Sport rehabilitation in a Young Offenders Institution:
The "Get Onside" Rugby Intervention, from practice to perception

A thesis submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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June 2021

Abstract

The effectiveness of using rugby as a tool for rehabilitation in a Young Offenders Institution (YOI) was investigated in three studies.

In Study 1, young adult males (N = 54) currently serving sentences at a YOI were split into 2 groups, intervention (N = 33, mean age = 19.55, SD = .79) and control (N = 21, mean age = 19.76, SD = .89). Participants completed the Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA) instrument (Mills et al., 2002) pre and post intervention at 4 different time cycles lasting eight weeks. Additionally, qualitative semi-structured interviews were carried out with intervention (N = 20) and control groups (N = 9) as well as 2 focus groups with the intervention group (N = 27) and 1 focus group with the control group (N = 5). There was a small reduction between attitudes on MCAA measures taken before and after Rugby intervention. Analysis across the 4 time cycles showed significant differences between cohorts and time of questionnaire completion. Thematic Analysis of qualitative data indicated the programme developed pro-social values, fostered social cohesion, and provided its participants with protective factors against reoffending.

Study 2 employed a questionnaire with 14 items based on subscales of the MCAA and themes arising from Study 1, which were first tested in a pilot study (N = 110) and amendments made relating to vignette salience. The items were then presented to student respondents (Male = 27, Female = 61, mean age = 29.78, SD = 11.75) after reading a vignette depicting an offender as having committed a violent crime (N = 44) or a non-violent crime (N = 44) to explore their perceptions of rehabilitation. Results showed female respondents demonstrated perceptions significantly more supportive of the success of the programme in the areas of reduced criminal attitudes and social and behavioural outcomes. The perceptions of vignette character convicted of violent compared to non-violent crime were not demonstrated to be significantly different. Thematic analysis of open-ended responses indicated the programme was perceived to be a positive initiative that promotes health and wellbeing and provides a community and sense of belonging.

Study 3 formed an Interpretative Phenomenological case study with an ex-prisoner, Adam. The analysis of an in-depth, semi-structured interview provided an insight into the development and formation of his personal identity in the prison and beyond, and the understanding of the impact of this specific intervention programme.

Findings from this thesis present a novel contribution to prison sport literature, by placing prisoners' experiences at the heart of the research process. Implications are discussed and recommendations made in terms of prison-based sport rehabilitation for researchers and policy makers.

Acknowledgements

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Publications and Presentations from this thesis

Welland, S., Duffy, L. J., & Baluch, B. (2020). Rugby as a rehabilitation program in a United Kingdom male young offenders' institution: Key findings and implications from mixed methods research. *Journal of Exercise Rehabilitation*, *16*(1), 78. https://doi.org/10.12965/jer.1938726.363

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Welland, S., Duffy, L., Baluch, B. (2017). How to reduce re-offending at a Young Offenders Institution (YOI). An investigation of the effectiveness of the 'Get Onside' Saracens RFC sporting intervention programme. Research Degree Student Conference 2017, Middlesex University, Hendon. Poster presentation.

Glossary

ACEs: Adverse Childhood Experiences, highly stressful events or situations that happen during childhood and/or adolescence

Basic: Lowest level of IEP, a punishment level for those who do not comply with prison regulations and protocols resulting in privileges being taken away

CJS: Criminal Justice System

Enhanced: Highest level of IEP, for prisoners who exceed Standard level by abiding by behaviour principles to a consistently high standard, resulting in privileges such as more visits or increased access to spending allowance.

HMP: Her Majesty's Prison

HMPPS: Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

IEP: Incentives and Earned Privileges (prisoner status within a prison based on their behaviour, consisting of three levels, Basic, Standard and Enhanced)

Keep Apart List: A list of individuals whose safety is deemed to require separation from another individual(s), resulting in movement being restricted and limiting educational and recreational activities

MCAA: Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates

MoJ: Ministry of Justice

NOMS: National Offender Management Service

OMP: Offender Management Programme, the aim of Offender Management is to rehabilitate through goal setting and helping prisoner's best manage their time in prison

Open Prison: Prisons with a more relaxed security regime who hold Category D prisoners, defined as those at low risk for escaping and harm to the public

PEI:	Prison Education Instructor (Prison Officer based in the Gym, who teaches and supervises sport provision at a prison)
PRU:	Pupil Referral Unit, a school for pupils excluded from mainstream schools
PSI:	Prison Service Instructions, the rules, regulations, and guidelines by which prisons are run
Resettlement:	Preparation and support to be released from prison into the community and effectively helped to reduce the likelihood of reoffending
ROTL:	Release on Temporary License, being able to leave the prison for a short time e.g., to participate in paid or unpaid work or to see family members or dependents
SCH:	Secure Children's Home, run by local councils for children aged 10-14
SPSS:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, a software package used for statistical analysis
STC:	Secure Training Centre, run by private companies for children aged from 12-17
Through the gate:	Resettlement support that bridges the gap between prison and community
Wing:	Separate areas of the prison where prisoner's cells are located, connected by secure walkways. Also referred to as "Unit". Movement between them is restricted.
YJS:	Youth Justice System
YOI:	Young Offenders Institution, run by the Prison Service and private companies for children and young people aged 15-21

Chapter 1: Introduction

"They give you a good structure to a life already, 'cause you can come out with skills, qualifications, a hobby and a routine, which I think is what you need to live a fairly organised and fulfilling life."

Extract from a young adult male offender's interview

(Welland et al., 2020 p.82)

In recent decades, researchers and practitioners have called for a need to address disillusioned young people caught between the youth and adult criminal justice system (henceforth referred to as CJS). The potential for using sport as a 'hook' to engage these individuals was summarised by Lewis and Meek (2012) when they suggested that "sport can present a valuable and unique opportunity to engage with even the most challenging of young people caught up in a cycle of offending and imprisonment". Historically, confinement has necessitated creativity as a form of self-fulfilment (Kaufman Singer, 2010) and combined with prisoner interest in sport, this has generated creative outlets such as "cell workouts" or even the origins of some sports we know today. Indeed, in the 19th century, prisoners in Fleet Prison, London used to pass the time by hitting a ball against the walls of the exercise area, thus inventing the first iteration of Squash, known as "rackets". Historically, the UK has had a somewhat punitive approach to crime, however in recent times, there has been a move towards a more rehabilitation focused model in the UK prison estate and increased support for these initiatives (Allen, 2002; Reynolds et al., 2013; Wood & Viki, 2004). With this, the use of more holistic rehabilitative practices including sport, art and vocational skills (see for example, Farrier et al., 2019; Parker et al., 2014; Wilkinson & Caulfield, 2017) have been subject to extensive investigation. The general benefits of sport in prison and its effect on the psychological, social and physical wellbeing of offenders is well documented (Amtmann & Kukay, 2016; Battaglia et al., 2013) and the use of community sport partnerships by prisons including football, rugby and rowing (Meek, 2018) has expanded the availability of such team sports.

The present thesis and three reported studies made an attempt first to examine prisoners' own perceptions of their participation in a rugby intervention and prospects for resettlement, secondly to present this to the public to gain an understanding of public perceptions of using rugby in preventing reoffending and assisting in the resettlement of young adult male offenders and finally to hear the testimony of one individual's experience of the programme and resettlement.

1.1 Synopsis

The current Chapter (Chapter 1) provides a synopsis of the current thesis, giving a brief account of what has been covered in each chapter and the implications and findings thus far. A review of the literature exploring challenges of young adult offenders and the youth prison estate is documented in Chapter 2, to aim to understand the mechanisms of reoffending, risk and protective factors that inform the pathway of at-risk youth and their engagement with the youth prison estate and provide the rationale and theoretical underpinnings of the three studies in the present thesis. It does this by examining theory behind long-term desistance and the need for not only opportunities to adopt and internalise an alternative positive identity, but the positive public acceptance of this identity.

Chapter 3 outlines the main research approach and methodological foundations of the thesis. It explores and reflects upon the ethical implications of working with prisoners as research participants and the physical, social, and emotional boundaries that come with venturing inside prison walls to conduct research. It also draws upon the importance of both exploring and documenting reflexivity as a researcher when conducting the type of impact research work that forms this thesis.

Chapter 4 reports study 1 of this thesis, which comprised a mixed-methods, longitudinal impact evaluation of the 8-week "Get Onside" rugby intervention programme conducted with young adult males currently serving sentences at HMPYOI Feltham. Findings demonstrated a small, non-significant reduction between attitudes on the Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA) instrument (Mills et al., 2002) between

intervention and control groups, however showed significant differences from pre to post intervention between cohorts and time of questionnaire completion. Thematic Analysis of qualitative interviews and focus groups suggested for participants of the programme, it developed pro-social values and positive health behaviours, fostered social cohesion, and provided protective factors against reoffending while those in the control group cited a lack of support and role models available to them as well as an inevitability to their engagement with criminal behaviour due to the financial incentives it held.

Chapter 5 reports study 2 which formed a preliminary investigation into student perceptions of the prison-based sport intervention, providing insight into their perceived effectiveness of facilitating resettlement for young adult male offenders. Results from administering a vignette and 14-item questionnaire based on subscales of the MCAA and themes arising from study 1 showed that when the type of offence the vignette character was convicted of was highlighted more clearly, female respondents demonstrated perceptions significantly more supportive of the success of the programme in areas of reduced criminal attitudes and social and behavioural outcomes. Thematic Analysis of open-ended responses indicated the programme was perceived to be a positive initiative that promotes health and wellbeing and provides a community and sense of belonging. However, potential risks of using the sport of rugby and resettlement challenges were highlighted by respondents, including whether the offender would be accepted back into the community and the risk factors they would face.

Chapter 6 reports study 3 which was an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study of the experience of the Rugby intervention programme through the experience of one individual (Adam) and his resettlement journey to establishing long-term desistance of almost two years. A number of empirical findings were highlighted through the stories of the participant (Millward & Senker, 2012) and analysis revealed that participating in the intervention programme was instrumental in fostering relationships for Adam (Meek & Lewis, 2014a). However, the findings additionally suggested he had a strong sense of identity, priding himself on his status initially as a "trusted prisoner" and then as a volunteer for Saracens Sport Foundation visiting the prison as an "insider". Indeed,

what appeared to be a strong internal locus of control seemed to have enabled him to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the programme. While Adam identified multiple barriers to rehabilitation in prison, his own motivation and initiative had acted as a buffer to pursue the plans he had set out for himself, which are fully explored in Chapter 6.

Chapter 7 presents the general discussion of the findings, the contributions, and their implications. Chapter 8 provides a more detailed account of what is reported in each chapter, the conclusion, limitations, and directions for future research. It also presents a take home message to stakeholders and policymakers with ten recommendations based upon the research undertaken in this thesis. Overall, the results of the three studies should make an original contribution to understanding the impact of a prison-based rugby intervention, its role in the rehabilitation of young adult males and the public perception of both the rugby programme and these young men who have completed it, as they resettle into society. It is hoped that the UK prison estate as well as policymakers and practitioners involved in prison and rehabilitative efforts will benefit from the results of the present study, in developing interventions that can impact real, sustained change and addressing key challenges faced by these young men as they are released. In addition to this, the research hopes to make a useful contribution to the conversation regarding the best practice methodologically in evaluating such programmes. The implications of this will best place those in the prison and rehabilitative setting to tackle the problem of reoffending and record the benefits this will have on everyone in society, not just those attempting to rehabilitate.

Chapter 2: Review of the literature

2.1 Preface

In what follows, there will be a review of literature on issues facing young adult men in the UK prison estate and the mechanics of reoffending for this specific group. Young adult male prisoners present specific challenges and needs which impact their prison experience, their rehabilitation journey and ultimately their chances at resettlement upon release. This is then followed by a review of studies exploring outcomes of prison and community-based rehabilitation efforts and interventions in the UK, with a discussion on the most effective way to measure these outcomes. The focus will then shift to studies particularly exploring the power of sport in prison and the impact of custodial sport intervention programmes, leading to the significance of using contact sports such as rugby in the rehabilitation context. The review of literature will continue towards what is documented about experiences of what the resettlement process is like for young adults and the challenges it brings. The theoretical underpinnings and concepts for successful resettlement and desistance from crime will also be discussed. This will culminate with an overview of studies regarding public perceptions of rehabilitation efforts and resettlement to provide a full picture of the research question based on existing research, from practice (interventions) to perception (public views of offending).

2.2 Introduction

There is a significant issue in the UK regarding reoffending, with reoffending rates within the young adult prison population among the highest in the prison estate. Adults in the UK have a proven reoffending rate of 28.7% while juvenile offenders have a proven reoffending rate of 38.1% (Ministry of Justice, 2019). The reoffending rate specifically for 18 to 20-year-old offenders is 30% (Ministry of Justice, 2019). This issue is seen across the entire prison estate, and it is important to acknowledge that females make up over a quarter (26%) of individuals dealt with by the CJS (Ministry of Justice, 2020). Young adult women in the CJS present a specific set of issues and vulnerabilities, with mental health needs higher for young females (31%) in comparison to their male counterparts (18%) and in the last five years, a consistently higher

proportion of female prisoners have self-harmed (Ministry of Justice, 2020). In comparison to men, a greater proportion of female offenders are sentenced for offences that tend to receive shorter sentences (Ministry of Justice, 2020) and are more likely to be non-violent in nature (Prison Reform Trust, 2015). For example, previous research has found that half of 18-20 year old women sentenced receive prison sentences of six months or less and over half of the women receiving such prison sentences are convicted of theft and handling stolen goods (Allen, 2016). Furthermore, women's offending is often driven by abusive and coercive relationships, and this may be particularly true for young women (Allen, 2016; Earle, 2018). This is in comparison to young adult men who are "more likely to serve sentences for violent or acquisitive offences and more likely to be involved in robbery or low level drug dealing" (National Offender Management Service, 2015).

The present thesis focused on young adult males in the CJS due to the opportunity to undertake research investigating the rugby intervention programme that young adult male offenders participate in at HMPYOI Feltham, an establishment for young men and boys. Young adult offenders have been established as a distinct population with specific needs (Earle & Phillips, 2009; Judd & Lewis, 2015; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002), underpinned by the developmental maturation process that takes place during this time (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2016). Particularly as they fall between two key groups – children under 18 (classed in the youth justice estate as 'young people') and adults older than 25, they present a multitude of physical, mental and emotional needs (Meek & Lewis, 2012). However, future research should seek to also centre the experiences of young women in the prison estate where possible. In comparison to their female counterparts, men are overrepresented throughout the UK CJS, forming 95% of the prison population and nearly three quarters (74%) of those individuals dealt with by the CJS (Ministry of Justice, 2020). This is particularly true of young adult men who have a higher rate, compared to older adults of reoffending within one year of release and 73% of young adult men are assessed as having at least a 50% chance of proven reoffending within two years of being in the community after sentence (National Offender Management Service, 2015). Factors such as short sentences increase reoffending, with adult offenders serving sentences of less than 12 months demonstrating a proven reoffending rate of 62.2%.

To address the problem of reoffending, activity provision and intervention programmes have been developed in the UK prison estate in many areas, including academic subjects, Open University degree programmes, music, art, graphic design, and vocational courses such as painting and decorating, bricklaying and plastering. While gym and sport activities are compulsory in the youth estate (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2017), intervention programmes have aimed to implement sport or exercise within a structured course setting, often combining with functional education, job skills, goal setting and "through the gate" support.

In line with the increasing number of interventions and activities being provided in prison to attempt to meet some of the need for rehabilitation, there has been a growing body of research examining the social, psychological and health benefits of such prison-based interventions (see for example, Farrier et al., 2019; Meek & Lewis, 2014a; Wilkinson & Caulfield, 2017). The majority of these studies have demonstrated benefits of different types of interventions, in the areas of such measures as quality of life and psychological benefits such as less anxiety, depression and stress (Battaglia et al., 2015; Buckaloo et al., 2009; Cashin et al., 2008) as well as in measures such as attitudes towards reoffending (Meek, 2012; Williams et al., 2015) and rates of recidivism (Draper et al., 2013; Meek, 2012).

Previous research has also looked at the benefits of sport interventions specifically, in a prison setting (Martos-Garcia et al., 2009; Meek & Lewis, 2014a; Obadiora, 2016; Woods et al., 2017) and in the community with offenders and at-risk youth (Deuchar et al., 2016; Morgan & Parker, 2017; Parker et al., 2019; Van Hout & Phelan, 2014). The use of full-contact sports in prisons have been shown particularly to provide a release for stress and tension and a mechanism for managing emotions, for example in martial-arts (Martos-Garcia et al., 2009) and rugby (e.g. Meek, 2012; Meek et al., 2014a). However, studies that have looked at the impact of such interventions on reoffending have only been able to explore a short-term period constrained by their study design and thus there is limited research to date that looks at the longitudinal effects of an intervention.

2.3   Challenges faced by young adult males in prison

The UK youth secure estate houses young people with custodial sentences and consists of Young Offender Institutions, Secure Training Centres and Secure Children's Homes. Secure Training Centres are smaller, purpose-built establishments designed to accommodate boys and girls aged 12-17 years old while Secure Children's Homes are operated by local authorities and overseen by the Department of Education rather than the Ministry of Justice. Young Offender Institutions house males and females separately and within them, there are two groups of categorisations, young people (15–17-year-olds) and young adults (18–21-year-olds). Young adults in prison face a variety of issues, which can inform their experience and access to healthcare, activities, programmes, and opportunities for education and rehabilitation. These factors, in addition to issues faced by all prisoners when attempting to resettle into the community, inform their path upon release, including their likelihood to reoffend.

2.3.1   Masculinity and Criminal Associates

Emulating and upholding a sense of masculinity is a key concern for male offenders in prison (e.g. Abrams et al., 2008; Ricciardelli et al., 2015). Developing this masculine identity overlaps with some of the criminal activity that these individuals will engage in. Drug use, drug dealing and 'normal' crime for example are "important cultural and emotive resources for scripting a particular and powerful masculine identity on the street" (Collison, 1996). This serves as part of the image – in prison as well as "outside". Opportunities to reinforce these stereotypes occur by shaping masculine behaviour as a response to the antagonistic prison environment and its perceived risks (e.g. Ricciardelli et al., 2015). By mobilising these masculinities to mask vulnerability and attain status and legitimacy (de Viggiani, 2012), young offenders in particular may ensure their social and emotional survival. Particularly if they are coming from a gang context, which is "an attractive vehicle for 'doing masculinity' for boys and young men" (Baird, 2012).

Gang culture is also prevalent in young adult male offenders (see e.g. Alleyne et al., 2016) with many having their affiliations following them to prison. Gang affiliated young male offenders are significantly more likely to have histories of substance use, weapon use and violence (Chu et al., 2012) as well as display more pro-violent attitudes. Studies have also found that gang membership enhances or facilitates delinquency (Alleyne & Wood, 2010; Gordon et al., 2004; O'Brien et al., 2013; Weerman et al., 2015), indicating it may predict further trouble in prison and reoffending.

Family involvement in crime also represents a significant risk factor for criminal behaviour, with research finding 84% of prisoners surveyed had family members who had spent time in a prison or YOI (Williams et al., 2012) and those classed as persisting offenders most likely to have family members or peers involved in crime (Murray et al., 1999). Research has found exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is prevalent in young offenders (Baglivio et al., 2014) with ACEs such as exposure to emotional or physical violence in the home representing significant risk factors for offending behaviour (Baglivio et al., 2015; Fox et al., 2015) and perpetration of bullying and sexual violence (Basile et al., 2009). In a prisoner survey, 24% of prisoners surveyed had been in care at some point during their childhood and 41% had observed violence in the home as a child (Williams et al., 2012).

2.3.2   Health and Education challenges

Young offenders both in and out of custody face high levels of mental health needs (Carswell et al., 2004; Chitsabesan et al., 2006) reporting significantly more psychosocial problems including depression, excessive worry and problematic substance use. Factors such as age, offence type, amount or type of contact with the outside world, and sentence length are also historically found to influence levels of depression, stress and anxiety among inmates (Cooper & Berwick, 2001). The crime type of an offender is also important to consider, as research findings suggest that inmates serving time in more secure units for non-violent crimes such as theft, have high levels of depression, stress and anxiety (Daniel & Fleming, 2005; Mills & Kroner, 2005). Bullying behaviour is also a concern, with young offenders more likely than

adult offenders to report behaviours indicative of bullying others or being bullied (Ireland & Power, 2004).

Children and young people with learning disabilities are even more vulnerable, at a disproportionate risk of experiencing mental health problems and behavioural difficulties (Harrington et al., 2005; Hudson et al., 2018) with access and experiences of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) highly uneven. While the aforementioned needs of young offenders are high, they have been found to often be unmet (Chitsabesan et al., 2006) with a significant number of youths in the juvenile justice system that do not receive treatment for their disorders (Cauffman, 2004). Working with younger prisoners also involves a need to respond to increased levels of social isolation and difficulties in managing impulsivity, temper and conduct (Hemingway et al., 2015). Mental health issues are important to consider in this context as they have been found to affect the outcome of rehabilitation efforts (Kenny et al., 2007). A reduced level of engagement and behavioural challenges as a result may lessen the impact of rehabilitation programmes with this population and this has implications for recidivism.

Many young offenders also often possess low literacy levels, with high levels of speech, language and communication difficulties found among the population (Bryan, 2004) and 1 in 5 young offenders identified as having a learning disability (Chitsabesan et al., 2006). These prisoners can be reluctant to engage with functional skills or education programmes offered in prisons, due to their perceived similarity to the environment they experienced and were reluctant to engage with at school (Caulfield et al., 2016). Many formal rehabilitation programmes are therefore inaccessible for offenders who have speech and language difficulties or a learning disability (Prison Reform Trust, 2013), which is alienating for already disillusioned individuals. A lack of these skills is also a barrier to getting a job, playing a significant role in the possibility of reoffending (Cooney, 2012; Pogrebin et al., 2014) which can lead to a vicious circle. Difficulties with communicating adequately can also result in aggression and frustration which can cause issues both inside and outside of prison. A lack of awareness of communication skills (e.g. poor body language) can lead offenders to come across as aggressive when this is not their intention (Crabbe, 2016). This can add to the challenge of finding

employment, re-integration back into the community and even social cohesion in the prison itself.

2.4 Rehabilitation efforts and programmes

To address some of the issues faced by offenders in the youth prison estate and to attempt to reduce recidivism following their release from prison, various custody-based interventions have been established in the UK. What follows is a review of the literature examining effectiveness of such interventions, utilising variables such as psychometric attitudes, quality of life measures, self-reported health and wellbeing and reoffending rates.

2.4.1 Interventions

Previous studies examining offending attitudes and behaviour have looked at the effectiveness of different types of intervention programmes or activities. These have included evaluating interventions such as the Enhanced Thinking Skills programme (a cognitive behaviour offending programme designed to address thinking and behaviour associated with offending). This demonstrated a statistically significant reduction in one-year reconviction rates compared to a matched control group (Sadlier, 2010). An intervention of Multisystemic Therapy has similarly been shown to have some success in reducing the likelihood of non-violent offending during 18-month follow up (Butler et al., 2011). However, research completed in the UK has suggested that there may be more effective change found in a move towards an increasingly holistic and multi-faceted approach (for example including job training and education) in prison programme provision (Sapouna et al., 2011). Meta-analyses have also concluded that programmes which focus on human capital development are relatively more effective than punitive interventions as they may provide new, critical skills that increase the likelihood of successful adjustment to adulthood and desistance from anti-social activity (Mulvey et al., 2004). The Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award (a programme encompassing volunteering, physical activity, the development of life skills and expedition) is one such voluntary community programme that is also now delivered in

the secure estate in England and Wales. A qualitative study has demonstrated the way in which participating in the DofE provided young people with new experiences and helped them to cope with stress and acquire necessary social skills for future paths into employment and training (Dubberley & Parry, 2010).

Furthermore, therapeutic art-based programmes have been shown to contribute to increasing offenders' self-esteem (e.g. Bilby et al., 2013; Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008; Miles, 2006). Programmes using music have demonstrated that learning a new skill in an informal group setting is empowering (Wilkinson & Caulfield, 2017). While their study focused on prisoners at the older end of the age spectrum, i.e., 50+, the two groups face similar concerns when serving custodial sentences, including vulnerability and mental health.

2.5   The power of sport in prison

Participation rates in physical education and sport in the juvenile and young adult male estate are among the highest in the UK prison population (Lewis & Meek, 2012). Sport is a generally accessible activity that interests many young people and may function as a "hook" (Chamberlain, 2013) to get them involved in a wider programme that includes education, employability training and soft skills. Team sport is something that many youths may have taken part in, in their younger years at school or recreationally which may have resulted in numerous positive experiences in childhood. However there may have come a time before prison that they rejected these activities in favour of other activities e.g. criminal activity or substance use (see Van Hout & Phelan, 2014).

2.5.1   Sport interventions

As a result of the acknowledged potential of using sport to engage young adult prisoners, some of the literature has specifically examined interventions focusing on sport and physical activity, (e.g. Martos-Garcia et al., 2009; Meek, 2012; Obadiora,

2016; Parker et al., 2019; Van Hout & Phelan, 2014; Woods et al., 2017). In addition to a relatively small number of studies specifically exploring the effectiveness of prison-based sport interventions in the UK, previous literature has also demonstrated the potential of schemes in the community implemented to prevent at-risk youth from going to prison. Some of this success has been owed to sport clubs and after school activities providing the opportunity to mix with different social groups, away from established criminal associates and gang involvement (Nichols, 1997). Referred to by Jenkins & Ellis (2011) as "non-deviant peer networks", these social groups include role models who are not criminal associates, providing peer support which ideally could contribute to reducing recidivism (Gallant et al., 2015). Group-based activities are therefore often used in community sports-based interventions to encourage and develop these pro-social relationships. Using sport in this way can replicate the sense of emotional belonging that gang membership can bring (Chamberlain, 2013). For example, combat sports have been recommended for use in interventions with gang members as they provide participants with a sense of identity that they are proud to be affiliated with (Jenkins & Ellis, 2011). Organised sports can also provide young people with a new pro-social identity and daily routine which helps them reintegrate into the community (Van Hout & Phelan, 2014).

Sport can also provide a legitimate means for young people to engage more constructively with their local communities which has the potential to allow them to gain a stronger sense of active citizenship and access an improved quality of life (Parker et al., 2019). The psychosocial benefits of organised community sports programmes have even been said to far outweigh the physical health benefits they provide (Hudson et al., 2018). This can also work similarly in prisons; opportunities such as recreational tournaments can empower offenders through sport. Additionally, if this involves the outside community, it can encourage social connections from inside and outside of the prison which are necessary for social integration and facilitating post-release entry into the community (Obadiora, 2016).

It has been suggested that merely being involved in an alternative purposeful and legitimate activity (such as sport) may prevent involvement in crime (Nichols, 1997) as the activity can act as a diversion at times when young people could be causing trouble,

i.e. after school (Nichols & Crow, 2004). It can also offer a suitable environment in which to instil virtues of morality (Andrews & Andrews, 2003). This contributes to the concept of "breaking the cycle" – as young people stop engaging in at-risk behaviours and activities, they stop associating with criminal friends and associates.

In addition to providing a diversion activity, research has explored the benefits of using sport as a tool to build trust and a supportive relationship with an adult (France & Homel, 2006), suggesting that this is what young people really value over programmes and content. A sports leader may act as a positive role model for young people who are in need of one (Nichols & Crow, 2004) or even as a paternal role (Draper et al., 2013). Indeed, young people in a study by Green et al. (2013) believed that successful relationships with workers were dependent on genuineness and a belief that they should act as advocates for them. These environments where marginalised young people are able to develop strong interpersonal relationships with sport coaches have been demonstrated to develop self-worth by building trust and recognition (Morgan & Parker, 2017) and coaches who maintained good relationships with their athletes also reduced antisocial behaviour (Rutten et al., 2007). Providing a context where young people can find meaning and security and have positive and supportive experiences has been found to be beneficial, particularly for those who are vulnerable or at-risk (Haudenhuyse et al., 2014).

2.5.2   Benefits of prison-based sport interventions

Engaging in sport and physical activity, e.g. football, has also been found to promote a high quality of life amongst prisoners (Obadiora, 2016). The concept of acquiring new skills in sport can have a positive effect on physical health and the psychological and social wellbeing of inmates, as it benefits physical fitness and self-esteem. Taking part in regular sport also provides inmates with the opportunity to develop a routine (Obadiora, 2016; Van Hout & Phelan, 2014).

Furthermore, sport and exercise can provide a coping mechanism for prisoners (Cooper & Berwick, 2001). Finding successful coping mechanisms while incarcerated is

essential to functioning and inmates who have poor coping methods have been found to have an increased risk of causing disruptions and reoffending after release (Dowden et al., 2003; Peters & Schonfeld, 1993). Participating in sport can also provide a way to manage the negative psychological effects of prison such as levels of depression, stress and anxiety (Battaglia et al., 2015; Buckaloo et al., 2009; Callaghan, 2004; Parker et al., 2014).

However, Callaghan (2004) suggests that exercise is often not recognised as an effective intervention in the care and treatment of mental health problems. This may be because sport is often found to be lower on the priority list for prisons and prisoners compared to other programmes and activities (Martos-Garcia et al., 2009). In the case of recidivism, this may be because educational and vocational courses are perceived to be more likely to provide employment opportunities upon release. Therefore, if sport can be used as an enticing setting in which to embed numeracy, literacy and employment skills (Meek, 2012), it's suggested this increases the potential to rehabilitate and reduce reoffending (Martos-Garcia et al., 2009) by adding long-term benefit to reward participation. The necessity for 'through the gate' support has also been recognised as key in avoiding reoffending, with the ability for offenders to access similar programmes post-release to provide ongoing support deemed essential (Gallant et al., 2015).

Sport may also have an important role in social rehabilitation within the prison population by generating positive attitudes and behaviours. It can promote the socialisation of inmates, as they acquire personal skills, improve their relationships, form new attitudes and develop healthy habits (Moscoso-Sanchez et al., 2017). This has positive effects on the general wellbeing of the prison population and can therefore increase social cohesion (Obadiora, 2016). Organised sporting activities can help inmates acquire these skills as they are encouraged to respect rules and regulations and channel aggressive behaviour in a specific space and context. However, researchers have suggested that social reintegration will depend on each inmate's external social context. For example, gang associations may follow individuals into prison, causing conflict or leading to their isolation.

2.6 Rugby for rehabilitation

Previous literature has demonstrated that high discipline sports such as rugby can help prisoners manage aggression and violence and improve behavioural discipline (Meek & Lewis, 2013). The use of high-discipline sport in such interventions has been explored in previous research which has found varying outcomes on delinquency depending on the type of sport engaged in (Begg et al., 1996). Researchers suggest certain types of sport may provide a different impact in addressing specific problem behaviours or skill deficits than others. Skills learnt specifically in rugby, such as those to channel and modify aggressive behaviour may be especially important for those whose offending behaviour is linked to aggression.

It has also been suggested that with appropriate guidance, contact sports such as martial arts can improve behaviours related to aggression and be cathartic for participants (Draper et al., 2013; Harwood et al., 2017). Moreover, combat sports specifically may reduce crime by replacing the excitement usually experienced through risk behaviours such as crime or drug taking, with the thrill of sport (Jenkins & Ellis, 2011). Learning the art of boxing has also been used in a group context to attempt to address violence in high-risk youth and juvenile offenders, providing them with a 'new' identity as a boxer and a sense of belonging, as well as something that excites and challenges them (Wright, 2006). The masculine context of a full-contact sport such as boxing has also been suggested to provide a "safe space to perform broader versions of locally dominated views on masculinity and to reflect on current situations and dilemmas" (Deuchar et al., 2016). Additionally, weight training has been shown to reduce measures of verbal aggression, hostility and anger through the lens of cathartic theory (Wagner et al., 1999). This refers to the use of intense physical activity to release a build-up of aggression, releasing repressed drives and purging the body (Macrae & Simmel, 1955).

Rugby specifically, as a full-contact sport requires engagement in rucking, scrums and tackling which presents its own challenges in the prison estate, regarding the dilemma that physical contact in the context of competition may foster aggression (Jenkins & Ellis, 2011). However, through catharsis this may also provide release, presenting a unique opportunity for stress relief and the management of emotions (e.g. Meek, 2012;

Parker et al., 2014) with benefits seen in previous studies such as improved attitudes towards aggression and criminal thinking (e.g. Williams et al., 2015) and increased social cohesion (McDonald et al., 2019). The control required to engage in such a sport has been demonstrated to have a positive effect on the discipline and team working values of young men (Meek, 2012; Meek & Lewis, 2014a) by helping them to "manage circumstances and face difficult situations together" (Parise et al., 2015). Engaging in the game of rugby itself brings about situations of physical fight, however, this may help individuals to manage their emotions as their physical impulsiveness is overruled by the code of ethics of the game which puts the respect for rules and teammates first. When the individual puts aside their personal ambitions or competitiveness for the good of the group, they realise they can count on their teammates' physical and emotional support to achieve a successful result (Parise et al., 2015). This strong team ethos and ethical code can provide a useful framework for young men, especially if they have been gang-affiliated, as they can find positive role models and a sense of belonging in the team setting (e.g. Buckle & Walsh, 2013; Parker et al., 2014).

2.7   The resettlement process and its challenges

Literature exploring the resettlement process has suggested it is a challenging path for many, particularly young adult offenders, who as identified by a report by the Social Exclusion Unit (2002), are "at the age where a wide range of social exclusion and other factors that may have a bearing on offending are at or approaching their peak." Listening to these young people's own first-hand accounts of their experiences in prison may therefore effectively inform resettlement literature, as they provide critical perspectives on successes and limitations of current prison policy (Drake et al., 2014). Indeed in the wider literature, there is a call to give greater power and voice to young people in research and policy development processes (Case, 2006; Grover, 2004; Prior & Mason, 2010). Additionally, to gain a greater understanding of these processes to start with, we need to listen to the voices and perspectives of young people themselves (France & Homel, 2006). This is exemplified by researchers such as Earle (2011) who have explored the way young men in English prisons talk about their lives by listening to their own accounts. By seeking to answer the question of how we can secure young people's engagement and sustain their involvement in intervention programmes (Drake

et al., 2014), we may learn about how to sustain this motivation that is considered vital to the maintenance of processes of change (Maguire & Raynor, 2006) needed for desistance.

2.7.1   A theory of desistance

It would be impossible to discuss resettlement and reoffending without referring to concepts of desistance and work aiming to evaluate the rehabilitation of offenders must be informed by a theoretical based understanding of desistance from crime. Desistance itself is difficult to define, however tends to refer to the long-term abstinence from criminal and offending behaviour. It has been studied as a process (see e.g. Laub & Sampson, 2001; Weaver, 2019) because being able to pinpoint a particular "moment" that any behaviour ceases permanently is unlikely. The relationships between behaviour, identity and belonging are embedded in the main explanatory theories of desistance. In a critical review, Weaver (2019) suggested that an increasing number of desistance theories conceptualise the desistance process as an interaction between or integration of social, behavioural and structural factors, drawing on narrative accounts of individuals' desistance processes. Maruna & Farrall (2004) developed the concepts of primary and secondary desistance to mirror those of primary and secondary deviance (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1948). They identified the distinction between "primary" and "secondary" desistance, with the former principally behavioural, referring to a period of non-offending and the latter suggesting a shift in identity whereby the individual no longer thinks of themselves as an offender. The concepts are based on the reasoning that changes in self-perception and identity formation are what allow long-term sustained changes in behaviour. In achieving secondary desistance, an individual may embark on "making good" on their troubled past, to accept and internalise this positive change in identity (Maruna, 2001). In more recent literature, it has been acknowledged that in addition to depending on how one sees one's self, the desistance process is also affected by how the individual is viewed by others and whether they are accepted which may impact whether long-term change is secured (Weaver, 2013). This has led McNeill (2016) to contribute the term of "tertiary desistance", which highlights the importance of social recognition in securing a sense of belonging in and commitment to a moral community. Thus, allowing the individual to see themselves as having a place in society (Nugent & McNeill, 2016). It has been argued that developing these social links with

others improves the odds of sustained desistance as it allows ex-offenders to access increased social resources (McNeill, 2006). Taking up new experiences that may result from this allows those trying to desist to act out their "new identity" and give the opportunity for it to be affirmed by a wider audience, which can strengthen it at a deeper level (Nugent & Schinkel, 2016).

Although the terms given to these concepts may unintentionally indicate so, it has been identified and accepted that desistance is a process rather than an end-point (Weaver, 2019). This process is not linear and instead tends to be a "zigzag" (Burnett, 2004) where offenders may vary in their motivation and readiness for change. This may "involve reversals and relapses and thus identifies that services aiming to help offenders need to engage with these realities and support them in the maintenance of motivation" (Hudson et al., 2007). As McNeill (2006) explains, the implication of such theory is that Offender Management Services need to think of themselves less as providers of "correctional" treatment and more as supporters of desistance processes, that belong to the individual trying to desist, themselves. Indeed, since desistance is partly about discovering and developing self-efficacy, interventions are most likely to be effective where they encourage self-determination, thus working "with" offenders as opposed to "on" them (McCulloch, 2005; McNeill, 2006; McNeill et al., 2012).

2.8   Public perceptions of rehabilitation efforts

Secondary and tertiary desistance, while relating to changes in offender's own identity, behaviour and belonging in a quest for sustained desistance (McNeill, 2016; Nugent & McNeill, 2016), also draw on shifts in their sense of belonging to a community. This considers their place in society in regard to how they see themselves and how they are seen by others, with the emphasis on belonging suggesting that successful community reintegration requires more than "instrumental compliance with the law and behaving well" (Graham & McNeill, 2017). Instead, processes might include making positive changes in their communities and the lives of others, developing bonds with their community and removing the negative stigma attached to their offender label (Benson et al., 2011; Kilmer, 2016; Maruna, 2001). Equally, this may also include having "fair access to all the resources, rights and opportunities routinely afforded to other citizens"

(Graham & McNeill, 2017; McNeill, 2012). However, the possibility of realising this level of desistance may be reduced depending on the climate of public punitiveness and attitudes of discrimination or stigma towards individuals from the community they are attempting to reintegrate into.

To give an overview of the changing public perception and attitudes towards prisons and the punishment of offenders in the UK CJS over the years, research has focused attention on the changes in public punitiveness (e.g. Cullen et al., 1990, 2000; Flanagan et al., 1985; Hindelang et al., 1975; Mears et al., 2015). In regard to youth justice, a basic punitive orientation was established following the high-profile Jamie Bulger case in the early 1990's and concern about persistent juvenile offenders (Allen, 2002). Around this time, public opinion towards crime and youth offenders in the UK tended to be strongly punitive, with three quarters of people believing that the CJS was too lenient and that there was a need for harsher sentences (Barretto et al., 2018; Mattinson & Mirrlees-Black, 2000). In fact, various opinion surveys actually found young people were widely perceived to be responsible for the majority of crime or at least as much as adults (Mattinson & Mirrlees-Black, 2000) and demonstrated "public support for getting tougher on juvenile crime and punishing youths as harshly as their adult counterparts" (Scott et al., 2006; Soler, 2001). Despite this, there appears to be a desire from the public for prisoners to improve their lives while inside, as a report by the Social Exclusion Unit (2002) suggests, "a prison sentence also presents the opportunity to reduce crime, with an ability to make a longer term, sustained difference to the causes of reoffending and to prisoners' attitudes and behaviour." This is a good sign for rehabilitation efforts. Furthermore, in more recent times rehabilitation and resettlement based approaches have been adopted by the Home Office and Ministry of Justice, for example with the introduction of Integrated Offender Management in 2009, which aimed to reduce reoffending through targeting specific cohorts of offenders within local areas (see Hadfield et al., 2020, for a review). In addition, in 2013, the UK government introduced a "Through the Gate" scheme as part of its "Transforming Rehabilitation" agenda, re-designating a majority of prisons in England and Wales as "resettlement prisons" to attempt to integrate and extend rehabilitative support from custody into the community (Taylor et al., 2017).

It is noteworthy to mention that past research has suggested that the public report a lack of familiarity with the prison estate, leading them to make large under-estimates of conviction, imprisonment rates and the general severity of the CJS (Barretto et al., 2018; Russell & Morgan, 2001). Moreover, there is evidence to suggest a belief that prison conditions are quite "easy", which might explain a low level of confidence in the prison system (Roberts & Hough, 2005). Researchers have explored the potential consequences of public misconceptions of the CJS and its severity, for example that policy makers may be pressured into creating legislation based on punitive public opinion (Barretto et al., 2018). This can result in a vicious circle – policy based on these misunderstandings of public attitudes and public attitudes that are influenced further by this legislation. Policy makers may also justify expenditures for punitive justice reforms on the basis of popular demand for tougher policies (Nagin et al., 2006). This highlights the importance of exploring public attitudes, because of their potential to influence policy within the justice system. Existing research has additionally considered the impact of public perceptions of prisoners (i.e. Garland et al., 2016; Maruna & King, 2009; Reynolds et al., 2013) and found correlations between negative attitudes towards prisoners and more punitive attitudes towards crime and punishment (Kjelsberg et al., 2007). The ramifications of these negative public perceptions are seen for example in the workplace, where ex-prisoners and those with a criminal background are rated as less likely to demonstrate employability and obtain and maintain employment (Graffam et al., 2008).

2.8.1   Public perceptions by offender group and crime type

When considering public perceptions towards offenders, it is also important to distinguish between the offender group as the literature has established differences in perceptions. For example, young offenders may be seen as less accountable and less competent than older offenders (Walker, 2001), particularly by adult community members who may perceive their criminal choices to be influenced by their developmental immaturity in comparison to adult offenders (Miers, 2015). Findings have indicated that the public attribute more responsibility for the criminal act to the offender as they get older (Scott et al., 2006) and punitive attitudes have been shown to increase with offender age, regardless of offence type (e.g. Rogers & Ferguson, 2011).

For example, research has seen adult sex offenders viewed more punitively than juvenile offenders (e.g. Harper, 2012).

However, the public have appeared to have little confidence in juvenile courts, believing they deal too leniently particularly regarding persistent juvenile offenders (Mattinson & Mirrlees-Black, 2000) and have been ineffective in protecting the public (Schwartz et al., 1993). Nevertheless, they favoured restorative and reparative dispositions for first time juvenile offenders. This is reflected in literature finding that the public recommend differential treatment between adults and juveniles (Scott et al., 2006) favouring rehabilitation with an opportunity to repent (Ellis et al., 2018) and the addressing of systemic issues (Barretto et al., 2018), with a willingness to pay for justice policies such as early childhood prevention (Nagin et al., 2006) and restorative justice options (Miers, 2015; Roberts & Stalans, 2004).

