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The Responsible Man: A Study in Two Private Prisons

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Abstract

With the expansion of the use of private prisons and detention centres worldwide and the increasing involvement of private actors in the provision of custodial services, this doctoral thesis considers life inside two private prisons in England. Using theoretically informed ethnography it evaluates the effect of responsibility on men imprisoned in two private prisons in England. Firstly, it briefly reviews the background and development of prison privatisation in England and Wales and considers the role and place of private prisons as part of a wider neo-liberal shift. Secondly, using qualitative data gathered inside two private prisons, it evaluates if these prisons, through their regimes, are trying to create responsible self-governing prisoners. The thesis reviews both, how regimes and practices in place in these two prisons attempt to forge responsible prisoners, and how individual men and groups of prisoners experience, feel about, cope with and assimilate penal messages of self-governance and responsibility. Finally, it questions both the impact of responsible prisoners for prisons and the impact of responsibility on prisoners and argues that, whilst there is a benefit to fostering environments in which prisoners are enabled to become responsible and self-governing, a careful balance must be maintained, as for some men the responsibility itself becomes characteristic of the 'pain of imprisonment'.

For my Grandfather, Fred Fenwick (1921-2011)

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Contents

Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
BOSS	Body Orifice Scanner
CARAT	Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice, Throughcare
CSU	Care and Separation Unit
CUREC	Central University Research Ethics Committee
DCMF	Design Construct Manage Finance
FNC	First Night Centre
FNP	Foreign National Prisoner
HDC	Home Detention Curfew
HMCIP	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
ID	Identification
IEP	Incentives and Earned Privileges
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IPP	Imprisonment for Public Protection
IRC	Immigration Removal Centre
JVA	Justizvollzugsanstalt
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MDT	Mandatory Drug Test
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OC	Operational Capacity
OMU	Offender Management Unit

OS	Other Staff
PCO	Prison Custody Officer
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PO	Personal Officer
POA	Prison Officers Association
PSI	Prison Service Instruction
RMN	Registered Mental Health Nurse
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMARG	Segregation Management and Review Group
SMT	Senior Management Team
SOTP	Sex Offender Treatment Programme
STOP	Substance, Treatment and Offenders Programme
UM	Unit Manager
VDT	Voluntary Drug Test
VP	Vulnerable Prisoner
VPU	Vulnerable Prisoner Unit
VTU	Vocational Training Unit
WM	Workshop Manager
YO	Young Offender

Table of Statutes

Criminal Justice Act 1991 (CJA1991)

Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

Chapter One

Private Prisons: An Introduction

> I believe in competing services as a means to raise the quality of public services. This can deliver innovation, better performance and value for money. Services should be funded by taxpayers, but delivered by whoever is best suited to do so. (Kenneth Clarke QC MP, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Ministry of Justice, 2012)

> *I got a discount on a coffee at the airport last week because the waitress saw my company ID badge in my pocket. I explained I wasn't airport security but another division. She said it didn't matter, I worked for the company.*
>
> (Senior Education Manager, June 2011)

> *It doesn't matter whether it's public or private sector. I have a duty of care to the men in my prison. I need to keep them safe and provide what they need. Who I work for is irrelevant.* (Director, HMP Wansford[1], May 2011)

1.1. An Overview

In April 2014 14,716 men and women were serving their prison sentence or time on remand in privately operated prisons in England and Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2014a)[2].[3] These men and women were housed in 14 private prisons operated by one of three private companies, G4S, Sodexo (formerly Kalyx) and Serco (Ministry of Justice, 2014b). This thesis is concerned with life, and, in particular regimes and practices which encourage prisoners to

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[1] The prisons in which research was conducted for this thesis are not identified by name and are allocated the pseudonyms HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford.

[2] These statistics are provided by individual prison, rather than as a total of the men and women in the contracted-out estate. In reaching the figure above I have added the population number for each of the 14 private prisons in England and Wales together to reach a total. Individual population numbers are as follows: HMP Altcourse 1,126; HMP Ashfield 390; HMP Birmingham 1,418; HMP Bronzefield 499; HMP Doncaster 1,093; HMP Dovegate 1,099; HMP Forest Bank 1,432; HMP Lowdham Grange 915; HMP Northumberland 1,333; HMP Oakwood 1,592; HMP Parc 1,375; HMP Peterborough 930; HMP Rye Hill 618; HMP Thameside 896 (Ministry of Justice, 2014a).

[3] I include statistics for men and women although this thesis is generally concerned with men. This is because the data provided in the population statistics does not provide a breakdown in number differentiating between male and female prisoners at HMP Peterborough. For this reason I include the male private prison estate as well as HMP Bronzefield which holds women and HMP Peterborough (Women) in this total.

take on responsibility, inside two of these prisons, HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford, both operated by the same private contractor.[4]

In this introductory chapter I firstly briefly outline the history and expansion of the private prison in England and Wales and consider the increasing role of private companies in the provision of custodial services. Secondly, I ask what we know about life inside private prisons, considering previous ethnographic studies and reports. Thirdly, I set out the theoretical framework that informs this thesis.

A number of scholars from within criminology and other disciplines have asserted that the privatisation of state entities including prisons is characteristic of neo-liberal democracies (Dean, 1999; Garland, 1997, 2001a, 2001b; Hannah-Moffat, 2001; O'Malley, 1992, 1998; Rose, 1996). They argue that in neo-liberal states or democracies the state distances itself from power and in turn encourages individuals to become responsible and self-governing citizens (Dean, 1999; Foucault, 2000; Garland, 1997, 2001a; Hannah-Moffat, 2001; Lemke, 2001; Rose, 1996). In this chapter and the thesis more broadly I question what this neo-liberal theory of privatisation means for men serving their sentence inside private prisons. If private prisons are characteristic of neo-liberal states, does it follow that the men housed within them are encouraged to become responsible and self-governing? What is responsibility and how might we understand how men experience it inside the prison walls? Finally, in this introductory chapter I outline the structure of this thesis and its constituent chapters.

[4]Not their real name/identifier. In this thesis the names of the prisons I visited to gather data are anonymised and allocated pseudonyms. Throughout this thesis the prisons are referred to by the fictional identifiers HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford

1.2. Private Prisons: Historically and Today

It's private - what does that mean? Is it like fast-track - like not the NHS?

(Leroy, HMP Nassington, April 2010)

We often think of private prisons as a modern construct. Yet, it was not until 1877 that the government in England and Wales, through the Prison Commission, took responsibility for all prisons (Harding, 1985; McConville, 1995; Pugh, 1968). Instead, many prisons were privately operated by Bishops and prison wardens for profit, as prisoners, even debtors, were required to pay for their bed and board (McConville, 1995; Porter, 1990). The beginning of the modern move to privatisation in England and Wales, Cavadino and Dignan (2002) argue, can be traced to 1970 and a contract between the government and Securicor Ltd. to operate detention centres at airports to house suspected illegal immigrants (see also Rutherford, 1990).[5] [6] Yet, private participation in the prison sector did not immediately follow, despite increasing privatisation of other state run services including British Telecom in 1984, the British Airports Authority in 1986, British Gas in 1987 and British Steel in 1988.[7] [8] In the midst of the privatisation of other services, Home Secretary Douglas Hurd in 1987 stated in a House of Commons debate that: "*I do not think there is a case, and I do not believe that the House would accept a case, for auctioning or privatising the prisons or handing over the business of*

[5] On these privately operated detention centres in the 1970s see Rutherford (1990). For an overview of the use and history of immigration detention, the use of private operators in immigration detention and life in immigration detention centres in England see Bosworth (2014). On the involvement of private operations in immigration detention see Bacon (2005).

[6] See also Teeters (1950) who outlines the prison system in the United Kingdom post the second world war. For an introduction to Her Majesty's Prison Service see Bryans and Jones (2001). For a broader history of prisons in the western hemisphere see Morgan and Rathman (1995).

[7] On privatisation of utilities and services in the UK during this period see Foster (1992); Abromeit (1988); Arnold and Cooper (1999); Hood (1991); Gamble (1988) and Young (2001). For a history of public and private ownership of British industry 1820-1900 see Foreman-Peck and Milward (1995). The Guardian.com (Thursday 12 September 2013) also has a useful interactive timeline of British Privatisation available at: www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/interactive/2013/sep/12/biggest-sell-offs-in-uk-privatisation-timeline.