It is worth noting that as the seriousness of the offence increases, public support for alternative sentencing options like restorative justice does decline, which suggests a strong public adherence to the concept that the severity of the sentence reflects the seriousness of the crime (Roberts & Stalans, 2004; von Hirsch, 1992). Similarly, in vignette studies such as that by Ghetti & Redlich (2001), the type of crime and outcome were major motivating factors in sentencing decisions, with a more favourable attitude towards non-violent criminals with no sexual offences (e.g. Rade et al., 2016). This is also echoed in findings by Immerwahr & Johnson (2002) of respondents' support for resettlement programmes; a key concern was what type of prisoners might be included and how effective these programmes would be at keeping them out of trouble. This suggests that a motivating factor for public support is how they perceive the offender, with crime type and severity a crucial aspect to consider.

In addition to this, is the perception of the offender themselves and how morally responsible they are deemed to be for their criminal offence. Looking at this through the lens of attribution theory, in terms of how "responsible" the offender is perceived to be for their crime has led research to find more punitive attitudes towards domestic violence offenders and violent drug offenders compared to those who are veterans or suffering from mental health issues (Atkin-Plunk, 2020). In the same vein, individuals

committing crimes attributed to perceived situational factors out of their control (e.g. structural inequality and poverty) may be seen as more redeemable and deserving of rehabilitation and thus the public are likely to endorse this (Cochran et al., 2006; Cullen et al., 1985; Jacobs & Carmichael, 2002, 2004; Unnever et al., 2010).

2.8.2 Public perceptions towards prison-based interventions

Although there is literature evaluating various prison intervention programmes and their rehabilitation efforts, the research exploring public perception of such interventions in the UK is sparse. However, studies have explored the level of public awareness of challenges associated with prisoner resettlement and public opinion towards resettlement policies and practices. While it has been found that people take into account values such as social welfare, retribution and self-interest (Garland et al., 2013) and most are aware of obstacles for offenders in returning to the community, they also hadn't thought extensively about these resettlement issues for prisoners (Immerwahr & Johnson, 2002). Researchers identify that resettlement initiatives may struggle to get off the ground without public support and this could lead to an undermining of the movement towards reintegration and resettlement as a whole (Garland et al., 2016). This is reflected in suggestions that positive attitudes towards prisoners are important in securing the effectiveness of prison rehabilitation programmes (Kjelsberg et al., 2007) and that initiatives need to demonstrate to the public the need for them to service ex-prisoners in order to facilitate their successful reintegration after release.

Research that has explored disparities in perceptions of offenders between different public and social groups has commonly utilised students as a research population, finding that female students demonstrate a more positive attitude towards rehabilitating inmates than their male counterparts (Ortet-fabregat & Pérez, 1992; Tucker & Yuen, 2019). Perceptions of offenders have also been demonstrated to differ based on respondent profession. For example, findings that forensic staff have more favourable attitudes towards sex offenders than students or professionals not involved in treatment (Kerr et al., 2018). Studies have also shown that University students (Medical, Nursing, Psychology and Criminology) hold a stronger supportive attitude toward rehabilitating inmates than the general public and correctional and law enforcement officers (Gakhal

& Brown, 2011; Kjelsberg et al., 2007; Ortet-fabregat & Pérez, 1992; Tucker & Yuen, 2019). Indeed, prison officers have been demonstrated to often hold more negative views towards prisoners than other prison employees (Kjelsberg et al., 2007). This is somewhat concerning as frontline staff play an important role in the rehabilitation of offenders in both prison and community settings (Dowden & Andrews, 2004) and prison officers are in day to day interaction with the inmates, consequently their positive attitudes play a crucial role in facilitating change prior to successful release from prison (Glaser, 1969; Kjelsberg et al., 2007). Negative attitudes among prison officers have been seen to be more common in correctional facilities that have little focus on rehabilitation in comparison to institutions with this a core focus (Kifer et al., 2003).

In the case of student perceptions, respondent programme of study has also been found to influence perception of prisoners. For example, students studying a degree such as Business Economics have been seen to hold more negative attitudes towards prisoners than those studying Nursing (Kjelsberg et al., 2007). The proximity of the degree programme to prisoners and offenders (i.e. consideration of working in prison settings after graduation, relatedness to prison work) is also a factor that has been associated with support for rehabilitating inmates (Tucker & Yuen, 2019, 2020). Researchers suggest that students' programme of choice may also shape their attitudes and beliefs in the efficacy of treatment and support for rehabilitation to begin with. As Harper (2012) rightly questions, would it be possible to work in the field of offender rehabilitation whilst simultaneously not believing that the offender can change? It is important we understand the perceptions of the public and more specifically, in the case of students, those who intend to work in the prison and probation setting, as this has a large impact on the broader context of offender rehabilitation. As Morgan et al., (2020) identifies, "prison rehabilitation programmes do not exist in a vacuum and social context must be considered in relation to offender rehabilitation and re-entry".

2.9   Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has explored firstly the issues faced by young adult offenders in the prison estate and the risk factors that may exacerbate offending behaviour. It has highlighted the limited amount of existing literature demonstrating the success of sport interventions

in both the community and the youth prison estate, presenting the rationale behind a thorough evaluation of this rugby intervention programme aimed at young adult males. The methodological concerns of existing studies in this area have also highlighted the need for longitudinal exploration and follow up. In addition, the chapter has identified what we currently know about effective practice and equally barriers to successful resettlement and reintegration. It has been suggested that based on the concepts of primary, secondary, and tertiary desistance, intervention programmes must seek to enable individuals to form a socially recognised (and accepted) pro-social identity in order to facilitate their belonging in a moral community and ultimately, long-term desistance. This provides further rationale for the approach of the thesis in evaluating the effectiveness of the "Get Onside" rugby intervention programme and the approach and methodology utilised to undertake this evaluation will be detailed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, the literature review presented a detailed exploration of research that had investigated the experiences of young adult offenders and effects of prison and community-based interventions focused on sport alongside the perceptions of these rehabilitative efforts. The literature review concluded that while the potential for the use of sport in prisons (particularly with young offenders) is well documented, there are limited numbers of research studies that have allowed direct access to young adult prisoners currently serving custodial sentences to explore the effectiveness of such interventions. Additionally, research that has had the opportunity to explore prison-based interventions longitudinally (specifically relating to sport), utilising a matched control group is sparse. There have been limitations in study design and the use of matched control groups as well as the reporting of perceptions of rehabilitation from young adult prisoners themselves. While each individual study's chapter in this thesis outlines the specific aims, variables, participants, and procedures undertaken for each study, it was deemed important to discuss the researcher's approach and reflexivity in conducting this challenging piece of research. Particularly the research that required the researcher to carry the responsibility of amplifying young voices that are not often heard (Shafi, 2020) due to the marginalised status and setting they find themselves in. A dearth of existing literature has sought to actively explore the reflexive moments where the emotionally charged nature of prison research and resulting experiences for both researchers and participants is recognised (James, 2013). This chapter therefore aims to discuss the research approach of the current thesis and take an in-depth look at the ethical, emotional, and ethnographic challenges and complications rife in prison research, particularly when working with and collecting data from young adult male offenders as a female researcher. This contributes to the understanding of the big picture, the "larger relational, communal and political world of which we are a part and that moves us to critical engagement, social action and social change" (Ellis, 2009).

3.2 Summary of aims and research approach

Chapter 1 outlines the aims of the current thesis in detail. To summarise, this thesis aims to explore the effectiveness of a prison-based rugby intervention programme in practice, and the perception of its participants as well as the public of using rugby as a rehabilitation programme. The use of a triangulation protocol in the whole thesis allows the development of a comprehensive understanding of the research question. If the question is, "does rugby as a rehabilitation work?" then the answer is achieved by asking prisoners, asking the public and asking those who have completed the programme and successfully resettled into the community. Asking questions of these unique but overlapping populations allows us to paint the whole picture of whether indeed rugby does work in rehabilitative practice.

3.3 Research Approach

To explore and aim to answer the questions of this thesis, it was essential to adopt the appropriate research approach that was carefully considered, well planned and reflexive. When establishing the methods of data collection, it was important to consider those participants involved, particularly the study that involved the prison population, alongside the needs of the research. Not only was it important to ensure participants did not experience any negative effects due to taking part in the research, but it was also vital to consider the practical implications of conducting research in the prison setting. In addition, it is important to note that the literature review presented many studies that had utilised quantitative methodologies, moreover there was a sparsity of studies conducted in the youth prison estate, particularly when using a sample of young adult prisoners. A mixed method approach, using data collected through questionnaires alongside semi-structured interviews and focus groups was therefore adopted. As Reiter (2014) suggests, a mixed method, collaborative approach to prison research is the best way to overcome the structural, bureaucratic and emotional barriers that closes prisons off to researchers.

Using a triangulation protocol to integrate qualitative and quantitative data can reveal findings that need further interpretation and highlight areas of dissonance that lead to a

deeper insight than separate analyses (Tonkin-Crine et al., 2016). Using quantitative methods alone, one may never consider the role of the researcher and their impact on the data. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the social desirability that may occur particularly in the use of self-report quantitative measures. For example, Paulhus (1984) identified an aspect of social desirability referred to as "impression management", consisting of the favourable representation of the self to others. In this specific context, this may include wanting to present a positive public impression to those holding a higher level of social influence (e.g. prison officers, coaches, or indeed, visiting researchers) through responses in the research (Mills et al., 2003). This has been demonstrated in research findings that offenders rated high on an Impression Management measure, reported lower antisocial attitudes on the self-report measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (Mills & Kroner, 2006). It is also possible that when completing self-report measures, participants may feel compelled to show an improvement on their score, in order to reflect positively on the programme (Farrier et al., 2019). Again, this could potentially relate to the desire to create a good impression to programme staff that they had bonded with. This is another benefit of employing qualitative methods as they provide an element of humanity, subjectivity and transparency which is insightful and provides a fuller picture of participant experiences. By allowing researchers to see things from alternative perspectives, they can make a valuable contribution (Toye et al., 2016) which helps to contextualise these findings. Qualitative research can also help with making specific recommendations and asking further questions. For example, although quantitative measures used in the thesis may indicate reduced responses endorsing predictors of criminality, they do not provide the answer as to "why?". Additionally, some improvements may not be captured in such self-report measures, as it is difficult to track pro-social values, behaviours, and morals in a tangible way.

Participant experiences are also important, particularly when they are from those who are marginalised from society and qualitative methods give them a voice. If the aims of the project are to gain insight into prisoner views and experiences, we need to make them part of the conversation, it would be folly to just talk about them. In addition to triangulation, the processes of collaboration with participants, reflexivity and prolonged engagement are also vital components for ensuring rigor, validity and usefulness in a study that employs qualitative methods (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Marshall & Rossman,

2014; Maxwell, 2012). Equally, it has been suggested that there is a place in the literature for more studies addressing the issues of using qualitative methods based upon original, empirical research (Schlosser, 2008). Similarly to research such as the longitudinal case study of Transforming Rehabilitation at a particular prison in the UK (Taylor et al., 2017), the fieldwork presented in this these took place over an 18 month period (March 2018-December 2019) and comprised of four two-month phases of activity. Within each phase of activity, the researcher conducted observational fieldwork, conducted interviews, focus groups and questionnaires with sample groups of prisoners. A feature of the project design was to identify cohorts of prisoners to follow throughout phases of activity, to capture experiences of passing through the programme and beyond. While longitudinal reconviction analyses, although limited, may show a wearing off period (e.g. Jolliffe et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2011) continued mixed method approaches may provide further insight into the effectiveness of interventions.

The strength of qualitative data collection and analyses is the extent to which it allows the researcher to investigate in depth the motivations, attitudes, and opinions of individuals, particularly in the case of a prisoner sample, who may not ordinarily be given the opportunity to have their opinions expressed and heard. This direct contact with offenders provides valuable insights into how and why people commit crime (Copes et al., 2015). Interviews often go beyond information gained when using quantitative methodology by gathering data directly from participants in their own words, which provides depth of clarity and understanding to learn the rationale behind the results (Dixon, 2015). By combining quantitative and qualitative data, i.e., interviews and questionnaires, a wider perspective and understanding of participant responses is gained than when employing either method in isolation. Interviews can also be an empowering experience for participants, particularly for those who might be reluctant to complete questionnaires but are instead willing to express themselves to an interested human interviewer. The boredom of the regularity of prison also may encourage participation as it gives inmates a chance to talk to new people and break up the monotony of prison life (Copes et al., 2013).

Conducting focus groups provides an effective way to elicit multiple perspectives on a given topic (Fusch & Ness, 2015) and capitalises on the synergy of a group to produce insights into attitudes and beliefs that underlie certain behaviours (Carey, 2016). The advantage of conducting a focus group alongside a smaller number of individual interviews is that it generates discussion and provides the opportunity for a group perspective, which may be relevant to the research findings and is otherwise overlooked without this methodology. However, specifically when working with this population it is important to be conscious of the potential for individuals to be reluctant to talk about their experiences for fear of embarrassment or ridicule, or indeed, the lack of oral or social skills to communicate effectively (James, 2013). As noted in the literature on prison research, the promise of confidentiality is instrumental in gaining the trust of young offenders in these settings which are "by definition, a low trust environment" (Liebling, 1999).

3.4   Ethical considerations

While including qualitative methods captures the subjective reality of the prison setting and provides rich, descriptive data, it is important to acknowledge the institutional context of the YOI which exerted a strong shaping influence over the research activity. This is because the young men participating in the research were surrounded by an environment in which "their voices had a reduced level of respect" (James, 2013).

3.4.1   Barriers to conducting research in the prison setting

In considering one's ethical responsibility as a prison researcher, it is also poignant to discuss the complications and barriers that one may face in this type of impact research. A number of prison researchers have reflected on the tensions and challenges of their ethnographic practice (Earle, 2014; Giallombardo, 1966; Jacobs, 1974; Jewkes, 2012; King & Wincup, 2008; Liebling, 2014; Reiter, 2014; Sparks, 2002; Waldram, 2009; Yuen, 2011). Prison environments are notoriously complicated with large numbers of staff in various departments, each with their own culture (Reiter, 2014). As a result, there "can be a lengthy process for researchers to become known to staff and prisoner groups and even longer to gain the trust of individuals" leading to "a prison researcher

finding herself at any given time throughout a research project re-negotiating access to individuals, knowledge and space" (Drake & Harvey, 2014). In terms of research access in the prison estate, there are time-limited windows of access within a regulated daily schedule where the prison regime (i.e. lockups, security checks, healthcare visits) takes precedence and participants may be unpredictably unavailable when researchers visit (Abbott et al., 2018). As a result, this may lead to a choice to use opportunistic sampling due to which research designs are feasible in the prison context, instead of more rigorous sampling methods. In addition, other mechanisms of promoting rigor in qualitative research may be impeded by access barriers, such as through limiting opportunities to interview participants more than once or to check findings with participants.

3.4.2 Gatekeepers to prison research

Additionally, the potential for prisoners to take part in research is often dependent upon the goodwill of institutional gatekeepers to grant access and consent (Heath et al., 2007; James, 2013). In secure settings, this is intensified due to the restrictions imposed on an individual's freedom and autonomy. Surprisingly, there is limited literature available that discusses the politics of negotiating access or the micro-relations engaged in by prison researchers on a daily basis to negotiate their continued access (Drake & Harvey, 2014). As a result, the negotiations required for an outside researcher's access to these institutions is time-consuming (Smith & Wincup, 2000), with the process bound up with organisational interests (such as specific institutional priorities) which can make research plans difficult to execute (Sloan & Wright, 2015). Similar to the experience of James (2013), the difficulties of access for the current research were twofold; first, gaining access to the institution to carry out the research, and second, gaining access to the young adult men themselves. Gaining access to HMPYOI Feltham involved a lengthy negotiation process with HM Prison and Probation Service (henceforth referred to as HMPPS) about the aims of the study and the benefits to the prison, as well as reassuring the prison establishment that the research would not be too disruptive to its daily regime or demands on staff resourcing. As Sloan and Wright (2015) suggest, "who you know" also often serves one better than "what you know" in attempting to gain access to research in prison. Indeed, mutual relationships with the outside agency administering the sport intervention programme (who already had an established

presence in the prison) were beneficial to negotiating initial access for the research via the Prison Governor and their communications with HMPPS and operational staff.

As other prison researchers in the literature have identified, it is important to acknowledge that even after approval is gained from HMPPS, approval from the prison itself may still be withheld, resulting in research not being permitted to take place. Additional challenges to the prison research process included required permissions to enter with a sound recording device, necessitated for collecting interview and focus group data (Sloan & Wright, 2015). Again, this is often benefitted by the aforementioned "who you know" familiarity with the organisational hierarchy to influence the decision to allow recording equipment for the purposes of the research.

Furthermore, the power and influence of gatekeepers in prison research cannot be underestimated. For example, Prison Officers and Governors played a key role in negotiating access to the young adult prisoners. The power of this gatekeeping role became evident as similar to the experiences of James (2013), the researcher found that prison officers were able to block access to certain young offenders at any time, particularly those who had been placed on 'basic' regime for poor behaviour. Thus, it was vital to build a rapport through good relationships with these gatekeepers, to protect the best interests of the aims of the study and to gain access to the young adult prisoner participants. This is also a key ethical consideration as arguably, prison staff can deny participants the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they want to participate in research, which goes against the notion of obtaining voluntary, informed consent (James, 2013). Even if this environment makes the process of informed consent more challenging, the young men should still have the information, control, and choice over what research they participate in, in addition to the right to freely enrol or withdraw.

This gatekeeping can also extend for example, to the framing of negative perceptions towards the truthfulness of the prisoner's stories, similarly experienced by James (2013) who "became annoyed with such negative comments…prison officers telling us not to believe what the young offenders told us". Like other researchers in the literature, it was deemed important to accept the young men's accounts as authentic and credible rather than undermine their voices and dismiss their views as dishonest or meaningless. This

was also key to building a trusting relationship with them that enabled the researcher to become involved in their world (James, 2013; Liebling, 1999). As identified by Bosworth et al., (2005), of the many versions told about the prison experience, not one alone will provide the absolute truth about imprisonment. The significance of prisoners' vulnerable status is also noted by Shafi (2020), "when researching vulnerable participants with little voice…who are we as researchers to claim that what they said is invalid? Ethical research is about trusting participants in what they choose to tell you, rather than judging their credibility".

3.4.3   Prisoners as research participants

Prisoners are considered a vulnerable population due to constraints upon their liberty and autonomy and the coercive nature of the prison environment (Charles et al., 2016). Young offenders specifically are considered 'doubly vulnerable' due to both their age and their possession of status as 'offender' which makes them more susceptible to marginalisation (Shafi, 2020). It is therefore important to ensure that prison research does not further violate their sense of agency by respecting their privacy and position as autonomous human beings who may not want to be researched, questioned or reported on (Sloan & Wright, 2015). In addition, it is crucial that time and effort is taken to build trust and develop rapport with these young men, however this is challenging in the custodial setting which restricts opportunities for spontaneous interactions and thus requires any rapport building to be done within these constraints (Cowie et al., 2007; Shafi, 2020). As Schlosser (2008) identifies, "interviewing in prison presents a unique set of obstacles and methodological landmines." Indeed, the very nature of it can pose challenges, for example, because the young men have been repeatedly interviewed by police, the idea of a research interview may appear as somewhat threatening or hostile, with participants suspicious of the researchers' intent (Cowie et al., 2007). This can be amplified by the use of a recording device, reminiscent of the recording of a police interview and the thought of engaging with researchers, which is not something young adult prisoners are accustomed to (Holt & Pamment, 2011; Sloan & Wright, 2015). Like Shafi (2020), efforts were therefore made in the current research to clearly define the research interview as unthreatening, instead referring to it as "an informal chat".

It was also important to create space to explain and familiarise the role of the researcher and the purposes of the study. Providing prisoners with the opportunity to talk freely, express doubts or suspicions and ask any questions they may have regarding the research gave them a sense of autonomy that they do not usually get in the prison setting (James, 2013). In this way, prisoner participants were considered as "active social agents" in the research and empowered to express their views about taking part before they were required to consent to the research (Heath et al., 2007; James, 2013).

Additionally, when conducting interviews with prisoner participants, it is crucial to consider the active role the researcher has in constructing the narrative and employ reflexivity. Institutional influences may also have an effect on prisoners' willingness to participate and the safety they feel in recounting personal experiences (Schlosser, 2008). Thus, treating prisoners with respect and patience and being aware of the environment and responsibility one has as a researcher to consider their reflexivity. It is also important to acknowledge that as a researcher coming into the prison establishment, one is an outsider and it is not possible to ever fully grasp the experience of "being a prisoner" no matter how skilled in ethnographic technique (Drake & Harvey, 2014). Research exploring whether prisoners feel coerced to take part in research has found relatively little evidence of significant coercive influences on voluntary decisions to take part in research (Edens et al., 2011), with prisoner participants reporting they did not experience harm from the research or feel coerced to take part (Copes et al., 2013). In fact, prisoners have been found to have extremely limited access to research participation and despite them remaining a vulnerable research population, excluding them from research might not be the answer (Charles et al., 2016) when they can share their experiences most authentically (Drake & Harvey, 2014). Indeed, ignoring the perspectives and experiences of young adult offenders when conducting such research due to concerns regarding their autonomy may actually increase their vulnerability (James, 2013), by missing out on data that is important in understanding the effectiveness of prison interventions, such as the rugby programme in the present research. Giving young adult prisoners the opportunity to share their own circumstances also avoids the pitfalls of only listening to others (on a more privileged side of the power dynamic, such as prison officers or programme stakeholders), speaking on their behalf. However, as has been correctly noted in previous literature, many studies that seek to amplify the voices of prisoners are produced by single authors (much like the

present research), meaning they usually offer a single interpretation of the prison experience and this interpretation belongs to the researcher not the prisoners (Bosworth et al., 2005).

3.5 Reflexivity

It is thus also important to acknowledge that the rigor of qualitative research is improved if the researcher's positioning in relation to those being researched is explicitly considered (Doyle, 2013) as they are unavoidably present within and throughout the research process (Holloway & Biley, 2011). In their review of studies utilising a qualitative approach in prison research, Abbott et al., (2018) found that the majority did not include significant detail about researchers or interviewers. Thus, it is important to identify the researcher as a White, British female who for the duration of the research was in her late twenties and consider the implications this may have had on the course of the research. Finding a place within a strange culture can be especially tricky for female ethnographers because not only do they have to conform to assumptions about women being unchallenging and compliant but also must be seen to be operating successfully in a male-dominated public sphere (Hunt, 1989). Jewkes (2012) for example, identifies those women conducting fieldwork in men's prisons are more likely to recognise feelings of anxiety and vulnerability because they are more likely to be directly and personally encountered in an almost exclusively male environment. Indeed, these feelings tend to be left out of many accounts of prison research, that spending time in prison as a student researcher can be intimidating at times (Sloan & Wright, 2015). Prisons by their nature and design are places intended to deter, therefore it would be naïve to believe that a novice researcher would immediately feel at ease. In this sense, the experience of the present researcher may have had parallels with those of the prisoners, particularly those who were serving their first custodial sentence in the establishment, and this may have benefitted her connection with them. This was reflected in a conversation with a prisoner about his first experience of prison, that resonated with the researcher: "When I first arrived…got to my cell. [I] was so on edge…ready to stand up for myself…think I had my fists clenched for the entire first 24 hours" (Field Notes - 20 November, 2018). As Jewkes (2012) suggests, prisons can be life-affirming environments in which to do qualitative

research and emotional identification with prisoners and prison staff, like all research participants, is often a positive and powerful stimulus in the formation of knowledge.

Making these meaningful connections with prisoners during the research process has benefits for both prisoner and researcher, and there is a sparsity of literature exploring this in depth. There is potential for furthering knowledge and understanding of these people and contexts in recognising that subjective experience and emotional responsiveness has a role to play (Jewkes, 2012). For example, there was a commonality between the experiences of the researcher in the current thesis and experiences recounted in the existing literature. Empathy was developed for experiences recounted by research participants, resulting in a closeness with them that at times made it difficult to maintain a sense of distance and detachment (James, 2013). While this arguably has an impact on the interpretations and representations of the data gathered from the young men, true objectivity is not only an impractical goal in prison ethnography but may actually be undesirable if to achieve detachment, an opportunity to understand important issues is lost (Jewkes, 2012). Indeed, a small amount of literature identifies the limitations that would result from failing to explore emotions experienced from both sides of the process. Bosworth et al., (2005) note that failure to explore the emotions (such as anger, frustration, and fear) harboured by prisoners towards their imprisonment undermines an ability to effectively critique the prison system. Equally, the removal of emotion and humanity presented by the researcher (e.g. empathy) during the research process may be "a missed opportunity to enrich the analysis" (Jewkes, 2012).

Similar to other prison research team's experiences, the researcher had feelings of guilt and unease about leaving the YOI and not knowing what would happen next in the lives of the young men after her departure (James, 2013). Indeed, the privilege the researcher had on being able to freely leave the prison setting and go home after each visit is something that also fed into the power imbalance between researcher and participant. These complicated emotions must be considered as part of the research design in such 'impact research' that involves venturing inside the prison walls for a time that is very much temporary, and ultimately leaving it (and those who have participated in the research) behind. This is especially true when there are expectations placed upon the

researcher by the young people who have participated in the research and built trust with them (Shafi, 2020). Much like the present researcher's role as an external evaluator, she found herself to be limited in the extent to which she was able to extend opportunities to the young men, given the secure nature of the setting and the limits of her role there. This indicates that the ethics involved in prison research are not just about conducting the research itself, but also what happens afterwards. Thereby extending the responsibilities of the researcher who does not often have the power to do anything beyond the research. One must also acknowledge the discomfort at having benefitted from the research encounter in terms of the data collected in a way that participants did not. This is an imbalance of power between researcher and participants (Kvale, 2006) that takes place in most research interviews, regardless of the setting, as after completion, the power returns to the researcher who interprets, analyses, and disseminates the data. However, this is highlighted further in the secure prison setting where power is more overt in its presence. A lack of attempt to balance this power dynamic puts the credibility of data collected in question, suggesting participants' powerless status may make them more likely to give the researcher what they want to hear, or refrain from genuinely engaging at all (Shafi, 2020).

Similar to the strategies of James (2013), the researcher introduced herself as an independent researcher and evaluator of the programme, separate from prison authorities and interested in finding out about participants' lives. Taking the role of "semi-participant observer" (Swain, 2006) during the programme was beneficial for reducing the distance that fed into this power imbalance and provided a means by which the young men could familiarise themselves with her presence. This included participating in icebreakers and warm-up games at the start of each session, as well as some group work in addition to taking time away from the group to take field notes and make observations which provided further insight into interactions between programme participants. It was also important to establish boundaries of the relationship between the researcher and the research participants, for example by making it clear how many days a week she would be present for, and the length of the study, to eliminate any false expectations of her long-term presence. While as established, the self-reflection of the present researcher's own feelings while conducting the research was important, her significantly different personal history and social location also facilitated some of these

boundaries and enabled her to retain a level of objectivity when reacting to participant responses (James, 2013).

In line with the view that "prisons are… commonly difficult places to work" (Liebling, 1999), it is important to address these social, physical and emotional challenges associated with prison research. However, without researchers having a presence in such establishments, there is a lost opportunity for the understanding and sharing of the experiences of these young men. This is what makes these reflections of the research process all the more valuable as they provide a sense of authenticity and transparency, as well as ethnographic knowledge of what can challenge the institutional regimes of YOI's (James, 2013). Indeed, taking a more honest and reflexive approach to qualitative prison research may also provide a benchmark for others trying to process their experiences and feelings about the research they undertake (Jewkes, 2012). While each research experience is individual, the accounts of others can increase methodological and ethical understanding of doing research with under-researched groups in challenging contexts (Shafi, 2020). This insight has the potential to allow researchers and academics to work as a bridge between the prison and the policy and structures informing it (Bosworth et al., 2005). For example, prisoners who have been removed from the public world through imprisonment can make meaningful connections through sharing their experiences. Through these exchanges, researchers can become advocates for prisoners, with the power to amplify their voices which might otherwise not be heard.

3.6   Summary of the chapter

The methodology chapter aimed to outline the research approach, analyses and ethical considerations undertaken in the current thesis. It also drew upon the reflexivity engaged in by the researcher, which is crucial in research work with vulnerable participants. This is of particular importance in prison settings, which by nature are closed off from the outside world, putting the researcher at a power advantage in the dynamic between interviewer and interviewee (Schlosser, 2008). There is power in engaging in a reflexive process about the role one's social position plays during data collection and analysis, as well as the documenting of feelings and thoughts regarding

these issues. Additionally, extending this process to the emotional experiences of those who are being researched creates opportunities to empower and amplify prisoner voices. For example, feelings arise as a result of opening up to a stranger (Bosworth et al., 2005) and documenting these allows the sharing of their experiences with authenticity and validity.

In the chapter that follows, an evaluation of the effectiveness of rugby training as a rehabilitation intervention in a YOI is reported. It utilised a mixed-methods approach to assess whether there were reductions in attitudes endorsing criminality as a result of participating in the rugby intervention as well as interviews and focus groups to gain insight into prisoner experiences and views of sport as a rehabilitation tool.

Chapter 4: Study 1 – A mixed-method study of male young adult offenders' experiences of the "Get Onside" Rugby intervention

4.1 Introduction

The review of the literature in Chapter 2 has generally acknowledged the challenges faced specifically by young adult male offenders in the UK and the potential for sport in providing a valuable and unique opportunity to engage with these young people caught up in a cycle of offending and imprisonment Lewis and Meek (2012). It has suggested that important components of a successful intervention programme include the provision of a positive and genuine role model (Nichols & Crow, 2004) and the potential for exertion of tension and aggression facilitated by high-discipline, full-contact sport (Draper et al., 2013; Harwood et al., 2017) such as rugby. Furthermore, the provision of social links and pathways to employment or education after release from prison can give those trying to desist the opportunity to have their identity as "ex-offender" affirmed by a wider audience (Nugent & Schinkel, 2016) and improve the odds of sustained desistance (McNeill, 2006).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, there is a small number of longitudinal studies evaluating sport-based interventions in the UK youth prison estate. In terms of measuring such intervention programmes, those based on sport are identified to need ongoing, built in processes for monitoring and evaluating their impact on levels of crime among young people (Smith & Waddington, 2004) in addition to an empirical approach to understand efficacy in preventing reoffending (Andrews & Andrews, 2003). While cost-benefit analyses have found that the largest and most consistent economic returns are found for those programmes designed for juvenile offenders (Aos et al., 2001), the crime reduction benefits of some of these prevention programmes may take many years to be realised. For example, benefits of reduced crime in young people may only be realised when they become adults. As a result, researchers have recommended that more objective measurements such as reconviction rates should be examined for at least two years post-release (Jenkins & Ellis, 2011; Nichols, 1997), in addition to longitudinal research combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to assess how far these

findings are sustained in the long term (Bilby et al., 2013). Another recommendation from the existing literature is that research should replicate studies on a larger scale with a control group to examine the impact on shorter-term and longer-term prisoners and effects on recidivism (Battaglia et al., 2015). It is impossible to ignore the issue of studies solely using reconviction data as an outcome measure (Farrington, 1997). For example, only 3% of crimes result in conviction (Wilkinson, 1994), therefore this cannot be relied upon alone to give an accurate picture of an individual's reoffending behaviour. Qualitative data is needed to supplement reconviction data (Nichols & Crow, 2004) and gain insight into young offenders' perceptions of their offending behaviour, rehabilitation and the use of a sport intervention as a tool for preventing reoffending (Wagner et al., 1999). The use of a mixed methods approach in the present study will enable further exploration of the views and attitudes of participants and non-participants of the intervention programme and to expand upon quantitative responses regarding attitudes endorsing criminality.

4.1.1   The rugby intervention

The Saracens Sport Foundation 'Get Onside' intervention is an 8-week intensive rugby programme based in HMPYOI Feltham in West London, for young adult male offenders aged 18-21 years. The intervention programme takes place twice a year, once in the summer (May-June) and once in the winter (October-November). It aims to foster inclusion and address issues based on personal development by providing a framework for pro-social values through the sport of rugby. These values are drawn from the four core values of the London based, Rugby Union Club Saracens RFC: "Honesty", "Discipline", "Work Rate" and "Humility." The intervention offers its participants the opportunity to develop positive attitudes and perceptions of themselves and others, as well as team and individual values, and provides resettlement opportunities to include voluntary work, education, and employment. It is hoped that by providing young people with such opportunities, these individuals will desist from crime in the future. The accredited programme delivery (a total of 176 hours) includes functional Numeracy levels 1 and 2. Rugby sessions (72 hours) provide individuals with an opportunity to coach, teach and officiate, including organising and running a Touch Rugby Tournament event for external visitors. These include staff from Saracens RFC, Saracens Sport Foundation and club sponsors, Allianz and CME Group who play in the

tournament alongside programme participants. The intervention programme also includes training and goal setting in physical fitness and conditioning (32 hours) and social inclusion workshops (72 hours), which involve topics such as resilience, life skills and organisation, victim awareness, conflict management, team values and CV writing. Participants engage in group discussion, small group work and practical exercises such as for example, creating a short oral presentation of "my life in five years". Mentoring and career advice are also offered. A key element of the programme is a workbook which participants keep, consisting of a diary where progress can be recorded, exercises completed, and activities scheduled. A combination of prison service Physical Education Instructors (PEI's), Saracens Sports Foundation Coaches and a prison service Functional Skills Instructor deliver the programme. Archival data has indicated intervention success (a reconviction rate of 15%, supplied by HMPYOI Feltham Resettlement Team).

4.2   Aims of Study 1

In general, past research (reviewed in Chapter 2) has indicated that prison-based sport programmes have the potential to develop pro-social values, improve health and wellbeing and foster social cohesion and positive relationships. Findings have demonstrated that prisoners and staff administrating such programmes perceive their participation to be positive (Meek & Lewis, 2014b). Research findings have suggested that while there are concerns about using full-contact sport such as rugby with offenders and at-risk youth, the benefits may outweigh any potential risks (see e.g. Williams et al., 2015). When measuring outcomes of similar team sport and rugby-based programmes on quantifiable measures, studies have found improvements to attitudes towards offending and aggression (Meek, 2012; Williams et al., 2015) psychological wellbeing (Woods et al., 2017) quality of life and self-esteem (Psychou et al., 2019) and impulsivity (Meek, 2012). Consequently, based on previous literature, it may be hypothesised that young adult males will self-report reduced attitudes endorsing violence, entitlement, anti-social intent, and associates as a result of taking part in a prison-based rugby intervention programme.

Research in this area has suggested that there is a need for further studies which utilise a control group within the same prison institution to more thoroughly test the effectiveness of sport interventions (see e.g. Meek, 2012). Therefore, it may also be hypothesised that young adult males who participate in the prison-based rugby programme will self-report lower scores on a measure of attitudes endorsing criminality compared to a control group of young adult males serving custodial sentences in the same prison establishment.

The aim of the present study was to assess the differences in attitudes endorsing criminality amongst young adult males before and after participating in an 8-week intensive rugby intervention. Furthermore, to compare attitudes endorsing criminality between young adult males who participated and did not participate in the rugby intervention. Additionally, the study aimed to gain insight into prisoner experiences from both intervention and control groups about rugby in prison, rehabilitation, and best ways of reducing reoffending. It was determined that this qualitative investigation would add value to the quantitative data; as although a reliable and valid attitude measure can provide information about inclinations towards predictors of criminality, it cannot report on an individuals' opinion, views, or personal history. These are valid factors that may contribute towards reoffending, and thus were considered pertinent to explore.

4.2.1 Aims

i) To assess whether there are differences in criminal attitudes of young adult males after participating in an 8-week intensive rugby intervention.

ii) To assess whether there are differences in criminal attitudes of young adult males who completed an 8-week prison-based rugby intervention compared to young adult males in the same prison who did not complete the rugby intervention.

iii) To assess views from both intervention and control groups about rugby in prison, rehabilitation, and best ways of reducing reoffending.

4.2.2 Hypotheses

i)   Young adult males that take part in the 8-week intensive rugby intervention will self-report reduced criminal attitudes at the end of the 8-week programme in comparison to the start of the programme.

ii) Young adult males that take part in the 8-week intensive rugby intervention will self-report reduced criminal attitudes compared to controls.

4.3 Method

4.3.1 Participants

Demographic data for both groups (intervention and control) are detailed in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1

Intervention group participant demographics and offence profiles

(Number of Participants)	Total
	N = 33
Age (Mean years)	19.55
Ethnicity (n)	
White	8
Black	12
Asian	1
Arab	1
Mixed White and Black	8
Other mixed background	3
Offence(s) (n)	
Violence against the person	7
Robbery	6
Burglary	1
Drug Offences	12
Arson	1
Fraud	1
Weapons	3
Other	2

Table 2

Control group participant demographics and offence profiles

(Number of Participants)	Total
	N = 21
Age (Mean years)	19.76
Ethnicity (n)	
White	4
Black	7
Asian	2
Arab	2
Mixed White and Black	4
Other mixed background	2
Offence(s) (n)	
Violence against the person	1
Robbery	3
Burglary	1
Drug Offences	11
Arson	0
Fraud	0
Weapons	4
Other	1

Participants for Study 1 were recruited from HMPYOI Feltham. Participants of the intervention group were recruited from the rugby intervention programme they were participating in. Participants of the control group were recruited verbally from their Unit of the prison. The inclusion criteria were young adult male (between the ages of 18-21 years old) prisoners currently serving sentences at HMPYOI Feltham. Exclusion criteria excluded 'lifers' (those serving long-term sentences which would result in them being transferred to adult prison and not released for an extended period).

Purposive sampling was implemented with the objective of producing a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population (i.e., the young adult area of the youth prison estate). The control group was non-randomised, and participants who were not participating in the intervention programme were selected. One participant had completed the intervention programme in the past and two participants had begun the intervention programme but not completed it. It was not a requirement that control participants participated in no other activities during their time in prison, as the intent was that they would be realistic comparisons of whatever was occurring naturally in the prison environment, against the participants of the intervention. A PEI Officer based at the Prison Gym assisted the researcher in identifying and approaching participants through word of mouth who had not completed the intervention programme to take part in data collection. Initially, the aim was to match participants in both control and intervention groups on characteristics such as age, ethnicity, index offence (the main offence they were sentenced for) and sentence length. However, due to practical constraints (e.g., limited access to individual matched participants), this was not possible. As a result, comparisons were carried out overall between the intervention and control group rather than matched pairs of participants.

4.3.2 Design

The study implemented a quasi-experimental design, with the following independent and dependent variables:

Quantitative

The independent variables were experimental group (intervention x control) and time (pre x post) for the intervention group, as they completed the quantitative measure prior to starting the rugby intervention (Pre) and following completion 8 weeks later, (Post) to assess changes in attitudes from commencing to completing the programme.

The dependent variable was the score on the Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates questionnaire (MCAA), with a higher score indicating endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence, attitudes focusing on a right to take whatever one wants

(entitlement), anti-social intent and attitudes that are favourable to having anti-social friends (associates).

Qualitative

In addition to quantitative methods, qualitative methods of interview and focus group were used to further illustrate participant views and attitudes towards offending, in addition to their opinions on rehabilitation, reoffending, sport in prison and their experience completing the rugby programme. A semi-structured schedule was used for interviews and focus group (see Appendix B), and all were recorded using a digital voice recorder and data was transcribed and analysed later.

Semi-structured interview

For the qualitative part of the study, a semi-structured interview schedule was used which consisted of 15 questions (see Appendix B for full interview schedule). The schedule consisted of general questions relating to the respondent's time spent in the YOI, including questions regarding sport and course participation, self-perception, and attitudes towards offending, reoffending, and release. For example, these questions included "Have you taken part in any courses during your time in prison?" and "How do you feel about your previous offending". Probes such as "What are the changes you have noticed in yourself?" and "Why is it the best course you've done?" were used if the interviewer felt that the participant could expand on the answers given in order to gain responses richer in detail. Interviews were voice recorded using a digital voice recorder so that responses could be transcribed and analysed later.

Focus group

In addition, for the intervention group, a focus group schedule was used which consisted of 6 discussion areas and 15 questions in total (see Appendix B).

4.3.3 Materials

Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates

The Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA) Part B (Mills et al., 2002) was used in the current study (see Appendix A for full measure). The MCAA was selected for its ability to measure self-reported criminal attitudes and attitudes endorsing criminal associates, which are considered among the most significant predictors of future reoffending (Gendreau et al., 1996; Mills et al., 2004). The MCAA has been previously used effectively in prisoner populations and is a two-part self-report measure of criminal attitudes and associates. Part A is a quantified measure of friends they spent the most time with and a rating of their level of criminal involvement, and Part B consists of a 46-item measure of attitudes that is composed of four scales: Violence (12 items), Entitlement (12 items), Antisocial Intent (12 items) and Associates (10 items). Sample statements include "It's understandable to hit someone who insults you" (Violence); "a person is right to take what is owed them, even if they have to steal it" (Entitlement); "I could easily tell a convincing lie" (Anti-social intent); "I have friends who have been to jail" (Associates).

The MCAA has been piloted, used and validated with incarcerated adult offenders and has shown predictive validity for the outcomes of general and violent recidivism (Mills et al., 2004). The measure has also been tested with a range of youth populations. It has been utilised in assessing attitudes towards violence in a YOI in Germany (Klatt et al., 2016), and the subscales of Violence, Entitlement and Associates have been found to be significantly associated with gang affiliation for youth offenders in Singapore (Chu et al., 2014). Moreover it has been demonstrated to be a valid measure for testing criminal attitudes and associates among adolescent offenders in Canada (O'Hagan, 2015) and a suitable and reliable instrument for the identification of high school age youth at risk of future offending behaviour in South Africa (Prinsloo, 2016). Previous research utilising the measure has also shown validity for evidence of change over the course of treatment (Bäckström & Björklund, 2008; Howard & van Doorn, 2018; Kroner & Yessine, 2013). Its temporal stability has suggested it would be an appropriate pre-post-test measure for

interventions addressing anti-social or criminally supportive attitudes. As such, the measure is considered suitable as a means to evaluate offender treatment which aims to facilitate change by addressing these attitudes (Howard & van Doorn, 2018), like the prison-based rugby intervention in this research.

For the purpose of the study, only Part B of the scale was used as it reflected criminal thinking style and current attitudes towards crime and criminal behaviour. In contrast, Part A investigated retrospective questions intending to quantify criminal friends when last in the community and was deemed to have limited application for the purposes of this study. This is because these responses may not be amenable to change in the period of participating in this sport intervention in the custodial setting (see e.g. Howard & van Doorn, 2018). The literature has demonstrated that measures derived from Part B of the MCAA have significant associations with reoffending behaviour (Mills et al., 2004). The use of the tool had the purpose of assessing attitudes in four key areas: attitudes towards violence, sentiments of entitlement, antisocial intent, and attitudes towards associates. Participants responded to statements with a dichotomous choice of "agree" or "disagree". Each approval on an antisocial item (or rejection on a pro-social one) accrued 1 point, whereas each rejection on an antisocial item (or acceptance on a pro-social one) accrued 0 points. Scores were summed for each subscale, with higher scores reflecting higher criminal attitudes. For the Violence scale, a high score indicates an endorsement of attitudes supportive of violence; high scores on the Entitlement scale indicate attitudes endorsing the right to take whatever they want; high scores on the Antisocial intent scale indicate attitudes endorsing potential antisocial actions that the respondent believes he could commit in the future; high scores on the Associates scale indicate attitudes favourable to having antisocial friends and associations with others who are involved in criminal activities.

In examining attitudes endorsing criminality, researchers evaluating the MCAA tool for use in prisons (Kroner & Mills, 2001) recommended that future research should cross-validate it with other offender populations including juveniles, in addition to assessing its ability to measure pre and post intervention (Mills et al., 2004) and make sure to incorporate follow-up (Hallingberg et al., 2015). The present research addressed this recommendation by using the measure with young adult male offenders at pre- and

post-intervention time intervals to assess the intervention and additionally seek to cross-validate the measure with this offender population.

Schedule for semi-structured interviews and focus groups

A schedule was used for semi-structured interviews and focus groups carried out in the study. These included questions and prompts such as "Have you taken part in any courses during your time in prison?" and "How do you feel about your previous offending" (see Appendix B for full schedule).

4.3.4 Procedure

The researcher's working relationship with Saracens Sports Foundation enabled her initial access as a visitor to the prison site where the data was collected. The researcher began by visiting the prison when a prior cycle of the intervention was running, to observe its content and how it was operationalised, and to make first contact with both the Prison Governor and the Physical Education Instructors, who run the sports programmes, gym sessions and function as officers. Following discussion with the Prison Governor regarding the purpose of the research, the proposed schedule of data collection, and the implications for resource (i.e., how many and how often would officers be needed to escort the researcher) approval from the Governor for the researcher's access was granted and a permission letter was signed (see Appendix D). Additionally, ethical permission was granted by Middlesex University Psychology Ethics Board (see Appendix E). The HMPPS National Research Committee were contacted and an application for the study was submitted. Single-site permission for the research to take place was then granted in May 2018 (Ref: 2017-352, see Appendix E).

Quantitative and qualitative data collection began in May 2018 and took place over a two-year period, assessed over the course of each of the four 'cycles' of the 8-week intervention that took place over that period. This is because the rugby intervention programme takes place twice a year, once in the summer (May-June) and once in the

winter (October-November). As a result, there were four 'cycles' or cohorts of participants who took part in the present study.

The researcher began by introducing herself to the participants at the start of the intervention programme, explaining her role as external researcher and evaluator of the Saracens Get Onside programme, informing them about the aims of the research, and what the research process would entail. It was made clear that the research process was separate from the project delivery, independent from the Prison or Probation Services and that participation was entirely voluntary. Information sheets including contact details of the researcher in case of questions or complaints, and an explanation of how to withdraw from the study were given to all participants. In verbal and written instructions, participants were reassured of anonymity, with the exception of instances where information relating to a breach in prison security or plans to harm themselves or others was revealed in the course of the research (in which case, the researcher would be obliged to inform prison staff). All programme participants agreed to take part in the research and returned a completed consent form.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were completed by all participants of the intervention programme at Pre and Post interval. Pre-interval questionnaires were administered at the start of the first session of the 8-week programme, after the researcher introduced herself and presented them with information sheets and consent forms, it was the first activity completed by participants. They completed their questionnaires in the classroom setting of the intervention programme (located in the Education block of the prison establishment) and were instructed to complete them individually, without discussing or looking at one anothers' responses. Post-interval questionnaires were administered in the final session of the 8-week programme, again in the classroom setting.

Questionnaires were completed by all participants of the control group at one interval due to their non-participation in the intervention programme. After the researcher introduced herself and the research and presented them with information sheets and

consent forms, they completed their questionnaire individually, either on their residential unit of the prison or in the prison gym and handed it back to the researcher or a PEI.

Semi-structured interviews

The interviews with both intervention and control groups took place over the course of the 8-week programme. Due to the need for access to a private office room for the interview, only a maximum of two interviews could be completed in any one session. This office room was located next to the classroom venue of the intervention programme and is where all interviews with participants from the intervention group took place. Interviews with control participants took place in either a private visiting room on the wing, or a private office connected to the prison gym. Although an Officer was required to be positioned nearby the door in the corridor, the participant and researcher had privacy for the interview and the door was closed. The first part of the interaction involved informal conversation to put the participant at ease, familiarising the participant again with the aims of the research, what would be discussed in the interview, and an emphasis on the informal and semi-structured nature of the process to follow. Putting the participant at ease was particularly important for the control group, as these individuals were less familiar with the researcher than participants of the intervention group. The importance of establishing informality and friendliness was an integral part of the interview process as it replicated the friendly manner experienced by the intervention group when interacting with the researcher. All participants were reassured that although the interview would be recorded and transcribed, once this was completed, the recording would be destroyed and their participation would be completely anonymous, with nothing to identify them except a code. Each participant was given an information sheet that outlined the purpose of the study, stated how long the interview would take and provided the interviewer's contact details (see Appendix C). They were then asked to complete a consent form. Participants were assured they could take as much time as required to answer the questions, and that if they felt uncomfortable answering any of the questions, then they could ask the interviewer to move onto the next question. The researcher then activated the voice-recording device and placed it in view of the participant. The interview schedule was semi-structured and

included 15 guide questions (see Appendix B). The schedule consisted of general questions relating to the respondent's time spent in the YOI, including questions regarding sport and course participation, self-perception, and attitudes towards offending, reoffending, and release. Examples include "Have you taken part in any courses during your time in prison?" and "how do you feel about your previous offending?" Probes were used if the interviewer felt that the participant could expand on the answers given to gain responses richer in detail, or if it was apparent the participant had more to say in relation to certain topic. The questions included in the semi-structured interview schedule were designed to be applicable to both groups (with slight modification i.e. "What have you heard about the rugby programme?" rather than "How did you hear about the rugby programme?" The interviews lasted for between 20 and 50 minutes and the voice recorder was stopped after the participant had finished responding to the last question. Following the interviews, participants were debriefed (see Appendix C) and assured that their participation was completely voluntary, therefore any part or all of their responses could be excluded from data analysis if they wished. Finally, participants were asked if they had any questions for the researcher and were thanked for taking part.

Focus groups

Focus groups with the intervention group were carried out during the final week of the programme in June 2018 and December 2018. They took place in the classroom location of the intervention programme, with the participants sitting at their desks. The focus group with the control group was carried out in May 2019 and took place in a quiet area of an uninhabited unit of the prison. The discussions took place over 35-50 minutes and were recorded with the permission of the participants. Following the focus group discussion, the content of the conversation was transcribed. Care was taken by the researcher to assure participants that their input would not be identifiable in any way in any subsequent report, and that the recording would be destroyed after the report was written. The researcher began the focus group by stating some ground rules, including that participants should respect each other's opinion, that it was a safe space where participants should feel able to share therefore any information discussed should not be repeated anywhere else in the prison, and that they should listen when others were

speaking and refrain from speaking over one another. The researcher then switched the voice recording device on, and the focus group began. It followed a semi-structure similar to the one-to-one interviews, consisting of 6 discussion areas and 15 guide questions in total (see Appendix B for schedule for both groups). For the intervention group, discussion was prompted on participants' experience of the programme (positive and negative), physical activity in prison, opinions on the course, rehabilitation, reoffending and plans for release. The final discussion point encouraged participants to put forward an ideal design for a prison intervention programme - participants were asked what features they thought would be most beneficial for rehabilitation, what format of intervention would be most likely to prevent reoffending, what structure and/or qualifications/training would be most helpful and what schedule of sessions would work best. For the control group, discussion was prompted on participants' experience of activities and programme provision in the prison, what they had heard about the rugby intervention and whether they would participate (if not, why not), plans for release, views on rehabilitation and reoffending and the use of sport in prison. As in the intervention group, participants of the control group were also encouraged to put forward an ideal design for a prison intervention programme that they would deem most engaging and beneficial.

Observations/Field notes

Throughout the duration of the course, the researcher maintained a presence in the prison, attending 2-3 days per week over the 8-week period. As well as gaining a rapport with the participants of the study in both the intervention and control groups, this also enabled the researcher to observe classroom sessions, talks from visiting speakers and mentors as part of the intervention programme, and gym and field rugby training sessions. During this time, field notes were taken on the structure of the programme, progress observed on the pitch and in the gym, and content of the sessions and the participants' interaction with each other, activities, staff, and coaches. Additionally, notes were made of a reflexive nature, as a means of informing the later data interpretation and analysis and to also encourage a reflexive appraisal of oneself. That is, as a way of "debriefing" or "emotionally purging" (Sloan & Wright, 2015), to

reflect on challenges and feelings encountered in the prison research setting and the varying social and emotional interactions that had taken place.

4.4 Summary of results

4.4.1 Quantitative

Responses from a total of 54 participants (33 intervention group and 21 control group) were input into SPSS and subjected to analysis. Note: the higher the rating on the MCAA, the stronger the expressions towards the intended (Violence, Entitlement, Anti-social intent, and Associates) measure. To enable a comparison of the pre and post scores of participants of the intervention, participants were required to fully complete the MCAA measure at both intervals. However, due to programme drop-out and absence on the day it was administered, this was not always possible. As such, detailed in Table 3 is data regarding programme drop-out and questionnaire completion. Programme drop-out was consistently due to one of two reasons: an unexpected early release or transfer from the prison, or a negative behavioural incident that resulted in the individual's removal from any educational or job programme.

Table 3

Totals of intervention programme and MCAA participation and completion by cycle of intervention

Cycle (Cohort of intervention)	Number of participants at pre interval	Number of participants at post interval	Number of participants completing MCAA at both intervals
Cycle 1	13	11	8
Cycle 2	16	13	8
Cycle 3	19	16	9
Cycle 4	16	13	8

Comparison of Pre and Post scores

Table 4

Means and standard deviations for intervention group at pre- and post-intervals

	Intervention group (n= 33) Pre score	Intervention group (n= 33) Post score
MCAA total	31.52 (7.05)	29.94 (7.34)
Violence	7.09 (3.11)	6.36 (3.27)
Entitlement	7.24 (2.56)	6.88 (2.78)
Antisocial Intent	8.82 (2.58)	8.36 (2.49)
Associates	8.36 (1.45)	8.33 (1.61)

Table 4 demonstrates a difference in scores for participants of the rugby intervention at Pre and Post intervals, with the total score on the MCAA lower at Post interval than at Pre interval. There were reductions on scores for all four subscales however for the subscale of Associates, this was a small reduction only.

Table 5

Comparisons of MCAA scores of intervention group at pre- and post-intervals

	Paired samples t-test
MCAA total	$t(32) = 1.58, p = .13$
Violence	$t(32) = 1.9, p = .07$
Entitlement	$t(32) = .83, p = .41$
Antisocial Intent	$t(32) = 1.08, p = .29$
Associates	$t(32) = .14, p = .89$

To test the first hypothesis that young adult males that take part in the 8-week rugby intervention will exhibit reduced criminal attitudes at the end of the 8-week programme in comparison to the start of the programme, a paired samples t-test was conducted on the responses of 33 intervention group participants (see table 5). No statistically significant differences were found between Pre and Post intervals on total MCAA score, ($p = .13$) or on the subscales measuring criminal attitudes towards Entitlement ($p = .41$), Anti-social Intent ($p = .29$) or Associates ($p = .89$). Scores indicating criminal attitudes towards Violence neared significance in their reduction from baseline to post-programme level $(p = .07)$.

Comparison of Intervention and Control group scores

Table 6

Means and standard deviations for intervention group and control group MCAA scores at baseline level

	Intervention group Pre (n= 33)	Control group (n= 21)
MCAA total	31.52 (7.05)	31.29 (7.7)
Violence	7.09 (3.11)	7.90 (3.32)
Entitlement	7.24 (2.56)	8.38 (2.52)
Antisocial Intent	8.82 (2.58)	7.57 (3.12)
Associates	8.36 (1.45)	7.43 (1.33)

Table 6 illustrates a comparison of scores at baseline (pre) level, between the participants of the intervention group and the control group. As can be seen, there was a small difference in total mean score between groups on the MCAA, with participants of the control group reporting lower scores than the intervention group at baseline level. The control group also reported lower mean scores on the subscales of Antisocial intent and Associates compared to the intervention group at baseline but higher mean scores on the subscales of Violence and Entitlement.

Table 7

Comparisons of MCAA scores of intervention group and control group at baseline level

	Independent samples t-test
MCAA total	$t(52) = .11, p = .91$
Violence	$t(52) = .91, p = .37$
Entitlement	$t(52) = 1.6, p = .12$
Antisocial Intent	$t(52) = 1.59, p = .12$
Associates	$t(52) = 2.38, p = .02$

An independent groups t-test was carried out to test if there were any statistically significant differences between the two groups at baseline (as can be seen in Table 7), there were no significant differences between the Intervention group and the Control group's total scores on the MCAA ($p = .91$), or their scores on the subscale of criminal attitudes towards Violence ($p = .37$), Entitlement ($p = .12$) or Anti-Social Intent ($p = .12$). However, there was a statistically significant difference on the subscale of attitudes towards Associates, with the Intervention group reporting significantly higher scores than the Control group at baseline ($p < .05$).

Table 8

Means and standard deviations for intervention group and control group MCAA scores at post-programme level

	Intervention group Post (n= 33)	Control group (n= 21)
MCAA total	29.94 (7.34)	31.29 (7.7)
Violence	6.36 (3.27)	7.9 (3.32)
Entitlement	6.88 (2.78)	8.38 (2.52)
Antisocial Intent	8.36 (2.49)	7.57 (3.12)
Associates	8.33 (1.61)	7.43 (1.33)

As can be seen in table 8, there is a difference in scores between participants of the rugby intervention after completing the programme and participants of the control group. Participants who had completed the intervention had a lower mean total score on the MCAA compared to those who did not, in addition to lower mean scores on subscales measuring criminal attitudes towards Violence and Entitlement. However, participants who had completed the intervention had a higher mean score on subscales measuring attitudes towards Antisocial Intent and Associates.

Table 9

Comparisons of MCAA scores of intervention group and control group at post-programme level

	Independent samples t-test
MCAA total	$t(52) = .65, p = .52$
Violence	$t(52) = 1.68, p = .10$
Entitlement	$t(52) = 2.01, p = .05$
Antisocial Intent	$t(52) = 1.03, p = .31$
Associates	$t(52) = 2.15, p = .04$

To test the second hypothesis that young adult males that take part in the 8-week rugby intervention will report reduced criminal attitudes towards Violence, Entitlement, Anti-Social intent, and Associates compared to controls, a series of independent groups t-tests were conducted on the responses of the 33 intervention and 21 control group participants (see table 9).

There was no significant difference between the two groups on their total MCAA score, ($p = .52$) or on the subscales measuring criminal attitudes towards Violence ($p = .10$) or Anti-social Intent ($p = .31$). However, a statistically significant difference was found on the subscale measuring criminal attitudes towards Entitlement, with participants of the intervention scoring significantly lower than participants of the control group, $p = .05$. There was a statistically significant difference on the subscale measuring criminal attitudes towards Associates, with participants of the intervention group presenting with a more favourable attitude at baseline ($p < .05$), regardless of the intervention. This remained significantly higher than participants of the control group at post level, $p < .05$, with the intervention showing little effect on criminal attitudes towards Associates.

Comparison across four cycles of participants completing the intervention programme

Table 10

Mean total MCAA scores and standard deviations at pre- and post-intervention as per 4 cycles and number of participants per each cycle.

Cycle (Cohort of intervention)	Total Pre intervention	Total Post intervention	Number of participants
Cycle 1	31.25 (5.67)	33.62 (6.11)	8
Cycle 2	29.63 (7.63)	28.25 (5.11)	8
Cycle 3	37.11 (4.72)	34.33 (5.63)	9
Cycle 4	27.38 (6.84)	23.00 (6.89)	8

As can be seen in table 10, there are differences in measurements between cycles 1, 2, 3 and 4.

A 2 x 4 Factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of the four different cycles of the intervention programme on the MCAA score at Pre and Post intervention. Cycle included four levels (cycle 1-4) and Time consisted of two levels (Pre, Post). There was a statistically significant effect for cycle – the main effect for cycle yielded an F ratio of $F(3, 29) = 5.75$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .37$ indicating a significant difference between Pre (M = 31.52, SD = 7.05) and Post (M = 29.94, SD = 7.34) scores. The interaction effect between Cycle and Time however, was not significant, $F(3, 29) = 2.28$, $p = .10$)

Post hoc comparisons of the means using Tukey's LSD showed that the mean difference was statistically significant between Cycle 1 and Cycle 4 ($p = .013$) with lower scores for Cycle 4. Additionally, the mean difference was statistically significant between Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 ($p = .016$) with lower scores at Cycle 2 and the mean difference was statistically significant between Cycle 3 and Cycle 4 ($p < .001$) with lower scores at Cycle 4 (see Figure 1 for a graphical representation).

Figure 1

Pre (in blue) and Post (in red) mean scores on the MCAA across the four cycles of the rugby intervention
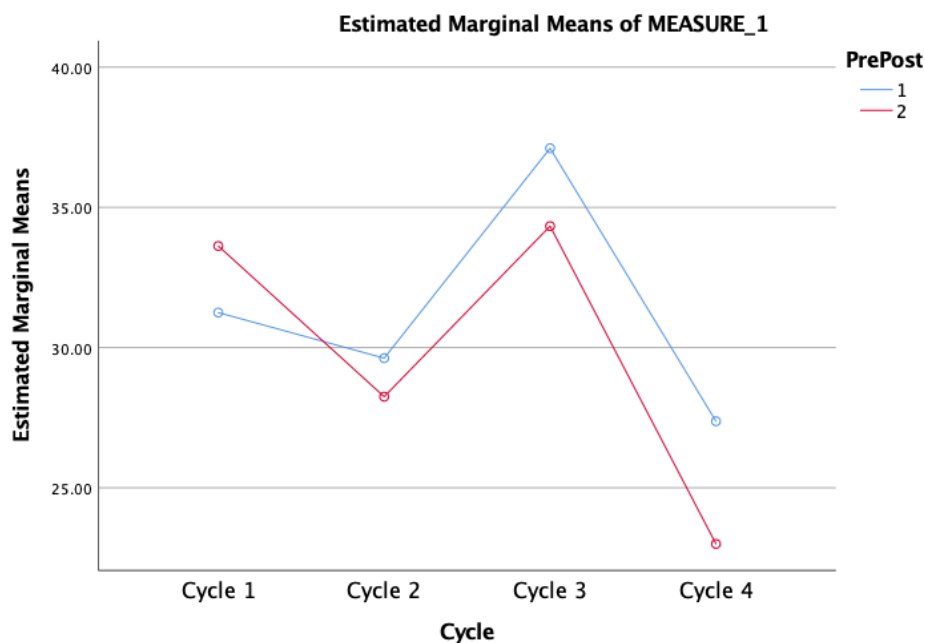
Analyses were also conducted on the effect of the four different Cycles of the intervention programme on the MCAA score for each of the individual four subscales: Violence, Entitlement, Anti-social Intent and Associates.

Violence

Table 11

Mean scores and standard deviations on Violence subscale at pre- and post-intervention as per 4 cycles and number of participants per each cycle.

Cycles (Cohort of intervention)	Total Pre intervention Violence score	Total post intervention Violence score	Number of participants
Cycle 1	7.75 (2.12)	7.63 (2.97)	8
Cycle 2	4.88 (3.56)	4.38 (2.5)	8
Cycle 3	9.56 (2.07)	9.22 (1.86)	9
Cycle 4	5.87 (2.53)	3.88 (2.42)	8

As can be seen in table 11, there are differences in measurements between Cycles 1, 2, 3 and 4.

A 2 x 4 Factorial ANOVA (time: Pre and Post, cycle: 1, 2, 3, 4) found the main effect for cycle number yielded an F ratio of $F(3, 29) = 8.48$, $p = .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .47$ indicating a significant difference between Pre (M = 7.10, SD = 3.11) and Post (M = 6.36, SD = 3.27) scores on the Violence subscale.

Post hoc comparisons of the means using Tukey's LSD showed that the mean difference was statistically significant between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 ($p = .01$), between Cycle 1 and Cycle 4 ($p = .02$), between Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 ($p < .001$) and between Cycle 3 and Cycle 4 ($p < .001$). As seen in Figure 2, no differences were found on the subscale of Violence between cycles 1 and 3 ($p = .138$), which both took place during summer or between cycles 2 and 4 ($p = .829$), which both took place during winter.

Figure 2

Pre (in blue) and Post (in red) scores for Violence across the four cycles of the rugby intervention

Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE_1
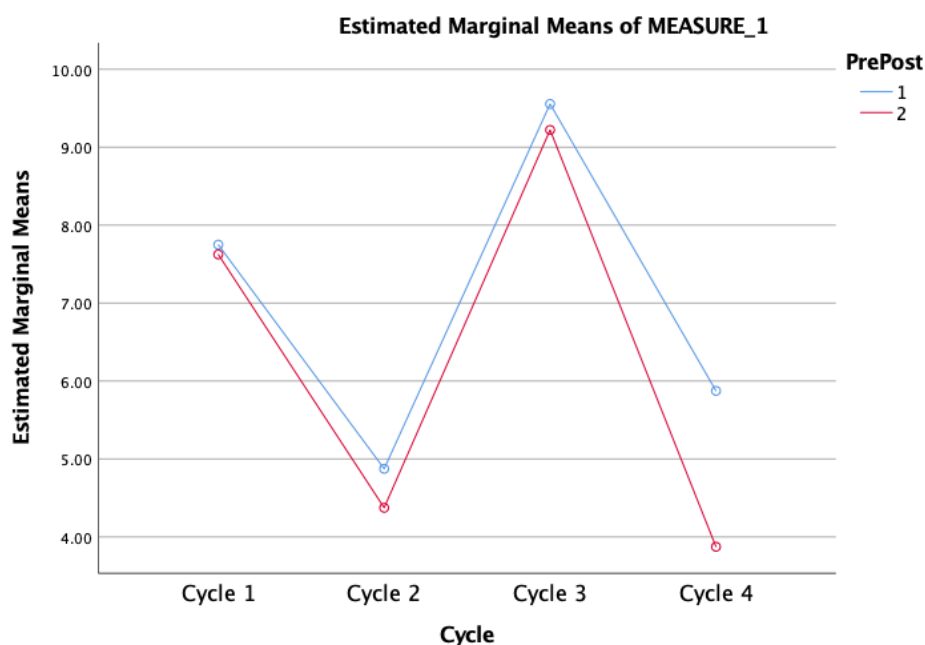
Entitlement

Table 12

Mean scores and standard deviations on Entitlement subscale at pre- and post-intervention as per 4 cycles and number of participants per each cycle.

Cycles (Cohort of intervention)	Total Pre intervention Entitlement score	Total post intervention Entitlement score	Number of participants
Cycle 1	7.38 (1.3)	8.88 (1.96)	8
Cycle 2	6.75 (2.12)	6.25 (2.66)	8
Cycle 3	9 (2.74)	7.11 (2.8)	9
Cycle 4	5.63 (2.83)	5.25 (2.71)	8

As can be seen in table 12, there are differences in measurements between Cycles 1, 2, 3 and 4.

A 2 (Time: pre and post) x 4 (Cycle: 1, 2, 3, 4) Factorial ANOVA with repeated measures on the Cycle variable found the main effect for cycle number yielded an F ratio of $F(3, 29) = 2.95$, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .23$ indicating a significant difference between Pre (M = 7.24, SD = 2.56) and Post (M = 6.88, SD = 2.78) scores on the Entitlement subscale.

Post hoc comparisons of the means using Tukey's LSD showed that the mean difference was statistically significant between Cycle 1 and Cycle 4 ($p = .02$) and between Cycle 3 and Cycle 4 ($p = .02$). As can be seen in Figure 3, no significant differences were found on the subscale of Entitlement between the two summer cycles 1 and 3 ($p = .95$) or between the two winter cycles 2 and 4 ($p = .34$).

Figure 3

Pre (in blue) and Post (in red) scores for Entitlement across the four cycles of the rugby intervention
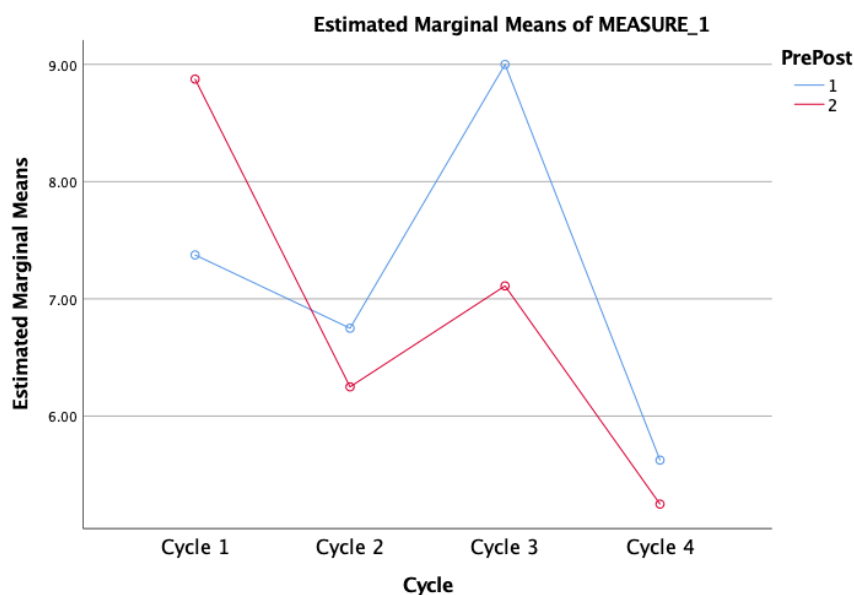
Anti-Social Intent

Table 13

Mean scores and standard deviations for Anti-social Intent subscale at pre- and post-intervention as per 4 cycles and number of participants per each cycle.

Cycles (Cohort of intervention)	Total Pre intervention Anti-social Intent score	Total Post intervention Anti-social Intent score	Number of participants
Cycle 1	8.38 (2.62)	8.88 (1.55)	8
Cycle 2	8.63 (2.5)	8.63 (1.6)	8
Cycle 3	9.89 (1.62)	9.67 (2.12)	9
Cycle 4	8.25 (3.49)	6.13 (3.14)	8

As can be seen in table 13, there are minor differences in means between Cycles 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The results of the 2 x 4 Factorial ANOVA showed that there was no significant main effect of Time $F(1, 29) = 1.32$, $p = .26$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$ on scores measuring Anti-Social Intent (See figure 4 for a graphical representation). In addition, there was also no significant main effect of Cycle on scores measuring Anti-Social Intent $F(3, 29) = 2.11$, $p = .12$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$ with participants showing similar mean score overall at Pre ($M = 8.82$, $SD = 2.58$) and Post ($M = 8.36$, $SD = 2.49$) level. The interaction between Time and Cycle overall was also non-significant for attitudes towards Anti-social Intent, $F(3, 29) = 1.99$, $p = .14$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$.

Figure 4

Pre (in blue) and Post (in red) scores for Anti-Social Intent across the four cycles of the rugby intervention

Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE_1
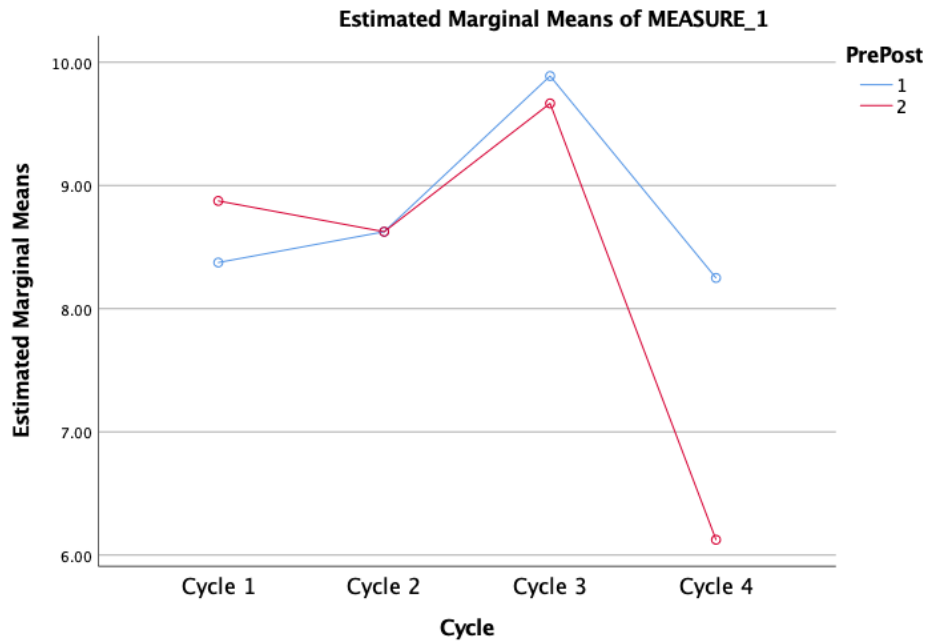
Associates

Table 14

Mean scores and standard deviations for Associates subscale at pre- and post-intervention as per 4 cycles and number of participants per each cycle.

Cycles (Cohort of intervention)	Total Pre intervention Associates score	Total post intervention Associates score	Number of participants
Cycle 1	7.75 (2.12)	8.25 (1.91)	8
Cycle 2	9.38 (.52)	9 (1.07)	8
Cycle 3	8.67 (.71)	8.33 (1.58)	9
Cycle 4	7.63 (1.41)	7.75 (1.83)	8

As can be seen in table 14, there are minor differences in means between Cycles 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The results of a 2 x 4 Factorial ANOVA showed that there was no significant main effect of Time $F(1, 29) = .01$, $p = .92$, $\eta_p^2 = .0001$ overall on scores measuring attitudes towards Associates (see figure 5 for a graphical representation). In addition, there was also no significant main effect of Cycle number on scores measuring attitudes towards Associates $F(3, 29) = 1.88$, $p = .16$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$ with participants showing similar average score at Pre (M = 8.36, SD = 1.45) and Post (M = 8.33, SD = 1.61) level. The overall interaction between Time and Cycle was also non-significant, $F(3, 29) = .91$, $p = .45$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$.

Figure 5

Pre (in blue) and Post (in red) scores for Associates across the four cycles of the rugby intervention
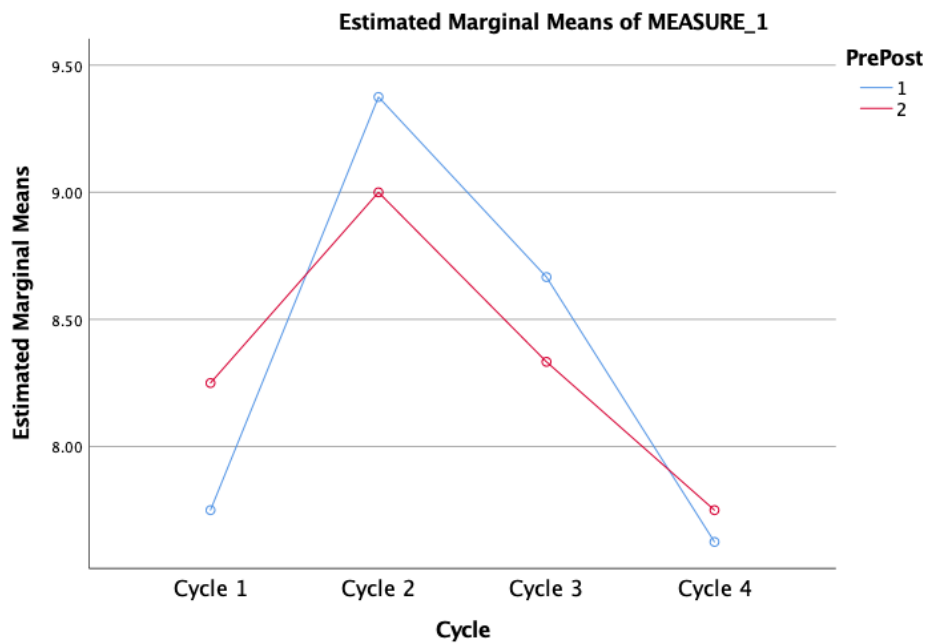
4.4.2 Qualitative

Interview and focus group data from 47 young adult offenders completing the intervention and 14 young adult offenders not completing the intervention were transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed using Inductive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), whereby interview and focus group transcripts were re-read and interesting patterns that arose in the text were firstly highlighted and coded. Transcripts were coded separately, and codes were organised into initial themes. They were then examined for recurring and emergent themes. The drawing of these themes led to categories of data which were all reviewed together systematically, until the most commonly cited themes were identified. While each theme has been presented and expanded on separately, they are not mutually exclusive. The extracts cited for the purpose of this study include a representative sample of participant responses.

Analyses revealed 5 super-ordinate themes from interviews and focus groups with participants of the intervention group: Social Cohesion and Learning to Play Together; Positive Health Behaviours; Controlled Aggression; People Around You; Challenges of Release and Finding Support.

Additionally, 4 super-ordinate themes emerged from interviews and focus group with participants of the control group who did not participate in the programme: Barriers to Support and Rehabilitation; Using Time; Inevitability and Financial Incentives of Crime; Role Models.

For both groups, these super-ordinate themes emerged from a construct that participants repeatedly referred to as "the inside" and "the outside", whereby they connected their experiences to their time before prison, their time in prison and the time when they would be released. Themes arising from both the intervention group and control group in relation to the psychological constructs of "the inside" and "the outside" are presented in figure 6.

Figure 6

Diagram presenting themes from Intervention and Control groups in relation to the psychological constructs of "the inside" and "the outside".
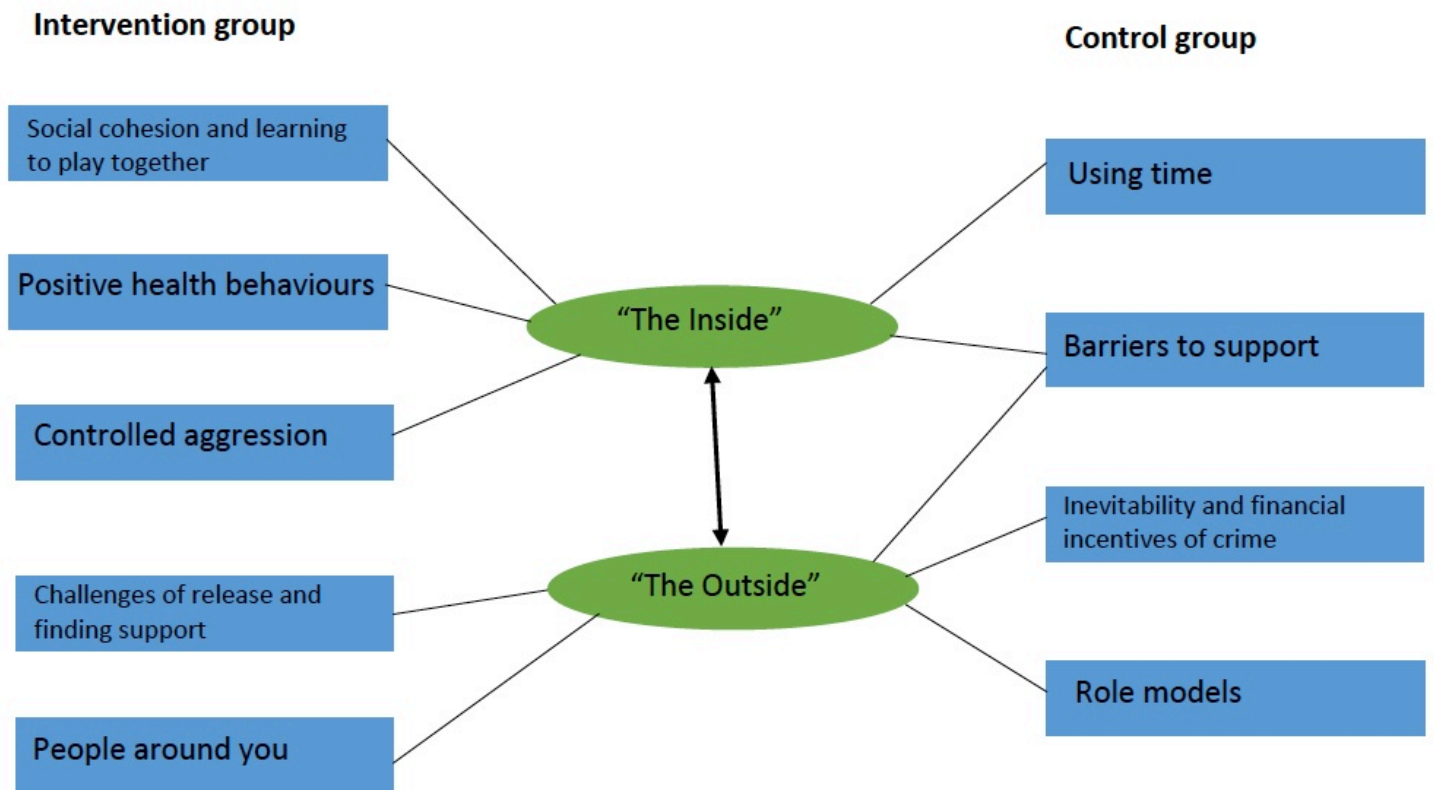
The themes for each group (intervention and control) indicated by the analysis are additionally presented in Table 15 together with illustrative quotes from transcripts for each theme. The quotes are attributed to participants who are anonymised by a code – a letter denoting their group (I for intervention or C for control, plus a number).

Table 15

Themes identified through thematic analysis organised into group and illustrated by examples of quotes from participant transcripts.

Group	Theme	Quote
	Social cohesion and learning to play together	"The fact that different post codes, we're all together, playing for each other, I think it's really important…" (Participant I8)
	Controlled aggression	"So it's good self-control, you can hit someone along the lines of rugby, and they've just gotta walk away. Same vice versa with you." (Participant I2, focus group)
Intervention group	Positive health behaviours	"They give you a good structure to a life already, 'cause you can come out with skills, qualifications, a hobby and a routine, which I think is what you need to live a fairly organised and fulfilling life." (Participant I4)
	People around you	"Obviously I don't wanna be–keep coming in jail, and then that's not a good role model for my son." (Participant I13)
		"Bad influences, old friends. If I go back there, I'm just gonna caught up in the same shit and that, yeah." (Participant I15)

	Challenges of release and finding support	"What people say, when you get out, all the plans go away, that's the hardest thing about it, you've got to really stick to it." (Participant I5, focus group)
Control group	Barriers to support	"That's what I think drives people to wanna do more criminal stuff, because they think people are just gonna judge me now, because I've got a criminal record, so. Yeah, and they're not gonna give me the opportunity, and then they obviously get bored and don't wanna do anything else and it drives them back to what they were doing before, so." (Participant C12, focus group) "Because I feel like when I'm gonna be released, I'll be in a worst position than before I came into prison". (C13, focus group)
	Financial incentives and the inevitability of crime	"If you've got olders in the area, making money…driving flash cars, being with like loads of girls and stuff, you wanna get some of that as well." (Participant C2) "I knew, even when I was on road, doing what I was doing, I knew there was a time I would come jail…" (Participant C5)
	Role models	"If you see people around you that are going towards crime and less people are going towards the normal life…then you're gonna just think "oh that's just—I guess that's the way." (Participant C1)

Using time	"It helps pass the time sometimes, yeah. Instead of just sitting in your cell doing nothing, you know, you're doing something that maybe will help you when you're on the outside." (Participant C9, focus group)

Intervention group themes

Social Cohesion and Learning to Play Together

The use of team sport to encourage different individuals from across the establishment to mix with each other was perceived as beneficial and values were acquired through playing rugby together as a team such as respect and discipline. It appeared to have encouraged them to consider their success as part of a team rather than as an individual "rugby is a team sport, so it should be working together, it's not by yourself." Being part of the team additionally provided a behavioural incentive and motivation to achieve, which resulted in observed changes in behaviour.

Controlled Aggression

The controlled aggression in rugby was widely emphasised, providing an effective way of releasing anger and stress built up through the prison regime. Working this out on the rugby pitch was seen as a constructive way of resolving tension without consequences. Participating in rugby on the programme was perceived to be a novel experience with the outlet it provided a key benefit of taking part: "the contact, 'cause, other than this, you don't really do nothing with contact in–in well where we are now."

Positive Health Behaviours

Developing a healthy routine and engaging in health behaviours such as going to the gym were perceived to be a positive outcome of taking part in the intervention programme, which pushed participants to better their fitness and wellbeing. This was considered important as it was perceived to be a buffer against negative impacts of imprisonment, such as depression: "A regime that's healthy, that's important in jail, because like, you're doing something, you're bettering yourself, you're interacting with people, you're not gonna like, be let's say depressed in a cell all day. You're out most of the time, so yeah."