[8] On the regulation of privatisation and accountability for private companies offering services that were previously sate monopolies see Clarke (2000); Cranston (1979); Demsetz (1968); Foster (1992) and Heimer (2002).

keeping prisoners safe to anyone other than government servants" (HC Deb. 16 July 1987, vol. 119, col. 1299, cited in Cavadino and Dignan, 2002: 230). Nonetheless, later that year the Home Affairs Select Committee offered an alternative view, stating that: 'the state should be the sole provider of a service only when no-one else exists who can provide the same service at less cost or can provide a better service' and recommended that private companies be able to bid to run remand prisons (Home Affairs Select Committee, 1987).[9] In writing their report, recommending further research on and review of the introduction of private sector involvement in the provision of prisons, the Home Affairs Select Committee visited a number of private prisons in the United States. The report itself was followed by a number of research studies and reports, commissioned by the government, into the benefits of private sector involvement in the prison system (Cavadino and Dignan, 2002; Pozen, 2003). By 1988, a Home Office Green Paper recommended a trial of privately operated remand prisons, as well as the privatisation of some prison transport and escort services and the 'creation of partnerships between the public and private sectors' (Home Office, 1988). This shift in attitude is largely attributed to the increasing demand for prison places, particularly in the remand estate (James and Bottomley, 1998), alongside wider pressures on the prison system such as overcrowding and the stock of relatively old prisons requiring updating and investment. In April 1990 the momentum for change in the prison system in England and Wales increased as the Strangeways Riot and the subsequent Woolf Report (1991) brought to the attention of the world the poor conditions and overcrowding in many public sector establishments.

[9] On the changing role the state is shaping for itself, through privatisation, competition and changes in regulation and the influence on the criminal justice system see Braithwaite (2000).

The opportunity for private operators to bid for contracts to manage prisons was introduced in the United Kingdom in the Criminal Justice Act 1991 (CJA 1991).[10] The initial limitation to private management of only remand prisons was removed during the passage of the bill through Parliament, paving the way for private companies to play a part in a sector in which the state had previously held a monopoly on the provision of services, and more controversially to profit from the provision of such a service.[11]

The first 'modern' private prison in England and Wales, and indeed the first in Europe[12] to be competitively tendered (Tanner, 2013: 6), HMP Wolds, opened in April 1992, in what James et al. (1997: 3) describe as 'the penal experiment of the century'.[13] Operated by Group

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[10] See Lacey (1994) who argues that the passing of the CJA 1991 and the privatisation of prisons transformed the government into a manager, while citizens became consumers of custodial services.

[11] On this wider moral debate on contracting out prisons and the morality of profiting from punishment see Shichor (1995); Moyle (2001); Sparks (1994); Logan (1987). The moral debate on privatisation of custodial services is considered in more detail later in this chapter.

[12] Both France and Germany operate semi-private systems in some prisons, called *gestion mixte* in France. In 1986 the French Justice Minister announced 'Programme 13,000' under which the private sector would build and manage 25 high-security prisons. These prisons were never built. Following large-scale political protest led by the French Socialist Party and largely hinging on a constitutional restriction on the legality of privatising punishment services, 'Programme 13,000' was withdrawn. In a bid to balance the benefits of privatisation with the constitutional restriction a compromise of semi-privatisation was reached. Within the semi-privatised model adopted by France the duties of control and discipline within a privatised prison remain within the jurisdiction of the State, while all other services are outsourced to a private sector partner. By early 1994, 17 semi-private prisons were in operation holding some 10,000 prisoners (Ruggiero et al., 1995). The German Constitution, like its French counterpart, prevents the privatisation or outsourcing of criminal justice services, as the custodial services form a core state function that must remain the duty of state officials and state officials alone (Gusy and Lührmann, 2001: 46). 'A privatisation of the penal system as a whole is forbidden as the Justizvollzugsanstalt (JVA) [prison] belongs to the core task of the state role and as such because of the Rule of Law it cannot be privatised.' (original in German) (Hessisches Ministerium der Justiz, 2007). See also Hessischer Landtag (2004, 2008). Despite this constitutional limitation, semi-private prisons are in operation in Germany. Similar to the French model, the core custodial function remains in the hands of the state while non-custodial functions such as education, food provision and building maintenance are private and the responsibility of external bodies. On the German model of semi-privatisation, see Huber (2009) and Mason (2013).

[13] Private prisons are also currently in operation in the USA and Australia. In 2011, 85,604 adults (3.7% of the total US prison population) were housed in 107 privately operated prisons (Schmalleger and Smykla, 2011). See also Melossi and Pavarini (1981); Shichor (1995); DiIulio (1990) and Lukemeyer and McCorkle (2006). On the development of private prisons in Australia see Chan (1992); Consoli (2006); Harding (1994); Moyle (1994) and Andrew (2007). The Israeli Knesset introduced private prisons in 2004 and building work began on the first private prison in Israel. In 2009 the Israeli Constitutional Court declared the operation of a private prison to be unconstitutional and refused to allow the prison to open. The Israeli government were forced to pay compensation to the private contractor who had won the contract to operate the prison and had by the time of the judgement already constructed the prison. On privatisation of prison services in Israel, see Preminger (2008); Timor (2006) and Wassermann (2007). See also Sauve (1977), a report from the task force on the role of the private sector in criminal justice in Canada, which outlines the arguments both for and against privatisation of criminal justice services and also summarises available statistics, from that date, on cost and effectiveness.

4, a precursor of the current G4S, it initially held remand prisoners but a year later was re-categorised as a local Category B prison for remand and sentenced prisoners. The CJA 1991 only allowed for prison management by private operators, the state retained the ownership of the prison site. This rule was amended in the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 which permitted private sector involvement in the construction of prison sites as well as their management through private finance initiatives (PFI) and Design, Construct, Manage, Finance (DCMF) contracts. HMP Parc, along with HMP Altcourse, opened in 1997 built under DCMF contracts. In 2011 there were 11 privately operated prisons in England and Wales and 'in April 2012, HMP Birmingham became the first public sector prison to be fully privatised meaning that the private company[14] both runs and owns the asset' (Panchamia, 2014: 4).

Today 14 prisons in England and Wales are operated by private companies under contract to the Ministry of Justice.[15] Whilst there have been ebbs and flows in the development and expansion of the contracted-out[16] prison estate since HMP Wolds was opened in 1992, the current government seems set on a path to continue the involvement of the private sector in prison operation and criminal justice service provision more widely. In response to a Parliamentary Question in February 2012, Prime Minister David Cameron said:

> *The Government's policy on tendering for the running of prisons flows from our ambition for encouraging greater involvement of the private and voluntary sectors in the rehabilitation of offenders in order to cut re-offending and improve*

[14] In this case G4S.

[15] 'Ten of these are owned and run by private companies under a PFI contract (with ownership reverting back to the public sector at the end of the contract); three are government owned but privately run; and one is privately owned and privately run' (Panchamia, 2014: 6). These figures are quoted by Panchamia in his 2013 report on private prisons and attributed to the Ministry of Justice Website. However that webpage is in April 2014 no longer available to access.

[16] In this thesis I use the terms contracted-out and private prisons interchangeably.

> *outcomes and efficiency. Competition will provide the opportunity to implement policy priorities, such as working prisons and payment by results.*
>
> (HC Deb, 1 February 2012, c703-4W)

In addition, the expansion of the private sector into the provision of probation services (The Guardian, July 13 2012) and services to the police including staffing custody suites (The Independent, March 12 2012) coupled with Chris Graylings announcement in September 2013 of his plans to expand the prison estate, including, amongst other expansion, a newly built 2000 capacity prison in Wrexham (Ministry Of Justice, 2013), suggests that the move of the private sector into the provision of criminal justice services is robust.[17] [18] [19]

1.3. Competition, Contracts and Controllers

In order to win a contract to manage an existing prison or build a new one, private companies must respond to invitations to tender sent out by the government.[20] The initial tendering process for HMP Wolds was not opened to the public sector (Panchamia, 2014: 2). After that:

> The Home Office began to push the Prison Service to compete with private firms for management contracts thereby testing its market viability as a prison manager. The then Home Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, argued that market testing would incentivise the Prison Service to improve its performance and "encourage the

[17] For a brief discussion of the increasing and wider extension of the private sector into state enterprises and functions see Plimmer (2014). For a converse evaluation of government stepping into to profit from or control the private sector see McHarg (1998). On the regulation of privatised entities (particularly utilities) see Price (1994); Rabin (1986); Thatcher (1997) and Young (2001).

[18] See also Adab et al. (2002) who argue that competition, performance indicators and comparative performance league tables, previously the reserve of the private sector, are becoming increasingly appear in state run services, for example the NHS. They argue that league tables in particular have had a detrimental effect on both the organisation and efficiency of the NHS. Conversely, Levačić and Woods (2002) argue that performance league tables have had a positive effect on school performance. Furthermore, see Smith (1990) who considers the use of performance indicators in the public sector and Pollitt (1993) who considers the impact of managerialism, historically associated with the private sector more than the public sector, on public services during the 1990s.

[19] On the political importance of privatisation see Donahue (1989) for broader argument and Heald (1988) for a more UK focused analysis.

[20] Post 2004 invitations to tender are sent out by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) on behalf of The Ministry of Justice.

> spread of those reforms across public sector prisons much more quickly than would otherwise have been the case". (ibid.)

Between 1992 and 2012 there were 30 prison tender opportunities[21] (Tanner, 2013: 5). Following the Laming Review, which recommended that Service Level Agreements (SLA) based on the same standards as those contained in private prison contracts be available to public sector prisons (Laming, 2000), the public sector has been successful in winning tenders to operate prisons, under SLA, replacing private operators at HMP Buckley Hall and HMP Blakenhurst (now HMP Hewell) in 2000 and winning the bid to operate HMP Manchester in 2003. Most recently, in 2013 HM Prison Service won the contract to operate HMP Wolds, meaning that for the first time in its history HMP Wolds is no longer a part of the contracted-out prison estate. Conversely in 2012, G4S was awarded the contract to operate HMP Birmingham, wresting it from the public sector.

A number of scholars and policy makers have argued that competition at tender, between HM Prison Service and private operators, for the contracts to operate prisons has improved the prison system in England and Wales as a whole, encouraging cost reductions alongside regime and management innovations (Bottomley et al., 1997; Sturgess and Smith, 2006). Competition has resulted in what Harding (2001) has termed 'cross-fertilisation' or the exchange and transfer of skills and management practices between public and private sector.[22] Lord Carter in his 2003 review report, *Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime,* recommended

[21] In some cases the tender has failed due to no bidders (HMP Brixton in 2001) or been withdrawn (HMP Maghull, 2010).

[22] See also Raine (1997) and Brownlee (1998) on managerialism in criminal justice.

an increasing emphasis on competition from both private and voluntary providers (Carter, 2003).[23] The National Audit Office found that:

> The use of the PFI has brought innovation, mainly in the recruitment and deployment of staff and use of new technology; however, there appears little difference in terms of the daily routines of prisons. A key innovation by the private sector has been in promoting a more constructive staff/prisoner relationship. PCOs are encouraged to treat prisoners in a more positive manner, for example through the use of first names and mentoring schemes. The senior management of the Prison Service has been able to use the success of the private sector in nurturing better staff/prisoner relationships to encourage their own staff to adopt a similar approach.
>
> (National Audit Office, 2003, cited in Tanner, 2013: 13)

Alison Liebling and Ben Crewe's research into 'insider views in private sector competition' found that prison managers in both public and private prisons recognised the benefits that had come from competition with one saying:

> *I think* [privatisation has] *been really helpful in raising our game, and it's been a wake-up call in terms of suddenly realising that...this may not be a job for life, that we've actually got to deliver and if we don't there's people over there who will do it instead, and I think that's generally been good.*
>
> (Senior Manager 65, Crewe and Liebling, 2012: 26)

Delivering to expectations has been shaped by the introduction of competition to the prison market. The standards and provision of service in contracted-out prisons is set out and governed by contract. James et al. (1997) in their early research at HMP Wolds found that;

> The contract for Wolds has provided a higher level of controls and accountability than that which has traditionally existed in relation to public-sector prisons. However, it has also created a degree of inflexibility. (James et al., 1997: 176)

[23] This report also recommended the creation of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) which was established in 2004.

The exact details of contracts to operate private prisons, their terms and the standards expected are not publicly available.[24] Vagg (1994: 300) argues that 'there can be no reason for such secrecy except to prevent the cost basis of the contract being discovered by possible competitors'. Performance of contractual obligations, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and general prison operation in contracted-out prisons is monitored on a day-to-day basis by a Controller. Usually an experienced prison governor, the Controller is employed by NOMS, to monitor the contract and is able to impose monetary fines on prison operators for any breach in delivery of services. HMP Nassington, for example, was fined during my break in fieldwork between June 2010 and July 2011 for locking prisoners behind their doors as punishment, in breach of the expected protocol for such actions as set out in the contract (see Genders, 2002; National Audit Office, 2003). I learned of this breach because a similar incident on a much smaller scale occurred in July 2011 when I was in the prison. Senior Management on discovering what had happened from an Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) member, were at pains to rectify the situation immediately, in order to avoid, if possible, a further fine (Field notes[25], HMP Nassington, July 2011).

While I was in the field both Directors and Controllers were happy to talk in general about their particular prison contract and contracts more generally but shied away from discussing specifics, particularly target KPIs and, other than the incidence of penalty discussed above, any examples of breach of the contract. They did, however, talk of pressure to meet targets and were concerned with ensuring projects were brought in on cost.

[24] On the benefits and drawbacks of the contractual regulation of schools see Laughlin and Broadbent (1997).

[25] In the thesis I have used the reference 'field notes' to denote data gathered from broader sources such as informal conversations and observations around the prisons. These observations and notes were recorded in my research diary which I carried while in the prison to record notes and observations and which I also used to write an account at the end of each day. Where my observations relate to a particular prison, or a particular date that is referenced. Those field note references without location and date are more general observations that were repeated on numerous occasions during my time in the field.

However, they told me it was not all about price, it was more important to meet their contractual obligations, ensure the continuation of the contract and avoid penalty fines for breach (Field notes, July 2011). Despite senior staff asserting that cost was not a prime motivator, that the contract was more important, one Prison Custody Officer (PCO) told me: *"the men on the wing, they know their entitlement and they soon holler if something's amiss",* but "*not everything is a requirement, set out in contract, it's the extras these lads don't always get.*" (Saul[26], PCO 23, HMP Nassington, July 2011).

The provision of additional services, or 'extras' as Saul called them, may not have been monitored but contractual obligations were vigorously policed. I met and interviewed the Controllers at both HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford and was also able to interview the Controller from another private prison whilst he was on a visit to HMP Nassington. Interestingly, the relationship between Controller and Senior Management differed greatly at both prisons. At one of the two prisons, the Controller was far more embedded in the wider prison team, striving to ensure the best possible environment for the men in the prison. At the other, the Controller saw herself as an outsider, there to enforce and uphold a contract and ensure that the private provider was delivering what it was being paid to do. This woman '*could not wait to get back to a public sector prison'* (Field notes, April 2010). This difference in style was recognised by senior staff. During my early months in the field, senior staff who had experience of working in both prisons expressed a preference for the

[26] This is not his real name. The names used for the prisoners throughout this thesis are not their own, instead pseudonyms have been assigned. In allocating anonymities I did not use a complex code, instead working chronologically through the sample I allocated pseudonyms in alphabetical order, seeking wherever possible to avoid the men's 'real' names and starting again at 'A' once I had used all 26 letters. In total I allocated 176 names to prisoners and their associated interview and observation data, although not all 176 appear in this thesis. In the interests of transparency, I only allocated the letters 'X' and 'Y' once and the letter 'Z' twice because of the small number of names beginning with those letters. Custody Officers and Senior Mangers were anonymised using letter identifiers (i.e. PCO 1; SMT 1) – again chronologically by the point at which I first observed or interviewed them. Other staff (OS) including nurses and health workers are identified using numbers (i.e. OS 1). Unit Managers and Workshop Managers are identified with UM and WM respectively. At times prisoners referred to officers by name. In this thesis where the use of the name is integral to the quotation or speech of a prisoner I have allocated the officer a pseudonym in addition to their number identifier.

approach to monitoring and enforcement of the team-orientated Controller to the other, believing that her openness made it easier for them to flag to her if the prison was getting something wrong, as she was more likely to work with prison staff to fix it rather than watch a breach occur (Field notes, April 2010 and December 2011).

1.4. Life Inside Private Prisons

The rise of prison privatisation across the United States and Australia in the 1980s and their introduction in the United Kingdom in the 1990s prompted a rich body of academic literature. Scholars initially considered the legitimacy of privatised penal establishments, the morality of profiting from punishment and broader moral and constitutional questions of a state's ability to delegate responsibility for the administration of punishment to a private corporation. John DiIulio stated that:

> The central moral issues surrounding private prisons and jail management have little to do with the profit motive of privatizers and much to do with the propriety, in a constitutional democracy, of delegating the authority to administer criminal justice to nonpublic individuals and groups. (1990: 177)

Other critics of privatisation agree, arguing that punishment and therefore the operation of prisons is the sole responsibility of the state (Christie, 1993; Radzinowicz, 1988; Ryan and Ward, 1989a, 1989b; Shichor, 1995). For John DiIulio, 'the authority to govern behind bars, to deprive citizens of their liberty, to coerce (and even kill them) […] must remain in the hands of government authorities' (1990: 197). Proponents of privatisation argue, in contrast, that it is possible to separate the allocation of punishment from its administration and delivery, which could therefore be legitimately delegated (Logan, 1987, 1990; Moyle, 2001;