People Around You

The behaviour of friends was perceived to be a predictor of offending behaviour with the awareness of needing to cut ties upon release – "…it's the people you hang out with the most…if you chill with five drug dealers, you're gonna be the sixth, if you chill with five businessman, you're gonna be the sixth. It's all–like your friends have a major impact on your life." The needs of a close family member and the positive influence of new friends however, were deemed to be protective factors that could discourage recidivism. Positive friends were anticipated to offer the opportunity for participants to move themselves in the right direction, by acting as positive peer role models while the responsibility of supporting family for example was deemed a deterrent from getting into trouble again: "I've come to jail now, and I've obviously seen what it's done to my family, I've got responsibilities now as well…"

Challenges of Release and Finding Support

Resettlement challenges including housing and employment concerns were perceived to be a potential barrier to rehabilitation. Having support systems available upon release were considered an important factor in preventing reoffending however participants identified barriers for seeking emotional support such as the perception of weakness. Participants also suggested the difficulties of organising aspects of their resettlement from inside the prison: "there's a lot of things that you can't do from inside jail, that are gonna hold you back when you come out, know what I mean."

Control group themes

Inevitability and Financial Incentives of Crime

Participants perceived there to be an inevitability in their engaging in criminal behaviour. They similarly considered the consequences that would follow such as prison time, injury or even death as inevitable and these outcomes appeared to be an accepted part of committing crime. The incentive of money was also identified as a key factor in becoming involved in criminal activity. The risks that came with fast money were often perceived to be preferable to the struggle of a minimum wage job, especially when paired with the temptations of a flashy lifestyle demonstrated by older peers in the local area. Financial incentives and inevitability were so often intertwined, as "you come out of prison and boom, you gotta apply for a job, you've got a criminal record, you can't get a job, so what am I gonna do? I'm gonna go do something that will make money."

Barriers to Support

Participants identified the lack of support and opportunities in their local community as a factor that influenced their criminal activity. If support was not found in the home or community, it was found in other settings that may be conducive to crime, such as a gang. This was equally true in some of the programme provision in prison which was considered inadequate, "everything that they've offered me…is just quite low ability really. I don't feel like it's gonna benefit me in what I want to do, so." In participants' view, programmes on "the inside" needed to provide the opportunity to bridge with "the outside" and help them with what they wanted to do – "if that can actually can help you pursue a career on the outside, or help you get a qualification, then that would be very good, still."

Role Models

Male role models found in the local area who could offer guidance and security were identified as a risk factor for involvement in criminal activity, as they represented an aspirational lifestyle that participants wanted to emulate. However, participants also suggested the benefit of spending time with peer role models who had lived experience and had "made good", thus having a knowledge of challenges they'd faced, perceiving "having people that have been through what you've been through" to be a more effective way of facilitating change.

Using Time

Participants perceived the boredom and monotony of prison life as a motivator to want to get outside and engage with an activity (such as sport or education). Some considered that their time in prison potentially presented them with the opportunity to engage in something positive, "if you was to come here, you could use your time here wisely and benefit yourself, to change your life and better you for the outside". However, others perceived their life to have been on hold while they were inside, with a sense of getting left behind when others outside moved on, while they stood still: "I don't think it's done well in rehabilitation, which is trying to make you get that life, it's just been a bit of a stagnation process, it's just stayed exactly the same. And then you just come out and everything's just moved on."

4.4.3 Summary of findings

Overall analysis of the results of Study 1 indicated a positive change of attitude towards rehabilitation and resettlement for participants of the intervention group after completing the rugby intervention programme. They displayed considerations towards release, support, and opportunities they could utilise both "inside" and "outside", perceiving themselves as more likely to engage in positive health behaviours, routines and learning while in prison and an intention to continue playing sport after release. In comparison, those who did not complete the intervention, displayed inclinations towards the inevitability of criminal activity once "outside" due to its financial incentives and the barriers they experienced to prevent them from accessing support and opportunities for financial security both "inside" and "outside". While both groups identified risk factors to their reoffending behaviour on release, the intervention group appeared to have acquired some protective factors through their participation in the programme compared to participants in the control group who had not and perceived a sense of uncertainty about their future. The quantitative data showed a small improvement in attitudes endorsing criminality in the intervention group at completion

of the intervention compared to baseline as well as a lower overall score compared to the control group, however neither difference was significant. This was also the case on measures of Violence and Anti-Social Intent. Nevertheless, there was a statistically significant difference in scores of attitudes endorsing Entitlement, with participants of the intervention group scoring lower than participants in the control group. Additionally, there was a statistically significant difference in scores of attitudes endorsing Associates, with participants of the intervention group scoring higher than participants in the control group, which was also observed at Baseline. Furthermore, there were statistically significant differences between MCAA scores in Cycle 1 and Cycle 4, Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 and Cycle 3 and 4 of the intervention, which suggests an effect of the specific cycle on participant scores measuring attitudes endorsing criminality.

4.5 Discussion

4.5.1 Quantitative

The first aim of the present study was to examine the effectiveness of rugby training as a rehabilitation programme for young male offenders from both a quantitative and qualitative methodological approach. This was underpinned by the recommendation for longitudinal studies investigating the impact of prison-based sport interventions (e.g. Meek & Lewis, 2014) utilising a matched control group (Meek, 2012). MCAA measures were taken as evidence of the effectiveness of the programme and the data was subjected to quantitative analysis. The results showed a positive trend towards improvement in attitudes endorsing measures of criminality after completing the rugby programme however not significant and a small difference between the overall scores of the intervention group compared to the control group on the majority of measures. Intervention participant's scores were significantly lower on the Entitlement subscale and significantly higher on the Associates subscale when were compared to controls. Additionally, an interesting finding was that there were significant differences when comparing intervention participant scores on the MCAA across the four cycles of the intervention. The qualitative analysis of the effectiveness of the programme, based on one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions showed a positive improvement in attitudes towards rehabilitation and resettlement and acquired protective factors for those in the rugby intervention. In what follows the present findings are discussed together with the limitations and implications.

4.5.2 Differences in pre- and post-rugby intervention in measures of criminal attitudes and associates

The expectation was that those involved in the intervention group would score significantly lower at post intervention on the MCAA than at baseline. However, this was not the case neither for the total measures nor for the breakdown of each subscale, although improved scores in Violence subscale neared significance. This trend towards improvement in attitudes endorsing violence is consistent with previous findings that

participation in a prison-based rugby programme has the potential to reduce attitudes towards aggression (Meek, 2012; Williams et al., 2015).

Although the intervention had lower scores overall on the MCAA than the control group, this difference was not significant. The difference between the intervention group and the control group in scores on the subscale of Entitlement, however, was significant, with those completing the intervention scoring lower on the scale. While other studies evaluating prison-based rugby programmes have not measured Entitlement (e.g. Meek, 2012; Williams et al., 2015), other evaluations of prison interventions have shown reduction on Entitlement as a psychometric measure (Lees, 2007), particularly in the wider view of a reduction of measure of criminal attitudes. This finding also supports suggestions that participating in the sport of rugby specifically may be a humbling experience that instils positive values and morals such as respect and discipline (Meek & Lewis, 2014a). However, it is important to consider that although intervention scores on Entitlement were lower than the Control group at Baseline also, which may suggest that those who participated in the rugby intervention tended to already have lower measures of Entitlement. Average scores of Entitlement in the intervention group were lower at the end of the programme compared to when they started, which indicates a trend towards improvement, however this difference was not significant.

Interestingly, the intervention group had significantly higher scores on attitudes endorsing Associates than the control group. Possible explanations for such a finding are that the intervention has little effect on attitudes endorsing criminal associates. Additionally, there was no significant difference in intervention participant scores at post-programme level compared to baseline, in fact their scores were very slightly higher at post-programme level. This suggests that individuals are unlikely to self-report as making or cementing any real changes in their friendship groups in the short-term, despite what their intentions long-term (and indeed on release from prison) may be. It also brings into question the effectiveness of using the subscale of Associates in this team-sport intervention setting as it includes items such as e.g., "a close friend is in prison". As Lees (2007) identifies, this statement appears to be based on fact rather than attitude and thus responses to it would not change, at least in the short-term. The

subscale is based on the reasoning that a key predictor of criminal behaviour is the endorsing attitude towards criminal friends an individual has (Mills et al., 2002, 2004). Participants may have intentions to distance themselves from certain "criminal" friends and items such as this do not necessarily accommodate for these future plans. It is worth considering that when the MCAA is administered to those currently serving custodial sentences, their immediate friendship group as it stands is likely to involve criminal associates. Particularly in the setting of a prison-based rugby programme that fosters social cohesion and friendships with other individuals who have also been convicted of a criminal offence, thus are "criminal associates" by nature of their location and circumstances even if they are people with no intention to return to prison.

Studies utilising psychometric measures have also suggested that long-term improvements may be more likely to be evident than short-term improvements on such measures. For example, Meek (2012) found reductions in scores from baseline to after completion of a prison sport academy only became significant at long-term follow up (at least two months after completion). This suggests that some improvements on self-reported psychometric measures may only become evident in the long-term which supports research finding long-term measures show more predictive validity for recidivism (Walters & Lowenkamp, 2016; Woods et al., 2017). It also identifies the need to access participants after they are released from prison, to complete measures at a follow-up time interval. This would allow assessment of whether significant improvements to attitudes endorsing criminality have emerged in the long-term as a result of participating in the intervention. In most cases this was not possible in the current study but should be aimed for in future research.

Findings that scores for attitudes endorsing Associates were significantly higher in the intervention group at both baseline and post-programme are also of interest. This indicates that the cohorts of prisoners that participated in the rugby intervention had increased attitudes endorsing associates compared to the cohort of prisoners in the Control group, regardless of their volunteering for the intervention. This may also comment on the matching of participants for the study. While randomised controlled trials may be considered the gold-standard of evaluation methodology, a common problem in the context of prison research and small-scale programme delivery is that

this is not practically achievable (Meek, 2012; Williams et al., 2015). Due to the nature of recruitment for the programme and inability to access participants until immediately prior to its commencement, participants were not able to be matched on baseline score.

As suggested in earlier findings of the current research where overall intervention scores were found to be higher than the control group (albeit not significantly), a finding of differences on self-report attitude scales may also be attributed to the kind of personality traits that attract a person to engage in a sport like rugby (Welland et al., 2020). Indeed it has been argued that those who engage in extreme-sport for example display more robust personality traits than those who engage in non-extreme sport and such personality differences may have implications for sport rehabilitation interventions (Cohen et al., 2018). Future research should consider the personality makeup of participants when using psychometric measures in assessing effectiveness of sport rehabilitation programmes, particularly if they are physical, full-contact and potentially dangerous sports like rugby. Reliance on participant's self-reported questionnaire responses alone may thus not be the best method of assessing effectiveness of intervention programmes.

This questions whether quantitative measures are reliable or sufficient in evaluating prison-based sport interventions. It resonates with existing research suggesting that self-reported change in anti-social attitudes may not provide valid information about change in risk of recidivism as a result of intervention (Howard & van Doorn, 2018). Other methods may therefore be more beneficial in obtaining the whole picture and predicting whether interventions will truly 'rehabilitate' their participants. Similar studies have discovered that while quantitative measures may not reveal a significant difference in change scores, qualitative interviews reveal benefits of the intervention which would otherwise not be seen (e.g. Farrier et al., 2019). This emphasises the need for mixed methods in this research area which has been suggested in previous literature (see e.g. Blagden et al., 2016) and was utilised in the present study.

Qualitative measures provide participants with the opportunity to talk sincerely and express what they really think, which may be a more accurate measure of the effectiveness of an intervention (Giacomini & Cook, 2000). The specific population of

young adult male offenders may also play a role in the effectiveness of the quantitative measure as their social context may explain socially desirable responding to such measures (Howard & van Doorn, 2018), and may influence the truthfulness or accuracy of their answers. Existing studies have encountered similar issues here with response bias, where participants ticked all answers or left questionnaires incomplete (Farrier et al., 2019).

4.5.3 Differences in measures taken from the 4 data collection cycles of the intervention programme

It was interesting to note that findings from each cohort of intervention participants that completed the MCAA were significantly different between Cycle 1 and Cycle 4, Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 and Cycle 3 and 4 of the programme evaluated. Recent research in both prison settings and psychiatric wards has explored the significance of social climate with evidence of the effect of prison climate on prison rehabilitation effectiveness (Stasch et al., 2018) and environmental factors and timing as a factor affecting outcomes of intervention treatments (e.g. Jaspers et al., 2019). For example, in the study of Stasch et al., (2018), findings of a more positive climate in terms of trust in therapy seemed to relate to a lesser therapy resistance reported by inmates. This positive perception of the climate appeared to accompany a positive attitude towards therapy in terms of recognising the programme as helpful. Moreover, those inmates who perceived the therapeutic relationship (between correctional staff and inmates) more positively, showed stronger decreases in their dynamic risk factors. In the case of recidivism, research analysing the relationship between prison moral and social climate and reoffending found several measures on the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life survey related to rates of proven reoffending (Auty & Liebling, 2020). The result of the present study and differences in the scores of MCAA over the four cycles may be an indication of climate in the prison affecting participants responses. This may also indicate an effect of prison climate on the success of the intervention as measured by self-reported prisoner criminal attitudes, resonating with literature that suggests in order for interventions to succeed, they need to be welcomed by the whole prisoner environment (Liebling, 2011). Indeed there are similarities between findings of the present study and those of Beech & Hamilton-Giachritsis (2005), which suggested differences between

cohorts running the same treatment programme indicate a relationship between group social climate and cohesiveness and reductions in pro-offending attitudes.

Additionally, findings that differences were significant on the Violence subscale with higher scores from the cohort of Cycle 1 and Cycle 3 (which took place in summer) and lower scores from the cohort of Cycle 2 and Cycle 4 (which took place in winter) may indicate support that wider prison climate impacts outcomes achievable through rehabilitation programmes (Harding, 2014) . Prison social climate is characterised by features such as decency, fairness, humanity, relationships with staff and the use of authority (Auty & Liebling, 2020). It has been shown to influence domains including wellbeing (van Ginneken et al., 2019) , prisoner misconduct (Bosma et al., 2020) higher internal locus of control (van der Helm et al., 2009) and reoffending (Auty & Liebling, 2020). The implications of this are that prison climate should be a factor considered when administering psychometric measures as they may have a significant effect on their success. As Bullock & Bunce (2020) suggest, "the implementation and impact of any rehabilitative interventions cannot be separated from the wider prison environment in which they operate." Qualitative exploration in addition to using quantitative measures also provides the opportunity for insight into potential changes in prison climate that may influence intervention rehabilitation success.

Furthermore, the findings indicate the importance of longitudinal investigation and the novel nature of this research study. If the data had only been collected from one cycle of the intervention, (as is the case with many existing evaluation studies of small-scale interventions due to funding grants and access) the data may present significant differences, but this may only accurately represent the specific cohort being investigated during that one "snapshot" of time. Thus, the generalisability of such measured 'effectiveness' is limited. In addition to addressing potential effects of prison climate on intervention success, the findings of significant differences across intervention cohorts in the present study also provides evidence supporting the importance of intervention consistency. This is a key concern in research addressing the design of successful change programmes (e.g. Coalter, 2013; Morgan et al., 2020; Woods et al., 2017) and indicates to accurately find out "what works", a theoretical underpinning to the administering of the prison-based sport interventions under investigation would be

beneficial. Of course, naturally interventions may change over time according to improvements, structural changes to the prison climate and external factors. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic led to prison-wide lockdown in the regime meaning the suspension of all activities and interventions. However, as Woods et al. (2017) identifies, evaluation quality can be compromised by a lack of consistency in the administration of prison-based interventions. This has implications for longitudinal research design, indicating the need for an understanding between key stakeholders, prison and programme staff and researchers evaluating them that they remain consistent in their aims, structure, and provision where possible across cohorts. However, evaluating a perfectly run intervention is rare and this point contributes to the literature regarding "methodological landmines" that are characteristic of prison research (Schlosser, 2008).

4.5.4 Qualitative

The second aim of study 1 was to explore the views of imprisoned young adult males on rehabilitation, reoffending, the role of sport in prison and their past experiences and the extent to which views differ across two groups – those who complete an 8-week rugby intervention programme and those who do not. The purpose of this was to gain an informed understanding of perceived factors relating to offending and reoffending behaviours, as well as successful rehabilitation to help evaluate the rugby intervention and to inform future sport intervention programmes. The intention of using qualitative interviews and focus groups was to draw on prisoner accounts to gain empirical insight of how they experience rehabilitation, as such studies are rare (Blagden et al., 2016; Bullock & Bunce, 2020).

Both groups discussed prison and the process of release and resettlement in relation to the psychological constructs of "the inside" and "the outside". They reconciled their progress, opportunities and equally, barriers to successful resettlement based upon the gap it bridged between the two. Participants in the control group drew upon the lack of focus by programmes to bridge this gap, attributing this as a barrier to their resettlement and re-entry into society. Participants in the intervention group appeared to perceive

themselves more equipped for "the outside", having acquired protective factors and developed positive relationships during the intervention.

Results of the qualitative analyses revealed 5 master themes from interviews and focus groups with participants of the intervention programme: Opportunities and learning through sport; Positive health behaviours; People around you; Learning to play together; Challenges of release and support systems. Additionally, 4 master themes emerged from interviews and focus group with participants of the control group who did not participate in the programme: Barriers to support and rehabilitation; Using time; Inevitability and financial incentives of crime; Role models.

4.5.5 Social influences and cohesion through rugby

The expectation was that the intervention participants would have a more positive view of their future and their associations. Both the intervention and the control groups acknowledged the influence of friends on their criminal behaviour and gang involvement, (Evans et al., 2016; Lenzi et al., 2015). However, the intervention group discussed the need to cut ties with old friends in favour of making new, more positive friends (Hoge & Andrews, 1996). An intervention that facilitates socialisation with new people through team sport is therefore beneficial and can provide a pro-social identity for prisoners who may feel dehumanised by prison which can have a negative impact on mental health and wellbeing, particularly for young offenders (Carswell et al., 2004; Chitsabesan et al., 2006). This empowerment is heightened through the opportunity to organise their own event and is supported by the literature which suggests offenders are more likely to desist if they manage to gain a sense of control over their lives (e.g. (Sapouna et al., 2011). Those who took part in the intervention programme reported a sense of freedom when playing rugby, emphasising their experiences outdoors on the field and the opportunity it provided to "not feel like a prisoner". This regular time outdoors was considered a selling-point of the programme when compared with other activities and jobs on offer at the YOI as it was one of the few programmes that provided this opportunity. Prisoners will sometimes spend a lot of time in their cells due to limited access to association or work (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2017). Previous research demonstrates the positive effect of spending time outdoors playing sport in

prison (Jiler, 2006; Martos-Garcia et al., 2009; Woods et al., 2017), especially in green spaces (Farrier et al., 2019) and mixing with visitors from outside the prison (Bales & Mears, 2008; Duwe & Clark, 2013; Gras, 2005; Tewksbury & Connor, 2012).

Additionally, the programme had fostered a sense of belonging amongst the intervention participants, which is in accordance with previous literature which has identified the benefits team sport has on communication, social cohesion and citizenship development (Parker et al., 2019). Additionally, the relationship between the positive support system a team provides and mental health and wellbeing is well documented (Battaglia et al., 2015; Buckaloo et al., 2009; Cashin et al., 2008; Martos-Garcia et al., 2009; Woods et al., 2017). Participants of the intervention programme also additionally considered the effect their imprisonment had on their family, with strong family ties recognised as an important factor in promoting effective resettlement (Walker et al., 2020).

In contrast, the control group showed a lack of sense of belonging and commented on the lack of support in their community. Consequently they found support in a gang setting due to the financial support, protection and sense of belonging that it provided (Lenzi et al., 2015; Merrin et al., 2015) and their need for a male role model to provide guidance (e.g. Hurd et al., 2009). One explanation for these differences is that the team setting of rugby provided a sense of belonging and team membership for the intervention participants, whilst participants in the control group had to look for this sense of belonging elsewhere. This is consistent with research that has studied the potential for team sports to bring people together (Thorpe et al., 2014) and foster positive relationships, especially for those who are at risk of gang-affiliation (Hemphill et al., 2018; Spruit et al., 2018).

The intervention programme also discouraged gang related divides in the prison, by facilitating socialisation between different prisoners and providing an opportunity for conflict resolution and social cohesion through learning to play together. This is particularly beneficial in a YOI due to the presence of 'keep apart lists' (restrictions on individuals' movement around the prison and access to educational or recreational activities, often due to gang affiliation) which can act as a barrier to accessing activities

and programmes for certain prisoners. Participants themselves discussed how they had previously been reluctant to mix with certain other prisoners, but that engaging in team sports had facilitated this. The fostering of a social team environment was also found to be constructive for participants' behaviour as they were held accountable due to their status as a member of the team, with sport providing an incentive to succeed and a framework of positive values for participants to pin their behaviour on (Gallant et al., 2015; Lewis & Meek, 2012a; Martos-Garcia et al., 2009; Meek & Lewis, 2013; Perkins & Noam, 2007; Van Hout & Phelan, 2014) particularly when they were back on the prison unit where they resided.

4.5.6 Rugby values

High discipline sports like rugby challenge participants to develop their responsibility and awareness of others (Haudenhuyse et al., 2012), the very humbling experience of being tackled to the ground is particularly crucial in building values such as self-control and resilience (Patience et al., 2013). Using full-contact sport was a productive way of releasing anger and tension built up in the daily prison regime. Tackling and rucking helped participants to work through tensions and stress, providing a positive and controlled way of coping. Full-contact sport such as boxing and martial arts has been found to help with enforcing discipline and boundaries (Blomqvist Mickelsson, 2020; Draper et al., 2013; Twemlow & Sacco, 1998) and thus may provide a productive mechanism for anger management. Recent literature, such as the Ministry of Justice review "A Sporting Chance" has suggested sport is an underused method of conflict resolution in prison (Meek, 2018). Using sport in this way often possesses a greater appeal than traditional classroom-based education courses (Sharp et al., 2004) and previous research has demonstrated the power of values and morals learnt in a team sport setting (Parker et al., 2014), particularly in promoting social inclusion (Morgan & Parker, 2017). Participants also benefit from having this framework of behavioural and moral values to tap into throughout the rest of their time in prison and beyond, that they could apply to different areas of their life.

In addition to the values developed through the intervention programme, the opportunities to learn a new sport and acquire new skills were considered useful for

their potential to be taken forward for career purposes or as a hobby. This opportunity-driven motivation to participate in prisoner learning supports the research which has demonstrated increased opportunities on release for prisoners who engage in prisoner learning and education-focused programmes (Bloom, 2006; Hunter & Boyce, 2009) which in turn could help realise the benefits of decreased recidivism rates (Farley & Pike, 2016; Vacca, 2004).

4.5.7   Risk and protective factors

Risk factors on release from prison were established by both groups of participants. It has been well established that the period post-release is critical for risk factors that predict reoffending, particularly the first six months (Langan & Levin, 2002; Ramakers et al., 2017; Souza et al., 2015; Wartna et al., 2011). Numerous challenges face young people who are newly released from prison, including housing, financial, employment and probation concerns (Dirkzwager et al., 2009; K. Hudson et al., 2007; Visher et al., 2011; Yukhnenko et al., 2020). The importance of having a plan in place prior to release is not to be underestimated (Dickson & Polaschek, 2014) with a need for employment and housing to be coordinated in advance when possible.

Barriers to support

There is evidence that young people who are not in employment, education or training are more likely to return to prison (e.g. Lahey & Waldman, 2005), however, the limited opportunity for prisoners to apply for jobs and housing prior to release was perceived to be a significant barrier to their success. This was a recurring notion in the transcripts of control group participants who identified that the prison was lacking in providing opportunities to facilitate a "bridging of the gap" between what prisoners referred to as "the inside" and "the outside". The necessity for prison programmes to provide education and employment opportunities as well as 'through the gate' support is something that is supported by existing literature (e.g. Hudson et al., 2007; Meek, 2012). Programmes that provide participants with contacts and mentors who can be accessed beyond the prison gates benefits them with support and potential links to

education and employment (Duwe, 2012). Opportunities in sport related fields are particularly beneficial for young adults, who may have the talent but not have not had the opportunity to become involved in such areas previously.

Participants in the control group perceived this lack of "bridging of the gap" in the prison as an example of a barrier to their opportunities for support to better themselves. They perceived the lack of support they received on "the inside" of the prison, to mirror the lack of support they had received prior to their imprisonment, on "the outside". There was a lack of support recounted in both schools and the community, and participants attributed difficulties at school and exclusion as significant risk factors for their offending behaviour, consistent with the literature that suggests school suspension increases the likelihood of criminal involvement, victimisation and incarceration in adulthood (Wolf & Kupchik, 2017). The emphasis was often on offending behaviour starting directly after the exclusion had taken place, supporting previous research which has shown a high number of prisoners have previously experienced permanent school exclusion (Coates, 2016; Williams et al., 2012). Pupil Referral Units (PRU's) were also perceived to be detrimental for offending behaviour, often providing additional negative role models, and failing to engage already disenfranchised students. This is in accordance with previous research exploring the negative outcomes and alienation associated with being excluded from mainstream schools and sent to PRU's or alternative provision (Brown, 2007; Pirrie et al., 2011). Leaving school early is thus considered a significant risk factor for future offending behaviour with gaps reported in community provision that should support at-risk school leavers. A concern is that where there is no support or opportunities in the home or local area, young people will look to find this elsewhere (Martinez & Abrams, 2013). This can lead to gang involvement due to the financial, emotional and physical support as well as the sense of belonging that being in a gang can provide (Beck & Malley, 1998; Carson & Esbensen, 2017; Wang, 2000). However, this comes with the cost of involvement in criminal activity and often violence (Chu et al., 2012; Weerman et al., 2015). This indicates the importance for individuals to have a secure support system upon leaving prison, as where a positive support network is absent, there will be a negative one in its place.

Participants in the intervention group also noted barriers to support, however their accounts revolved more around barriers in help-seeking despite having an awareness of needing support on release from prison. An example of this may be the image of masculinity (Kupers, 2005) particularly portrayed by young adults in prison (Abrams et al., 2008) and existing literature has demonstrated the reluctance of males to ask for help or seek out support in comparison to females (e.g. Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Courtenay, 2003). Participants also acknowledged a perception in weakness in engaging in help-seeking behaviours (Courtenay, 2000; O'Brien et al., 2005; Seidler et al., 2016). This resonates with existing literature which has explored the barriers faced by young male offenders in their attempts to engage in help-seeking behaviours and gain support (Abram et al., 2015; Hassett & Lane, 2018) including perceived masculinity and weakness in asking for help (Cobb & Farrants, 2014). The awareness of a need for support has also been identified by the previous literature, revealing a lack of a positive family-based support system on release a risk factor for reoffending (Hoge & Andrews, 1996) and evidence that emotional family support leads to positive post-release outcomes, such as lower rates of reconviction (e.g. Naser & La Vigne, 2006; Sullivan et al., 2002; Visher et al., 2004). Intervention participants perceived having a support system as important for preventing them from reoffending, with family support and contacts that could be used for employment and financial support acting as protective factors against concerns regarding housing, social needs and finance ahead of release from prison (Dirkzwager et al., 2009).

Protective factors

While they acknowledged some of these barriers, intervention participants appeared to frame them in a more positive light by discussing potential coping mechanisms. A possible explanation for this could be that they felt they had acquired protective factors against their reoffending, through the intervention programme. These protective factors have been seen in previous research to have a significant effect on reducing reoffending (Rennie & Dolan, 2010). Coping mechanisms established by the intervention group included the controlled aggression of rugby which provided a productive and controlled way of releasing tension. The intervention also brought forward the development of positive health behaviours, as it facilitated a daily routine that helped participants to be

more productive in their physical activity and moderated their behaviour. Research has identified the potential for fitness training and sports in providing a daily routine to assist with socially integrating into the community post-release (Obadiora, 2016; Van Hout & Phelan, 2014). Participants reported benefits to their fitness and wellbeing, consistent with previous research that suggests an association between team sport and improved health outcomes (Eime et al., 2013) and the benefits of keeping inmates busy and occupied in meaningful pursuits (Batchelder & Pippert, 2002; Wilkinson & Caulfield, 2017). The majority of intervention participants were keen for the opportunity to continue to play rugby matches as a team after the programme had ended, with teams visiting from outside of the prison. This is in accordance with new schemes promoting the concept of developing ongoing relationships between prisons and local sports teams, to enhance employment opportunities for offenders. 'The Twinning Project' (Newson & Whitehouse, 2020), founded by former FA and Arsenal vice-chairman David Dein is one such scheme which intends to pair 32 Premier League and Football League clubs with their local prison to deliver coaching and refereeing courses and ongoing support for offenders upon release. Participants of the intervention also hoped to continue playing team sport on release, with the awareness that this would be a productive use of their time that would deter them from engaging in offending behaviour. This provides support for existing literature which demonstrates the value of team sport in the community, and its impact on reoffending rates (Meek, 2012).

Release challenges

Although participants in the control group had participated in various other activities and educational activities in the establishment, as they had not participated in the intervention programme, they did not report acquiring some of the protective factors reported by the intervention group. In comparison to participants in the intervention group, who emphasised the importance of keeping busy in prison and upon release, participants in the control group perceived a level of inevitability of continuing to commit crime and its consequences. Existing literature documents the risk factors of recently released prisoners not engaging in education or employment (Bullis et al., 2002; Ramakers et al., 2017) and intervention participants acknowledged that boredom could often lead to offending behaviour as they would be more susceptible to engaging

in activities with friends. While participants in the intervention group appeared aware of the risks of not keeping themselves engaged in productive activities, the control group appeared to accept their engagement with crime as inevitable in addition to the consequences it would bring them. This touches upon existing literature which looks at increased risk-taking behaviours for offenders (Carroll et al., 2006; Pachur et al., 2010) and the relationship between anticipation of early death and youth crime (Brezina et al., 2009).

A common concern voiced by both groups was the release challenges that individuals face on release from prison and a key challenge among these relates to the financial needs faced by recently released prisoners. While the intervention group considered opportunities in sport that may be available to them through taking part in the programme on "the inside" and the routes to employment this could provide on "the outside", the control group identified the financial incentives of being involved with criminal activity. These incentives revolved around the perception that obtaining 'fast money' through crime (that could be made and spent very quickly) was a more efficient way of earning money compared to making money through the legitimate work pathways that may be available, such as apprenticeships, that did not offer a high salary and were thus, less appealing.

Financial struggles were also cited as motivation by participants for becoming involved in criminal activity in the first place. Money gained from criminal behaviour had often been used to help parents with bills and housing costs and help look after siblings or children. The association between poverty and crime is strong (Sharkey et al., 2016), especially in adolescents (Machell et al., 2016) with those living in poverty more likely to engage in risk-taking and anti-social behaviours than their middle or upper class peers (Moore & Glei, 1995; Pachur et al., 2010; Sampson & Laub, 1994). The desire to emulate the aspirational lifestyle modelled by older peers in the community, including expensive trainers, clothes and cars was also perceived to be a motivator behind criminal activity. While this carried risk, the acceptance of the inevitable consequences (including prison, injury or death) tied to their engagement with crime is consistent with findings of increased risk-taking behaviours for offenders (e.g. Pachur et al., 2010). Individuals felt a sense of empowerment in making their own money at a young age and

financial independence has been identified as a key criteria for being viewed as an adult (Arnett & Padilla-Walker, 2015).

People around you and role models

 The contrast between the two groups here highlights the potential for the intervention in providing protective factors that can combat such acknowledged risk factors and discourage participants from considering crime 'inevitable'. It also suggests the value of using role models in rehabilitation, particularly those with the same lived experience (Bandura, 1986; Bellamy et al., 2006; Haddad et al., 2011; MacCallum & Beltman, 2002; Yancey et al., 2011) that could demonstrate positive behaviours and choices for individuals to model. Adolescent males lacking a male role model in their home may look for one elsewhere to provide guidance (Hurd et al., 2009; Walters, 2016). Observing older peers on the street and wanting to emulate their lifestyle was identified by control group participants as a risk factor for becoming involved with offending behaviour. This is especially the case when older peers can provide the younger, more vulnerable individual with money and protection.

Having close family and friends in prison and/or involved with criminal activity is in accordance with previous literature, a key risk factor for criminality (Evans et al., 2016; Whited et al., 2017). For some individuals, a close family member spending time in prison might act as a deterrent, although we know that this is not true for the majority of young people and makes their involvement with criminal activity much more likely (Williams et al., 2012). Existing literature also demonstrates the impact of criminal friends on an individual's own criminal behaviour (Evans et al., 2016; Martinez & Abrams, 2013; Whited et al., 2017), including their likelihood to join a gang (Lenzi et al., 2015) and how this can hamper attempts to prevent reoffending. Participants in the intervention group did identify the need to cut themselves off from certain friends and even family members upon their release from prison, with the aim of making new, more positive friends who could be used as peer role models (McDonald et al., 2007).

Participants in the intervention group also focused on the effect of their time in prison on family, with this often a motivator for not reoffending. Strong family ties have been recognised as an important factor in promoting effective resettlement and reducing reoffending (Brunton-Smith & McCarthy, 2017; Farmer Review, 2017; Mills & Codd, 2008). Family was identified as a key motivator for wanting to stay out of prison, with participants perceiving the effect their prison time had on their family as a deterrent (Ashkar & Kenny, 2008).

4.6   Limitations

In summary, the findings herein are not without certain limitations. This study questions whether quantitative measures are reliable or sufficient in evaluating such prison-based interventions. Research has suggested that self-reported change in antisocial attitudes may not provide valid information about change in risk of recidivism as a result of intervention (Howard & van Doorn, 2018) and therefore other methods may be more beneficial in predicting whether interventions will truly 'rehabilitate' their participants. Similar studies have discovered that while quantitative measures may not reveal a significant difference in change scores, qualitative interviews reveal benefits of the intervention which would otherwise not be seen (Farrier et al., 2019). This emphasises the need for mixed methods in this research area which has been suggested in previous literature (Blagden et al., 2016).

Qualitative measures allow participants to talk sincerely and express what they really think and thus may be a more accurate measure of the effectiveness of the intervention (Giacomini & Cook, 2000). The specific population of young adult male offenders may also play a role in the effectiveness of the quantitative measure as their social context may explain socially desirable responses to such measures (Howard & van Doorn, 2018), and may influence the truthfulness or accuracy of their answers. Existing studies have encountered similar issues here with response bias, where participants ticked all answers or left questionnaires incomplete (Farrier et al., 2019). Equally however, the use of qualitative focus groups in the same setting may encounter similar concerns of socially desirable responses, where participants feel encouraged to give the response deemed most socially acceptable to any given questions, based on their surroundings. In

this context, this may be to fit in with their peers and assume the most accepted stance for their status as an incarcerated prisoner. Indeed data from focus groups may also be vulnerable to the issue of groupthink (Dimitroff et al., 2005; Fusch & Ness, 2015), where participants feel pressured to conform to group consensus.

It is additionally important to acknowledge that the qualitative methodology implemented does include the potential for researcher bias. Considering the rationale for undertaking the research revolve around hypotheses pre-determined by the researcher, the area of research may of course be of particular significance and interest, where the interviewer may unintentionally encourage the expression of particular views and opinions. The approach of reflexivity (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3) was thus considered crucial, taking into account both the effect of the researcher on the research and also the effect of the research on the researcher. Reflexivity acknowledges the reciprocity of both and how the interaction between them is context dependent (Mann, 2016). The effect on the researcher is specifically relevant in the unique setting of prison research, where the extremes of social life are starkly represented (Sparks et al., 1996) and access to such an unfamiliar environment can bring about feelings of stress and anxiety (Woods & Breslin, 2019). The researcher is tasked with navigating 'insider' and 'outsider' boundaries (Rowe, 2015; Woods & Breslin, 2019) and establishing relationships with gatekeepers and officers in the prison estate, often facing suspicion and mistrust (Beyens et al., 2015).

The steps taken to minimise researcher bias included ensuring questions were open-ended and designed to be non-directive, allowing participants to describe their experiences in their own words without the views of the researcher imposed on them. It was also important to acknowledge that participants in this setting may have certain things they want heard, based on the surroundings they find themselves in, and that the stories they draw on are likely shaped by their current sociocultural environment (Copes et al., 2015). However, it is also fair to consider that people construct their personal stories and accounts in every setting, regardless of where they are interviewed.

An additional limitation is the present study recruited a small number of young adult males from the YOI and this may have been reflected in not only the quantitative data,

but the themes identified in the Thematic Analysis. As has been identified in some of the prison research literature, challenges in collecting questionnaire data specific to the prison context may arise, for example, regarding difficulties experienced in engaging participants to complete follow-on questionnaires, rendering baseline data unusable (Farrier et al., 2019). This was similarly found in the current research, where the ability to collect completed questionnaires at both pre and post interval was compromised consistently over the four cycles of data collection due to prisoner absence, release/transfer or drop-out. Due to the nature of the sample population, such access challenges and limitations are unavoidable. Repeating the study with a larger sample may compensate for the relatively high incompletion rate of questionnaires, as well as be more representative of the prison population and determine whether findings could be translated to a wider context. However, it is important to consider that the potential for this is limited by both practical and ethical constraints.

Furthermore, although the research benefited from including a control group (Meek, 2012) which allows for stronger inferences to be made regarding the effectiveness of the intervention (Williams et al., 2015), there were limitations in the matching of the control sample, which is often par for the course in this specific research context (Ramluggun et al., 2010; Reiter, 2014). This partly reflects the methodological landmines that are rife in conducting prison research (Schlosser, 2008). Additionally, the lack of opportunity to randomise participants to groups due to prison restrictions introduces the potential for bias, as similarly found in a recent study by Woods et al. (2020). In fact, Skerfving et al., (2014) for example, redesigned their study to evaluate the effects of support groups for children from a randomised control trial to a quasi-experimental control group study due to unwillingness presented by practitioners to randomise participants into the control group.

The nature of the intervention itself must also be acknowledged, the use specifically of the sport of rugby could bring about its own limitations in participant recruitment. As a full-contact sport, rugby is known for its physicality and even for providing "a competitive sporting space used to construct identities and influence behaviours to align with orthodox perspectives of masculinist embodiment and expression" (Anderson & McGuire, 2010). A specific body type may also often be perceived to be a necessity for

participating in rugby, for example, some might consider themselves to be "too skinny" to take part and be discouraged by the excessive machismo displayed by rugby players (Wellard, 2009). However, in its use in prisons, the sport has been shown to build confidence and reduce aggression (Meek, 2012), indicating that the opportunity to access the sport in the prison environment appears to be worth abandoning initial perceptions. Additionally, although rugby is used as the hook for the programme, there are other components to the course which have been demonstrated through the qualitative research to be appealing, such as the introduction of employment contacts and mentors, time out of cells and in the fresh air and the general fitness benefits including increased weight-training and conditioning sessions.

4.7   Summary of the chapter and conclusion

The present study did not aim to draw conclusions regarding the causation of offending or reoffending behaviour, but instead aimed to explore beliefs on causality and the impact of the intervention programme. While the study was not without limitations, it provided useful insight into experiences of those taking part and was consistent with previous work that has found the positive impact of a rugby intervention on attitudes towards crime as measured at the end of the programme (Meek, 2012; Parker et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2015). Reoffending behaviour was perceived to be informed by factors such as a lack of a positive support system and the influence of close friends and family as well as the motivation of quick financial gain. Factors such as positive role models, genuine employment opportunities and keeping busy were perceived to provide ex-offenders with the best chance to avoid reoffending. Conflict resolution, anger-release and empowerment were perceived to be the most significant factors for explaining the benefit of team sport in prison.

The study identified strengths of the programme and examples of good practice through qualitative measures. This included full-contact rugby providing a constructive method to release anger and relieve tension and protective factors developed through the programme such as the promotion of positive health behaviours and the empowerment of prisoners organising their own prison sporting events. The use of sport as a leveller also promoted the potential for its use in conflict resolution, especially in those who are

gang affiliated. In addition, risk factors and motivations for crime were also established in the context of resettlement challenges that would need addressing when prisoners came to be released, whether they had completed the intervention programme or not.

However, insight gained through the utilisation of mixed methods raised the question of how protective factors and risk factors, established by prisoner accounts, would be perceived by the public. Indeed, prison rehabilitation programmes do not exist in a vacuum and broader social context must be considered in relation to offender re-entry and resettlement (Morgan et al., 2020). Despite positive outcomes and pathways to opportunities such as employment and education through completing prison-based programmes, if ex-prisoners are not accepted by the community they are resettling into, this may be a barrier to their securing a sense of belonging and with it, long-term desistance (McNeill, 2016). The forthcoming Chapter 5 will report a mixed-methods exploratory study that sought to investigate student perceptions of the efforts of a prison-based rugby intervention, in improving attitudes towards criminality and rehabilitating male young adult offenders and exploring whether they determined it would be successful.

Chapter 5: Study 2 – Student perceptions of rugby as a rehabilitation programme in a male YOI

5.1 Introduction

The findings of Study 1 detailed in Chapter 4 have indicated the positive health benefits, pro-social values and social cohesion gained from participating in a prison-based rugby intervention. Protective and risk factors were additionally identified directly from participant accounts. These suggested financial motivations and barriers to support on release are key risk factors which can potentially be buffered by protective factors acquired through the programme including health routines, support systems and a framework of values to draw upon.

As Hollin & Bilby (2007) identified, one of the most fascinating aspects of offending behaviour programmes is "the way they touch so many figures, from policy-makers and managers to professionals and practitioners to academic researchers". Indeed, participant experiences with an intervention programme as they relate to rehabilitation are only one part of the picture in understanding intervention success, as programme experiences are also related to interactions with stakeholders such as staff, volunteers, the community and graduates (Morgan et al., 2020; Wright et al., 2012). The review of the literature in Chapter 2 has acknowledged the potential impact of public attitudes and perception on policy regarding punitive vs. rehabilitative policies in prisons. As identified by Melvin et al. (1985), attitudes towards prisoners are crucial for understanding how CJS agents and other groups of individuals interact with prisoners. For example, positive attitudes held by prison officers have been shown to be critical in facilitating change prior to successful release from prison (Glaser, 1969). Literature considering the impact of public perceptions has found correlations between negative attitudes towards prisoners and more punitive attitudes towards crime and punishment (Kjelsberg et al., 2007). The ramifications of these negative public perceptions are seen for example in the workplace, where ex-prisoners and those with a criminal background are rated as less likely to demonstrate employability and obtain and maintain employment (Graffam et al., 2008).

As acknowledged in Chapter 2, despite the potential impacts, there is a paucity of studies exploring public perceptions of prison-based rehabilitation interventions in the UK. Such resettlement initiatives may struggle to secure funding and establish themselves without public support which has the potential to lead to an undermining of the movement towards reintegration and resettlement as a whole (Garland et al., 2016). This is reflected in suggestions that positive attitudes towards prisoners are important in securing the effectiveness of prison rehabilitation programmes (Kjelsberg et al., 2007) and that initiatives need to demonstrate to the public the need for them to service ex-prisoners to facilitate their successful reintegration after release.

The present study seeks to investigate the question of whether the type of crime an offender is perceived to have committed will impact student respondents' perception of their potential rehabilitation success. Additionally, it examined the role of gender in perceptions of the rugby programme and its rehabilitation efforts.

The study bases its methods on data collected in Study 1 (published as Welland et al., 2020) which has explored prisoner perceptions of the effectiveness of a prison-based rugby intervention and whether their attitudes towards committing crime and reoffending have changed as a result of it. The advantage of using this research to inform the current study is that it allows us to draw on the accounts of prisoners and their own lived experiences of rehabilitation efforts within prison (Bullock & Bunce, 2020). Study 1 demonstrated mixed findings, with the positive impact of the programme demonstrated through qualitative interviews and focus groups while the quantitative methods failed to demonstrate a significance improvement in the majority of psychometric attitude subscales as a result of taking part in the programme. The current study therefore aims to explore how students perceive the effectiveness and benefits of this specific programme and its outcomes. While existing research has considered the impact of public perceptions of prison inmates (i.e. Garland et al., 2016; Maruna & King, 2009; Reynolds et al., 2013), studies exploring public or student perceptions of young adult offenders are sparse, especially in regard to rehabilitation efforts in the UK. If resettlement is to be successful, it is important to be aware of public perceptions of those offenders that are attempting to reintegrate.

5.2   Aims of Study 2

The main aim of study 2 is to examine student perceptions of using rugby as a rehabilitation programme with young adult offenders. The use of students to represent the perceptions of the public in this study is of note, as those who study specific programmes are more likely to work in settings where they will encounter or support rehabilitating offenders. In this case, Criminology students may be more likely to pursue careers relating to rehabilitation (i.e., probation, the prison service or resettlement support). This is based on existing research which has demonstrated respondent programme of study and consideration of working in prison settings after graduation as a factor significantly associated with support for rehabilitating inmates (Tucker & Yuen, 2019, 2020). Their study also found that if respondents felt their career choice (in this case, Occupational Therapy) had a role in prison settings, this was associated with more supportive attitudes for rehabilitating inmates also. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that those who study a relevant programme of study such as Criminology will have more supportive attitudes towards the rehabilitation of inmates and the prison rehabilitation programme, in comparison to those who study a less relevant programme of study to the area, such as Engineering.

A small number of previous studies have explored public attitudes towards ex-offenders relating to their crime type, and have seen a more favourable attitude to non-violent criminals with no sexual offences (Rade et al., 2016) and thus this will be an independent variable in the present study, to test whether the type of crime has an impact on how offenders are perceived in regards to the effectiveness of the rehabilitation programme they have completed.

5.2.1 Aims

i. To investigate the perceptions and views held by students towards rugby as a prison-based rehabilitation programme and its participants.
ii. To investigate differences between student perceptions towards a rugby rehabilitation programme when controlling for their gender.
iii. To investigate differences in student perceptions of offender rehabilitation based on the crime type of the offender depicted in the vignette (violent vs. non-violent).

5.2.2 Hypotheses

i. There will be a significant difference in student perceptions of offender rehabilitation when controlling for programme of study.
ii. There will be a significant difference in student perceptions of offender rehabilitation when controlling for offenders of violent or non-violent crime.
iii. There will be a significant difference in student perceptions of offender rehabilitation when controlling for gender.

5.3 Method

5.3.1 Respondents

Respondents were recruited from Middlesex University. In the pilot study, initially recruitment took place in person at a university research participation event, and then after a national lockdown was put in place for COVID-19, respondent recruitment moved to online through the University SONA system (online management software that allows researchers to recruit participants). Further to this, online research participation groups were also utilised. This convenience sampling method was used to recruit student respondents for both the Pilot study and the Main study. Using student-based samples in this way has been demonstrated to be an effective and accessible method for exploring public perceptions (Payne & Chappell, 2008). Descriptive data for participants for both the Pilot study and Main study is detailed in Table 16.

Table 16

Respondent demographic breakdown for both Pilot study and Main study

(Number of Respondents)	Pilot study	Main study)
	(N = 110)	(N = 88)
Age (Mean years)	28.61 (SD = 13.44)	29.78, SD = 11.75)
Gender (n)		
Male	25	27
Female	85	61

Respondent age, gender, and programme of study for both pilot study and main study are detailed in Table 17 and Table 18.

Table 17

Respondent demographics, programme of study and vignette type for Pilot Study

(Number of respondents)	Vignette type		All participants
	Non-Violent (N = 58)	Violent (N = 52)	(N = 110)
Age (Mean years)	30.76 (SD = 15.56)	26.21 (SD = 10.22)	28.61 (SD = 13.44)
Gender (n)			
Male	13	12	25
Female	45	40	85
Programme of study (n)			
Psychology	30	27	57
Criminology	10	3	13
Other programme	13	19	32
Programme unspecified	5	3	8

Table 18

Respondent demographics, programme of study and vignette type for Main Study

(Number of respondents)	Vignette type		All participants
	Non-Violent (N = 44)	Violent (N = 44)	(N = 88)
Age (Mean years)	30.2 (SD = 11.59)	29.36 (SD = 12.01)	29.78 (SD = 11.75)
Gender (n)			
Male	12	15	27
Female	32	29	61
Programme of study (n)			
Psychology	21	14	35
Criminology	4	7	11
Other programme	13	18	31
Programme unspecified	6	5	11

5.3.2 Design

The study employed a mixed methods strategy to explore student perceptions of offender rehabilitation based on the success of previous research using this triangulation method (Morgan et al., 2020; Welland et al., 2020), which has found meaningful results using qualitative methods that broaden understanding and knowledge of this area.

The present study implemented a between-groups design.

Independent variables were:

i) Offender type portrayed in vignette (one respondent group responded to a vignette portraying offender convicted of a violent offence taking part in a prison-based rugby rehabilitation programme, while the other group responded to a vignette portraying offender convicted of a non-violent offence taking part in a prison-based rugby rehabilitation programme.

ii) Programme of study

iii) Respondent gender

Dependent variables were responses to the questionnaire indicating their agreement or disagreement with 12 items based upon the vignette that had been presented to them. Additionally, 12 open-ended responses to elaborate on their score and 2 open ended responses to questions probing for final views of the programme portrayed in the vignette overall.

5.3.3 Materials

Materials included a14-item questionnaire featuring a vignette based on a description of the 8-week, prison-based rugby rehabilitation programme. Vignettes have been described as "short stories about individuals, situations and structures which can make reference to important points in the study of perceptions, beliefs and attitudes" (Hughes, 1998). The use of vignettes in social research methodology has the benefit of eliciting perceptions and attitudes from participant responses (Barter & Renold, 1999) and this was the intention of the decision to use a vignette in the present study. In addition, they are used to enhance data collected by other methods (i.e., in the case of this study, a questionnaire measure). There were two versions of the vignette – one depicting violent offenders taking part in the intervention programme and the other depicting non-violent offenders taking part in the intervention programme (see Appendix F for full vignette and questionnaire measure). In the pilot study, the vignette was presented as a paragraph of text all formatted in the same style. After observing responses to this vignette, for the main part of the study the vignette was amended to make the offence type of the individuals in the vignette more salient (violent and non-violent were presented in bold).

The materials used to construct the questionnaire were largely derived from the previous research in study 1 (Welland et al., 2020). The measure consisted of 12 statements derived from the four subscales of the MCAA (Mills et al., 2002) and themes that had emerged from qualitative responses to interviews and focus groups, all of which had been administered to young adult males in the previous study. Therefore, statements were based upon reduced attitudes towards Violence, Entitlement, Anti-social intent and Associates and prisoner's own perceptions of the social and behavioural outcomes of the rugby intervention and the motivations and associations that they perceived to challenge their resettlement and inform future offending.

The questionnaire featured 4 statements that directly addressed the 4 subscales of the MCAA, these being Violence, Entitlement, Anti-social Intent and Associates. These 4 statements formed the first subscale of the questionnaire, referred to in analysis as "Reduced Attitudes". Respondents were asked: "Do you think that there will be a significant change in criminal attitudes as a result of taking part in the rugby programme, in the following areas?" followed by the four statements, which included "Reduced attitudes towards violence" and "Reduced attitudes towards entitlement". Respondents responded on a 4-point Likert scale from "very much so", "somewhat", "little change" to "no change at all". The second part of the questionnaire featured 8 statements for participants to 'agree' or 'disagree' along a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The 8 statements were split into two subscales, referred to in analysis as "Social and Behavioural" and "Motivations and Associates". Respondents were asked "Do you think taking part in the programme may lead to:" followed by the 8 statements. Statements within the Social and Behavioural subscale included "Greater social cohesion" and "More positive health behaviours". Items within the Motivations and Associates subscale included "No change to lack of support in the community and family" and "Financial incentives being a motivation for criminal activity". Respondents were provided with the opportunity to elaborate on reasoning for their response in an open-ended section for each of the statements, as well as 2 open-ended questions where respondents were invited to add any other comments or suggestions for improvement of the intervention (see Appendix F for the full questionnaire measure).

5.3.4 Procedure

Ethical approval for the study was granted by Middlesex University Psychology Ethics Board (see Appendix H). The questionnaire was initially distributed in paper format at the University in the Psychology department as a convenience sample of students at a research participation event. The questionnaire was then distributed online through Qualtrics, on the SONA research participation system, through lecturers in the University as well as online university student research participation groups.

Participation took approximately 15 minutes as a one-off data collection. Respondents were instructed to read the information sheet which outlined the requirements of their participation and given the choice to decline to take part or provide their voluntary, informed consent (see Appendix G). They were then provided with the questionnaire to complete (either in person or through Qualtrics). Respondents were first presented with a vignette describing the features of a prison-based rugby intervention programme for young adult male offenders and these offenders were either described as being convicted of a violent or non-violent crime.

The respondents were next presented with three subscales of 12 statements in total, that were required responses relating to the offenders and intervention programme described in the vignette they had previously read. For each of the 4 statements in the first Reduced Attitudes subscale, they responded on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "very much so" to "no change at all". The former was indicative of their perception that the attitudes would be very much reduced and the latter indicative of their perception that attitudes would not be reduced at all. For each of the 8 statements in the second and third subscales, Social and Behavioural and Motivations and Associates, they responded on a 7-point Likert scale according to how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement. For each of the 12 total statements, respondents were given the opportunity to provide a reason for their response rating. Finally, respondents were presented with two open-ended questions which provided them with the opportunity to add any comments they had about the intervention programme, the rehabilitation of the young

adult male offenders and any suggestions they had for improving the programme in any way.

Respondents were then thanked for their time and provided with a debriefing sheet. This summarised their participation in the research, the motivations behind it and gave them the opportunity to withdraw their data as well as the details for how to request this if required. All statements on the questionnaire were then entered into SPSS and analysed. Quantitative data was reversed when necessary and analysed. Qualitative responses were analysed in excel using Thematic Analysis.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Quantitative

The novel questionnaire and vignette were pilot tested in phase one of the study (N = 110). Descriptive data outlining vignette type and gender is displayed in Table 19.

Table 19

Pilot study – Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) for each subscale by vignette type and gender

N = 110	Violent Vignette				Non-Violent Vignette			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
Subscale	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Reduced Attitudes statements	2.02	.45	2.08	.57	2.08	.33	2.14	.52
Social and Behavioural statements	3.25	1.35	3.18	1.11	3.25	1.26	3.18	1.03
Motivations and Associates statements	3.83	.89	3.64	.93	3.48	.81	3.85	.82

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of gender and vignette type (crime portrayed in vignette) on perceptions of offender rehabilitation. There was no statistically significant interaction between the effects of gender and vignette type on perceptions of Reduced Attitudes towards criminal activity, $F(1, 106) = .001$, $p = .98$.

Additionally, no statistically significant interaction was found between the effects of gender and vignette type on perceptions of Social and Behavioural outcomes, F (1, 106) = .00, p = .995. There was also no statistically significant interaction found between the effects of gender and vignette type on perceptions of Motivations and Associates F (1, 106) = 2.00, p = .16.

No significant findings based on offence type depicted in the vignette or respondent gender were found in the pilot study. Consequently, the vignette was adapted to make the distinction between the offence type (violent or non-violent) depicted clearer.

The adjusted vignette was then presented to respondents in the sample for the main study (N=88) and results follow in Table 20.

Table 20

Main study - Means and standard deviations for each subscale by group and gender

N = 88	Violent Vignette				Non-Violent Vignette			
Subscale	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Reduced Attitudes statements	2.28	.57	1.96	.53	2.27	.57	2.09	.52
Social and Behavioural statements	3.48	1.16	2.57	1.22	3.38	.89	2.95	.80
Motivations and Associates statements	4.03	.88	3.88	.94	4.0	.97	3.82	.88

Table 21

Means, Standard deviations and univariate analysis of variance examining interaction effect of gender and group on perceptions of offender rehabilitation

Subscales and statements	Total Mean (SD)	Gender (*p* value)	Vignette type (*p* value)	Interaction - Vignette type X Gender (*p* value)
Reduced attitudes				
1. Reduced attitudes towards violence	2.06 (.68)	.08	.76	.46
2.Reduced attitudes towards entitlement	2.1 (.86)	.25	.63	.86
3.Reduced attitudes towards anti-social intent	1.98 (.62)	**.03**	.31	.84
4.Reduced attitudes towards associates	2.28 (.90)	.40	.80	.38
Social and behavioural				
5.Greater social cohesion	2.89 (1.28)	**.04**	.38	.52
6.Greater aggressive control	3.23 (1.44)	.09	.13	.51
7.More positive health behaviours	2.69 (1.33)	**.01**	.13	.89
8.Increased social connections and family support	3.09 (1.44)	**.04**	.65	.06
Motivations and Associates				
9.Financial incentives being a motivation for criminal activity	4.58 (1.42)	.46	.48	.83
10.No change of circle of friends with criminal intent	3.8 (1.37)	.68	.94	.9
11.No change to lack of support in the community and family	3.76 (1.2)	.45	.16	.79

12. No change in criminal activity	3.47	.18	.97	.72
	(1.1)			

A two-way ANOVA was conducted that examined the effect of gender and group (crime portrayed in vignette type) on perceptions of offender rehabilitation (Table 21). There was a statistically significant interaction between the effect of gender on perception of Reduced Attitudes towards criminal activity, $F(1, 84) = 4.09$, $p = .05$. This indicated that gender had an effect on response to Reduced Attitudes - as seen in the descriptive data, females demonstrated more supportive perceptions than males.

This gender difference is particularly shown in item 3 'reduced attitudes towards anti-social intent', $F(1, 84) = 4.74$, $p = .03$. The interaction effect between gender and vignette type on perception of Reduced Attitudes however, was not found to be significant, $F(1, 84) = .36$, $p = .55$. Therefore, ignoring respondent gender, vignette type did not have a significant effect on response to Reduced Attitudes, $F(1, 84) = .25$, $p = .62$.

There was also a statistically significant interaction between the effect of gender and perception of improved social and behavioural items, $F(1, 84) = 7.82$, $p = .01$. This indicates that gender had an effect on response to items relating to Social and Behaviour, as seen in the descriptive data, females demonstrated more supportive perceptions than males. This gender difference is particularly shown in item 5 'Greater social cohesion', $F(1, 84) = 4.45$, $p = .038$, item 7 'More positive health behaviours', $F(1, 84) = 7.27$, $p = .01$ and item 8 'Increased social connections and family support, $F(1, 84) = 4.61$, $p = .04$. For item 8, the interaction effect between gender and vignette type also neared significance, $F(1, 84) = 3.69$, $p = .06$. The interaction effect between gender and vignette type on response to the Social and Behavioural subscale however, was not found to be significant, $F(1, 84) = 1.06$, $p = .31$. Ignoring respondent gender, vignette type did not have a significant effect on response to the subscale of Social and Behavioural items, $F(1, 84) = .33$, $p = .57$.

There was no statistically significant interaction between the effect of gender and perception of items relating to Motivations and Associates, $F (1, 84) = .63$, $p = .43$. A significant interaction between gender and vignette type was also not demonstrated, $F (1, 84) = .004$, $p = .95$. Similarly, when ignoring respondent gender, vignette type did not have a significant effect on response to Motivations and Associates items, $F (1, 84) = .05$, $p = .83$.

Table 22

Means and standard deviations for each subscale by respondent programme of study

Programme of study	Reduced Attitudes statements	Social and Behavioural statements	Motivations and Associates statements
Psychology (N=35)	2.09 (.47)	3.04 (.94)	3.96 (.86)
Criminology (N=11)	2.25 (.54)	2.45 (.84)	3.55 (.83)
Other programme (N = 31)	2.08 (.61)	3.07 (1.23)	3.82 (.96)
Programme unspecified (N = 11)	2.09 (.62)	3.02 (1.14)	4.3 (.83)

Additionally, no significant interaction effect was found between respondent programme of study and perceptions of offender rehabilitation (Table 22), on any of the three subscales, Reduced Attitudes, $F (3, 84) = .29$, $p = .83$, Social and Behavioural, $F (3, 84) = .999$, $p = .40$ and Motivations and Associates, $F (3, 84) = 1.43$, $p = .24$. However, 11 respondents did not specify their programme of study. It was only when

exploring an interaction between gender and programme of study that a significant interaction was found when responding to Social and Behavioural items, $F (1, 82) = 3.88$, $p = .05$. Thus, as previously demonstrated, when ignoring respondent programme of study, gender was influential.

5.4.2 Qualitative

The responses to each of the questions asked in the questionnaire were analysed using the six steps outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006). These responses were coded originally question by question, with the data filtered by gender and by group. Furthermore, themes were drawn from the responses and compiled for reporting. The analysis was illustrated through mind maps for each subscale of the questionnaire. These were then examined to explore recurring themes that emerged between the groupings and a final picture of the overarching themes from the data was created, to gain understanding of respondents' perceptions of offender rehabilitation and the use of a rugby intervention programme (see Figure 7 for the mind map). Themes are also presented in Table 23 with illustrative quotes from the analysis.

Figure 7

Mind map diagram to illustrate the mapping of themes in the Thematic Analysis process, (superordinate themes presented in green and subordinate themes presented in blue).
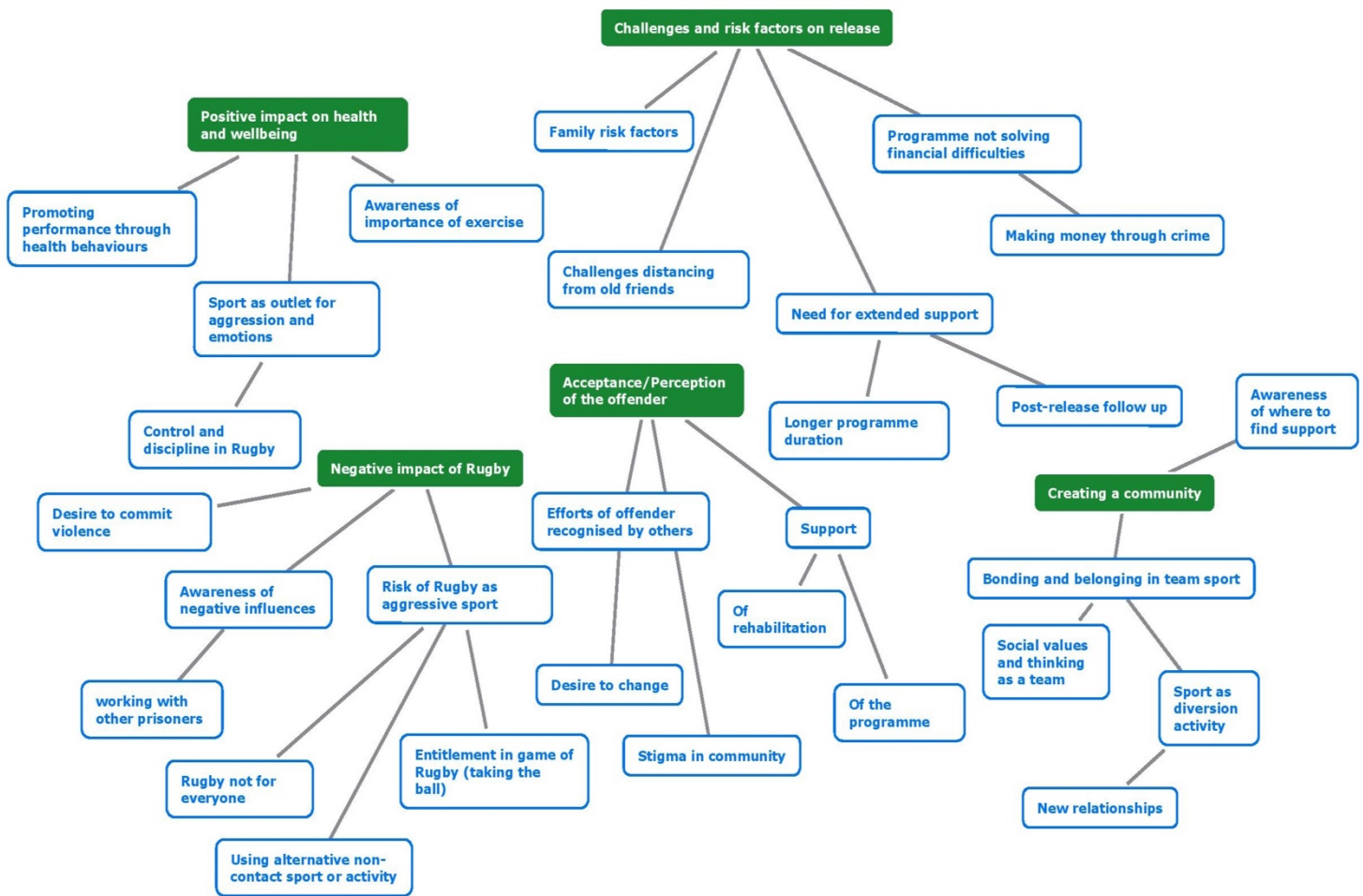
Table 23

Themes identified through Thematic Analysis illustrated by examples of quotes from participant transcripts.

Super-ordinate Themes and Sub-ordinate Themes	Illustrative quotes
Positive Impacts on Health and Wellbeing - Sport as outlet for aggression and emotions - Control and discipline in rugby - Awareness of importance of exercise - Promoting performance through health behaviours	"Nothing better than a game of rugby for clearing the mind" *Male aged 23, Violent group study 1 (Business undergraduate)* "They have an outlet for any stresses and anxieties - they should feel happier and less aggressive taking part in sport" *Female aged 21, Violent group study 1 (Marketing undergraduate)* "Training in a demanding sport will increase the importance and self-awareness of caring for physical and mental health in order to achieve." *Male aged 29, Violent group study 1 (Psychology undergraduate)*
Creating a Community - Bonding and belonging in team sport - Social values and thinking as a team - Sport as diversion activity - New relationships - Awareness of where to find support	"Being part of a team or a community of rugby players will give them a group to belong to socially. This may help them see themselves as part of a bigger community." *Female aged 35, Violent group study 1 (Social and Health Sciences undergraduate)* "Sport is a good way to explore teamwork and how collective work can achieve a goal instead of working on your own" *Female aged 22, Violent group study 2 (Arts and Humanities postgraduate)* "I hope that it offers a positive alternative to spend time" *Female aged 22, Violent group study 2 (Arts and humanities postgraduate)*

	"Possibly, but given the popularity of the sport, it is likely that there are communities out there that can welcome and support individuals who are being reintegrated into society." *Male aged 23, Non-violent group study 2*
Acceptance of the Offender - Efforts of offender recognised by others - Desire to change - Support – of the programme, of rehabilitation - Stigma in community	"People in the community will become more supportive if they can see the individual has changed and made progress in changing attitudes." *Female aged 19, Non-violent group study 1 (Psychology undergraduate)* "They will be doing something positive and the community and peer circles will see the change" *Male aged 23, Non-violent group study 2 (Marketing student Undergraduate)* "The family may still view them as criminals" *Male aged 22, Non-violent group study 2 (Business postgraduate)*
Risk Factors on Release - Family risk factors - Challenges distancing from old friends - Programme not solving financial difficulties - Making money through crime - Need for extended support – longer programme duration, post-release follow-up	"Opportunities exist in the program to create social connections but separately need to confirm that the family doesn't have a negative impact." *Male aged 58, Non-violent group study 1 (programme of study not specified)* "Friends are important bonds. It is not easy to reject an attachment so strong and admit the change to positive behaviour with persons that can't understand it." *Female aged 25, Non-violent group study 1 (Psychology undergraduate)* "If people lack support then they are likely to turn to criminal activity to gain financially in order to support themselves." *Female aged 19, Non-violent group study 1 (Psychology undergraduate)* "An attempt to follow up prisoners after leaving/make links with potential clubs in the area

	who would be interested in taking on new players" *Male aged 21, Violent group study 2, (Criminology postgraduate)*

Negative Impact of Rugby - Desire to commit violence - Awareness of negative influences - Working with other prisoners - Risk of rugby as aggressive sport - Rugby not for everyone - Using alternative non-contact sport or activity - Entitlement in game of rugby	"A violent person cannot be changed by rugby itself. They need mental rehabilitation and to develop empathy and compassion." *Female aged 44, Violent group study 1 (programme of study not specified)* "I think that a healthy way to vent some violence is great, but I also believe that rugby is a violent sport and putting a large group of men together in a violent way could limit positive benefits." *Female aged 31, Non-violent group study 1 (Business postgraduate)* "Learn the rights and wrongs in the game and start to respect the rules and those who break them. Therefore, may respect the law and not respect those who break the law" *Male aged 23, Violent group study 1 (Business undergraduate)*

Positive Impacts on Health and Wellbeing

The theme emerged of the perceived benefits of taking part in the programme on participants' health routines and their awareness of the importance of exercise in their lives. In addition, respondents discussed rugby's potential for teaching control and discipline.

Creating a Community

A key perceived benefit of taking part in the programme was the fostering of social relationships and a sense of belonging – particularly with the use of sport and rugby as a way of encouraging pro-social values and support systems.

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Acceptance of the Offender

The acceptance (or not) of participants of the course as they are released back into the community was a theme that emerged from respondents – with a focus on stigma participants might encounter from their community and the positive impact others' perception of their efforts would have on their acceptance.

Risk factors on Release

One of the prominent concerns from respondents was the perception of release challenges that participants would face in spite of the positive work of the programme, including financial difficulties and risk factors of associating with family and friends – leading to the suggestion of extended through-the-gate support including follow-up and an extended run of sessions.

Negative impact of Rugby

Respondents discussed the potential negative impacts of rugby as a full-contact sport, often perceived to be aggressive. The subthemes to this include the desire of an individual to commit violence and whether they have this predisposition as well as how the programme can assist in the development of an awareness of negative influences.

5.5   Discussion

5.5.1   Quantitative findings

Gender differences

A significant effect for gender was found in the first two subscales of the questionnaire, namely Reduced Attitudes towards criminal activity and Social and Behavioural statements, although there was no significant interaction. Female responses to the statements indicated a perception more supportive of the reduction of criminal attitudes and positive social and behavioural outcomes of the intervention, in comparison to their male counterparts. This adds to the existing literature comparing gender differences in attitudes towards offenders (see Gault & Sabini, 2000) who found consistent gender differences in attitudes towards punishment, mediated by gender differences in empathy. Moreover, Font (2013) found a small effect of respondent gender in a meta-analysis of studies on perceptions of juvenile sex abuse explained by vignette and sample characteristics such as use of student samples and year of publication.

Similarly, alternative vignette studies have found similar gender differences across a few offence types, for example female respondents have been shown to hold more positive views towards sex offenders (Ferguson & Ireland, 2006) and more forgiving towards white-collar offending than male respondents (Dodge et al., 2013). Literature exploring attitudes towards rehabilitating offenders is even more sparse, however female students (of Occupational Therapy) have been shown to report a more supportive attitude towards rehabilitating offenders than male students (Tucker & Yuen, 2019).

Differences in respondent programme of study

There were no significant differences found between sub-groups of respondents based on their programme of study, the original prediction had been that Criminology or Psychology students would hold more supportive perceptions of offenders, in

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comparison to students from other programmes. The results herein may reflect the conclusions of Harper (2012), whose study found no significant differences between Psychology and non-Psychology students in attitudes towards sex offenders, thus concluding that undergraduate Psychology degrees do not go far enough to address some of the stigmatised views held by the general population towards offenders. Although a study conducted by Tucker & Yuen (2019) found Occupational Therapy students significantly more supportive of rehabilitating offenders than the general public and criminal justice professionals, they additionally investigated respondents' intent to work in the forensic setting. It may be that respondents' profession (or intent to pursue as a profession) has more of an effect on their positive attitudes towards offender rehabilitation. For example, actively working in a setting aiming to reintegrating sex offenders, as seen by Kerr et al. (2018). Similarly, forensic staff have shown to be more likely than students to view sex offenders as individuals who can be rehabilitated (Ferguson & Ireland, 2006) and the attitudes of mental health counselling professionals towards adolescent sexual offenders has been found to be positive overall (Jones, 2013). Indeed, Tucker & Yuen's (2019) study revealed that student respondents' consideration of working in prison settings after graduation were significantly associated with support for rehabilitating prisoners. Their further research additionally demonstrated that respondents who considered working in prison settings had twice greater odds of favouring rehabilitation interventions for prisoners in comparison to those who did not consider working in prison settings (Tucker & Yuen, 2020). However, it is important to note that while research has found years of experience in working in such settings has a positive significant relationship with attitudes towards imprisoned adults (Meredith Nelson et al., 2002) no statistical relationship has been found between years of training and attitudes towards imprisoned adolescents (Jones, 2013). This suggests that offender age may also play an important role (see e.g. Mattinson et al., 2000) when investigating the relationship between working in prison settings and positive attitudes towards offender rehabilitation. It is important therefore for more research to take place in this area and further explore the effect these variables have on perceptions of rehabilitation, specifically for young adult offenders.

Vignette type and vignette message salience

The differences between perceptions when responding to the vignette describing a violent offender compared to a non-violent offender were not found to be significant.

This finding differs from previous literature which has indicated a difference in perception based on the offence type depicted in the vignette (Michel, 2015; Rogers & Ferguson, 2011). Michel's research for example, found that the public perceived violent street crime vignettes to be more serious than those describing white-collar crime, recommending more punitive sanctions towards street criminals compared to white-collar offenders. However, these studies focused more on respondent perception of the vignette character as a perpetrator of their offence, rather than the perception of this offender as an individual to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into the community.

Noteworthy in the present study were gender differences in perceptions which emerged after increasing the salience of the vignette, implemented as a result of findings from the pilot study. This contributes to the existing literature regarding the use of pilot testing in vignette studies – indicating that for the differences in the vignette character to have an effect, the message to respondents needs to more salient. Using vignettes in pilot testing for example, has been demonstrated to be beneficial for understanding how broadly or narrowly respondents view a concept. It additionally has the potential to provide important information about problems of question wording (DeMaio et al., 1998).

This is reflected in studies such as that by Grol-Prokopczyk (2014) which have found respondents often appear to neglect instructions regarding vignette characters, suggesting that the use of clear opening instructions appear to improve consistency of response. This was similarly seen in the present study, where improved consistency of crime type-related response was seen after pilot testing, where respondents had been given clearer opening instructions to highlight the vignette character's offence type. Research has also indicated that priming in the case of vignettes provides a way of better communicating the question's meaning (Hopkins & King, 2010).

5.5.2   Qualitative findings

The qualitative data did not reflect the findings of the quantitative data whereby there was no significant difference between males and females in their perceptions of the effectiveness of the programme. Five super-ordinate themes consistently emerged

throughout the responses found in the qualitative data. This supports the findings of Messerschmidt (2017) whereby triangulation through the use of mixed methods allows a wider examination of attitudes towards prisoners (in his case after experiences with a prison choir), in comparison to the use of quantitative methods alone. The five super-ordinate themes established were: Positive Impacts on Health and Wellbeing; Creating a Community; Acceptance of the Offender; Challenges and Risk Factors on Release and Negative Impact of Rugby. Details of the themes are highlighted in the following text and are not presented in order of importance.

Positive Impacts on Health and Wellbeing

The first super-ordinate theme was the perceived benefits of taking part in the intervention programme on participants' health routines. This supports previous literature which has associated sports participation with improved general fitness and wellbeing among prisoners (Meek & Lewis, 2012; Verdot et al., 2010; Woodall, 2010) as well as reductions in depression, stress and anxiety and increased confidence and self-esteem (Buckaloo et al., 2009; Woods et al., 2017). Respondents also linked this to an increased awareness on the prisoners' part of the importance of exercise in their lives. This has been apparent in studies that have found benefits of using sport as a tool to encourage further positive health behaviours among populations who are typically difficult to engage with (Meek, 2013).

In addition, respondents discussed rugby's potential for teaching control and discipline. This has been found in studies over the years exploring full-contact or combat sports (Jenkins & Ellis, 2011; Palermo et al., 2006; Trulson, 1986; Williams et al., 2015). The specific structure and rule framework of rugby as a sport has been demonstrated to provide a framework for positive values, cultivating social capital (see McDonald et al., 2019 for a review of using rugby to build social cohesion within communities of young Pacific Islander men). Using sport as a catalyst for positive, health seeking behaviours has been seen in other studies (Woods et al., 2020) which found that using ex-professional rugby league players provided a sense of legitimacy to the vulnerabilities of prisoners and offered an "alternative empowering narrative to what is usually encountered within prison". This suggests that these perceived pro-social and health

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benefits of taking part in the sport of rugby are considered a positive component of using this specific sport in the intervention programme and its role in rehabilitation.

Creating a Community

The second super-ordinate theme that emerged was the perception of a fostering of social relationships and a sense of belonging through taking part in the programme. In particular, the use of sport and rugby as a way of encouraging pro-social values and support systems. These findings are echoed in the literature with previous research pinpointing social capital, such as ties to family, employment and education, as significant in explaining changes in criminal behaviour (Weaver & McNeill, 2007). Meaningful employment and family formation have been identified as important components of an offender's social context which have a significant impact on their desistance process (Farrall, 2002). Therefore, the emphasis of building these positive working relationships in the community is key for sustaining the motivation of young adult offenders (Judd & Lewis, 2015).

Research on youth work has found that relationships, built on trust and mutual respect are highly valued by young people, often in contrast to other adult relationships in their lives which have often led to rejection or negative experiences (Drake et al., 2014; Merton et al., 2004; Milbourne, 2009). Previous literature has identified the importance of trust, genuineness, warmth, empathy and advocacy as essential elements of helping relationships with children (Brandon et al., 1998; Drake et al., 2014). For example, a study by Green et al. (2013) found that successful relationships with social workers were dependent on the belief of the young people that workers would act as advocates for them. The use of rugby and other team sports, which provide coaches, mentors and role models are similarly useful in engaging in young people who may be lacking these relationships elsewhere (Draper et al., 2013; Nichols & Crow, 2004).

Acceptance of the Offender

The third super-ordinate theme concerned the acceptance (or not) of offenders who had taken part in the intervention programme as they are released back into the community. The challenged surrounding resettlement are summarised by Pogrebin et al. (2014 p. 406) who describes the uphill climb of a "path back to a society that cares little and understands less about the challenges these individuals face".

Respondents focused on the stigma that ex-prisoners and participants of the programme might encounter on their release back into the community. As Petersilia (2003) describes, "a criminal conviction – no matter how trivial or how long ago it occurred – scars one for life". Previous literature exploring prisoners' own experiences of stigma has demonstrated a perception of being discriminated against in society (LeBel, 2012). Research has explored the effect of prisoner stigma, documenting the negative impact this stigma and discrimination has on their wellbeing and self-esteem with those who experienced more stigma, more likely to identify strongly with other prisoners and have weaker social bonds to family and friends. This feeds back into an individual's behaviour – with the possibility of them internalising the delinquent label into their personal identity, indicating that this in turn can lead to an increase in crime and delinquent behaviour (Becker, 1963; LeBel, 2012). Aside from a potential increase in the likelihood of further criminal behaviour, other consequences of the 'prisoner label' include exclusion from opportunities such as employment and education (Sampson & Laub, 1997). Such opportunities have been demonstrated to be key contributors to ex-prisoners establishing roots and helping to facilitate their resettlement after release from prison (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Tripodi et al., 2010; Visher et al., 2011). A lack of meaningful employment is one of the most significant risk factors for an individual being recalled to the prison estate or participating in further criminal activity (Ramakers et al., 2017).

The acceptance and support of family, friends and community members may have a protective effect against feelings of prisoner stigma (Berger et al., 2001; Leary & Schreindorfer, 1998; LeBel, 2012; Young, 1976). These pro-social bonds may function as a protective factor that mitigates formerly imprisoned person's feelings of being

personally stigmatised by mainstream society (LeBel, 2012). Indeed, respondents suggested the potential of the positive impact others' perception of their efforts would have on their acceptance. Strong social bonds (e.g. family support and stable employment) have been acknowledged as important for successful prisoner reintegration (Nelson et al., 2011; Petersilia, 2003). Related literature also identifies that overcoming the stigma of being in prison might be an important aspect of successful prisoner resettlement (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010; Rose & Clear, 2003; Winnick & Bodkin, 2008). Therefore, in addition to strong social bonds, positive perceptions from society may be helpful and, in some cases, arguably necessary in facilitating an ex-prisoners' resettlement.

Risk Factors on Release

The fourth super-ordinate theme that emerged was the perception of release challenges that participants would face despite the positive work that had taken place on the intervention programme. Challenges such as financial difficulties and risk factors of associating with family and friends – leading to the suggestion of extended "through the gate" support including a longer programme length and follow-up sessions. Existing research similarly finds that successful resettlement is dependent on continuity of sentence planning and case management in custody and "through the gate" (Maguire & Raynor, 2017). However, the hand-over from support services to arrangements at release are often not running as planned, at a time when offenders are at greatest risk of involvement in new offences. Indeed, previous literature has indicated that rehabilitative interventions implemented in prison are more likely to be effective if they are followed up after release, and if transition from custody to community is planned and coordinated from an early stage in the sentence (Hudson et al., 2007).

A study of prisoner resettlement in the United States found that prisoner respondents were dependent on their family for a great deal of their financial support, with family relationships significantly related to resettlement outcomes (Visher et al., 2004). Literature that has explored the dynamics of social support for released young offenders has suggested that they walk a "fine line" with their peers, who not only provide a sense of belonging and route to financial assistance but also temptations and opportunities to

re-engage with criminal activity. While family members can provide support and comforts of "the ties that bind" they also provide potential risk factors – namely; re-enactment of old roles and negative dynamics (Martinez & Abrams, 2013). This was similarly found in research by Pogrebin et al. (2014) who state that one of the greatest needs for persons leaving prison and returning to their communities is immediate employment. As well as providing stability, this also provides a solution to financial obligations commonly faced by ex-prisoners, including debts incurred prior to and after imprisonment. The researchers argue that without the ability to meet such financial obligations, many resettling ex-prisoners may come to believe they will never achieve economic success, significantly affecting their resettlement efforts. Thus, opportunities for employment and sources of support such as access to benefits, stable housing, treatment programmes, family support, healthcare and a positive probation experience are all important factors crucial for successful resettlement (Naser & La Vigne, 2006; Pogrebin et al., 2014; Travis & Petersilia, 2001).

Negative Impact of Rugby

The fifth and final super-ordinate theme concerned the potential negative impacts of rugby as a full-contact sport, often perceived to be aggressive. The subthemes to this include the desire of an individual to commit violence and whether they have this predisposition as well as how the programme can assist in the development of an awareness of negative influences. Concerns that using contact sports may encourage antisocial and aggressive behaviour are well documented (Abbott & Barber, 2007; Endresen & Olweus, 2005; Jenkins & Ellis, 2011). Williams et al. (2015) suggested that excessive exposure to "macho" values and the normalisation of violence in permitted rituals of play may lead to this behaviour being expressed in other settings.

Rugby is however lauded for its structured approach and its pro-social values (Parise et al., 2015) which provide the opportunity for meeting aggressive catharsis in a constructive setting (Jenkins & Ellis, 2011). Research evaluating prison-based rugby interventions have also failed to find any suggestion that indicators of aggression were raised as a result of participation, suggesting that concerns over potential negative

effects in terms of aggression may be misplaced (Welland et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2015).

It is additionally important to consider that some respondents may not be familiar with the sport of rugby and what the sport entails. As DeMaio et al. (1998) describe, vignettes present hypothetical situations and ask for the respondents' classification of the situation based on their interpretation of the concept. Respondents' interpretation of a vignette in any study will therefore depend on their own interpretation of the concept or situation described. Other studies that have employed the use of a vignette have found, for example, that while the majority of respondents or interviewees understood the concept of a vignette, the vignette story or questions needed repeating in some cases (Gourlay et al., 2014).

5.6 Limitations

It is poignant at this stage to highlight the noticeable limitations of the study. Firstly, the sample size used in the study was relatively small, which leads us to the acknowledgement of a potential lack of statistical power, arguably preventing the results from being generalised to the wider population of the UK. In addition, as the study had a large representation of students participating in Psychology as a programme of study, the study may have drawn more respondents who are interested in prisoner and sport rehabilitation. Consequently, the findings may overestimate the respondents' support for rehabilitating (as opposed to punishing) prisoners. It is also important to note that 11 respondents did not specify their programme of study, which may have impacted the analysis and thus the conclusions that can be drawn from these individuals' quantitative responses.

The circumstances of COVID-19 also limited the researcher from distributing the questionnaire widely in person, instead relying on the use of online collection methods. The potential limitations of these methods have been documented, including for example challenges relating to response rate, lack of researcher control and lack of knowledge about participant behaviour (Griffiths et al., 2014). However, in addition to

providing the potential to access a large and geographically distributed population, online questionnaires do allow respondents to participate at their own convenience. This is in comparison to classroom administered questionnaires where participants are asked to arrive at a certain time to take part, or to complete the questionnaire prior to or following other scheduled activities (Lefever et al., 2007). Studies have also found little to no differences in psychometric properties of online questionnaires in comparison to paper methods (Riva et al., 2003) with meta-analysis finding social desirability to be the same in offline, online and paper surveys (Dodou & De Winter, 2014), which suggests internet-based questionnaires can be a suitable alternative provided they are tested for validity and reliability.