Sparks, 1994).[27] It is neither my intention in this thesis to revisit that debate, nor to pass opinion on the moral status of private prisons. Private prisons have now operated in England and Wales for more than 20 years. My interest and the scope of this thesis lies in life inside them and how this is experienced by the men serving sentences within their walls. Crewe and Liebling go so far as to say that in the UK:

> The heated debates about the ethics of privatisation have faded […] the first private prison in England opened in 1992 it might be unsurprising that many practitioners and critics have become accustomed to the presence of private sector prisons and are no longer disputing first principles. (2012: 25)

Life behind bars in England and Wales has been the subject of varied and detailed investigation, with academics considering a plethora of different aspects including suicide and coping (Crighton, 2006; Liebling, 1992; Snow, 2006; Towl et al., 2002); agency in women's prisons (Bosworth, 1999); prison and inmate culture (Finkelstein, 1993; Irwin and Cressey, 1962); the exercise of power in the male prison (Crewe, 2007, 2009, 2011a, 2011b); long term imprisonment (Cohen and Taylor, 1972); elderly men and their prison life (Crawley, 2005, 2012; Crawley and Sparks, 2005); life in and impact of prison therapeutic communities (Cullen, 2004; Genders and Player, 1995; Lee et al., 1999; Stevens, 2011, 2012, 2013a, 2013b); race relations in prison (Genders and Player, 1989); ethnicity and multiculturalism (Phillips, 2008, 2012; Phillips and Earle, 2010); the lives and experience of prison officers and (Bennett, Crewe and Wahidin, 2007; Crawley, 2004; Liebling and Price, 2001); prisoners' experiences of prison officers (Drake, 2014); selfhood and identity for women in prison (Rowe, 2011); management of bullying (Ireland, 2000, 2002); the experience of Muslim prisoners (Quraishi, 2008); the effect of imprisonment on prisoners' children and families

[27] See also Porter (1990) who, writing before the passage of the CJA 1991 through Parliament, makes a case based on the US experience for why the UK should not adopt a private prison model.

(Condry, 2007, 2011; Codd, 2008; Comfort, 2007); the state, maximum security prisons and the continuing use of imprisonment (Drake, 2012), and the experience of foreign-nationals in prison (Kaufman, 2014).[28] Less is known about life within the confines of a private prison and 'neither the quality nor the legitimacy of privately-managed prisons has been subjected to close scrutiny in recent years' (Crewe and Liebling, 2012: 25).[29] Research on and about private prisons in England and Wales and more widely, has focused less on life inside them, on relationships and regime, and more on their performance, how they are managed and whether they offer cost savings (Harding, 2001; Liebling, Crewe and Hulley, 2011a, 2011b; Crewe and Liebling, 2012) and 'outcomes have generally been conceived in terms of future offending or cost savings alone' (Liebling, Crewe and Hulley, 2012: 16).[30] There is indeed a variety of statistical data about the comparative cost and value for money of public and private prisons (Coopers and Lybrand, 1996) and comparative prison performance and cost (Home Affairs Committee, 1997; Woodbridge, 1999) with the private sector found to be between 9% and 15% less expensive than the public sector in 1997 but each year these savings fell by 2.5% when compared with the public sector (Home Affairs Committee, 1997, cited in Liebling, 2004: 99).[31]

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[28] This is not an exhaustive list. The intention is to demonstrate the breadth and variety of research that has been undertaken about prisons, life inside them and the experiences of those who work within them.

[29] Some prison ethnographers have conducted research in private prisons and not touched on their private status. Alisa Stevens (2011, 2012, 2013a, 2013b), for example, conducted research at HMP Dovegate as part of her wider study into prison therapeutic communities. She was interested in the impact of therapeutic communities for prisoners rather than any impact or effect of privatisation.

[30] Also see Lanza-Kaduce et al. (1999) who compared reconviction rates between private and public prisons in Florida finding that 'private prison releasees were more successful than were there public prison matches' (1999: 42) and that in general private prisons in the study had lower rates of recidivism. For a more detailed review of this work see Liebling and Arnold (2002: 114). Furthermore, see Logan (1992) who found that the quality of provision and confinement in the private prisons he studied in America was superior to that in public prisons and Lukemeyer and McCorkle (2006) who consider the impact of privatisation on prison conditions in the United States.

[31] See also National Audit Office (2003) for statistics and comparisons between privately and publicly operated prisons in England and Wales. See also John Elledge writing in in the Newstatesman (9 July 2007) and Chris Gourlay in the Sunday Times (19 January 2008) who summarise the comparative performance of public and private prisons, with Gourlay arguing that the statistics for England and Wales show private prisons to be 'poor performers'.

There are few qualitative accounts of life inside private prisons in England and Wales.[32] Bottomley et al. (1997) conducted the first empirical study into life inside private prison in England (see also James et al., 1997). Charged with the task of evaluating the fledgling private HMP Wolds and HMP Woodhill, a recently opened public sector prison, they outline and critique daily life for the remand prisoners, officer morale and regime. They found that life and regime at HMP Wolds was viewed positively by prisoners who praised its conditions, regime and staff-attitude.

Shefer and Liebling (2008) consider staff-prisoner relationships in private prisons in England and Wales (see also Liebling, 2004). Using qualitative research, they identify a different type of relationship existing between prison officers and prisoners in prisons run under private contract to those in the public sector. Their research highlights a close relationship between prison officers and inmates. They attribute some of this to a different balance of power in private prisons to that of the public sector, resulting from the large number of inexperienced officers (see also James et al., 1997 and Taylor and Cooper, 2008). They also identify an ethos within staff/prisoner relationships in private prisons and the motivations behind them, which they call the '"we are here to do business (and not punish)" explanation' (2008: 269). Shefer and Liebling (2008) found a dialogue of respect in some private sector establishments in which prisoners were treated more benignly and more respectfully than in the majority of public sector prisons.[33] Much of what has recently been

[32] Although see Taylor and Cooper (2008) who consider life inside the first private prison in Scotland, HMP Kilmarnock. Taylor and Cooper found high staff turnover and resulting inexperience amongst staff, poor pay and conditions which they argue put both staff and prisoners at risk.

[33] On the role of respect in prisons in England and Wales see Butler and Drake (2007). See also Hulley, Liebling and Crewe (2012).

added to the discourse on life inside private prisons can be attributed to Alison Liebling, Ben Crewe and Susie Hulley. Their ESRC funded study conducted between 2007-2010 in two public and two private prisons in England and Wales, coupled with quality of life surveys and limited interview data from three more prisons, provides the most detailed account of life, and particularly quality of life inside private prisons, since James and Bottomley and their research team went inside HMP Wolds in 1997. Their identification of differing attitudes and cultures but overlapping strengths and deficiencies in public and private sector prisons, their review of staffing and identification of differing approaches has added an insight and a depth to private prison literature that had been lacking. That is not to say that more research inside private prisons is not necessary. Vicki Helyar-Cardwell commenting on prison privatisation and the fledgling expansion of the private sector into probation services writes; 'what is apparent is the dearth of evidence from prisoners themselves on various differing prison regimes' (2012: 60). In undertaking research inside two private prisons my aim is to contribute further to this growing body of qualitative data about private prisons and in turn aid our understanding of what life is like for the men who serve their prison sentences or time on remand inside them.

1.5. Private Prisons: Cogs in a Neo-Liberal Machine or Finding an Informed Ethnography

When I was in the early stages of framing the research questions for this thesis, I read widely about prisons, private prisons and doing prison research. I knew broadly that I was interested in life inside private prisons and how the men housed inside them felt about serving their sentence inside a private prison. I wanted my work to move beyond the moral debate about profiting from punishment that had filled many volumes since the initial contracts were awarded and to go inside the walls. I knew I needed to rule out comprehensive comparison

with the public sector,[34] not because it did not have value, nor that it would not add great substance to the discourse and knowledge in the field, but because I recognised that such a complex study was perhaps beyond the scope of the time allowed for a doctoral thesis and a sole researched and authored project. I wanted my research to contribute a textured account of life inside private prisons. I hoped to reveal the emotional and human aspect of private prison life, considering relationships and emotional responses rather than concentrating on Foucauldian ideas of power (Crewe, 2011b; Hannah-Moffat, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2005; Liebling, 2010). Pryor in a comparative study between public and private sector prisons in 2001 found that:

> The culture of a private prison was seen by prisoners in stark contrast to that of public (or 'POA') prisons, mainly as one where they were regarded in a more level relationship as being responsible both as people and as prisoners.
>
> (Pryor, 2001: 5)

I sought to find out, through my empirical research, if and why this was the case. What do private prisons 'do' or maybe even 'not do' to encourage responsibility amongst prisoners? Were these feelings of and about responsibility still the same today for prisoners in private prisons? If they were, what does this add to our understanding of life and regime inside private prisons in England and Wales? In focusing on responsibility, considering the small scale ways in which men and staff interact, how they felt about or reacted to opportunities which encouraged them to be more responsible, I sought to reveal how power is negotiated in private prisons and in turn the significance, if any, of responsibility to that.