There is of course a chance of bias when using questionnaires to evaluate others' behaviour in research (Podsakoff et al., 2012) and similarly, using an original questionnaire scale is not without risk, with concerns relating to limited validity. To attempt to avoid this, the questionnaire scale was drawn from results of previous published research (Welland et al., 2020) and was initially pilot tested on a student sample in the first phase of the study. The use of pilot testing in the present study allowed the researcher to test out the questionnaire structure with respondents and indicated the importance of salient messaging around vignette use.

One aspect that the present study did not address in its questionnaire design was whether respondents had a close relative in prison or had been a victim of crime themselves. Previous literature has indicated this proximity to the CJS as a factor that influences perception of prisoner rehabilitation and resettlement. For example, having a close relative who has been arrested or having been a victim of crime themselves has been significantly related to respondent attitudes to offender reintegration (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). Future research on this topic should seek to ask the question of whether respondents have been a victim of crime or had a close relative in prison, as this could conceivably impact their perception of prisoners seeking to resettle into the community.

5.7 Summary of the chapter and conclusion

The present chapter reported a study which formed a successful preliminary investigation into assessing student perceptions of prison-based sport interventions, providing insight into the attitudes of the public in the very communities that ex-prisoners will be aiming to reintegrate into. To summarise, the present study demonstrated a significant gender difference in the first two subscales measured - namely, Reduced Attitudes and Social and Behavioural outcomes. Female respondents were more supportive of reduced criminal attitudes and improved social and behavioural outcomes of participants as a result of participating in the rugby intervention, in comparison to their male counterparts. There was no significant gender difference in the third subscale measured, statements relating to Motivations and Associates. The implication of this finding is that females appear to be more supportive of rehabilitating prisoners and of the positive effects of a prison-based rugby programme, which replicates previous findings such as those of Tucker & Yuen (2019) whereby female students had a more supportive attitude towards rehabilitating prisoners compared to male students. This raises interesting questions for future research relating to whether female students are more likely to become involved with such rehabilitative initiatives and whether females in the community are more likely to facilitate successful resettlement for previous offenders in comparison to males.

The novel use of a vignette and questionnaire measure, based on prisoner perception research and the implementation of pilot testing contributes to the body of previous literature utilising vignettes as tools for studies in this type of setting. Arguably it adds to the evidence recommending the use of clear opening instructions regarding vignette characters to improve consistency of response. The qualitative aspect of the study provides further insight into the public understanding and perception of the issues faced by young adult offenders in resettlement, as well as their perceptions of whether using rugby in a prison-based rehabilitation programme will be successful at reducing reoffending. The qualitative analyses established five main themes: two of which highlighted success of the programme stemming from its 'Positive Impacts on Health and Wellbeing' and 'Creating a Community'; two of which highlighted main resettlement challenges as 'Acceptance of the Offender' and 'Risk Factors on Release'

and one which highlighted concerns based on the intervention programme itself, namely the 'Negative Impact of Rugby'.

Indeed, as detailed in Chapters 4 and 5, insight gained regarding the perception of rehabilitation from both prisoners (Study 1) and the public, specifically students (Study 2) have raised questions about the individual journey from imprisonment to resettlement and the challenges prisoners will face as they attempt to reintegrate into society having completed a prison-based sport intervention. Despite the opportunity to develop pro-social values and positive relationships, how does one transition their identity from "offender" to "ex-offender" and participate in a successful, long-term desistance process that is socially recognised? The Chapter that follows will report an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis case study of one individual's experience of the rugby intervention programme and resettlement journey to having established sustained desistance of almost two years.

Chapter 6: Study 3 – An Interpretative Phenomenological study of one individual's experience of the "Get Onside" programme in prison and on release

6.1 Introduction

As outlined in the review of the literature in Chapter 2, as well as the discussions of both Study 1 (Chapter 4) and Study 2 (Chapter 5), the challenges faced by prisoners attempting resettlement in the UK have been widely documented and explored (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Harding et al., 2013; LeBel & Maruna, 2012; Martinez & Abrams, 2013; Pogrebin et al., 2014; Visher et al., 2004). However, research directly exploring resettlement challenges has often featured a focus from the perspective of probation workers, prison officers and practitioners (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2011; Shoham et al., 2018). Studies which consider how prisoners themselves experience rehabilitative practices and processes are rare (Blagden et al., 2016; Bullock & Bunce, 2020) particularly in the case of young adult offenders who face their own specific challenges and are over-represented in the CJS (Judd & Lewis, 2015). This indicates a need for continued exploratory studies investigating offenders' experiences of resettlement and rehabilitation by listening to the way they talk about their lives and drawing on their own accounts (Bowman & Travis, 2012; Earle, 2011).

A few studies have presented the experiences and perspectives of marginalised young people both inside and outside of the youth justice system (Barron, 2000; Sharpe, 2011). However, there has been continued calls in academic literature for these young people to be given greater power and voice through research, particularly that which informs policy development (Case, 2006; Drake et al., 2014; Grover, 2004; Milbourne, 2009; Mycock & Tonge, 2012; Prior & Mason, 2010). Hearing first-hand accounts of young people's experiences can be illuminating as it can provide critical perspectives on successes and limitations of current policies and practice (Drake et al., 2014) and as France & Homel (2006) identified, to gain a greater understanding of these processes, we need to listen to the voices and perspectives of young people themselves. Using young people's subjective experiences of the youth justice system offers a way to

understand them within the cogs of a moving system rather than just objects to study. It has also been suggested that for some ex-prisoners, opening up about their experience can provide another way of leaving the prison behind (Earle, 2014; Maruna, 2001).

Study 1 (Chapter 4) investigated and reported the views of young adult offenders completing a prison-based rugby intervention programme (Welland et al., 2020) finding that participants fostered team values and relationships and gained community connections, coping mechanisms and positive health behaviours. Qualitative studies of young people who offend are not plentiful (Shafi, 2019) and neither is there much qualitative research on understanding adolescent disengagement, particularly in urban settings (Fredricks et al., 2016, 2019). As Drake et al., (2014) identifies, the question of how to secure young people's engagement is scarcely examined in research on the interventions with young offenders, despite apparent preoccupation with "what works". Therefore, it appears the best method is arguably to discover the answer from young offenders themselves. Study 1 provided a rare opportunity for access, over a two-year period, to elicit the views and experiences of young adult male prisoners completing their sentences and taking part in the rugby intervention programme. Researchers have emphasised the importance of utilising long-term follow-up after programme completion (Woods et al., 2017) to fully evaluate the effectiveness of such interventions. The present study provided this opportunity in carrying out an in-depth follow-up with one previous participant of the programme who had resettled into the community.

6.2 Method

6.2.1 Participant

The name of the participant in the present study has been changed to safeguard confidentiality, furthermore some personalised aspects of his account are generalised to further protect his identity. The participant has been given a pseudonym and will henceforth be referred to as "Adam". At the time of the study, Adam was 22 years old and living in his family home in inner-city London, after being released from prison in 2018.

Since release from prison, he has worked with the Saracens RFC organisation in an office sales and administration role. Additionally, he has contributed to the "Get Onside" programme as a mentor and is part of a steering group for the intervention in an advisory capacity. At the time of the present study, he had been furloughed from his role due to COVID-19 which had also put his plans to complete a Coaching Qualification on hold. Moreover, he was currently studying at University for an Undergraduate degree.

6.2.2 Materials

A schedule was used for a semi-structured interview technique including questions and prompts such as "Do you think playing rugby as a new sport increased your opportunities on release?" and "Do you think public opinion had an effect on how you have settled back into your local community?" and further probes to gain more detail if necessary, such as "Is it important to you?" (see Appendix I for full schedule).

6.2.3 Procedure

Adam could be described as an opportunistic sample, he participated in the rugby intervention programme in prison and was known to the researcher for this reason. He was invited to participate in the present research initially by first engaging in an initial short interview conducted by the researcher, which was followed up by a longer, full interview at a later date whereby the topics outlined could be visited in depth. Initially, Adam was to be one of the participants in a small-scale study looking at how participants of the "Get Onside" programme experience release from prison and subsequent resettlement. However, the depth, richness and texture of Adam's narrative led to the decision to change the focus of the project and to carry out a detailed, Interpretative Phenomenological study. A small number of intensively analysed cases are typical in IPA work (Eatough & Smith, 2007). The study had ethical approval and Adam signed a consent form (see Appendix J). After an initial telephone exchange to discuss what participation in the study would entail, the interview schedule was

arranged (due to COVID-19 protocols, it was conducted over the phone). The researcher carried out one main semi-structured interview, which resulted in two hours of data. The interview took place on the telephone with the participant and researcher both in their homes and were recorded onto a digital voice recorder.

Although there were specific issues that the research aimed to address, the primary aim was for Adam to tell his story and not to simply be a respondent. When people share the experiences of their life, they make reference to actual events, pinning onto them meaning and significance. The interview aimed to capture the richness and complexity of Adam's experiences relating to prison and resettlement. Thus, it progressed down avenues led by Adam himself, rather than those dictated by the schedule. The interview was transcribed in full.

6.2.4 Analysis

An Interpretative Phenomenological study was deemed most appropriate as the study sought to explore the lived experience of an ex-prisoner (Marshall & Rossman, 2014) through their experience of the programme and beyond the prison gates. The research focused on one former prisoner of HMPYOI Feltham to whom is assigned a gender-specific pseudonym, Adam. A semi-structured interview was recommended as being most conducive to facilitating individual sense-making (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Interviews also provide the opportunity to delve into a whole life, explore periods and events within it and interactions between specific periods and events (Mishler, 1986). Although the interview had a schedule, it was guided by the topics in general rather than the questions themselves and the interview schedule was used as a guide like a "conversation with a purpose" (Burgess, 1984, p. 102) such that spontaneously mentioned issues relevant to understanding the motivations of Adam could be queried when and as they arose rather than at a specific stage of the interview (see Appendix I for full schedule).

The main semi-structured interview took 2 hours and was recorded in its' entirety on a digital Dictaphone, providing a point of reference and to facilitate verbatim transcription for subsequent analysis.

Although the reflexive practices utilised have been discussed in depth in the Methodology Chapter (Chapter 3), these were detailed principally in the context of conducting research with prisoners. It is important here to once again acknowledge the role the researcher plays in the analytical process. The primary goal of research using IPA is to investigate how individuals make sense of their experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014) and great effort has been taken to provide a rich, descriptive account of Adam's story from his own words. However, it is important to acknowledge the power and ownership the researcher has on interpreting the data in the process of analysis. Engaging in reflexivity is a crucial part in ethical research and builds a more robust approach to the analysis overall by reflecting on and acknowledging one's role in producing the findings. Thus, the researcher engaged in reflexive approaches throughout the process, to observe and examine the connection between herself (the researcher) and Adam (the researched). This involved recording any direct observations and reflections of potential significance throughout the interview, transcription, and analysis. Not only did this provide a useful tool to consider how her own constructions of the world shaped the research, but it also offered an opportunity to reflect on emotions that arose during the process, thus enriching the analysis (Jewkes, 2012).

The analysis of transcripts drew upon Smith & Osborn's (2003) interpretative advice. Transcription provided an opportunity to re-engage with the interview and the transcripts were read and re-read several times to gain a holistic picture of Adam's account. During this process, the researcher made notes relating to anything within the text which appeared relevant, interesting, or significant, including considerations that seemed especially poignant and relevant to the individual. Following this, distinct Emergent Themes were drawn that were felt to capture the essence of Adam's account. The next stage involved drawing connections between these emerging themes and clustering them together according to conceptual similarities, with some of the themes dropped at this stage if they did not fit well or represent Adam's account. These themes were then listed and grouped, with the final list consisting of super-ordinate themes and

related sub-ordinate themes. As suggested by Smith & Osborn (2003), the interpretations of the researcher should be internally consistent and open to interrogation through the presentation of raw interview data. During this data organisation process, the researcher continuously referred to the transcript to ensure that the themes selected could be thoroughly grounded in it and were representative of Adam's account. The super-ordinate themes were tabulated along with pertinent sub-ordinate themes. Each theme was illustrated by quotes from the transcript to highlight their grounding in the text (Johnston & Morrison, 2007). This process was continued throughout the whole of the analysis to ensure Adam's data was appropriately represented and the results of the process were used to produce the written analysis.

6.3   Results

Adam was asked to talk as widely as possible about the different ways prison and his experience of the intervention programme had impacted or influenced his feelings, beliefs or attitudes about himself, his criminal offence, rehabilitation, and his experience in resettlement.

The following analysis explored one individual's personal experience of resettlement via the close examination of four super-ordinate themes that his account clustered around, namely: His Identity through Prison and Beyond; Barriers in the Prison Experience; Values in Rugby; and Building Connections. Each of the four super-ordinate themes had associated sub-ordinate themes (see Table 24). Each sub-ordinate theme discussed had been supported by extracted quotes from the transcript, which captured its essence. The main findings of each super-ordinate theme will thereafter be discussed in further detail. For ease of explication, the four themes are presented separately, although there are several interrelated elements.

Table 24

Four super-ordinate themes and sub-ordinate themes generated from an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Super-ordinate Themes	Sub-ordinate Themes
His Identity Through Prison and Beyond	*Perceptions of him from others (as ex-prisoner and individual)*
	Perception of self
	His lived experience and role as insider
	His optimistic approach
Barriers in the Prison Experience	*Barriers to rehabilitation and false promises*
	False/unhelpful information in prison
	Financial and release challenges
Values in Rugby	*Benefits of sport*
	Out of comfort zone
	Sense of freedom
	Family engagement
Building Connections	*Fostering relationships*
	Family engagement
	Fostering relationships through programme and beyond

His Identity Through Prison and Beyond

A prominent theme that emerged was how much of Adam's experiences were informed by how others see him and how he sees himself. This sense of perception affecting his interactions with the public and the organisation was also reflected when he discussed individuals' perceptions of prison, particularly the negative connotations that were associated with it and its inhabitants from childhood:

> *"Just talking to people outside and everyone's got negative connotations of a prison. But anyone that–even from a young age, if you asked a child, what is a prison? They'll tell you, "that's where bad people are." Pg.19, Line 26*

This extended to his perception that the community would have little interest in the rehabilitation of young men being released from prison, instead continuing to see them as criminals:

> *"Me personally, I could never see the public's seeing someone come out of jail and thinking, yeah that person's reformed or that person's rehabilitated." Pg.19, Line 44*

However, his observations of members of the public interacting with the programme indicated that he saw the potential for people to change their perception based on positive experiences and communication with the prisoners as part of the rugby programme.

> *"I like the fact that there's negative connotations because then when people are invited to come to the game and the tournament, and they actually meet the boys and the guys they're working with, that's what I love, 'cos eventually they get to see, oh shit, these are actually genuine people, they're normal people, everyday people. And that's what I like seeing." Pg.20, Line 3*

Adam also discussed his interactions with the public that revolved around the course, and how he observed these interactions to change based on individuals finding out that he was an ex-prisoner. He talked about how he noticed a change in the way people talked to him:

> *"I don't know, it just–sometimes what I've realised, some guys some people try and talk to me in more of a slang way. They change the way they talk, they talk*

more, informal maybe to see the way I talk. Do you get what I'm saying?"
Pg.19, Line 14

Talk on the significance of others' (including prison staff and organisation staff) perception of Adam as an individual emerged as a narrative thread running throughout his account. He attributed the success he had experienced in prison and employment opportunities in resettlement to their positive perception of his efforts:

> *"They need to see evidence from you, 'cos that's what the guys at Saracens always said about me, they said they saw the effort from me. They saw that I was engaged, they saw that I wanted to do something different and they saw that I had plans." Pg.6, Line 34*

Something that was also important to Adam was his perception of himself and his sense of self-identity. He attributed his unique experience to "living two lives"; while he acknowledged his life experience as a way of identifying with the young men in the prison, he also rejected the label of prisoner, or criminal, as he was assured in his own achievement and intelligence:

> *"If like, I chat to the guys and say, I know about drugs, I know about everything to do with the street, the street life I know inside out. But at the same time, I'm very clever, I'm very intelligent, I'm well educated, I've finished my A Levels, I'm at Uni right now, so there's nothing that anybody can tell me, that, "oh you're this person, oh you're that person, you're a criminal, you're this, you're that," 'cos you can never put a label on me. I've lived both lives if that makes sense…" Pg.15, Line 44*

He also considered much of his success in resettlement down to his own identity and approach. A lot of his account revolved around his experience in prison and what this had taught him that he could apply to life:

"But that's what I mean by, you can't–that's one thing I realised in jail is, if you want something done, you have to get it done yourself. You can't rely on someone and I stick with that erm, I keep that with me 'til now, I apply that to my everyday life. If you want something done, get it done yourself, don't rely on no one." Pg.25, line 6

By cultivating an optimistic attitude and approach to the challenges facing him upon resettlement, Adam rejected the labels and stigma that might be put on him as a result of his criminal past. His conversation centred on positive attitudes also emerged as a narrative thread to many of the sub-ordinate themes such as taking an optimistic approach and his own positive self-perception.

"Cos I would say, "alright cool, I made a mistake when I was younger, and this is what I'm doing now. This is what I've done during that time." It just shows growth and progression and if they wanna…" Pg.21, Line 43

"So instead of using it as –hiding behind everything, you use it to show change and growth within yourself as an individual." Pg.21, Line 38

This was reflected in the advice he described giving to prisoners' when visiting the prison:

"And so what I tell these guys is like, if you're a drug dealer, you can sell a product, if you're a gang member, you can run a business, if you run a gang, you can do that. Everything you do outside on the street, whether it's illegal or not, you can apply it to real life." Pg.15, Line 3

The process of earning trust took time, especially when presented next to many other individuals who Adam described as "selling a dream". In the following extract he describes how he had expressed disbelief when the organisation followed through on their promises after the intervention programme had ended:

"And then when I got moved on into the other jail, someone from Saracens, you know [staff member], came over to see me and that caught me by surprise, I was like "woah, hold up wait, like these guys are actually taking time out to come see me, in jail, for a one to one, just to check up on me and see how I am…'Cos the things they were saying and doing on the course, they were actually following up with it." Pg.4, line 17

Those who come into the prison to work or visit are often known by prisoners as "civilians" and this was exemplified when Adam referred to the coaches who work on the programme:

"When they're talking to [coaches], no matter how nice you are, no matter how friendly you are, erm, they're never gonna talk to you in the way that they will talk to me." Pg.8, line 5

Adam's perception of himself and of how others' saw him was very important to him, and this relates to the sense of identity he had built for himself. He often referred back to his role as an "insider", an individual who had lived experience of the system and therefore could gain the trust of currently serving prisoners:

"But with me, they would never see me as a civilian. Just because I've been prison, I'm part of the lifestyle, if that makes sense. So they would never ever refer to me as a civilian or anything. So they accept you straight away. And I think that's the most important thing, just the respect." Pg.11, line 40

His indication was that his status as an "insider" elevated him to a position of trust with prisoners that "civilians" would have to earn to achieve themselves. This was in direct comparison to the coaches who conversely had the role of "outsider".

"Cos with me, they can talk with no filter." Pg.8, line 1

This put him in a unique position to be able to provide advice to prisoners in an "unfiltered" way, based on his own experiences.

Barriers in Prison

Additionally, his own lived experience enabled him to share his experiences and knowledge with the young men in the prison. He discussed his negative perceptions of "rehabilitation" based upon the barriers he observed during his time spent in prison. For example, when describing the lengthy process in order to be able to get transferred to an open prison:

> *"See, that's what I'm saying, it's just a backwards system, so the guys–the way it works is, you have to be a goody two shoes as long as you can, for as long as possible and you have to be fighting a losing battle to try and get your paperwork sorted and you have to fight a losing battle with probation to get your paperwork sorted, and then you have to get referral from the jail…" Pg.9, line 34*

These barriers to rehabilitation were a frequent theme in Adam's account, with him also particularly focusing on the misinformation and "false promises" he perceived to be fed to prisoners while they were spending time:

> *"The biggest challenges I faced was when you're coming up towards your release, so even when you're–even when, whatever part of your sentence you're at, there's a lot of things thrown at you, be it "when you come out, we can help you with this", "when you come out, I can do this for you, I can invest in this for you, I can connect you with courses", a lot of it is bullshit. In prison you get used to being sold dreams." Pg.12, line 15*

This related to his perception of the concept of rehabilitation as a whole, describing the process of it with a sense of disillusion:

> *"I personally think like, the whole word rehabilitation, in the justice system is thrown around too easily. 'Cos to actually rehabilitate someone you have to erm, there's got to be a lot more effort put into it, than just, alright just jump onto these three courses and you're rehabilitated." Pg.16, line 40*

He appeared to consider it his contribution to be a voice of reason, who could provide accurate information to prisoners on how to emulate his "success" using the knowledge he had gained through his own experience and learning journey:

> *"When I go back to the young offenders' prison, I try and relay as much of the information that I had to learn by myself, through reading books, through learning about the prison PSI's, learning about criminal law, what I'm eligible for…" Pg.8, line 21*

He also spoke specifically about the experience in a prison with young men in comparison to adults – finding the time spent there at this age, proceeding from teenage-hood to early adulthood particularly poignant:

> *"They learn how to be a man in jail. I've seen officers erm, like teach guys how to shave and that. Because they haven't had anyone from outside to teach them how to do things like that and it's sad, you watch guys–you watch people grow up in jail. The things they should be like, getting up to outside, learn naturally in a natural environment." Pg.23, Line 3*

Values in Rugby

Drawing upon the values specifically learned through the sport of rugby, Adam articulated his experience of watching others become engaged in rugby through a sense of freedom:

> *"It's a very big thing. It takes them out of the prison environment, just for the day, you feel normal again. I think, that's power. That's powerful. It gives people like, it gives guys that have been tired by their sentence extra life to carry on, to finish the last year of their sentence." Pg.27, line 44*

A lot of the description relating to rugby in Adam's account revolves around the concept of power exchange. He describes how providing the prisoners with a different experience to their everyday existence empowers them and gives them energy to continue with their sentence. The power imbalance of being a prisoner to their surroundings also emerges as he describes the opportunity to exert force and aggression in the controlled and respectful setting of rugby:

> *"But with the whole rugby thing, I don't know, it's something different where you're giving them the opportunity to release anger but, controlled as well. So something different to that, so they have to learn new skills, you're outside playing on a field, it's just a different experience to actually being in jail on any other course." Pg.5, line 10*

> *"And then, being able to–being hit full force, hurting yourself and not reacting is a big, big thing. Even if you feel like it was a dirty tackle, it's rugby. You can't say anything." Pg.27, line 7*

The benefit of specifically using rugby is attributed to the "common ground" it provides for the young men playing it. Adam suggests this is because it is a sport that the

majority of those in prison haven't played before, instead being much more familiar with football:

> "Yeah, the fact that the sport is rugby, it's a sport that the majority of people haven't played. So everyone is starting from scratch together..." Pg.5, line 23

For prisoners who experience a relatively monotonous day-to-day existence as a result of the standardised prison regime, sport provides something constructive to engage in with tangible benefits:

> "Sport can change lives, 'cos sport is a common ground for everyone. Even if you hate physical activity, hate it, despise it. In prison, it's something to do, and it's something to make you feel better. Everyone loves doing sport in prison. Any opportunity you get, everyone jumps at it. It's a common ground." Pg.32, line 35

Building Connections

One of the core narratives running through Adam's account is the importance of building connections and how fostering these connections through the programme, his time in prison and beyond has benefitted him. He attributes his success to building relationships through a process he describes as "keeping his foot in the door", making himself present and available to take advantage of opportunities as they arise:

> "What you've just said there, is what I've been trying to do since the beginning of my sentence. I've just tried to keep my foot in the door with Saracens, to be able to reach my own personal goal." Pg.33, Line 30

This is exemplified when he describes his experience with gaining employment through his relationships built during his time on the rugby intervention programme:

"Cos the first job I got at Saracens was just because of, the guys they saw me around the stadium here and there and they spoke to me, they knew who I was, they liked how I held myself, there was a job opportunity…and yeah, just with no qualifications that qualified me to do that job, just because they believed in me, in my ability and who I was, and I got the job." Pg.33, Line 18

Adam also attributes improved family engagement to the interactive nature of the intervention programme, crediting this to family members witnessing their relative participating in a positive activity while in prison:

"That's one thing I'd say about the course is it's very interactive with the outside world, with the family, just because of the fact that you're calling your family, your family know you're engaging in something positive, something you're enjoying…" Pg.27, line 34

He described this using the example of photographs, as there are not usually many documented moments while individuals are in prison. He suggested this represented the "gap in their timeline" as young men serve time:

"Yeah, there's no pictures, there's nothing to say, "oh right, yeah, I was actually alive during this time." Pg.28, line 24

The fact the intervention programme provides families with the opportunities to have photographs of the prisoner, goes some way to giving prisoners "proof of life" in their sentence which he sees as reassuring for both prisoner and family:

"So even family having pictures and being in some pictures, it's just good to be able to look and be like, "you know what, yeah I done that, in that time." Pg.28, line 33

This suggests that participation in the intervention programme provides something meaningful for prisoners and their family, giving them a mutual milestone, which strengthens the family relationship in advance of their relatives' release.

6.4 Discussion

The findings of Study 3 revealed Adam's lived experience of resettlement and drew attention to how these experiences have value for our understanding of resettlement challenges and the impact of this specific intervention programme. In addition, it comments on how interpretative qualitative techniques and case studies offer an opportunity to develop rich, contextual understandings of the specific experience of young men as they are released from prison. The use of this approach and the data presented illuminates Adam's experience of resettlement as a young adult man in the UK. Moreover, it highlights how one's sense of identity and approach to others' perception of them is crucial for mediating the barriers and challenges faced in prison and through release.

6.4.1 Barriers to rehabilitation in the prison experience

Previous literature has explored some of the challenges facing rehabilitative efforts in the UK prison estate (Bullock & Bunce, 2020) and this is reflected in the prominent theme of prison failures and misinformation detailed in Adam's account. The importance of "through the gate" support is widely documented, with a key concern that the support is often insufficient, with "prisoners passed from varying support available in the prison to a different, often inadequately connected support at their point of release" (Maguire & Raynor, 2017). Equally, interventions with the aim of rehabilitation have a better chance of being effective "if they are followed up after release and there is consistency, with transition from custody to community planned and coordinated from an early stage in the sentence" (Bullock et al., 2018; Hudson et al., 2007).

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Adam had experienced a culture of misinformation and disinterest, which he had perceived to be a real barrier to opportunities within the prison, overcoming this admittedly only through his own self-motivation and drive. Creating and sustaining motivation is considered to be a key factor in promoting desistance from crime (Farrall, 2002; Maruna, 2001). Findings from Meek & Lewis (2014a) suggested that the combination of using sport as an initial engagement tool, then following this up with ongoing resettlement support to overcome motivation depleting experiences, such as financial or accommodation issues (Burnett & Maruna, 2004) may be a successful method of promoting change. The self-motivation that Adam perceived himself to possess may have enhanced his ability to engage in opportunities around him. This is also consistent with findings that young men in prison who were more internal in their locus of control were more able to adapt to their environment and thus able to seek and accept the support that was available to them in prison (Harvey, 2012). This enabled them to develop an understanding of the prison world socially, interacting with staff and prisoners in order to avoid conflict and give them access to privileges (Eime et al., 2013).

Bullock & Bunce (2020) who drew on prisoners' own accounts, similarly found a perception of a lack of interest and empathy from prison staff and an institutional failure to take responsibility for rehabilitation. In regards to the misinformation that Adam perceived to be rife in his prison experience, similar research has suggested there is a lack of consistent information, particularly in the case of newly arrived prisoners with more that could be done to inform them about policies, procedures and realities of prison life (Brosens, 2019). For example, by employing prisoners in a peer-support type model (Perrin & Blagden, 2016) whereby prisoners can support each other by sharing advice and information among themselves in an informal way (Inderbitzin et al., 2016).

Adam attributed a level of low motivation and boredom for many prisoners due to barriers that prevented opportunities from being presented to them. Existing research has revealed barriers to learning and education in the prison estate, including difficulties with access and support, suggesting there needs to be a change in approach and development of a learning culture (Farley & Pike, 2018). Previous literature has

suggested that the lack of meaningful activities combined with longer-term sentences contributes to a sense of "meaninglessness" emerging from prisoners' experience of punishment (Drake, 2012). This resonates with a description from Earle (2014a), of the difficulties of planning for a future while spending time in prison: "a place so removed from the rhythms of the social world that temporality is heavily distorted. A sense of the future which should be an open horizon, becomes all but inoperative while you are in prison".

The barriers to employment (in prison itself and upon release) can create a vicious circle as employment is one of the key protective factors against reoffending (Cuervo & Villanueva, 2015; Graffam et al., 2014) and time spent crime-free (Tripodi et al., 2010) and of course, as Adam states, there are financial challenges immediately upon release. In addition to the barriers to obtaining employment, Pogrebin et al., (2014) examined the additional financial obligations that are less addressed by research, which prevent ex-offenders from successfully resettling and gaining financial stability, such as mandatory expenses and other debts incurred prior to and after imprisonment. Researchers suggest this can significantly affect individuals hope for a better future and their ability to successfully re-enter society.

As Adam points out, the barriers to rehabilitation begin in prison and are then further translated into barriers to resettlement upon release, especially when other factors such as financial obstacles, family issues and peer relationships come into play and these are not mutually exclusive. For example, Martinez & Abrams (2013) found that upon release, peers provide a sense of belonging and potentially a route to financial assistance, however also may present the temptations and opportunities to re-engage with criminal activity, so young offenders "walk a fine line" when coming back into contact with certain peers.

6.4.2   Adam's sense of identity

The power of intervention programmes in allowing prisoners to adopt new identity and change others' perception of them has been discussed in the literature. For example,

participants talk about their changed self-identity in terms of moving from offender to non-offender status (Awenat et al., 2018; Maruna et al., 2004), whereby their involvement in the research facilitated an internal process of reflection, allowing them to challenge and reject their criminal identity in exchange for a new identity. The role of subjective factors such as thinking patterns, expectation and self-identity in desistance has also been investigated (Crank, 2014), with engagement in new pro-social roles found to be influential in the resettlement and desistance process (Maruna et al., 2004).

Literature on labelling theory has suggested that the internalisation of the delinquent label into the personal identity of the individual is a key part of the relationship between being sanctioned by the CJS and further or increased offending (Becker, 1963; LeBel, 2012). While this labelling as "criminal" can lead to an alteration of personal identity and increased likelihood of criminal behaviours, it can also contribute to barriers to opportunities such as employment and education (Sampson & Laub, 1997). Adam's narrative repeatedly referred to the roles he perceived to have after completing the programme during his time in prison as "trusted prisoner" and as an "ex-prisoner" returning to speak to inmates as an "insider". This resonates with the previous literature that suggests in addition to skill development, desistance is assisted by an offender's narrative around how they construct or re-construct their identity (Bottoms et al., 2004; Burnett & Mcneill, 2005; Judd & Lewis, 2015). Research has suggested that changing one's identity is a form of secondary desistance, ceasing to see one's self as an offender and finding a more positive identity (Farrall & Maruna, 2004; McNeill, 2009). In addition, literature has indicated that desistance for some ex-offenders might be through finding a way to "make good" on a troubled past by making a positive contribution to families or communities now (Maruna, 2001). By developing a pro-social identity for themselves and essentially, leaving behind "past social and personal life difficulties" (Wright et al., 2005), they may move on to more positive opportunities and future chances of success (Judd & Lewis, 2015; Maruna, 2001; Maruna & Roy, 2007). However, Judd & Lewis (2015) suggest that this desistance needs to be prompted by both strong social networks and an individual's determination to change (Kazemian & Farrington, 2010) and this may prove particularly difficult for the stage in their lives young adult offenders' are at. This is because they may be forming bonds as they construct their identity, which if anti-social may contribute to sustaining criminality for some time.

However, previous studies have also seen identities facilitated through prisoner education, for example classes in prison give students "the opportunity to identify themselves as something other than criminals; they identify as students. They have the opportunity to interact with and be seen by people from the outside as something other than criminals as well" (McCarty, 2006, p.93). The benefit of this is being able to interact with others who view them as people and students rather than simply prisoners (Parrotta & Thompson, 2011). This is true from Adam's account of participation in the rugby intervention programme as he emphasises the opportunity it provided to be seen as a teammate and a player before a prisoner. This links to his perception of the contrast between public preconceptions of prisoners before they meet them in the prison setting and after spending time with them as participants of the intervention programme and teammates.

As Parrotta & Thompson (2011) identified, moving beyond the stigma attached to labelling students as prisoners, both inside and outside is something seemingly so insignificant but can make a considerable difference to prisoners' self-perception, within the intervention programme and the prison itself. Similarly to the classroom, sport participation may then provide another means of positive self-perception and identity to challenge preconceived stereotypes and stigma associated with ex-offenders (Parker et al., 2014). It is of course important to consider that some individuals begin the process of desistance while serving custodial sentences and the literature has typically paid less attention to this, instead focusing on the post-release lives of prisoners (McLean et al., 2017). Maruna (2001) suggests that perhaps this is because prison is rarely viewed as a place where desistance may emerge from. In fact, as is attested through Adam's account, individuals who begin this process from inside the prison walls may be most successful.

6.4.3 Building rugby values and connections

A prominent theme that emerged from Adam's account was the values learnt through sport. Literature has demonstrated that high discipline sports such as rugby can help prisoners with managing aggression and violence and improving behavioural discipline

(Meek & Lewis, 2013). Different types of sport may be more effective in addressing specific problem behaviours than others and as they identify, skills specifically learnt in rugby such as those to channel and modify aggressive behaviour may be especially important for those whose offending behaviour is linked to aggression (Meek & Lewis, 2013).

Previous research has explored the potential for prison-based sport interventions in improving self-esteem and self-efficacy (Meek & Lewis, 2014a). Increased self-efficacy has been shown to have positive implications for the process of adaptation (Meek & Lewis, 2014a; van Dulmen & Ong, 2006) which Adam alluded to as essential in successfully navigating the prison experience, moreover it also features in strength-based models of desistance (Burnett & Maruna, 2006). The opportunity to develop new skills which can be utilised after release from prison, such as handling conflict and formulating ideas (Brosens, 2019) is also a vital part of taking part in such programmes.

Adam additionally described the sense of freedom gained through the opportunities for participating in sport outdoors the intervention programme provided whilst in prison. This sense of freedom has been reiterated by studies on category D Open Prisons, with greater freedom and autonomy encouraging reciprocal support amongst residents (Statham et al., 2020). In this study, researchers found that "the open conditions allowed prisoners to move away from being passive recipients of the prison service, towards being active citizens both inside and outside of the establishment." In discussing the last months of his sentence before release, which he spent in an Open Prison, Adam suggested that it somewhat acted as a rehearsal for the real life that followed, as residents were able to establish a routine, often with employment and time to see their families. This notion is supported by previous findings from experiences of prisoners whereby time becomes more "real" as the transition from closed to open prison becomes more imminent (Wahidin, 2006).

One of the key benefits of the intervention programme perceived by Adam were the relationships it had fostered between him and the coaches and mentors, particularly when they had followed through with their promises and visited him once he had transferred to a different establishment for the end of his sentence. This is in line with

literature suggesting that young people primarily value a good supportive relationship with a non-judgemental adult who is able to offer guidance and advocacy, rather than specific programmes and content (France & Homel, 2006). One to one resettlement work has been shown to be particularly beneficial for planning for release and focusing on goal-setting (Parker et al., 2014). Establishing resettlement support between external organisations and young men in advance of their return to the community can provide reassurance and motivation as well as help in sign-posting contacts for employment and education opportunities. Resettlement support offered within prison prior to release offered both hope for the future and motivation to strive towards future goals. The importance Adam placed on staying occupied and having a plan for his release is also reflected in previous research suggesting that desisting offenders are more likely to have a plan of action and optimistic outlook in comparison to reoffenders who possess little or uncertain future plans (Farrall & Calverley, 2005; Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001; Meek & Lewis, 2014a).

Similar to studies such as that by Millward & Senker (2012), a number of empirical findings can be highlighted through the stories of the participant. First, the intervention programme was clearly instrumental in facilitating change and fostering relationships for Adam, supporting previous findings that similar prison-based sport programmes have instigated positive relationships and pro-social values (Meek & Lewis, 2014a). However, the findings of this study also suggested that Adam's own strong locus of control and self-identity appeared to play a significant role in his motivation to use the time he was serving in prison productively.

6.5 Limitations

The study focused on an idiographic level of analysis, which makes findings specifically personal and difficult to generalise (Guest et al., 2006). Whilst the links to the literature throughout the discussion bolster the credibility of the findings, further research on a wider scale and with other ex-participants of the programme and other intervention programmes would be beneficial to explore whether the themes discovered in this study are applicable to other establishments. However, the in-depth quality of

Adam's account provided valuable knowledge about the potential for the programme's success, particularly when combined with a strong internal locus of control.

This study has explored the account of one former young adult male offender using qualitative measures. It is limited in that it does not account for differences in experiences which may be attributed to factors such as age, ethnicity, religion, or sentence type. For example, the experience of prisoners completing short sentences are likely to differ from those who are completing comparatively longer sentences (Honeywell, 2015). As such, the study is vulnerable to the widely voiced criticism that one cannot generalise on this basis. However as Yardley et al., (2015) stated, such criticism is grounded on the standards of experimental approaches that are testing factors and variables, whereas the intention of this study was exploratory in the context of discovery (McAdams, 2012).

6.6   Summary of the chapter and conclusion

This chapter highlighted the potential for empirical discovery through listening to prisoners' own accounts and presented one individual's experience of being released from prison and resettling into the community. It has illuminated some of the challenges that individuals who are released from prison face and provided a rich picture of how Adam perceived his sense of identity inside and outside the prison walls and successfully adapted to meet such challenges. The significant findings demonstrate the need to break down some of the barriers to rehabilitation seen in prisons such as limited access to opportunities and programming and a climate of misinformation. Furthermore, "through the gate" support offered by prison-based activities and programmes should make better use of fostering links between organisations based both within and external to the prison in order to facilitate resettlement.

The chapter that follows will discuss how findings from the complete research undertaken in this thesis have contributed to our knowledge regarding the use of rugby in a prison setting, prisoners and the public's perception of such rehabilitation efforts and the resettlement experience. It will then present the implications of these findings

and culminates with a call to action for practitioners, Prison Governors, third sector organisations and the Ministry of Justice.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1 Introduction

"Sport is a common ground for everyone" (Adam, Pg. 32, line 35) is how an ex-prisoner describes his positive experience of learning to play rugby in prison and the positive relationships it fostered. This captures the universal appeal of sport and its potential to be a leveller for people, regardless of their background. The present thesis aimed to evaluate rugby as a rehabilitation tool to reduce reoffending. It aimed to do this by following the life cycle of the participant and their experiences through completing the intervention programme "inside" and then a participant's experience as he successfully resettled into the community "outside". Additionally, the public's perception of rugby as the focus of a rehabilitation programme, from the "outside" looking in. This provided the opportunity to explore the success of the programme as perceived by its prisoner participants to the success of the programme as perceived by the public. As identified by Morgan et al. (2020), participant experiences with a prison intervention programme, as they relate to rehabilitation and resettlement, are only one part of the whole picture in understanding programme success (Wright et al., 2012) as programme experiences are also a function of interactions with extending systems such as staff, volunteers, community and graduates.

Whilst considerable research has explored the effectiveness of prison and community-based intervention programmes on various psychometric measures, less research has explored the qualitative experiences of offenders, particularly those defined as young adults in the prison estate (18–21-year-olds). Much of the literature investigating rehabilitation has sought to gain the experiences of prison officers, therapeutic staff and probation workers (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2011; Shoham et al., 2018), with a sparsity in studies exploring the views of prisoners experiencing rehabilitation (Blagden et al., 2016; Bullock & Bunce, 2020). In addition, while several studies evaluating prison and community-based interventions have collected views of both participant and staff, few have gained both perceptions of intervention success from both prisoners and public.

Therefore, the first question that arises is what do prisoners experience as the benefits of taking part in rugby in prison? Furthermore, does taking part in a rugby intervention

reduce attitudes endorsing criminality? As well as prisoners' experience of the rugby programme and rehabilitation efforts in prison, there is also the need to look at resettlement experiences of those participants released after completing the programme. In line with this introduction, the aim of Study 1 was to evaluate the effectiveness of a prison-based 8-week rugby intervention as a rehabilitation programme by investigating differences in attitudes endorsing criminality in young adult males before and after participating and compared to a young adult male control group, who did not participate. Furthermore, the study aimed to gain insight into prisoner experiences from both intervention and control groups about rugby in prison, rehabilitation, reducing reoffending and plans for resettlement.

The results of the quantitative data showed a small positive trend of improvement of attitudes endorsing criminality in the intervention group after completing the intervention as well as a lower overall score compared to the control group, although both differences were not significant. However, participants of the Intervention reported significantly lower scores on attitudes endorsing Entitlement compared to the control group, suggesting that, as also identified in qualitative investigation, rugby provides a new identity as a team member and pro-social tools that can be used by participants going forward. It also brings into question the ideal time frame when using psychometric measures in intervention evaluation. For example, studies utilising these measures have suggested that long-term improvements may be more likely to be evident than short-term improvements, with significant reductions only evident at longitudinal follow-up (Meek, 2012). Additionally, participants of the intervention exhibited significantly higher scores on attitudes endorsing Associates compared to the control group at both baseline and post-programme level, which suggests an implication for the consideration of personality makeup during cohort selection in the use of psychometric measures. Indeed, as identified in earlier findings, differences on self-report attitude scales may be attributed to the kind of personality traits that attract a person to engage in a sport such as rugby (Welland et al., 2020).

Furthermore, significant differences between the four tested cycles of the intervention programme were observed, suggesting an effect of the time they took place or the

differences in cohort tested. This highlights findings related to prison climate which have been explored in regard to prisoner perceptions of rehabilitation (Bullock & Bunce, 2020) and attitudes towards therapeutic treatment (Sauter et al., 2019) and reduction of risk factors (Stasch et al., 2018) but has not been directly investigated as a variable influencing prisoner-reported intervention effectiveness.