[34] For a comparative study of values and practices in public and private sector prisons and staff attitudes in public and private sector prisons see Liebling, Crewe and Hulley (2011a, 2011b, 2012); Crewe, Liebling and Hulley (2011) and Crewe and Liebling (2012).

Nearly twenty years ago, David Garland argued that prison regimes had experienced a recent 'departure from therapeutic or welfarist models to regimes which encourage prisoners to actualise their own reform' (1997: 191). He presented this change as characteristic of a neo-liberal shift in prison regime and expectations of prisoners; a shift in which prisoners are increasingly being asked to become responsible and self-governing and to take responsibility for their prison lives and experiences. Mary Bosworth, in an analysis of US federal prison admission and orientation packs, found within them a move towards 'placing all the responsibility on the prisoners for their self-improvement and good order' (2007: 67). Kelly Hannah-Moffat (2001) points to prison regimes in state-run prisons in Canada that increasingly encourage individuals to be self-governing citizens who take responsibility for their own reform. Identifying a growing emphasis on programmes which empower and encourage prisoners to manage their own sentence. In her study of political prisoners in Northern Ireland Mary Corcoran found that:

> Methods direct prisoners towards "sentence management" programmes and techniques for "empowering" them to examine their own past criminal behaviour and attitudes towards authority and motivating them to exercise 'responsible' life choices and learn to govern themselves as preparation for release.
>
> (Corcoran, 2006: 190)

Garland, Bosworth, Hannah-Moffat and Corcoran are not alone in identifying a neo-liberal shift in penal regimes and particularly in prison privatisation. A number of scholars from within criminology and elsewhere have argued that privatisation of state functions and enterprises, including that of criminal justice services characterises neo-liberal states or democracies (Beckett and Western, 2001; Dean, 1999; Foucault, 1979, 1991; Garland, 1997, 2001a, 2001b; Hannah-Moffat, 2001; Lemke, 2002; Rose, 1996). The neo-liberal state, they assert, seeks to distance itself from governing through privatisation of state enterprise (Arnold

and Cooper, 1999; Borzutzky, 2005; Kingfisher, 2002; Schneiderman, 2000). They further argue that the post-1991 move towards the privatisation of prisons and custodial services in the United Kingdom can be seen as part of a far larger shift towards the privatisation of key state enterprises such as the railway network and utility providers. The increasing use and involvement of private actors in the operation of prisons, immigration detention centres, prisoner transport and the operation of police custody services and the opening of the private prison and immigration detention market in the United Kingdom seemingly confirming David Garland's (1997) assertion that criminal justice systems, particularly in neo-liberal democracies, are increasingly moving towards a 'free-market paradigm'.

This free-market has wider implications. Neo-liberal scholars maintain that as the state distances itself, through privatisation, from governing, it seeks to create citizens who are able to self-govern. Cruikshank (1994, 1996), Dean (1996, 1999) and Rose (1989, 1996) argue that a withdrawal of direct state intervention in citizens' lives results in individuals who are less reliant on the state for support and guidance and therefore less in need of direct governing – in effect individuals who are more responsible and therefore govern themselves. More responsible citizens mean that the state can govern in an increasingly muted fashion, not by imposing harsh bureaucratic regimes, but through promulgating moral standards and expectations (Lemke, 2001; O'Malley, 1992, 1999, 2000; Rose, 1986, 1989). Acceptance of these expectations produces individuals who are able not only to self-govern, but also who can regulate and govern others through a level of shared expectations and moral standards, thereby enabling the state to govern individuals with less direct intervention through muted exercises of power (Benhabib, 1987; Cruikshank, 1994, 1996; Dean, 1999; Foucault, 2000; Lemke, 2001, 2002; O'Malley, 1992, 1999, 2000; Rose, 1986, 1989; Smith, 1995). What if this was also true of regimes in private prisons? Deborah Drake argues that 'there is much to

be learned about current state practices and strategies by examining the internal life of prisons and the strategies of penal systems' (2012: 4).[35] So, if private prisons themselves are characteristic of a neo-liberal shift, does it follow that regimes within them are also seeking to foster an environment which encourage responsibility and in which responsible, self-governing men are created or fostered?

It is neither my aim in framing this project to 'test' neo-liberal theory nor to provide an account of the relationship between the state and private prison operators. Instead, I seek to depict life inside these two private prisons in England, to describe and analyse how responsibility functions within them. I chose in my fieldwork and more widely in this thesis to steer way from the use of the term 'responsibilisation' favoured by neo-liberal scholars (Dean, 1999; Garland, 1997, 2001a, 2001b; Lemke, 2001, 2002; Hannah-Moffat, 2001, 2005; Rose, 1996). In the field the word 'responsibility' was complex enough to communicate and discuss without trying to explain the terms 'responsibilisation' or 'responsibilised'. In the same way more generally in this thesis, my aim is not to demonstrate 'responsibilisation' in action or 'regimes which responsibilise' (Hannah-Moffat, 2005). Instead I use that theory to inform the ethnography and guide my research. Through an analysis of more affective matters like trust, respect and relationships within the prisons I find that responsibility is indeed central to life inside HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford.

I do not, however, underestimate the importance of theory to criminological understanding. Neo-liberal theories of governmentality, responsibilisation and governance at a distance have certainly shaped and informed this work. I have sought to add to and enrich that theory, not by testing it or attempting to prove it, but instead by providing real-life examples

[35] See also Braithwaite (2000).

of responsibility in practice inside two private prisons, providing a cast-lived experience. As Bosworth puts it 'theory can be rich but going inside fills in gaps in knowledge, adding a depth and texture to our understanding' (Bosworth 2014: 6). It is this depth and texture, to enrich and add to the theory, that this thesis provides. David Garland wrote, when describing a shift towards 'regimes which encourage prisoners to actualise their own reform' (1997: 191), that ' […] the question of how prisoners engage with these practices, and the ways in which these practices do or do not actually shape prisoners' subjectivity and behaviour is a separate issue of great importance' (Garland 1997: 207). This thesis addresses this issue and fills the gaps. It shows how prisoners engage with regimes which encourage responsibility and outlines how for some men opportunities to make choices and be responsible are welcome and relished. It also shows, that for others, responsibility is difficult, if not impossible to manage. The demand to be responsible, in itself, adding to the pressure and pain of imprisonment.

1.6. Outline of Chapters

The remainder of this thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 has three aims. Firstly, it frames the methodological backdrop to the project and reviews the academic literature concerning research design and implementation. Secondly, it sets out the methodological approach taken and justifies its adoption. Finally, the chapter seeks to communicate the experience of fieldwork. I outline the issues and problems I faced in the field. In charting these challenges I review critically and justify my chosen methodology both practically and theoretically.

Chapters 3-5 are results chapters, outlining and analysing the data gathered. In Chapter 3 I consider prison life at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford. I detail how prisoners

experience their first arrival and how this sets the scene for the rest of their stay. I look at how sentence management, regime and the opportunities available, encourage and foster responsible prisoners. I consider the importance of relationships, both between the men and between staff and prisoners and question their impact on and importance for fostering responsible prisoners.

Chapter 4 builds on the analysis in Chapter 3 to consider responsibility in action, how it is facilitated and further, what responsibility meant for men at both prisons. Using data from interviews with staff and prisoners, a case study, and time spent in observations in all areas of the prisons, I identify and evaluate key elements of responsibility and consider what it means to prisoners to feel responsible and to have responsibility.

Chapter 5 considers the impact of demands of responsibility and engagement with the regime on the men in both prisons. I ask what happens when men cannot or will not conform and be responsible and describe how staff respond to prisoners who cannot manage to self-govern. I consider the effects, both positive and negative, of responsibility on men and staff and question how responsibility links to self-esteem and to the men's own understandings of their masculinity.

The final chapter of the thesis, Chapter 6, summarises the themes from the earlier chapters. I argue that, whilst there are some benefits to fostering environments which encourage choice and interaction, in which prisoners are enabled and encouraged to become responsible and self-governing, a careful balance must be maintained because for some men the demand to be responsible becomes characteristic of the 'pain of imprisonment'.

Chapter Two

Entering the Private Prison: Shaping a Research Methodology

*Why are **you** interested in what I think?*

(Mike, HMP Nassington, June 2010)

It's great that you're here. That you want to listen to us and hear what we think. It's good to talk - it's interesting to think about what you're interested in - see in here from the outside. Mostly it's nice to talk - talk to someone different. Sometimes you can feel forgotten, cut off from the world outside, everything going on without you there. You can't think that anyone will listen to you, though, and read what you write? You're young and naïve. If you weren't from Oxford I'd think you were stupid, but you really are mad to be here - no offence, Miss - you need to get your degree and move on. Do something else, why would you come here if you don't have to? It's awful. No one listens to us. No one is really interested in making things better for us, no matter what they say - remember that - you can't make a difference. (Larry, HMP Wansford, April 2010)

2.1. Challenges

The challenges of research inside a prison are manifold. Not only is the researcher faced with the task of interacting with and seeking data from men who have had their liberty taken away, but she must also chart and relate this information in an accurate and understandable manner. In asking participants about their lives, experiences and thoughts she is requesting privileged access: to be trusted and to trust in return. Prisons are often low trust environments (Liebling, 2004) and insecure places (Drake, 2012). Trust[36] within men's prison may be particularly limited as men choose to keep those around them at a distance (Corley, 2001: 106). Yet, in undertaking qualitative research with male inmates[37] building a level of trust, a rapport, or at the least an understanding, is crucial.

[36] Trust and relationships within a prison environment and relationships between staff and prisoners and Independent Monitoring Board (IMB), staff and prisoners and the impact of this on this study are considered in Chapters 3 and 4.

[37] Issues of gender in research methodology are discussed later in this Chapter and gender, particularly notions of 'masculinity' are considered in Chapter 5. In this chapter 1 also consider the possible impact on the research of being a female researcher working in a male dominated research environment.

This chapter has three aims. Firstly, it frames the methodological backdrop to the project and reviews the academic literature concerning research design and implementation. Secondly, it sets out the methodological approach taken and justifies its adoption. Finally, the chapter seeks to communicate the experience of fieldwork. I outline the issues and problems I faced in the field. Some of these problems were easily identifiable before fieldwork commenced and others were unexpected and required a quick response once the research had begun. In charting these challenges I review critically and justify my chosen methodology both practically and theoretically through a consideration of the tools and techniques used during the data collection and analysis stages of the research process. I found that the experience and practicalities of fieldwork differed substantially from what I had both expected and planned for. This, in turn, led me to question the theoretical methodological stance I had entrenched myself with. Such a tension is not undocumented (Bosworth, 1999; Downes and Rock, 1988; Garland, 1990; King, 2000) and in this chapter I attempt to reconcile my own empirical research experience with the methodology that underpins it.

2.2. Shaping a Methodology

> Deciding to do qualitative research is not a soft option. Such research demands theoretical sophistication and methodological rigour. (Silverman, 2005: 209)

Qualitative criminologists have widely sought to understand the realities and effects of imprisonment and detention. Assessing matters as diverse as suicide (Liebling, 1992; Towl et al., 2002); coping (Power et al., 2003); agency in women's prisons (Bosworth, 1999); the exercise of power in the male prison (Crewe, 2009, 2011a, 2011b); long term imprisonment (Cohen and Taylor, 1972); elderly men and their prison life (Crawley, 2005, 2012; Crawley

and Sparks, 2005); the lives and experience of prison officers (Bennett, Crewe and Wahidin, 2007; Crawley, 2004); prisoners experiences with prison officers (Drake, 2014); selfhood and identity for women in prison (Rowe, 2011); the experience of Muslim prisoners (Quraishi, 2008); race relations in prison (Genders and Player, 1989); ethnicity and multiculturalism (Phillips, 2008, 2012; Phillips and Earle, 2010); prison and inmate culture (Finkelstein, 1993; Irwin and Cressey, 1962); the effect of imprisonment on prisoners' children and families (Condry, 2007, 2011; Codd, 2008; Comfort, 2007); maximum security prisons and the continuing use of imprisonment (Drake, 2012) and the experience of foreign-nationals in prison (Kaufman, 2014), a diverse set of scholars have sought to understand and communicate the 'social reality' (Quraishi, 2008: 453; Earle and Phillips, 2009; Phillips and Earle, 2010; Phillips, 2012) of life inside the prison walls. While I seek to chart the social realities of life behind prison walls, my aim in framing this research is to understand life in the modern private prison; to grasp, firstly, how (and indeed whether) private prisons create responsible prisoners, secondly, how they do this and finally, how male inmates cope with this responsibility and its effect upon them. Research focused on answering these central research questions provides an image of the experience and effect of responsibility and in turn imprisonment within the private prison estate.[38]

For Silverman (2005) the starting point for any qualitative study must always be the identification and clarification of the central research questions of the project. Framing these questions, both in theory and in practice, is merely the beginning. Since Glaser and Strauss's

[38] The involvement of the private sector in punishment provision has seen academic scrutiny. Scholars have primarily considered the legitimacy of privatised penal establishments and the morality of delegating responsibility for the administration of punishment (Shichor, 1995; Moyle, 2001; Sparks, 1994; Logan, 1987, 1990). While life behind bars has been the subject of investigation, life within the confines of a privatised establishment remains relatively undocumented, particularly in the UK (an exception to this being James et al., 1997; Bottomley et al., 1997; James and Bottomley, 1998; Crewe, Liebling and Hulley, 2011 and Liebling, Crewe and Hulley, 2011a, 2011b, 2012). On the involvement of private companies in Immigration Detention see Bacon (2005) and Bosworth (2014). This literature was briefly considered in Chapter 1.

pioneering approach to qualitative research in the 1960's (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), methodological approaches using grounded theory have become common (see for example Lee, 1993; Frost, 2004 and Quraishi, 2008). Grounded theory is characterised by an organic and fluid development throughout the research process (Silverman, 2005: 31) that allows for the research questions to 'generate' the research. Only once the data gathering process has begun does it become possible to identify core theoretical concepts (Chenitz and Swanson, 1986) Only then can the researcher begin to connect the theoretical core concepts and the data. It is the development of these links and relationships between emergent data and the theoretical basis that guides the researcher in the early stages of a project, allowing data to emerge organically (Glaser, 1995a, 1995b). The fluid and flexible collection of data is of pivotal importance (Jupp, 1989). Glaser (1978) emphasises induction or emergence, and the individual researcher's creativity within a clear framework of stages. For a grounded theory methodology to be successful, however, a clear distinction between 'emergence' and 'forcing' of the data is fundamental. The researcher must not start with a theory; instead she must discover the theory implicit in the data.

Grounded theory, whilst providing a framework for the emergence of data and the relationship between theory and data, offers little help to the researcher in engaging with how the research should be conducted or, for example, what the relationship between the researcher and the researched should be. On this, feminist methodologies offer greater assistance.

Although it is difficult to identify a distinct or unifying feminist methodology, Pugh (1990), Olesen (1994) and Haig (1997) point to three common categories: feminist empiricism; feminist standpoint epistemology and feminist postmodernism. These

categorisations are useful to the extent that they identify the breadth and depth of feminist methodology. However, more generally adopting a feminist approach to qualitative research guides the researcher with what Haig (1997) identifies as the common features of feminist methodology: the rejection of positivism; the pervasive influence of gender relations and the pursuit of non-hierarchical research relationships.

Many of the early feminist critiques of methodology concentrate on the complexity of research from a female standpoint. According to such work, for a methodology to be truly 'feminist' in its approach it must be both by women and about women (Stanley and Wise, 1993). This is feminist methodology in its purest sense. Whilst my research concerns men[39] and their experience of imprisonment, much can be gained from feminist approaches which detail the importance of rapport and interaction and the relationships existing between researcher and researched (Oakley, 1981). In this sense, I use the term 'feminist methodology' not to describe research about women but more broadly to assess and describe the influence of feminist research methods on the choice of methodology for the thesis (Reinharz, 1992).

Feminist approaches to qualitative research emphasise action,[40] empowerment and emancipation through active research (Hammersley, 1995). Indeed for Lather (1991) qualitative research can only be categorised as feminine if it is action based:[41]

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[39] I did not choose to exclude women from my ethnographic research but was unable to secure access to either of the two private prisons which house women.

[40] 'Action' as a defining characteristic of research is not unique to research framed in a feminist approach and is evident in other traditions of social enquiry, for example, black studies, Marxism and gay and lesbian studies, (Fonow and Cook, 1991 and Punch, 1998).

[41] Even within the feminist action discourse there are distinct categorisations of approach and emphasis. Reinharz (1992: 180-194) for example lists five.

> I engage in feminist efforts to empower through empirical research designs, which maximise a dialogic, dialectically educative encounter between researcher and researched. […] What I suggest is that our intent more consciously be to use our research to help participants understand and change their situations.
>
> (Lather, 1991: 186)

Qualitative feminist research requires the researcher to acknowledge her own position within the research process and emphasises the role of the researcher in that process. These feminist methodologies stress the importance of qualitative research, both, as an empowering tool for the researcher and for her participants (Reinharz, 1992). It further allows for the researcher's experiences in the field to inform the data collection process and to be taken into account in the analytical stages (Lather, 1991).[42]

The importance of understanding and acknowledging my role as a researcher was something I had underestimated until I entered the field, despite my reliance on a feminist research methodology. Gaining that understanding and building upon it were important elements of my early days in the field when as an 'outsider' I learnt first-hand about life inside prison walls.