The qualitative investigation indicated a positive change of attitude towards rehabilitation and resettlement for participants of the Intervention group after completing the rugby intervention. They acknowledged risk factors to their reoffending behaviour and discussed protective factors they had acquired, such as engaging in positive health behaviours and routines and developing pro-social relationships they could utilise on the "outside" (Meek & Lewis, 2014a; Parker et al., 2014). In comparison, the control group identified barriers to their successful rehabilitation and resettlement that they encountered both "inside" and "outside" of the prison and appeared to lack some of the protective factors identified by the Intervention group. This acknowledgement of an inability to overcome these financial and social barriers led them to consider the inevitability of their future self to return to engaging in crime and its consequences (Kilmer, 2016; Pogrebin et al., 2014).

These results then led the thesis to investigate whether the public, specifically students, shared prisoners' positive perceptions about their experiences of rugby as a programme of rehabilitation, and whether they would they perceive the intervention programme as a vehicle to provide protective factors that buffer the risk factors identified by prisoner participants in Study 1.

The aim of Study 2 was to examine student perceptions of rugby as a rehabilitation programme in improving attitudes towards criminality and to assess whether they believed it would be successful in rehabilitating young adult male offenders. Study 2 utilised a questionnaire based on the results of the MCAA (utilised in Study 1) and themes from interview and focus group accounts also revealed following analyses reported in Study 1.

The quantitative part of Study 2 demonstrated a significant gender difference in two subscales of the questionnaire, statements regarding Reduced Attitudes towards criminal activity and statements regarding improved Social and Behavioural outcomes. Female respondents were more supportive of reduced criminal attitudes and improved social and behavioural outcomes of participants as a result of participating in the rugby intervention, in comparison to their male counterparts. No significant differences were found based on the vignette type respondents were presented with (offender convicted of violent vs. non-violent crime) however, findings demonstrated that priming respondents with the emphasis of the crime type resulted in significant differences between the way males and females perceived the outcomes of the vignette character.

The qualitative responses had the intention to provide insight into public perceptions of using rugby in the prison-based rehabilitation setting. The analyses indicated respondents were supportive of the positive impacts the intervention had on health and wellbeing and the community it facilitated for its young adult male participants to gain a sense of belonging. However, they expressed concerns around resettlement challenges, the use of rugby and suggested in order to be accepted, the offender would need to demonstrate the positive changes they had made. Concerns identified in qualitative exploration of both prisoners and student accounts of the rugby intervention programme, involved the risk factors and challenges that would be faced after completing the intervention and being released to the "outside" that may form barriers to successful resettlement. In response to the findings from Study 1 and Study 2, the thesis sought to explore one individual's experience from participation in the rugby intervention "inside" to successful resettlement back into the community "outside" (reported in Study 3).

The aim of Study 3 was to investigate an individual's experience following participation in the rugby programme to release from prison and re-entry into their community to illuminate their experience of resettlement in the UK. Furthermore, to gain insight and understanding of strategies and identity formation Adam utilised to consolidate and sustain his commitment to long-term desistance (Weaver, 2013).

Results presented one individual's experience of being released from prison and resettling into the community. It provided an in-depth examination of how Adam perceived his sense of identity inside and outside the prison walls and successfully adapted to meet such challenges, providing support for evidence that prisoners who were more internal in their locus of control were more able to adapt to their environment and seek and accept support (Harvey, 2012). Furthermore, Study 3 highlighted some of the challenges individuals who are released from prison face and the benefits of fostering links between internal organisations within the prison and external organisations to facilitate resettlement. Opportunities to work with these resettlement organisations may also facilitate secondary desistance, where one makes the internal changes deemed necessary to establish their identity from "offender" to "ex-offender" (Farrall & Maruna, 2004; McNeill, 2009). Thus, helping individuals to engage in redemptive behaviours which help them to shed their ex-offender label (Maruna, 2001). This stigmatising "offender" label appeared to be a barrier articulated by prisoners in the control group in Study 1 and Adam in Study 3. It was a contributing factor to the barrier to rehabilitation they perceived to prevent their successful reintegration as a law-abiding citizen upon release from prison. In Study 3, Adam's in-depth account as a prisoner who resettled into his community after completing the rugby intervention suggested he had cultivated a positive identity of "ex-offender" for himself through developing pro-social relationships with organisation staff and "giving back" to his community through voluntary work. This allowed him the space to accept and make choices in his life required not to reoffend. As identified by Kilmer (2016), the role of helping others can help empower returning citizens by allowing them to demonstrate their positive contributions in "giving back" to society. Indeed, research had demonstrated the potentially transformative qualities of allowing formerly imprisoned individuals to be employed in a resettlement role from being part of "the problem" to being part of "the solution" (LeBel et al., 2015).

In previous chapters of this thesis, under the umbrella of a theory of socio-genic desistance, the concepts of "primary", "secondary" and "tertiary" desistance were drawn upon (Maruna & Farrall, 2004; McNeill, 2016) to explain different experiences and perceptions of rehabilitation and resettlement. As acknowledged throughout the thesis, this process is not linear and does not have sequential stages, instead tending to be a "zigzag" process (Burnett, 2004), where offenders may vary in their motivation and

readiness for change. In addition to this, their actions and behaviour relate not only to how they see themselves, but also to how they see themselves accepted by others which again relates to their actions and behaviour – representing these as interacting concepts (Nugent & Schinkel, 2016) rather than a timeline of "perfect desistance". While primary desistance is principally behavioural and refers to a period of non-offending (arguably beginning when participants relayed their experiences of taking part in the prison programme in Study 1 and intentions for the future), secondary desistance refers to a change in self-identity whereby the individual no longer thinks of themselves as an offender.

In the testimony of Adam, it was found that engagement with the organisation "through the gate" allowed him to develop a positive identity, as he perceived of himself and others. As McNeill (2006) identified, when ex-offenders develop social links with people in different social groups and hierarchies, the odds of sustained desistance are improved as it allows them the access to wider social resources. Indeed, taking up new experiences such as employment, hobbies, (or in Adam's case, volunteering) help those trying to desist from crime to move on with their lives. Additionally, new experiences allow their "new" identity to be acted out and affirmed by a wider audience, consolidating it at a deeper level (Nugent & Schinkel, 2016). The desistance process is also affected by how the individual is viewed to be undergoing change and this may impact their success at long-term desistance (Weaver, 2013). The concept of tertiary desistance (McNeill, 2016) highlights the importance of social recognition by others that one has changed and development of a sense of belonging in community for long-term change (Nugent & McNeill, 2016). Indeed, the results of Study 2 indicated that students (particularly females) had supportive views towards rugby as a rehabilitation programme. Respondents highlighted the importance of creating a community in which to belong in resettlement (Graham & McNeill, 2017), suggesting that others' perception of their efforts to change would have a positive effect on their acceptance by others in the community. In answering the research question of whether rugby is successful as a rehabilitation programme, assessing both prisoner and student's views of the intervention provided the whole picture from practice to perception.

In practice, as Lewis and Meek (2012) suggest, sport can provide a valuable and unique opportunity to engage with young people caught up in a cycle of offending and imprisonment. The rugby intervention was demonstrated to provide pro-social values, foster social cohesion, and provide its participants with protective factors against their reoffending as well as promote a small reduction in attitudes endorsing criminality.

In perception, the intervention was deemed to be a positive initiative, that promoted health and wellbeing and provided a community and sense of belonging. However, both in practice and in perception, the risk factors and obstacles of resettlement were highlighted as concerns that although protected against, could not be ameliorated completely.

7.2 Summary of the chapter

This chapter sought to summarise and explain the overall findings of the research work undertaken in this thesis, the findings herein to those already revealed from the literature, what is known about current theories of desistance and to address the research question set out at the start of journey of this thesis. What follows in the final chapter is a conclusion to this research as a whole and a take home message for Prison Governors and staff, practitioners, external and prison-based organisations, and government derived from the implications of these findings.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Overall, the findings of the three studies undertaken should make an original contribution to research evaluating a prison-based rugby intervention programme and prisoner and public perceptions of rehabilitation. The present thesis set out to measure the success of an 8-week intensive rugby intervention programme according to its participants, other prisoners, and University students. Gaining the opportunity to complete prison research, which is rife with barriers to access (Drake & Harvey, 2014) and sampling (Abbott et al., 2018) is challenging and thus a mixed methods investigation has taken place, specifically gaining empirical evidence from the young adult male setting. This highlights the novelty of the current study in accessing these empirical findings, providing evidence reported by prisoners of what is successful in engaging and providing opportunities for resettlement. Results of using this mixed methodology suggests that those using quantitative measures as the sole method in evaluating similar sport interventions should proceed with caution, as valuable improvements in attitudes could be missed. Qualitative methods, in combination with quantitative or on their own, empower participants in this population and provide them with the opportunity to express themselves sincerely.

Prison climate has emerged in recent research as a potentially key predictor for prisoner attitudes to treatment intervention. The results of this research should provide evidence that this warrants further investigation as a variable affecting the administering of sport intervention. This provides implications for the prison estate and external partners when planning sport interventions, for when they may be most successful in their rehabilitation efforts. Additionally, differences across cohorts of the intervention indicate the importance of longitudinal data collection and programme consistency.

The novel format of presenting vignette and questionnaire measures based on prisoner perceptions to the public, in order to broaden understanding of the whole picture of what is perceived to be success in rehabilitation, provides key findings for future research. This exploratory study adds to the sparsity of studies assessing public, namely student perceptions of a prison intervention through a vignette. Particularly in the context of using sport for change, it can assist in future evaluations by providing insight

of public support for such interventions and their participants. This is important especially for establishing positive community networks for ex-prisoners, as support and a sense of belonging facilitates tertiary, long-term desistance (McNeill, 2016).

Through the original research question of the thesis, whether rugby is successful as a rehabilitation programme, the Interpretative Phenomenological case study provided the unique opportunity to follow the story of a young adult man after completing his sentence and his account of resettlement success. The findings gave an insight into his personal identity formation, taking him from "trusted prisoner" to "ex-offender" and then "insider" when he returned to the prison with the organisation in a professional capacity. Identity formation is a key part of secondary desistance, with successful prisoners re-framing their self-identity from "offender" to "non-offender" (Awenat et al., 2018; Maruna et al., 2004). His positive identity of himself along with his strong internal locus of control provided a buffer for the prison experience and allowed him to take advantages of the opportunities and positive relationships that were offered to him as a result of taking part in the rugby intervention programme. Adam's aspirations to transfer to an open prison for the last period of his sentence and the contacts he had made helped him to fully internalise the change in himself and to improve his chances of taking advantage of the opportunities around him. Although transitioning to open prison is not a possibility for all prisoners, the literature has demonstrated the positive impact of motivation for change and desistance from crime (Farrall, 2002; Maruna, 2001). Another method for this motivation to be sustained is through opportunities and post-release support, facilitated through integrated partnership working and the development of community links as suggested by Meek & Lewis (2014a), who recommend this as a key element of an effective prison-based sport intervention programme.

Given the current levels of reoffending, conflict, lack of opportunities and mental health issues in the youth prison estate (Ismail, 2020; Maguire, 2020), the research outlined in this thesis makes an important contribution using a mixed-methods approach to the literature documenting the power of sport in prison. It reports the positive benefits of taking part in a prison-based rugby intervention programme using a triangulation protocol to collate the viewpoint of its prisoner participants, the perception of the public

and an in-depth account of how the programme contributed to the internalising of change in an ex-participant.

8.1 Limitations and directions for future research

Some of the limitations associated with each study (1, 2 and 3) were reported at the end of each study and therefore will not be reviewed here. However, there are certain limitations that need readdressing for further clarification and justification.

The research (particularly Study 1, which used a prisoner sample) recruited a small sample size and this may have been reflected in both the quantitative data and themes identified in the Thematic Analysis. The limitation of small sample sizes are a common theme, particularly in research in the prison context and often comes with the territory due to access limitations and time and space restrictions (Marie Heard et al., 2013). Additionally, for Study 3, the original goal was to interview at least three ex-prisoners who had previously participated in the "Get Onside" programme, however the researcher encountered great difficulty in locating and interviewing resettling prisoners, partially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As documented by Morgan et al. (2020), recruitment for formerly imprisoned intervention participants can involve "numerous methodological barriers, commonly resulting in small, yet sufficing, sample sizes."

Although the research in Study 1 benefited from including a control group (Meek, 2012) which allowed for stronger inferences to be made regarding the effectiveness of the intervention programme (Williams et al., 2015), there were limitations in attempts to match the control sample, which is often par for the course in this specific research context (Ramluggun et al., 2010; Reiter, 2014). This partly reflects the methodological landmines that are rife in conducting prison research (Schlosser, 2008). Additionally, the lack of opportunity to randomise participants to groups due to prison restrictions introduces the potential for bias, as similarly found in a recent study by Woods et al. (2020). While randomised controlled trials may be considered the gold-standard of evaluation methodology, a common problem in the context of prison research and small-scale programme delivery is that it is not practically achievable (Meek, 2012; Williams et al., 2015).

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However, the novel model of some of the research undertaken in this thesis provided valuable insight into prisoner and public perceptions of rehabilitation and could be applied to other prison-based interventions, involving sport or an alternative medium. Accounts of experiences from prisoners regarding rehabilitation are rare (Bullock & Bunce, 2020) and gathering these and presenting them to the public provides a novel way of combining the two viewpoints to get a rounded picture of the intervention being studied. Furthermore, research has indicated that connections to prison (i.e., being a victim of a crime or having a family member in prison) has a significant effect on perceptions of offender rehabilitation (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). Future research should expand on the current findings by including this question in future measures.

While the focus of the present thesis has been on young adult male prisoners' experiences of rugby as a tool for rehabilitation and resettlement, evidence suggests prison-based sport and physical activities can provide clear physical and psychological benefits and can be valuable in promoting desistance from crime for female offenders (Meek & Lewis, 2014b). Despite this, previous findings show that female prisoners are less likely than their male counterparts to participate in sport and physical activity (Goetting & Howsen, 1983; Meek & Lewis, 2012). It is therefore important to acknowledge the differing needs of the female and male prisoner population and consequently, the intervention programmes that have the best chance at success. While high-discipline sport programmes such as the "Get Onside" rugby intervention have been shown to be helpful for aggressive control in young adult males, these may be less effective for young adult women whose offences are more likely to be non-violent in nature (Prison Reform Trust, 2015). For young adult women, whose offending is much more likely than men's to be driven by abusive and coercive relationships (Earle, 2018), it is vital that interventions help to raise self-esteem and resist peer pressure, as well as aim to incorporate violence and abuse counselling (Allen, 2016). Future research should seek to investigate a holistic approach where this is incorporated with the valuable opportunities for social cohesion and pro-social values that sport can provide.

Additionally, future research should seek to extend the findings of the current intervention being evaluated. Reconviction analysis against a matched control group would provide further indication of effectiveness of the sport intervention. Psychometric measures would also benefit from long-term repeat testing as the findings of the current thesis and previous research has indicated that significant reduction in attitudes predicting criminality and offending may only be observed long-term (Meek, 2012). Further longitudinal research following individuals after release from prison as their life trajectory progresses may also shed more light on how prison-based intervention programmes support effective resettlement and reintegration as well as identifying whether there are long-term effects of the intervention programme (Woods et al., 2017) and equally, whether there are long-term effects of the prison experience.

Moreover, in recent times, a small amount of studies have included and welcomed the contribution of prisoners into their methodology working group (Brosens, 2019), also consulting with those with lived experience in their evaluation of a psychological intervention (Awenat et al., 2018). The idea behind this is that it adds value and internal validity to the research approach as it allows the perspective of the ultimate target group to be taken into consideration when decision making. The potential benefits of involving those with lived experience of the CJS are that it is both feasible and rewarding for service users and the researchers, indeed status as an "insider" gives ex-offenders power in carrying out successful ethnographic prison research (Earle, 2014). It appears feasible that future research could use this model, particularly in research based around intervention evaluation, by utilising the knowledge and insight of those with lived experience of the same intervention programme.

8.2   Take home message and recommendations of the research

As a reflection of this ethnographic approach to impact research, the thesis will conclude with the following recommendations based upon the findings and experiences of the doctoral researcher, and the implications put forward in Chapter 7.

Recommendations:

1. **Programmes need to facilitate a bridging of the gap between "the inside" and "the outside" and further their provision of "through the gate" support to avoid individuals from not engaging and falling through the gaps.**

As seen in themes that emerged from qualitative findings of Study 1 and Study 3, prisoners and ex-prisoners discussed the limitations of the rehabilitative approach of prison programmes on offer when they weren't facilitating opportunities for them after release in the community.

2. **High discipline, full-contact sport has shown to be effective in providing ways to manage behaviour and develop pro-social values, however, intervention programmes of this type are still underused in the prison estate.**

Themes that emerged from interviews with prisoners in Study 1 and Study 3 identified values developed through playing rugby and their potential. Equally, themes emerging from qualitative responses of students indicated concerns around using high-contact sport in the prison estate. Therefore, further could be done to translate its potential in practice (with prisoners) to perception (of the public).

3. **More needs to be done to educate the public accurately about rehabilitative policies and programmes in place.**

As seen in Study 2, there was a level of awareness of some of the risk factors for resettlement that programme participants would face, however, there was also concern about whether they would be accepted into the community. Qualitative research with prisoners in Study 1 also demonstrated concern that prisoners had for the stigma they

may encounter on their release from prison and the effect of this on resettlement opportunities such as education and employment.

4. **More research needs to employ mixed methods to add to the valuable resource of "what works" particularly for young adult offenders as they are a group with specific needs compared to adults and young people (Earle & Phillips, 2009; Judd & Lewis, 2015; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).**

The research in this thesis demonstrated the benefits of mixed methods research. As seen in Study 1 and 2, while quantitative measures were able to provide tangible data, qualitative measures were needed to supplement the richness of the data and tell the whole story. It is also a way of amplifying the often-unheard voices of the prison population.

5. **Efforts need to be made to explore the effect of why particular individuals experience more success than others – for example through further research into developing a stronger, internal locus of control and facilitating this through partnerships and mentors.**

Study 3 suggested that Adam's success was partly through his own means of motivation and self-identity. Further research with other successfully resettled participants may provide additional insight into commonalities between the personal characteristics of those individuals who succeed in desisting long-term.

6. **Those with lived experience need to be utilised more in mentorship, as they are individuals who can really identify with the needs and experiences of those they are working with.**

Findings from Study 3 established the useful implications of gaining insight from individuals like Adam, whose lived experience of prison and success in resettlement gave him an "insider" perspective when returning to the prison with the organisation in a mentoring capacity.

7. **Those with lived experience should also be used in research methodology steering groups as this has promising aspects.**

As discussed in Study 3, a small amount of research (e.g. Awenat et al., 2018; Brosens, 2019) has shown the potential of using individuals with lived experience in developing methodology, prisoner measures and qualitative schedules for effective research with prisoners. This needs to be further explored because of the value and internal validity it

can add to research approaches in evaluating custodial interventions and prisoner facing research.

8. **The availability and access to reconviction data needs to be improved to allow an increased number of long-term cohort studies that can utilise this data as an outcome measure for prison-based interventions.**

As seen in the current research, there were challenges in gaining accurate reconviction data as an outcome measure in the evaluation of the rugby intervention programme. This data is important, especially for studies which implement a comparison group, such as Study 1 herein. However, it is also vital that it is not considered the only "measure of success" as resettlement and desistance is not a linear process.

9. **External and environmental factors should be considered when planning and administering interventions as prison social climate can influence impact, moreover this highlights the need for continued opportunities for longitudinal research.**

As seen in Study 1, results demonstrated differences between cohorts of the programme on attitude measures, especially between the cycles that took place in the summer and winter. This reinforces the need for longitudinal mixed method research, as it suggests that one cohort of quantitative data may only represent one snapshot in time in the programme and indeed, its participants and their surroundings in the establishment at that time. It also replicates findings of studies on prison social climate which has shown its effect on prisoner attitude to treatment interventions and intervention outcomes (e.g. Harding, 2014; Stasch et al., 2018).

10. **As we enter the 'new normal', as the country aims to recover from the pandemic, prisons and programme stakeholders need to take more creative approaches in their programming. Plans for adaptability should be built into programmes to address uncontrollable factors.**

It is impossible to ignore the challenges that continue to face young men as they leave prison and attempt to reintegrate into the community. Particularly in the "new normal", when these individuals have more constraints on their liberty than they would have in the past when emerging from their custodial sentence into the "outside world". By working and speaking directly with those administering the programmes, there is the potential for adaptability to be built in, by examining what can be offered to support participants in prison and "through the gate" in difficult circumstances that may further

limit their engagement in resettlement. Study 3 gained insight into some of the barriers to employment and training faced by Adam during his resettlement, as he was furloughed and unable to complete coaching qualifications. Those who have been released during restricted measures and national lockdowns will have faced further barriers to support in housing, employment, education and healthcare and it is vital that going forward, policy makers and researchers acknowledge and investigate this.

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Appendix A: MCAA and Demographic questionnaire used with intervention and control groups in Study 1

_____   _____   _____

Group: **Identifying #**   **Date:**

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a series of statements for which you can respond by showing whether you agree or disagree with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers. <u>Please answer all the questions.</u>

A = Agree   D = Disagree   (Circle One Answer)

1. It's understandable to hit someone who insults you.	A	D
2. Stealing to survive is understandable.	A	D
3. I am not likely to commit a crime in the future.	A	D
4. I have a lot in common with people who break the law.	A	D
5. There is nothing wrong with beating up a child molester.	A	D
6. A person is right to take what is owed them, even if they have to steal it.	A	D
7. I would keep any amount of money I found.	A	D
8. None of my friends have committed crimes.	A	D
9. Sometimes you have to fight to keep your self-respect.	A	D
10. I should be allowed to decide what is right and wrong.	A	D
11. I could see myself lying to the police.	A	D
12. I know several people who have committed crimes.	A	D
13. Someone who makes you very angry deserves to be hit.	A	D
14. Only I should decide what I deserve.	A	D

15. In certain situations I would try to outrun the police.   A   D

16. I would not steal, and I would hold it against anyone who does.   A   D

17. People who get beat up usually had it coming.   A   D

18. I should be treated like anyone else no matter what I've done.   A   D

19. I would be open to cheating certain people.   A   D

20. I always feel welcomed around criminal friends.   A   D

21. It's all right to fight someone if they stole from you.   A   D

22. It's wrong for a lack of money to stop you from getting things.   A   D

23. I could easily tell a convincing lie.   A   D

24. Most of my friends don't have criminal records.   A   D

25. It's not wrong to hit someone who puts you down.   A   D

26. A hungry man has the right to steal.   A   D

27. Rules will not stop me from doing what I want.   A   D

28. I have friends who have been to jail.   A   D

29. Child molesters get what they have coming.   A   D

30. Taking what is owed you is not really stealing.   A   D

31. I would not enjoy getting away with something wrong.   A   D

32. None of my friends has ever wanted to commit a crime.   A   D

33. It's not wrong to fight to save face.   A   D

34. Only I can decide what is right and wrong.   A   D

35. I would run a scam if I could get away with it.   A   D

36. I have committed a crime with friends.   A   D

37. Someone who makes you really angry shouldn't complain if they get hit.   A   D

38. A person should decide what they deserve out of life.   A   D

39. For a good reason, I would commit a crime.   A   D

40. I have friends who are well known to the police.   A   D

41. There is nothing wrong with beating up someone who asks for it.   A   D

42. No matter what I've done, its only right to treat me like everyone else.   A   D

43. I will not break the law again.   A   D

44. It is reasonable to fight someone who cheated you.   A   D

45. A lack of money should not stop you from getting what you want.   A   D

46. I would be happy to fool the police.   A   D

Participant Demographics

What is your age?

What is your ethnic group?

Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background:

White

1. English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
2. Irish
3. Gypsy or Irish Traveller
4. Any other White background, please describe

Asian/Asian British

9. Indian
10. Pakistani
11. Bangladeshi
12. Chinese
13. Any other Asian background, please describe

Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups

5. White and Black Caribbean
6. White and Black African
7. White and Asian
8. Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background, please describe

Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British

14. African
15. Caribbean
16. Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, please describe

Other ethnic group

17. Arab
18. Any other ethnic group, please describe

Appendix B: Semi-structured interview and focus group schedule used with intervention and control groups in Study 1

Guide questions for semi-structured interviews

Intervention:

1. How do you hear about and become involved with the Saracens Get Onside programme?

2. Are you currently involved in any other programmes in addition to Saracens Get Onside?

3. What do you think of the Get Onside programme? How has your experience of it been?

4. What other programmes have you completed while in prison? Which do you think is the best programme you have completed? (Why is it the best?)

5. Do you think the programme is useful for your rehabilitation towards release and not offending?

6. Do you think learning a new sport or participating in physical activity increases your opportunities upon release?

7. Do you think the programme opens up future career options and opportunities? Would this be beneficial in preventing someone from reoffending do you think?

8. What do you think leads someone to getting involved with crime?

9. Similarly, what do you think leads them away from it?

10. What do you think is the best way to prevent somebody from reoffending when they are released?

11. Have you noticed changes in yourself since spending time in prison?

12. Do you think your attitude towards committing crime has changed since being here? How do you feel about your previous offending?

13. Do you think your attitude towards committing crime has changed since completing this programme? Have you noticed any other changes?

14. Do you have plans for what you would like to do when you are released?

15. Are any of your plans related to work you have completed on the Get Onside programme? Are any of the plans related to other work or programmes you have completed in prison?

16. Do you have any other comments about the programme? Is there anything that you think would make it better/increase your engagement with it?

Control:

1. Have you heard of the Saracens Get Onside programme? (If yes, what have you heard about it?)
2. Have you volunteered to take part in the course before? (If not, why not?)
3. Are you currently involved in any programmes at the prison?
4. What other programmes have you completed while in prison? Which do you think is the best programme you have completed and why?
5. Do you think any of the prison-based programmes are useful for rehabilitation and not reoffending?
6. Do you think learning a new sport or participating in physical activity can increase your opportunities upon release?
7. In your opinion, is a programme that opens up future career/education options and opportunities useful in discouraging someone from reoffending upon release? Do you think this would prevent you reoffending?
8. What do you think leads someone to committing a crime?
9. Similarly, what do you think leads someone away from it? Are there any particular factors?
10. What do you think is the best way to prevent somebody from reoffending when they are released?
11. Have you noticed changes in yourself since spending time in prison? Do you think your attitude towards committing crime has changed since being here? How do you feel about your previous offending? (If you have completed any activities/programmes, have you noticed changes as a result of these?)
12. Do you think your attitude has changed since completing any programmes/activities?
13. Do you have plans for what you would like to do when you are released?
14. Are any plans related to programmes or activities you have completed while in prison?
15. What do you think makes a good programme? (If you could design one that you think would be most effective for rehabilitation/reducing reoffending, what would it be like?)

Focus group guide questions

1. OPINIONS ON GET ONSIDE
   - Why did you volunteer or get involved with the programme?
   - What's been something that you've particularly enjoyed or not enjoyed on the course so far?

2. OPINIONS ON SPORT/PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
   - Will you play more team sports (such as rugby) or engage in more physical activity after leaving prison do you think?
   - Do you think learning a new sport or participating in it gives you more opportunities upon release?

3. OPINIONS ON INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME
   - What are factors that lead young people to become involved in crime in your opinion?
   - Is there a main factor that may lead someone to end up in prison do you think? Or is it a combination of factors?

4. OPINIONS ON REOFFENDING
   - What factors might lead someone away from reoffending when they are released?
   - What would you say are the most important factors or deterrents?

5. OPINIONS ON CHANGES IN SELF AND ATTITUDE
   - What kind of changes have you seen in yourselves since being in prison?
   - Have you seen any changes in the way you handle certain situations?
   - Has your attitude towards getting into trouble changed?
   - Do you think the time itself has done this, your own personal changes, or programmes you have taken part in that has brought about this change?

6. OPINIONS ON PLANS/GOALS FOR RELEASE
   - Do you feel like you have plans or goals for when you leave prison?
   - Do you think it's important to have a plan?
   - Do you think programmes like this one help you with these plans?

Appendix C: Consent, Information and Debriefing sheets used in Study 1

Middlesex University School of Science and Technology
Psychology Department
The Burroughs, Hendon, NW4 4BT
Written Informed Consent

Title of study and academic year: An investigation of the effectiveness of the "Get Onside" Saracens RFC sporting intervention programme on re-offending at a Young Offenders Institution - 2019
Researcher's name: Sarah Welland (s.welland@mdx.ac.uk)
Supervisor's name and email*:   Dr Linda Duffy (l.duffy@mdx.ac.uk)*

- I have understood the details of the research as explained to me by the researcher, and confirm that I have consented to act as a participant.

- I have been given contact details for the researcher in the information sheet.

- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, the data collected during the research will not be identifiable, and I have the right to withdraw from participating in the project at any time without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so.

- I understand that I can ask for my data to be withdrawn from the project until data analysis begins 14 days after the final data collection for each individual 2-month study.

- I further understand that the data I provide may be used for analysis and subsequent publication in journal articles and a doctoral thesis, and I provide my consent that this may occur.

- I understand that my responses will recorded using a voice recorder and consent to this recording to be transcribed and used in the research.

- I understand that any reoffending data upon my release (if applicable) will be collected and consent to this being used anonymously in the research.

_____   _____
Print name   Sign Name

date: _____

To the participant: Data may be inspected by the Chair of the Psychology Ethics panel and the Chair of the School of Science and Technology Ethics committee of Middlesex University, if required by institutional audits about the correctness of procedures. Although this would happen in strict confidentiality, please tick here if you do not wish your data to be included in audits: _____

Department of Psychology, Middlesex University, The Burroughs, Hendon,

Participant Information sheet

Study title

An investigation of the effectiveness of the 'Get Onside' Saracens Rugby programme on reoffending at a Young Offenders Institution.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the research is to investigate whether a sporting programme at the prison can reduce re-offending rates of young offenders, when they are released. It will aim to do this by finding out if the offenders that complete the 8 week "Get Onside" rugby programme show lower rates of re-offending than the offenders who do not complete the programme. The research also aims to find out if attitudes towards crime differ between those who complete the programme and those who do not, as well as gaining insight into inmates' and prison staff's opinions of rehabilitation and re-offending. This is important research because if the programme is shown to improve opportunities upon release for the young men that complete it and make them less likely to return to prison, then it could gain more funding, be recommended for use in other institutions and prisons and potentially help more people.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be provided with a questionnaire to complete which will take a maximum of 15 minutes, at the start and end of a two-month period. This will be completed in the classroom or in your cell. You may also be asked to take part in a short informal interview during the two-month period about your experiences and opinions on prison, crime, rehabilitation, and reoffending. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes and will take place in a separate room at the prison with the researcher. You may also be asked to take part in a focus group with other participants on the same topics, which will take place in a classroom with the researcher and a member of prison staff. The process of conducting the focus group, including ground rules will be made clear to participants at the beginning of each session. You will be involved in the research for a two-month period. Overall, the research as a whole will last approximately three years.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no known disadvantages and risks of taking part. The researcher and prison staff will be available to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your participation before, during and after the study. Any information you disclose during the interview will be held confidentially, however prison staff will be notified if you express a threat of harm to yourself or others.

Consent

This information sheet is yours to keep and you will be given a consent form to sign prior to participating in the study. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you do not have to sign the consent form and take part if you do not wish to. If you do decide to take part, you are welcome to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. The data you provide in the study is completely confidential. All paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, accessible only to the research team, and all electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer. Any information you provide will be treated in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act. Your responses during interviews and focus groups will also be recorded using a voice recorder, so they can be transcribed for the

research. You will never be identified by name on the voice recording, only by a code.

Who has reviewed the study?

An Ethics Committee reviews all proposals for research using human participants before they can proceed. The Middlesex Psychology Department's Ethics Committee and National Research Committee have reviewed this proposal. Thank you for your time reading this information sheet.

Contact details

The researcher may be contacted at any time if you have any questions about your participation in the research.

Researcher: Sarah Welland, s.welland@mdx.ac.uk,

Supervisor: Linda Duffy, l.duffy@mdx.ac.uk

Department of Psychology, Middlesex University, The Burroughs, Hendon, NW4 4BT

Participant Debriefing sheet

Thank you very much for taking part in my research. The aims of this study were to find out whether a sporting programme at a prison could reduce re-offending rates of young adult male offenders when they are released. In addition to this, it aims to find out if attitudes towards crime differ between those who complete the programme and those who do not, as well as gaining insight into inmates' and prison staff's opinions of rehabilitation and re-offending. The background to the study is the important issue of re-offending among young people and young adults in the UK and how this could potentially be addressed by funding more programmes that provide people with more opportunities and support upon their release.

You completed a questionnaire, which assessed your attitudes towards crime, at the beginning and at the end of the two-month period. These scores will then be compared to see if there have been any changes in attitude. Your views on reoffending, rehabilitation, prison, and crime were recorded to be used in thematic analysis to assess views of the sporting programme and opinions on rehabilitation and reoffending.

The information you gave me will be held anonymously, and any responses you provided will not be attributed to you, however prison staff will be notified if a concern of yours or another's safety arises. The researcher and prison staff will be available to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your participation before, during and after the study. You have the right to withdraw any data you have provided without giving a reason and without penalty. This can be done up until 14 days after the final data collection for each individual 2-month study, when I will begin analysis. If you would like to withdraw your data, then this can be arranged by asking a member of the prison staff PE department to contact me by this date.

If you have any further questions, please use the contact details below.

Principal Investigator: Sarah Welland, s.welland@mdx.ac.uk,

Supervisor: Linda Duffy, l.duffy@mdx.ac.uk

Appendix D: Letters granting access to subjects and data collection in Study 1

Sarah Welland
Middlesex University
Faculty of Science and Technology
TG23, Town Hall
Hendon
London NW4 4BT
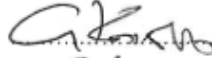
22/11/2017

Dear Sarah,

RE: Sarah Welland Ph.D. research project approval request

Further to your request, we confirm that we grant permission for you to collect data for your research project (including subsequent publications), evaluating the "Get Onside" rugby programme (in conjunction with Saracens RFC) within Feltham YOI, and will provide staff supervision where necessary. Data collection will include interviews, focus groups and the use of questionnaires with Young Adult participants of the Saracens "Get Onside" sports programme as well as control group participants from the Young Adult population of the prison.

Permission has been granted by:

....
G Knight – GOVERNOR....

Permission granted to:

SARAH WELLAND –   Ph.D. Research Student,
                         Middlesex University

LINDA DUFFY (Supervisor) –   Associate Professor,
                              Middlesex University

BAHMAN BALUCH (Supervisor) – Associate Professor,
                             Middlesex University

Duration of research: 30/11/2017 – 30/11/2019

Kind regards,

Saracens Sport Foundation
Allianz Park
Greenlands Lane
Hendon
NW4 1RL

Sarah Welland
Middlesex University
Faculty of Science and Technology
TG23, Town Hall
Hendon
NW4 4BT

24/11/2017

Dear Sarah,

RE: Information for Ph.D. research project ethics application

We confirm that Saracens "Get Onside" is an optional rugby skills training intervention programme run at HMPYOI Feltham in the Physical Education department, established in 2011. The research undertaken by Middlesex University will form an evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme on rehabilitation and reduction of reoffending in the young adult male prison population. This research is intended to recommend the programme as an official regime intervention in the youth estate.

Kind regards,

Nick Gourlay

Senior Development Manager - Inclusion

Appendix E: Ethical approval for Study 1

Middlesex University London

Psychology REC

The Burroughs
Hendon
London NW4 4BT

Main Switchboard: 0208 411 5000

08/09/2017

APPLICATION NUMBER: 1779

Dear Sarah Welland

Re your application title: Saracens "Get Onside" Evaluation

Supervisors: Linda Duffy and Bahman Baluch

Thank you for submitting your application. I can confirm that your application has been given approval from the date of this letter by the Psychology REC.

Although your application has been approved, the reviewers of your application may have made some useful comments on your application. Please look at your online application again to check whether the reviewers have added any comments for you to look at.

Also, please note the following:

1. Please ensure that you contact your supervisor/research ethics committee (REC) if any changes are made to the research project which could affect your ethics approval. There is an Amendment sub-form on MORE that can be completed and submitted to your REC for further review.

2. You must notify your supervisor/REC if there is a breach in data protection management or any issues that arise that may lead to a health and safety concern or conflict of interests.

3. If you require more time to complete your research, i.e., beyond the date specified in your application, please complete the Extension sub-form on MORE and submit it your REC for review.

4. Please quote the application number in any correspondence.

5. It is important that you retain this document as evidence of research ethics approval, as it may be required for submission to external bodies (e.g., NHS, grant awarding bodies) or as part of your research report, dissemination (e.g., journal articles) and data management plan.

6. Also, please forward any other information that would be helpful in enhancing our application form and procedures - please contact MOREsupport@mdx.ac.uk to provide feedback.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

Middlesex University

Chair

Psychology REC

Page 1 of 1

Appendix F: Vignette depicting violent and non-violent offender and accompanying questionnaire, used with respondents in Study 2

(Violent offender vignette and measure)

Age:

Gender:

Programme of study:

Year of study:

Please read the following vignette:

An 8-week prison-based course teaches rugby to young adult males (18-21 years old) convicted of **violent** crime (e.g. Grievous Bodily Harm or Assault). It is run by sport foundation coaches and prison staff and offers offenders the opportunity to develop positive attitudes and perceptions of themselves and others, as well as team values and provides resettlement opportunities to include voluntary work, education and employment. The programme delivery includes intensive Rugby training and gives individuals the opportunity to coach, teach and officiate as well as organise and run a touch rugby tournament for external visitors. The programme also includes Functional Numeracy and Social Inclusion workshops which involve topics such as goal setting, victim awareness, anger management, team values and CV writing as well as mentoring and career advice.

Before and after taking part in the 8-week training programme, the participants completed a questionnaire assessing their attitudes towards criminal activity.

Do you think that there will be a significant change in criminal attitudes as a result of taking part in the Rugby programme, in the following areas?:

1) **Reduced attitudes towards violence (this is the behaviour of individuals against persons or property that intentionally threatens, attempts or actually inflicts physical harm)**

   Very much so   Somewhat   Little change   No change at all

   Please give your reasons for your selected response:

2) **Reduced attitudes towards entitlement (this is the type of thinking that tells an individual that they have a right to take whatever they want from whoever has what they desire)**

   Very much so   Somewhat   Little change   No change at all

   Please give your reasons for your selected response:

3) **Reduced attitudes towards anti-social intent (this is the intent to engage in actions that harm or lack consideration for the wellbeing of others)**

   Very much so   Somewhat   Little change   No change at all

   Please give your reasons for your selected response:

4) Reduced attitudes towards associates (this means acceptance or not of criminal friends)

Very much so   Somewhat   Little change   No change at all

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

Do you think taking part in the programme may lead to:

5) Greater Social cohesion

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

6) Greater aggressive control

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

7) More positive health behaviours

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Strongly agree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

8) Increased social connections and family support

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

9) Financial incentives being a motivation for criminal activity

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Strongly agree   Strongly disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

10) No change of circle of friends with criminal intent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

11) No change to lack of support in the community and family

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

12) No change in criminal activity

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response

13) Are there any other comments that you have in support or lack of support of a rugby intervention as a method of prisoner rehabilitation?

14) Do you have any suggestions or changes to the intervention that you would recommend based on the information provided?

(Non-violent offender vignette and questionnaire)

Age:

Gender:

Programme of study:

Year of study:

Please read the following vignette:

An 8-week prison-based course teaches rugby to young adult males (18-21 years old) convicted of **non-violent** crime (e.g. Drug Offences or Burglary). It is run by sport foundation coaches and prison staff and offers offenders the opportunity to develop positive attitudes and perceptions of themselves and others, as well as team values and provides resettlement opportunities to include voluntary work, education and employment. The programme delivery includes intensive Rugby training and gives individuals the opportunity to coach, teach and officiate as well as organise and run a touch rugby tournament for external visitors. The programme also includes Functional Numeracy and Social Inclusion workshops which involve topics such as goal setting, victim awareness, anger management, team values and CV writing as well as mentoring and career advice.

Before and after taking part in the 8-week training programme, the participants completed a questionnaire assessing their attitudes towards criminal activity.

Do you think that there will be a significant change in criminal attitudes as a result of taking part in the Rugby programme, in the following areas?:

15) **Reduced attitudes towards violence (this is the behaviour of individuals against persons or property that intentionally threatens, attempts or actually inflicts physical harm)**

Very much so   Somewhat   Little change   No change at all

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

16) **Reduced attitudes towards entitlement (this is the type of thinking that tells an individual that they have a right to take whatever they want from whoever has what they desire)**

Very much so   Somewhat   Little change   No change at all

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

17) **Reduced attitudes towards anti-social intent (this is the intent to engage in actions that harm or lack consideration for the wellbeing of others)**

Very much so   Somewhat   Little change   No change at all

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

18) **Reduced attitudes towards associates (this means acceptance or not of criminal friends)**

Very much so   Somewhat   Little change   No change at all

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

Do you think taking part in the programme may lead to:

19) Greater Social cohesion

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

20) Greater aggressive control

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

21) More positive health behaviours

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Strongly agree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

22) Increased social connections and family support

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

23) Financial incentives being a motivation for criminal activity

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

24) No change of circle of friends with criminal intent

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

25) No change to lack of support in the community and family

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

26) No change in criminal activity

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Strongly agree   Strongly
disagree

Please give your reasons for your selected response:

27) Are there any other comments that you have in support or lack of support of a rugby intervention as a method of prisoner rehabilitation?

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28) Do you have any suggestions or changes to the intervention that you would recommend based on the information provided?

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Appendix G: Consent, Information and Debriefing sheets used in Study 2

Middlesex University School of Science and Technology
Psychology Department
The Burroughs, Hendon, NW4 4BT
Written Informed Consent

Title of study and academic year: Public perceptions of Rugby as a rehabilitation programme in a male youth institution - 2020

Researcher's name: Sarah Welland (s.welland@mdx.ac.uk)
Supervisor's name and email*:   *Dr Linda Duffy (l.duffy@mdx.ac.uk)*

- I have understood the details of the research as explained to me by the researcher, and confirm that I have consented to act as a participant.

- I have been given contact details for the researcher in the information sheet.

- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, the data collected during the research will not be identifiable, and I have the right to withdraw from participating in the project at any time without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so.

- I understand that I can ask for my data to be withdrawn from the project until data analysis begins 14 days after the data collection period.

- I further understand that the data I provide may be used for analysis and subsequent publication in journal articles and a doctoral thesis, and I provide my consent that this may occur.

_____   _____
Print name   Sign Name

date: _____

To the participant: Data may be inspected by the Chair of the Psychology Ethics panel and the Chair of the School of Science and Technology Ethics committee of Middlesex University, if required by institutional audits about the correctness of procedures. Although this would happen in strict confidentiality, please tick here if you do not wish your data to be included in audits: _____

Participant Information sheet

Study title

Public perceptions of Rugby as a rehabilitation programme in a male young offenders institution

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the research is to investigate the perceptions the general public possess regarding the rehabilitation of young adult offenders and whether they determine a rugby-based intervention will be successful in improving attitudes towards criminality.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be provided with a questionnaire to complete which will take a maximum of 20 minutes. This will be completed in the lecture hall. You will be involved in the research for the duration it takes to complete the questionnaire. The research as a whole will last approximately one month.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no known disadvantages and risks of taking part. The researcher will be available to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your participation before, during and after the study.

Consent

This information sheet is yours to keep and you will be given a consent form to sign prior to participating in the study. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you do not have to sign the consent form and take part if you do not wish to. If you do decide to take part, you are welcome to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. The data you provide in the study is completely confidential and anonymous. All paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, accessible only to the research team, and all electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer. Any information you provide will be treated in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act.

Who has reviewed the study?

An Ethics Committee reviews all proposals for research using human participants before they can proceed. The Middlesex Psychology Department's Ethics Committee have reviewed this proposal. Thank you for your time reading this information sheet.

Contact details

The researcher may be contacted at any time if you have any questions about your participation in the research.

Researcher: Sarah Welland, s.welland@mdx.ac.uk

Supervisor: Linda Duffy, l.duffy@mdx.ac.uk

Participant Debriefing sheet

Thank you very much for taking part in my research. The aims of this study were to find out public perceptions about rehabilitation and whether a rugby programme at a prison could successfully rehabilitate young adult males. In addition to this, it aimed to find out if perceptions towards the effectiveness of the rehabilitation programme differ between those completing a relevant degree to the prison and rehabilitation field and those completing an unrelated degree. Furthermore, it aimed to find out if perceptions of rehabilitation would differ if the participants completing the rugby intervention were non-violent offenders as opposed to violent offenders.

The background to the study is the important issue of reoffending among young people in the UK and how this could potentially be addressed by funding more programmes that could provide released prisoners with resettlement opportunities that are supported by the public, increasing the likelihood of their resettlement being successful and reducing the likelihood to reoffend.

You completed a questionnaire, which assessed your perceptions of the effectiveness of a prison-based rugby intervention, based on factors that have been seen by its participants as benefits in a previous study. Data will be compared and analysed to see if there are significant differences in perception of effectiveness of rehabilitation of non-violent offenders compared to violent offenders and if there are significant differences in perception of effectiveness of rehabilitation between criminology and non-criminology students.

The information you gave me will be held anonymously, and any responses you provided will not be attributed to you. The researcher will be available to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your participation before, during and after the study. You have the right to withdraw any data you have provided without giving a reason and without penalty. This can be done up until 14 days after the final data collection, when I will begin analysis. If you would like to withdraw your data, then this can be arranged by contacting me by this date.

If you have any further questions, please use the contact details below.

Principal Investigator: Sarah Welland, s.welland@mdx.ac.uk

Supervisor: Linda Duffy, l.duffy@mdx.ac.uk

Appendix H: Ethical approval for Study 2

Middlesex
University
London

Psychology REC

The Burroughs
Hendon
London NW4 4BT

Main Switchboard: 0208 411 5000

10/01/2020

APPLICATION NUMBER: 9115

Dear Sarah Welland and all collaborators/co-investigators

Re your application title: Student perceptions of Rugby as a rehabilitation programme in a male young offenders institution

Supervisor: Bahman Baluch and LindaDuffy

Co-investigators/collaborators:

Thank you for submitting your application. I can confirm that your application has been given APPROVAL from the date of this letter by the Psychology REC.

The following documents have been reviewed and approved as part of this research ethics application:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Participant Information Sheet	PSY Consent Form Perceptions study	10/12/2019	1
Debriefing Sheet	debrief perceptions study	10/12/2019	1
GDPR Declaration	Data Protection Declaration Form	06/01/2020	1
Materials	Perceptions questionnaire non-violent offenders	08/01/2020	2
Materials	Perceptions questionnaire violent offenders	08/01/2020	2
Data Protection Act checklist	(LSI) Data Protection Checklist	08/01/2020	1
Participant Information Sheet	Information Sheet Perceptions study	08/01/2020	2
Participant Recruitment Information	4.3ai	08/01/2020	1

Although your application has been approved, the reviewers of your application may have made some useful comments on your application. Please look at your online application again to check whether the reviewers have added any comments for you to look at.

Also, please note the following:

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2. You must notify your supervisor/REC if there is a breach in data protection management or any issues that arise that may lead to a health and safety concern or conflict of interests.

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4. Please quote the application number in any correspondence.

5. It is important that you retain this document as evidence of research ethics approval, as it may be required for submission to external bodies (e.g., NHS, grant awarding bodies) or as part of your research report, dissemination (e.g., journal articles) and data management plan.

6. Also, please forward any other information that would be helpful in enhancing our application form and procedures - please contact MOREsupport@mdx.ac.uk to provide feedback.

Good luck with your research.

Appendix I: Semi-structured schedule for Interpretative Phenomenological interview used in Study 3

1. How did you become aware of the Saracens Get Onside programme and what made you want to get involved?

   a. What did you think of the Get Onside programme? Did you enjoy the overall experience?

   b. Do you think the Get Onside programme was useful in preparing you for release from prison and for preventing you from reoffending? If so, what were the reasons?

   c. Other than the Get Onside programme, did you get involved in any other programme or activity?

   d. What do you think the best programme or activity that you completed in prison was? And why?

   e. Was Get Onside the first time you had played Rugby?

   f. Have you played other sports in the past?

   g. Do you think playing Rugby as a new sport increased your opportunities on release?

   h. Did the programme open up career or education opportunities? (In terms of your work at Saracens?)

   i. Have you noticed changes in yourself since before you went to prison (from your time spent there?) If so, in what way?

   j. Do you think your attitudes towards criminal and social activity has changed after getting involved in the Get Onside programme?

   k. Do you think your attitudes towards friends and family have changed after getting involved in the Get Onside programme? (Did you see any effects on your relationships with friends and family?)

2. What challenges did you face on your release from prison?

   a. What area were you released back into? (was it the same as before?)

   b. Did you have any relationships and support networks to help you?

c. In terms of support, do you think anything could have been improved upon your release from prison that might have helped you resettle better into the community? (Is there anything you would change?)

d. What do you think is the best way of preventing someone from reoffending when they are released from prison?

e. Do you think there is a main reason for repeat offending?

f. Do you have any advice you would give other young men in preparation for their release?

3. Do you think that general public opinions towards young men released from prison are positive or negative? (seeing them as reformed individuals or repeat offenders?)

a. Do you think public opinion had an effect on how you have settled back into your local community? Is it important to you?

4. Is there anything else you wanted to talk about that hasn't been covered so far?

Appendix J: Consent, Information and Debriefing sheets used in Study 3

Middlesex University School of Science and Technology
Psychology Department
The Burroughs, Hendon, NW4 4BT
Written Informed Consent

Title of study and academic year: An investigation of experiences of the "Get Onside" Saracens RFC sporting intervention programme in a Young Offenders Institution and on release - 2020
Researcher's name: Sarah Welland (s.welland@mdx.ac.uk)
Supervisor's name and email:*Dr Linda Duffy (l.duffy@mdx.ac.uk)*

- I have understood the details of the research as explained to me by the researcher and confirm that I have consented to act as a participant.

- I have been given contact details for the researcher in the information sheet.

- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, the data collected during the research will not be identifiable, and I have the right to withdraw from participating in the project at any time without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so.

- I understand that I can ask for my data to be withdrawn from the project until data analysis begins (14 days after data collection).

- I further understand that the data I provide may be used for analysis and subsequent publication in journal articles and a doctoral thesis, and I provide my consent that this may occur.

- I understand that my responses will be recorded using a voice recorder and consent to this recording to be transcribed and used in the research.

_____   _____
Print name   Sign Name

date: _____

To the participant: Data may be inspected by the Chair of the Psychology Ethics panel and the Chair of the School of Science and Technology Ethics committee of Middlesex University, if required by institutional audits about the correctness of procedures. Although this would happen in strict confidentiality, please tick here if you do not wish your data to be included in audits: _____

Participant Information sheet

Study title

An investigation of experiences of the "Get Onside" Saracens RFC sporting
intervention programme in a Young Offenders Institution and on release.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to
participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being
done and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following
information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if
there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.
Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the research is to explore the longitudinal effects of the "Get
Onside" rugby intervention programme and the support it can provide
within the prison and outside the prison in the community. This is important
research because if the programme is shown to improve opportunities upon
release for the young men that complete it and make them less likely to
return to prison, then it could gain more funding, be recommended for use
in other institutions and prisons and potentially help more people.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will take part in an informal extended interview about your experiences
on the Rugby intervention programme and your experiences in
resettlement. Additionally, you will be asked about opinions on prison,
crime, rehabilitation, and reoffending. This will take place over the phone or

video call due to COVID-19 restrictions. The interview will take approximately 1-2 hours and you may take a break or stop the interview at any time you wish.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no known disadvantages and risks of taking part. The researcher will be available to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your participation before, during and after the study. Any information you disclose during the interview will be held confidentially.

Consent

This information sheet is yours to keep and you will be given a consent form to sign prior to participating in the study. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you do not have to sign the consent form and take part if you do not wish to. If you do decide to take part, you are welcome to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. The data you provide in the study is completely confidential. All paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, accessible only to the principal researcher, and all electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer. Any information you provide will be treated in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act. Your responses during interview will also be recorded using a voice recorder, so they can be transcribed for the research. You will never be identified by name on the voice recording, only by a pseudonym.

Who has reviewed the study?

An Ethics Committee reviews all proposals for research using human participants before they can proceed. The Middlesex Psychology Department's Ethics Committee and National Research Committee have reviewed this proposal. Thank you for your time reading this information sheet.

Contact details

The researcher may be contacted at any time if you have any questions about your participation in the research.

Researcher: Sarah Welland, s.welland@mdx.ac.uk,

Supervisor: Linda Duffy, l.duffy@mdx.ac.uk

Participant Debriefing sheet

Thank you very much for taking part in my research. The aims of this research were to find out whether a sporting programme at a prison could reduce re-offending rates and improve outcomes for young adult males when they are released. In addition to this, it aimed to gain insight into experiences of prison, rehabilitation, and resettlement. The background to the study is the important issue of re-offending among young people and young adults in the UK and how this could potentially be addressed by funding more programmes that provide people with more opportunities and support upon their release.

Your views on reoffending, rehabilitation, prison, and crime were recorded to be used in interpretative phenomenological analysis to assess experiences in resettlement and the use of sport in rehabilitation and reoffending.

The information you gave me will be held anonymously, and any responses you provided will not be attributed to you, but to a pseudonym. The researcher will be available to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your participation before, during and after the study. You have the right to withdraw any data you have provided without giving a reason and without penalty. This can be done up until 14 days after the data collection, when analysis will begin. If you would like to withdraw your data, then this can be arranged by contacting me by this date.

If you have any further questions, please use the contact details below.

Principal Investigator: Sarah Welland, s.welland@mdx.ac.uk,

Supervisor: Linda Duffy, l.duffy@mdx.ac.uk

Appendix K: Ethical approval for Study 3

Middlesex
University
London

Psychology REC

The Burroughs
Hendon
London NW4 4BT

Main Switchboard: 0208 411 5000

08/09/2017

APPLICATION NUMBER: 1779

Dear Sarah Welland

Re your application title: Saracens "Get Onside" Evaluation

Supervisors: Linda Duffy and Bahman Baluch

Thank you for submitting your application. I can confirm that your application has been given approval from the date of this letter by the Psychology REC.

Although your application has been approved, the reviewers of your application may have made some useful comments on your application. Please look at your online application again to check whether the reviewers have added any comments for you to look at.

Also, please note the following:

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6. Also, please forward any other information that would be helpful in enhancing our application form and procedures - please contact MOREsupport@mdx.ac.uk to provide feedback.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

Middlesex
University

Chair

Psychology REC

Appendix L: Publications and Presentations from this thesis

Welland, S., Duffy, L. J., & Baluch, B. (2020). Rugby as a rehabilitation program in a United Kingdom male young offenders' institution: Key findings and implications from mixed methods research. *Journal of Exercise Rehabilitation*, *16*(1), 78. https://doi.org/10.12965/jer.1938726.363

Welland, S., Duffy, L., Baluch, B. (2019). Male offenders' experiences of an intensive rugby intervention as a method of prevention of reoffending in a Young Offenders Institution. Research Degree Student Conference 2019, Middlesex University, Hendon. Oral presentation. Won a prize for best oral presentation.

Welland, S. (2019, July 9). How rugby is helping to reform offenders in the UK. *Psychreg*.

Retrieved from https://www.psychreg.org/rugby-offenders/

Welland, S., Duffy, L., Baluch, B. (2018). Research in progress: An investigation of the effectiveness of the "Get Onside" rugby intervention programme on reoffending at a Young Offenders Institution (YOI). British Psychological Society: Division of Sport Psychology, Annual Conference 2018, poster presentation.

Welland, S., Duffy, L., Baluch, B. (2017). How to reduce re-offending at a Young Offenders Institution (YOI). An investigation of the effectiveness of the 'Get Onside' Saracens RFC sporting intervention programme. Research Degree Student Conference 2017, Middlesex University, Hendon. Poster presentation.

Rugby as a rehabilitation program in a United Kingdom Male Young Offenders' Institution: key findings and implications from mixed methods research

Sarah Welland, Linda J. Duffy, Bahman Baluch*

School of Science and Technology, Middlesex University, London, UK

There is a growing body of research on the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs in a Young Offenders' Institution (YOI). The aim of the present study is to investigate the effectiveness of rugby training as a rehabilitation intervention in a YOI in the United Kingdom. Young adult males (n=46) currently serving sentences at the YOI were split into two groups, intervention (n=25; mean age, 19.64±0.81 years) and no intervention (n=21; mean age, 19.76±0.89). Participants completed the Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA) instrument at three different time cycles and then pre/post for intervention group. Additionally, qualitative interviews (one to one and focus groups) were carried out with the intervention and no intervention groups during the same cycles of the study. The results of questionnaire analysis showed no significant difference in MCAA measures taken before and after rugby intervention.

Interestingly, the intervention group showed more pro-criminal attitudes on their responses compared to the no intervention group. Finally, analysis of the 3 cycles of data collected showed that the time of the year the questionnaire was completed has a significant impact on the responses given. In contrast, the qualitative interviews showed a very positive change of attitude towards rehabilitation from the intervention group after rugby training. The implications of the results in relation to studies aimed at evaluation of the intervention programs in YOI are discussed.

Keywords: Young offenders, Rugby, Rehabilitation, Pro-criminal attitudes, Mixed methods

INTRODUCTION

In recent years a realisation has occurred regarding the significant issue in the United Kingdom with reoffending, with rates of recidivism within the young adult population among the highest in the prison estate. The Ministry of Justice have reported the reoffending rate specifically for young adult offenders (18–20-year olds) as 30%. Young adults in prison have a variety of physical, mental and emotional needs (Meek and Lewis, 2012) which can impact their access to certain rehabilitation opportunities, ultimately informing their path to release and potential to reoffend. This calls for a need to understand offending behaviors and factors that may predict or prevent reoffending, as well as an understanding of how these can be addressed, if rehabilitation is to be successful.

In line with the increasing number of interventions being provided in prisons to meet rehabilitation needs, recent research has examined the social, psychological and health benefits of prison-based programs which include those focusing on arts, horticulture and vocational activities (Farrier et al., 2019; Wilkinson and Caulfield, 2017). The majority of these studies have demonstrated benefits in quality of life and reduced anxiety, depression and stress (Battaglia et al., 2013) as well as reduced rates of recidivism (Proctor et al., 2012).

A growing body of research has also explored the use of sport as a tool for youth rehabilitation. Participation in school sport clubs has been seen to contribute to fostering positive and desirable attitudes (Kwon, 2018) and support the development of social skills

and self-esteem (Bailey, 2006). Team sport in particular has been demonstrated to develop social cohesion and enjoyment (Elbe et al., 2017) and the potential for using this in the rehabilitation of offenders in a custodial setting has been explored in recent literature. Sport in prison has been seen to have a positive effect on the psychological, social and physical wellbeing of offenders (Amtmann and Kukay, 2016; Battaglia et al., 2013). A small amount of studies have investigated the use of contact sport with youths, for example the effect of martial arts on improving wellbeing outcomes including resilience and self-efficacy (Moore et al., 2018). The unique impact of utilising a full-contact team sport such as rugby in a prison setting as a mechanism for addressing and improving attitudes towards offending however, has yet to be explored to any great extent.

Attitudes favoring criminal activity have been established as a predictor of antisocial behavior in offender populations (Mills et al., 2004) and previous studies have examined the relationship between pro-criminal attitudes and recidivism in offenders (Walters, 2005). Findings implicating these attitudes as among the strongest predictors of male adult offender recidivism have led to the development of intervention methods aiming to address pro-criminal attitudes. Such cognitive based programs have seen a significant reduction in post intervention criminal attitude scores (Simourd et al., 2016; Warner et al., 2018).

Researchers have also examined the relationship between criminal attitudes and criminal associates, finding that the proportion of free time spent with criminal associates statistically predicted criminogenic thinking (Whited et al., 2017). The notion of criminal associates as a dynamic risk factor for crime has been operationalised in intervention measures such as the Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA) (Mills et al., 2002). Research has included the use of this tool with sexual and violent offenders (Mills et al., 2003; Mills et al., 2004) and found it a valid and reliable instrument in predicting general and violent recidivism.

The question, however, is to what extent intervention programs have been successful in reducing recidivism and to what extent any changes in pro-criminal attitudes (e.g., MCAA) could be taken as evidence of the effectiveness of said rehabilitation program. For example, Mulder et al. (2012) reported that groups identified as intervention in their study appeared to be worse after going through the program and the rates of recidivism showed no significant pattern between intervention and no intervention groups. Others have argued that the effectiveness of a rehabilitation program may require a more in-depth methodological approach in the format of a mixed method research (Morgan et al., 2019).

The use of mixed methods (research in this area) has been primarily based on the principle of triangulation, employing this as a means of obtaining a more complete picture of the population under study (Morgan et al., 2019; Tonkin-Crine et al., 2016). Existing literature places the significance of mixed methodology in how it offsets the weakness of both quantitative and qualitative methods and provides rich data that would not be possible through either approach alone (Blagden et al., 2016). This has been seen in the evaluation of prison programs (Farrier et al., 2019) who found that while quantitative methods were restricted by limited completion of follow-on questionnaires and concerns regarding response bias, the addition of qualitative interviews revealed the positive impacts on prisoners' mental health and wellbeing. This highlights the benefit of the mixed method approach, as interviews go beyond the quantitative information gained and gather data directly from participants in their own words, indicating the rationale behind the results. Interviews can also be an empowering experience for participants and those who may be reluctant to complete questionnaires or write down their thoughts are often willing to express themselves to an interested, human interviewer.

The main aims of the present study were (a) to examine the effectiveness of engagement in a rugby program training as a rehabilitation program for young male offenders and (b) to utilise both a quantitative and qualitative methodological approach. The quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of the program was assessed on the basis of responses given to the MCAA by those participating in an 8-week intensive rugby program training compared to those that did not and those that did not participate, to assess whether there were differences in pro-criminal attitudes after completing the program. The qualitative analysis of the effectiveness of the program was based on a one to one interview and focus group approach with those that participated in the rugby training program and those that did not, with the aim of assessing their views regarding about criminality, reoffending and the benefits of rugby training in the prison setting.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

In total, 46 young adult males currently serving sentences at the YOI took part in this study. Participants were split into two groups, those in the intervention sample (n = 25; mean age, 19.64 ± 0.81 years), and those in the no intervention sample (n = 21; mean age, 19.76 ± 0.89 years). Data for the study was collected at three different time cycles of 8 weeks, in May–June 2018 (n = 18), Oc-

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tober–December 2018 (n = 8), and in May–June 2019 (n = 20). Additionally, qualitative interviews were carried out with intervention and no intervention groups in May–June 2018 (n = 20) and with intervention group in October–December 2018 (n = 9) and a focus group with intervention participants in May–June 2018 (n = 12) and October–December 2018 (n = 15).

Materials

In the present study, the MCAA instrument (Mills et al., 2002) was used to measure criminal attitudes. The selection of this instrument was based on the conceptual concordance with the underpinnings of the intervention, in that it addresses criminal attitudes, values, beliefs and justifications directly related to criminal activity. The use of pre- and postintervention data, specifically change scores (difference between pre- and postintervention test data), are an effective method of determining the degree to which participants benefit from intervention, particularly those taking place in the criminal justice system (Howard and van Doorn, 2018; Simourd et al., 2016).

The MCAA tool was developed by Mills et al. (2002) and consists of two parts: Part A is a quantified self-report measure of criminal friends, and part B is a 46-item measure of attitudes that is composed of four scales: violence (12 items), entitlement (12 items), antisocial intent (12 items), and associates (10 items). The tool is based upon research that has demonstrated that antisocial attitudes and antisocial associates are among the better predictors of antisocial behavior (Mills et al., 2004). The MCAA has been piloted, used and validated with incarcerated adult offenders in Canada. It has shown predictive validity for the outcomes of general and violent recidivism (Mills et al., 2004) and has shown "reasonable reliability (internal consistency and temporal stability) and appropriate convergent and discriminant validity, with criterion validity evidenced in the scale's relationship with criminal history variables, and a factor analysis confirming the four distinct scale domains" (Mills et al., 2002). The temporal stability of the MCAA has also suggested its use as an appropriate pre- and posttest measure for interventions addressing antisocial attitudes.

An abridged version of the MCAA was selected for use in the study, with only part B of the tool administered to participants, with the purpose of assessing attitudes in four key areas: attitudes towards violence, sentiments of entitlement, antisocial intent and attitudes towards associates. It was important for the sample that the questionnaire was accessible and quick to complete due to time constraints, furthermore, and the nature of the sample meant that there was already some suspicion expressed around responding to the statements in the measure. It was concluded that the domain of 'attitudes towards associates' included in part B would be sufficient to measure the level of identification and acceptance of criminal associates, to reflect the influence that criminal associates may have on the individual (Mills et al., 2002).

Procedure

Ethical approval for this research was granted by Middlesex University Ethics Board and the YOI that participated in the study, through Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. The first author began by visiting the prison site and making contact with both the physical education instructors (prison officers who run sports programs, gym sessions, and also function as officers) and the prison governor. Approval from the prison governor for the researcher's access and implications for resource were granted. Single-site permission for the research to take place was then granted in May 2018.

Data collection began in May 2018. The program runs two cycles per year, one in the summer (May–June) and one in the winter (October–November). The first author began by introducing herself to the participants at the start of the intervention program, explaining her role as an external evaluator, informing them about the aims of the research, and what the research process would entail. It was made clear that the research process was separate from the project delivery, independent from the Prison or Probation Services and that participation was entirely voluntary. Information sheets including prison researcher contact details in case of questions or complaints, and an explanation of how to withdraw from the study were given to all participants to keep. All program participants agreed to take part in the research and returned a completed consent form.

Procedure for quantitative data collection

For the intervention group, the questionnaires were administered to participants at the start of the first week of the intervention and at the end of the final week. These were completed in the classroom. For the no intervention group, questionnaires were administered to participants at the end of the intervention period and were completed on the wing of the prison where they resided. All participants were reassured that their responses would be anonymous and that there was no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. They were all debriefed after taking part in the study.

Procedure for qualitative data collection

Interviews took place over the second half of the 8-week pro-

gram. Interviews with participants from intervention and no intervention groups took place in a private office in the prison. Participants were put at ease with informal conversation and assured that although the interview would be recorded for transcribing purposes, their participation would be completely anonymous and they would be identifiable only by a code. They were assured they could take as much time as they needed to respond and if they felt uncomfortable at any time could decline to answer or terminate the interview. The interviews followed a semistructured schedule of 15 guide questions relating to the respondent's time spent in the YOI, views on sport and course participation, self-perception and attitudes towards reoffending and release (a full list of questions included in the schedule are available from the first author upon request). Probes were used in order to gain responses richer in detail if the interviewer felt that the participant had more to say about a topic or could expand on the answers given. The questions in the schedule had to be applicable to both intervention and no intervention groups (with slight modification i.e., "What have you heard about the rugby program?" rather than "How did you hear about the rugby program?"). The interviews lasted between 10 and 50 min and the voice recorder was stopped after the participant had finished responding to the last question. After interview, each participant was thanked for taking part and debriefed, assured their participation was completely voluntary and that any part of their responses could be excluded from data analysis if they wished.

Focus groups also took place in a classroom with intervention participants on the final week of the program. The duration of the focus group was recorded with the permission of the participants. Care was taken by the first author to assure the respondents that they would not be identifiable in any subsequent report, and that the recording would be destroyed afterwards. The first author began the focus group by stating some ground rules including that participants should respect each other's opinion, listen when others were speaking and not repeat any of the discussion elsewhere in the prison. Focus groups followed a semistructure much like the interviews, consisting of six discussion areas and 15 guide ques-

tions in total. Group discussion was prompted on participants' experience of the program, physical activity in prison, rehabilitation, plans for release and what factors would most likely inform and prevent reoffending.

RESULTS

Quantitative analysis

No intervention vs. rugby intervention group

Mean total pro-criminal scores and corresponding standard deviations and number of participants as per no intervention and rugby group (pre- and postintervention) is shown in Table 1.

As can be seen in Table 1 the measures taken from no intervention group do not seem to differ much from the two measures taken from the rugby group at pre- and postintervention comparisons. Indeed, it seems that the rugby group has scored higher at both times from the no intervention group. Independent groups t-test comparisons between the no intervention group score and the scores taken at pre and post from the rugby group showed $t(44) = 0.73$, $P < 0.46$ for total preintervention and no intervention and $t(44) = 0.43$, $P < 0.66$ for total postintervention and no intervention group.

Rugby at 2-time measures for all four components

Mean scores on the MCAA (violence, entitlement, antisocial intent, and associates) and corresponding standard deviations for the rugby groups at pre- and postintervention are shown in Table 2.

As can be seen in Table 2 the measures taken from rugby group do not seem to differ much from the two measures taken at pre- and postintervention comparisons. Repeated measures t-test comparisons showed no significant differences for all four comparisons with $t(24) = 0.7$, $P < 0.48$, for violence, $t(24) = 0.7$, $P < 0.46$, for entitlement, $t(24) = 0.17$, $P < 0.86$ for antisocial intent and $t(24) = 0.31$, $P < 0.75$, for associates.

Data collection cycles

Mean total pro-criminal scores (pre- and postintervention) and

Table 1. Mean total pro-criminal scores and corresponding standard deviations and number of participants as per no intervention and rugby group (pre- and postintervention)

Participants	Mean ± SD
No intervention (n = 21)	31.28 ± 7.69
Rugby (preintervention) (n = 25)	32.84 ± 6.70
Rugby (postintervention) (n = 25)	32.16 ± 6.00

SD, standard deviation.
Higher rating equals more pro-criminal attitudes.

Table 2. Breakdown of pro-criminal attitudes scores as per mean violence, entitlement, antisocial intent and associates measures at pre- and postintervention for the rugby group (n = 25)

Intervention	Violence	Entitlement	Antisocial intent	Associates
Pre	7.48 ± 3.21	7.76 ± 2.29	9.00 ± 2.27	8.60 ± 1.41
Post	7.16 ± 3.13	7.40 ± 2.64	9.08 ± 1.77	8.52 ± 1.53

Values are presented as mean ± standard deviation.
The higher the rating the stronger the expressions towards the intended (violence, entitlement, antisocial intent, and associates) measure.

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corresponding standard deviations the rugby groups at 3 cycles of measurement are shown in Table 3.

As can be seen in Table 3 there are differences in measurements between cycle 2 and cycles 1 and 3. One way independent groups analysis of variance for pro-criminal scores at premeasurement between the 3 cycles found F (2, 22) = 3.61, MSe = 36.92, $P < 0.04$ and for postmeasurement F (2, 22) = 2.86, MSe = 31.79, $P < 0.07$. *Post hoc* comparisons of the means using Tukey honestly significant difference showed that the mean difference for cycle 2 at preintervention with cycle 3 (mean ± standard error [SE] = 7.48 ± 2.95) is significantly different at $P < 0.019$ with lower scores at cycle 2. Furthermore, the mean difference for cycle 2 at postintervention with cycle 3 (mean ± SE = -6.08 ± 2.73) is significantly different, at $P < 0.03$, with lower scores at cycle 2.

Qualitative analysis

Interview data from the intervention and no intervention groups of young adult offenders were transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis, whereby interesting features of patterns in the text were highlighted, significant and recurring ideas then coded, leading to categories of code and data,

which were reviewed systematically until the most commonly cited concepts were identified. While each theme has been presented and expanded on separately, they are not mutually exclusive. The extracts cited for the purpose of the present study include only a representative sample of participant responses. The themes for each group (intervention and no intervention) indicated by the analysis can be seen in Table 4 with illustrative quotes from transcripts for each theme.

Intervention group themes

Social cohesion and learning to play together

The use of team sport to encourage different individuals from across the establishment to mix with each other was perceived as beneficial and values were acquired through playing rugby together as a team such as respect and discipline. Being part of the team provided a behavioral incentive and motivation to achieve, which resulted in observed changes in behavior.

Controlled aggression

The controlled aggression in rugby was widely emphasized, providing an effective way of releasing anger and stress built up through the prison regime. Working this out on the rugby pitch was seen as a constructive way of resolving tension without consequences.

Positive health behaviors

Developing a healthy routine and engaging in health behaviors such as going to the gym were perceived to be a positive outcome of taking part in the intervention program, which pushed partici-

Table 3. Mean total pro-criminal scores pre- and postintervention as per 3 cycles and number of participants per each cycle

Cycles	Total preintervention	Total postintervention
Cycle 1 (n=8)	31.25 ± 5.67	33.62 ± 6.11
Cycle 2 (n=8)	29.62 ± 7.63	28.25 ± 5.11
Cycle 3 (n=9)	37.11 ± 4.72	34.33 ± 5.63

Values are presented as mean ± standard deviation.

Table 4. Themes identified through thematic analysis organised into group and illustrated by examples of quotes from participant transcripts

Group	Theme	Quote
Intervention (rugby)	Social cohesion and learning to play together	"The fact that different post codes, we're all together, playing for each other, I think it's really important…"
	Controlled aggression	"So it's good self-control, you can hit someone along the lines of rugby, and they've just gotta walk away. Same vice versa with you."
	Positive health behaviors	"They give you a good structure to a life already, cause you can come out with skills, qualifications, a hobby, and a routine, which I think is what you need to live a fairly organized and fulfilling life."
	People around you (associates)	"It's seeing someone else succeed, or someone like, where they've come from change."
	Challenges of release and finding support	"What people say, when you get out, all the plans go away, that's the hardest thing about it, you've got to really stick to it."
No intervention	Inevitability of crime	"I knew, even when I was on road, doing what I was doing, I knew there was a time I would come jail…"
	Lack of support	"Literally, they just put you into the big, bad world to fend for yourself. And that's why I think like a lot of youths feel hard done by. I feel like that—I felt like that."
	Financial incentives	"If you've got older in the area, making money…driving flash cars, being with like loads of girls and stuff, you wanna get some of that as well."
	Role models	"If you see people around you that are going towards crime and less people are going towards the normal life…then you're gonna just think "oh that's just—I guess that's the way.""

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pants to better their fitness and wellbeing.

People around you

The behavior of friends was perceived to be a predictor of offending behavior with the awareness of needing to cut ties upon release. The needs of a close family member and the positive influence of new friends were deemed to be protective factors that could discourage recidivism.

Challenges of release and finding support

Resettlement challenges including housing and employment concerns were perceived to be a potential barrier to rehabilitation. Having support systems available upon release were considered an important factor in preventing reoffending however participants identified barriers for seeking emotional support such as the perception of weakness.

No intervention group themes

Inevitability of crime

Participants perceived it to be inevitable to engage in criminal behavior. They similarly considered the consequences that would follow such as prison time, injury or even death as inevitable and these outcomes appeared to be an accepted part of committing crime.

Lack of support

Participants identified the lack of support and opportunities in their local community as a factor that influenced their criminal activity. If support was not found in the home or community, it was found in other settings that may be conducive to crime, such as a gang.

Financial incentives

The incentive of money was identified as a key factor in becoming involved in criminal activity. The risks that came with fast money were often perceived to be preferable to the struggle of a minimum wage job, especially when paired with the temptations of a flashy lifestyle demonstrated by older peers in the local area.

Role models

Male role models found in the local area who could offer guidance and security were identified as a risk factor for involvement in criminal activity, as they represented an aspirational lifestyle that participants wanted to emulate.

DISCUSSION

The main aim of the present study was to examine the effectiveness of a rugby intervention program as a useful tool for rehabilitation for young male offenders applying both a quantitative and qualitative methodological approach. MCAA measures were taken as evidence of the effectiveness of the program and the data were subjected to quantitative analysis. The results showed no significant change in pro-criminal attitudes before and after the rugby training program. Indeed, there were indications that the no intervention group scored lower on the MCAA measures compared to the pre- and post-MCAA measured of the intervention group. Another interesting finding was the significant differences in the time of data collection on the responses given to MCAA by the intervention group. The qualitative analysis of the effectiveness of the program, however which was based on one to one interviews and focus group discussions, showed a positive improvement in pro-criminal attitudes for those in the rugby intervention program. In what follows the present findings are discussed together with the limitations and implications of the current research.

The expectation was that those involved in the rugby intervention group would score significantly lower at postintervention in pro-criminal attitudes measure than preintervention. However, this was not the case neither for the total measures (Table 1) nor for the breakdown of each sub scale (Table 2). Interestingly, the intervention group had higher (although not significant) pro-criminal attitude scores than the no intervention group. Possible explanations for such a finding could be seen in the kind of personality traits that attracts a person to engage in an overtly aggressive sport such as rugby. As taking part in the rugby program was on a voluntary basis it seems that it has already attracted those with more thrill seeking, sensation seeking personality traits than those that are less likely to engage in such extreme sporting activities. As Cohen et al. (2018a) have demonstrated those engaged in extreme sports differ significantly from those engaged in nonextreme sport (e.g., archery) in showing more robust personality traits. Indeed, Cohen et al. (2018b) further argued that such personality difference may have implications for any rehabilitation intervention. Future researchers should take into account personality makeup of the participants when using psychometric measures in assessing effectiveness of rehabilitation program as a result of extreme sport intervention (e.g., rugby). Reliance on participant's responses to questionnaires alone may thus not be the most beneficial method of assessing effectiveness of intervention programs.

Whilst pre-post intervention measures showed no significant

differences it was interesting to note that the cycle (time of the year) that participants completed the pro-criminal measures were significantly different between cycle's 1 and 2 and cycle's 2 and 3 (Table 3). Recent research both in psychiatric wards and prison settings has raised the issue of the significance of environmental factors and the timing of any intervention as a factor affecting the outcomes of any intervention treatments (Jaspers et al., 2019). Stasch et al. (2018) argued that the prison climate has a significant effect on prisoner rehabilitation effectiveness. During periods when relationships between prisoners and staff are more positive there are more positive attitudes towards any treatments and interventions. The result of the present study and differences inthe scores of MCAA during the 3-time cycles may be an indication of climate change in the prison affecting participants' responses.

Qualitative

Social influences and cohesion through rugby

The expectation was that the intervention participants would have a more positive view of their future and their associations. Both the intervention and the no intervention groups acknowledged the influence of friends on their criminal behavior and gang involvement (Evans et al., 2016; Lenzi et al., 2015). However, the intervention group brought about discussion of cutting ties with old friends in favor of making new, positive friends who could be used as peer role models (Hoge et al., 1996). In addition, the program had fostered a sense of belonging amongst the intervention participants and began considering the effect their imprisonment had on their family, with strong family ties recognized as an important factor in promoting effective resettlement (Walker et al., 2017).

In contrast, the no intervention group showed a lack of sense of belonging and commented on the lack of support in their community. As a consequence, they had found value in a gang setting due to the financial support, protection and sense of belonging it provided (Lenzi et al., 2015; Merrin et al., 2015) and their need for a male role model to provide guidance (Hurd et al., 2009). One explanation for these differences is that the team setting of rugby provided a sense of belonging and team membership for the intervention participants, whilst the no intervention participants found this sense of belonging in gang membership. This is consistent with research that has studied the potential for team sports to bring people together (Thorpe et al., 2014), especially those who are at risk of gang-affiliation (Spruit et al., 2018) with the positive relationship between a good support system and wellbeing well documented (Battaglia et al., 2013).

The intervention group also discouraged gang-related divides in the prison, by facilitating socialization between prisoners and providing an opportunity for conflict resolution. The fostering of this social team environment was also found to be beneficial for participants' behavior as they were held accountable due to their status as a member of the team, with the sport providing an incentive to succeed and a framework for participants to pin their behavior on (Perkins and Noam, 2007).

Risk and protective factors

Risk factors on release from prison were established by both groups of participants. The crucial time period of resettlement for predicting reoffending is well established (Dickson and Polaschek, 2014) and employment, housing and financial difficulties are key risk factors for young people newly released from prison (Yukhnenko et al., 2019). Unlike the no intervention group, participants of the intervention acknowledged barriers to seeking support, such as the image of masculinity (Kupers, 2005) and the perception of weakness in engaging in help-seeking behaviors (Seidler et al., 2016). Intervention participants also appeared to frame these factors in a more positive light and discussed potential coping mechanisms. A possible explanation for this could be that they felt they had acquired protective factors against reoffending via engagement in the intervention program. These protective factors have been seen in previous research to have a significant effect on reducing reoffending (Rennie and Dolan, 2010). Coping mechanisms established by the intervention group included the controlled aggression of playing rugby which provided a productive and controlled way of releasing tension. The humbling nature of being tackled to the ground has been seen to be particularly crucial in building values such as self-control and resilience (Patience et al., 2013) and full-contact sport has been found to enforce discipline and boundaries (Blomqvist Mickelsson, 2019; Twemlow and Sacco, 1998). The intervention also brought forward the development of positive health behaviors, with it facilitating a daily routine. Participants reported benefits to their fitness and wellbeing, consistent with previous research that suggests an association between team sport and improved health outcomes (Eime et al., 2013) and the benefits of keeping inmates busy and occupied in meaningful pursuits (Wilkinson and Caulfield, 2017).

Protective factors were not acquired by no intervention participants and this, compounded with the motivations they discussed for their involvement in criminal activity, paint a concerning picture. The motivation of gaining 'fast money' through criminal activity as a means to affording an aspirational lifestyle modeled by

older peer models on the street, carried risk. However, the acceptance of the inevitable consequences (i.e., prison, injury, or death) tied to their engagement with crime is consistent with existing literature which has looked at increased risk-taking behaviors for offenders (Pachur et al., 2010). The contrast between the two groups here highlights the potential for the intervention in providing protective factors that can combat such acknowledged risk factors and discourage participants from considering crime as an 'inevitable' activity. It also suggests the value of using role models in rehabilitation, particularly those with the same lived experience (Haddad et al., 2011; Yancey et al., 2011) that could demonstrate a preference for positive behaviors and choices.

In summary, the findings herein are not without certain limitations. This study questions whether quantitative measures are reliable or sufficient enough in evaluating such prison-based interventions. Research has suggested that self-reported change in antisocial attitudes may not provide valid information about change in risk of recidivism as a result of intervention (Howard and van Doorn, 2018) and therefore other methods may be more beneficial in predicting whether interventions will truly 'rehabilitate' their participants. Similar studies have discovered that while quantitative measures may not reveal a significant difference in change scores, qualitative interviews reveal benefits of the intervention which would otherwise not be seen (Farrier et al., 2019). This emphasizes the need for mixed methods in this research area which has been suggested in previous literature (Blagden et al., 2016).

Qualitative measures allow participants to talk sincerely and express what they really think and thus may be a more accurate measure of the effectiveness of the intervention (Giacomini and Cook, 2000). The specific population of young adult male offenders may also play a role in the effectiveness of the quantitative measure as their social context may explain socially desirable responding to such measures (Howard and van Doorn, 2018), and may influence the truthfulness or accuracy of their answers. Existing studies have encountered similar issues here with response bias, where participants ticked all answers or left questionnaires incomplete (Farrier et al., 2019).

The relatively small sample size of young adult males recruited from the YOI is an additional limitation and this may have been reflected in not only the quantitative data, but in the themes identified through thematic analysis. This was, however, unavoidable due to the nature of the sample population and consequent access challenges. This led to limitations in the matching of the no intervention sample, which is often par for the course in this specific research context (Ramluggun et al., 2010). Similar challenges have

been encountered for example by Skerfving et al. (2014) who redesigned their randomized control trial as a quasi-experimental control group study due to unwillingness presented by practitioners to randomize participants into the no intervention group.

Conclusion, implications, and future research

While not presented in the quantitative results, the positive benefits of taking part in the intervention program were seen through qualitative measures, including the protective factors developed through the team and full-contact setting of rugby. The identified risk factors and motivations for crime also provide implications for improved through the gate support for outside agencies and the prison estate. Although there were no significant differences seen in self-reported pro-criminal attitudes as a result of participating in the rugby intervention, there were significant differences in pro-criminal attitudes at baseline depending on the time of year that the intervention was administered (winter vs. summer). This provides implications for the prison estate and external partners when planning sport interventions, for when they may be most successful in their rehabilitation efforts. The present study has also provided implications for future research in this area. Those using quantitative measures as the sole method in evaluating similar sport interventions should proceed with caution, as valuable improvements in attitudes could be missed. Qualitative methods, in combination with quantitative or on their own, empower participants in this population and provide them with the opportunity to express themselves sincerely.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

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