2.3. Setting the Scene: Behind the Prison Walls

i. Gaining Research Access: Challenges, Set-backs and Unexpected Gatekeepers

Gaining research access to the prison estate in England and Wales can be difficult. On beginning the study I had certainly underestimated just how hard it would be and the setbacks and delays I would face. That is not to say I was naïve to the problems I might encounter, prisons are after all as Maguire et al. put it 'closed and total institutions' (1985: 5). I sought to mitigate any delays or problems by securing research access as early as possible. A colleague suggested that

[42] On the value of considering the research experience as an aid to data analysis and as an additional layer or texture of data see Rowe (2014); Drake and Harvey (2013) and Jewkes (2011).

my best approach may lie in contacting private prisons directly, as Directors had a great deal of discretion as to who they afforded research access to. In the early weeks of my research I contacted HMP Peterborough to discuss the possibility of research access for the project. HMP Peterborough held particular significance for me, having grown up in the city and watched both the local press and friends' and families' response to the opening of a private prison on their doorstep with interest, I was hopeful that I would be able to do at least a portion of my fieldwork there. HMP Peterborough, as a research site, also provided the potential opportunity to undertake research with both men and women and consider how they might respond differently to responsibility, as it is the first prison in England and Wales to hold both men and women on the same site with one overarching management structure. HMP Peterborough were initially keen and I framed the first year of this project in terms of literature, planning and research focus on that prison. Unfortunately when the time came to begin fieldwork, HMP Peterborough had received a critical inspection report (HMCIP, 2007a, 2007b) and was under intense scrutiny. The Senior Manager I had been in touch with felt that it was not the right moment to open the prison to external research and asked that I get back in touch in a few months time. At this stage I had no reason to think that I would not eventually gain access to HMP Peterborough but began to explore other options, including a dialogue with NOMS. Staff at NOMS whilst incredibly helpful had recently approved research access for Alison Liebling, Ben Crewe and Susie Hulley for their large scale study of comparative quality of life in Public and Private Prisons and suggested informally that I may want to consider re-framing my research away from the private sphere. Undeterred I began the application process but continued to explore other options.[43]

[43]Including a very helpful introduction from Ben Crewe to a Senior Manager at HMP Forest Bank for which I am very grateful.

During the '*What is Criminology Conference*' held in Oxford in October 2009, when I was just beginning the third frustrating year of my DPhil study without having secured actual research access I was fortunate to speak to Kelly Hannah-Moffatt. At that conference, she gave a paper which touched on the problems that criminologists face in gaining and maintaining research access and the careful equilibrium between honesty and not 'too much' criticism criminologists often have to consider in order to ensure continuing research access (Hannah-Moffatt, 2011). I told her briefly of the problems I was facing and the concern for the completion of the project they caused. She encouraged me to think outside the box.[44] If I could not gain access in a conventional way, I needed to find a different gatekeeper. I should think about who else had access inside prison. Could I work with a charity or an educational programme and secure access that way? It was due to this conversation that, a few weeks later having exhausted the charity angle mainly because of training and time restrictions, I turned my attention to the IMB. As key-holders with access to all areas of the establishment they provided an unconventional yet possible gatekeeper. The then National Administrator could not have been more helpful and put me in touch with the National Council Member responsible for the contracted-out estate. She contacted the then-Director of HMP Wansford, where she was a member of the IMB and within weeks I began my research at HMP Wansford, followed by HMP Nassington.

I am not alone in facing difficulties in securing research access, Bosworth (2014) charts her own challenges in gaining access to the immigration detention estate and the frustrations of finding a balance between an academic study and the usefulness or utility demanded by Prison

[44] See for example, Bosworth et al., (2005) in which, facing problems securing research access to a prison in the United States, Mary Bosworth corresponded with prisoners by post, gaining research access and in turn data through an alternative means when conventional access was not possible.

and Detention Centre Managers.[45] Like her I, found initial approaches frustrating. Yet once I was 'in' and had the approval of the Prison Director, following the introduction from the IMB, I was allowed relative freedom to conduct my research as I pleased. My experience in securing research access underlines the essential point made by Bosworth, Hoyle and Dempsey (2011) and Bosworth (2014) of the dangers of assuming a right to research access. As criminologists we can often assume that we have a right to have access to people and institutions. We recognise the importance and value of our work, often with the most vulnerable members of society, and expect others to do so as well. In writing about the considerable problems I faced in gaining research access, I hope to fill in some of the 'silences' that Bosworth (2014: 5)[46] describes and provide an account of my difficulties which are missing from many research accounts.[47] As she puts it:

> In most publications how entry was obtained is rarely addressed and the account of the project proceeds as though it never were a problem. Such silence glosses over the significant difficulties many researchers endure, and can simplify complex and contested parts of the project. It obscures the potentially compromising effect of working with gatekeepers, while conveniently ignoring any debt we might owe them, as well as overlooking our own role in shaping the field, people's access to it, and what is discussed. (Bosworth, 2014: 5)

My own problems in gaining research access underline the importance of gatekeepers for criminological research.[48] As access to institutions becomes ever harder (Simon, 2000; Wacquant, 2008; Hannah-Moffat, 2011; Crewe 2009) the maintenance of good relationships

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[45] I was fortunate that at neither prison was I encouraged or forced to focus on usefulness or utility for the prison itself but was free to conduct my research as purely an academic study without pressure for policy outcomes for the prisons involved. (Bosworth 2014: 5). That is not to say, however, that Senior Managers at both prisons were uninterested in the outcome and results of the study. At HMP Nassington I gave a detailed presentation of my initial research analysis in December 2011 and provided a later summary report to both prisons. Once submitted and examined I will send copies of this dissertation to the Director and IMB of both prisons, as was agreed at the start of the research process.

[46] I am grateful to Mary Bosworth for having shared with me a completed draft of the manuscript for her 2014 forthcoming publication *Inside Immigration Detention.* The page numbers listed refer to that manuscript rather than the published book.

[47] See also Phillips and Earle (2010).

[48] On the important role played by 'gatekeepers' in sociological and criminological research see Broadhead and Rist (1976); Reeves (2010) and Bosworth (2014). On negotiating access see Duke (2002); Reeves (2010) and Bosworth (2014). On the difficulties of retaining research access see Hannah-Moffat (2011).

with those who can allow or facilitate access to closed institutions and organisations becomes more significant. Qualitative Methods texts (Cresswell, 2012; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Fetterman, 1998; Flick et al., 2004; Flick, 1998; Fontana and Frey, 1994; Fonow and Cook, 1991; Punch, 1998; Punch, 1986; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Silverman, 2005, 1997) encourage researchers to concentrate on building rapport and trust with the research subject but neglect the very real importance of creating and maintaining relationships with gatekeepers in order to gain and maintain research access. Yet relationships with gatekeepers can in themselves raise problems for research. As Bosworth describes, a careful balance has to be maintained between academic independence and the relationship and goodwill necessary to ensure access; 'it is difficult to find faults and retain research access' (2014: 6).[49] It is important that academics maintain their independence and do not, because of pressures of securing access and the demands of government and private organisations for usefulness or 'added value' in their research, in turn become agents of the state or merely conduct research that furthers an organisation's mantra or bidding (Bosworth and Hoyle, 2011; Christie, 1977; Cohen, 1988; Hannah-Moffat, 2011; Loader and Sparks, 2011).

I was fortunate that my gatekeeper, the IMB, did not demand that I compromise my research in any way, nor did the Directors or senior staff at either prison try to influence or shape my data-gathering. If anything they encouraged me to spend longer and visit even more areas of the prisons more regularly. I did not face the impossible choice that Kelly Hannah-Moffatt (2011) describes, between providing an honest account of my data, however critical, and mitigating my results to the positive in order to ensure continued research access. I was fortunate that having faced difficulties in gaining access, my time in the field gathering data

[49] See also Duke (2002).

and then analysing and writing up that data were not plagued with concerns about institutional politics or pressure to find only the good.

ii. My Gatekeeper: The Important Role of Independent Monitoring Boards

> Inside every prison, immigration removal centre and some short term holding facilities at airports, there is an Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) – a group of ordinary members of the public doing an extraordinary job.
>
> (justice.gov.uk, 2014)

The IMB at both HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford, were not only the gatekeeper for this research. The IMB members themselves became essential sources of information for the study. I interviewed a number of them and as they were my research escort I spent more time with them inside the prison walls than I did with anyone else. Given their importance both in gaining research access for this thesis but also as party to the research it is essential to briefly consider the role and significance of Independent Monitoring Boards, to prison life.

Every prison, immigration detention centre and even some airport holding facilities have an IMB (justice.gov.uk, 2014). Appointed by the Minister of Justice, IMB members in prisons hold keys and are free to visit the prison at any time, to visit all areas of the establishment and to talk to any prisoner they wish to or who expresses a wish to talk to them. Prisoners can also fill in a form, requesting to see a member of the IMB if they think that their questions or requests have not been dealt with appropriately by staff or during the formal complaints procedure operated by the prison. At both prisons these forms were easily available on every unit and the IMB checked the request box on each wing regularly. At HMP Nassington the IMB clerk was particularly quick at logging in requests and at both prisons PCOs were welcoming to IMB when they visited the wings and workshops.

Independent Monitoring Boards play an important role in prisons[50] in England and Wales, providing scrutiny and oversight over all areas of the prison. The IMB of every prison is under a legal duty under prison rule 77/1 to:

> • satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison, and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release
> • inform the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority, where it judges appropriate, of any concern it has
> • report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.
>
> (Prison Rule 77/1 cited in, IMB Reference Book, 2010: 2.2)

In practice, at HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington upholding these responsibilities meant the IMB having an active duty rota with IMB members allocated particular days or weeks where they were on-duty and responsible for visiting the prison, dealing with requests from prisoners, visiting the CSU and completing a weekly report. Annually each IMB writes a report for the Secretary of State with each member of the IMB taking on responsibility for a particular section under the supervision of the Chair. In my experience both IMBs did far more than this, both in terms of annual reports and day-to-day prison visits. From tasting the food on different units each week, to following up on requests for better disabled facilities on particular wings and sitting in on adjudications and meetings, IMB members were visible in all areas of prison life. Many expressed their delight in *"just turning up unexpectedly"* (Field notes) to see what was going on. At HMP Nassington in particular, the Chair of the IMB was highly visible in the prison. Often coming in on four or five days each week. He had a good relationship with Senior Management and PCOs and was well known and liked by men on the

[50] Despite their importance IMBs have the subject of little attention by academics. Notable exceptions to this are: Maguire and Vagg (1984); Maguire et al. (1985); Vagg (1985).

wings. He had high standards[51], often going beyond what was required, and was skeptical of direction from staff as to where he or other IMB members should or should not visit:

> *I'm like a terrier, if someone suggests I go somewhere then I go somewhere else. I'm even more obtuse if they suggest I don't visit somewhere - then I'll definitely visit. I'm always thinking what are they trying to hide? What do they think I should not see? I know that sounds harsh - I don't mean it to. I'm not here to look for their failings. To catch them out. You have to understand as IMB we're here to celebrate success and highlight that success as much as we are to find fault. Staff don't always see that. We'll call it a work in progress.*
>
> (IMB 3, HMP Nassington, June 2010)

There is little publicly available information on the the ethnic and demographic make-up of IMBs. Whilst there are few recent national statistics on this, a 'census' (Vagg, 1985) of membership in 1981 found that 43% of Board members were also magistrates and that a high proportion were over 50, with a large under-representation of ethnic minorities. Of the two IMBs I encountered the majority of members were retired, many having been or currently serving as magistrates. The prevalence of retired men and women on IMBs is to be expected. The time demands and responsibility associated with IMB membership lends itself to those who have more time and are able to be flexible with their time. That is not to say there were not younger members. On the IMBs of both prisons there was a member who was in full-time education and other members in employment. On both IMBs there was also a member who was currently or had previously served a term on the IMB National Council.[52] The time

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[51] He was famous amongst staff for refusing to allow members of the IMB to leave the administration block if they were not appropriately dressed, this included that male members of the IMB should wear a tie when in the prison. He very much viewed the role as professional, 'a job' and expected the other members of the IMB to show the same level of professionalism at all times. He regularly reminded both officers and IMB members of the legal obligation that the IMB had to report to the Minister of Justice and expected a degree of professionalism from IMB members that reflected that obligation.

[52] The IMB National Council is an elected body made up of nine area representatives drawn from IMBs across the country. Each member takes responsibility for a number of policy areas including, Foreign National Prisoners, prisoners property, contracted prisons, health, transport, safer custody and learning and skills. Members of the National Council continue with their normal IMB role as well as being a council member and do not receive payment for council membership. It was through the National Council member responsible for the contracted-estate that I was able to secure research access. For more information see https://www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/imb/national-council

demands of IMB membership are not to be underestimated and as one member at HMP Nassington told me the demands of being on an Independent Monitoring Board were not always compatible with employment:

> *My employer is quite supportive. I can work flexitime to make up for the time I'm at Nassington. It works well in theory but the practice is not quite the same. I end up having to swap my rota week with another member because of an important meeting at work or if my kids are ill. It's more time consuming than people think and it can be hard to balance with family life. I want to do it, but I have to do it well - it's not something you can give half to, you have to be on the ball. I think it is important that I do this - the IMB role is so important and I get so much from being on the IMB, but I and my family know that it has to be finite. I can't keep juggling work, family and this for much longer.*
>
> (IMB 5, HMP Nassington, December 2011)

Members had different motivations for joining an IMB. Younger members often saw their role as adding useful points to their Curriculum Vitae or were gaining credit at work or university for volunteering in the community. Many retired members took on the role to keep active in their retirement but were keen to dispel any suggestion that they were IMB members because they were *'do-gooders'* or *'curtain-twitchers'* (Field notes) with too much time on their hands; *"We're not all old retired busybodies. I mean I'm quite old and I am retired but I'm not a stuffy do-gooder."* (IMB 1, HMP Wansford, March 2010). Senior staff at both prisons emphasised the experience and value of retiree IMB members:

> *They have more time and they can be flexible. More importantly they bring with them a lot of work and life experience. Take Peter, it's brilliant to have him around. He knows so much about work opportunities and the local community around the prison. He is a real help to the staff and the men here.*
>
> (SMT 4, HMP Nassington, December 2011)

Most PCOs also valued the work of the IMB. Remarking that they *"really help"* (Field notes) and that *"they have the best interest of us and the lads in mind. They're like a security check,*

a monitor. They pull us up if things aren't right, but they say 'well done', too. That's important" (PCO 19, Wansford, May 2011).[53] Not all staff, however, were so appreciative of the work of the IMB commenting; *"they get in the way, they interfere. We do anything wrong and the lads just run and fill in a request to see the IMB. They can really escalate situations"* (PCO 6, HMP Wansford, March 2010). Often the IMB at both prisons were put in difficult situations, forced to make difficult decisions which left them unpopular with staff and prisoners. As one IMB member remarked:

> *I can't fix everything for everyone. My duty is to make sure the men here are safe, that the environment is safe and clean and that they have what they need. Simple things like a good and consistent standard of food or access to belongings that have been lost or are held in stores can make all the difference. Sometimes ensuring that they are safe, that they have what the law says they are entitled to, makes me unpopular with staff, particularly if they've done something they shouldn't have and I pull them up on it or report it to management. Equally, I can be unpopular with some of the prisoners. Not all of their complaints and requests can be found in their favour. I can't change prison rules for them.*
>
> (IMB 6, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

The difficulties and challenges of being a member of an IMB should not be underestimated. On occasion IMB members were viewed by staff as interfering or resented by prisoners for not providing what they thought they were entitled to:

> *Sometimes staff think we interfere. They can resent our presence. You have to have a pretty thick skin at times. I've heard what they say behind our backs. I don't think it's badly meant - well not all the time. Some think we're busybodies with nothing better to do - we're not. Prisoners think we're miracle workers, that we*

[53] In July 2011 the kitchens at HMP Nassington were trialling a monthly fine dining menu in the staff canteen. Staff and IMB could choose to pre-order the fine dining menu the day before and were then sat at specially set tables, with menu cards and table cloths. Prisoners who usually manned the hot plate and serving hatch took it in turns to wait on tables, taking orders and serving food. The programme was designed to pass on food service skills to prisoners and was prompted because of the success of The Clink at HMP High Down (see www.theclinkrestaurant.com). The IMB were hugely supportive of this initiative and tried to tie their monthly Board Meeting in with the fine dining so that IMB members could attend before their meeting. Staff were far less supportive, on the one occasion I joined the IMB for the fine dining lunch we were the only table. By December 2011 the programme had been halted because not enough people were choosing to order the fine dining menu. The IMB blamed this on a lack of engagement by staff (Field notes, December 2011).

> *can just fix anything. It's not like that. We have rules to follow. We're here to make sure things are okay. That they are treated well and are safe. We're not an ombudsman or a complaints procedure, we're an overseer. An annoying itch that management can't scratch. It is important to keep them on their toes. It makes for a better prison.* (IMB 4, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

A detailed and comprehensive analysis of the work of the IMB is beyond the scope of this thesis but their work and their role in prison life warrants more academic attention. I am very grateful to the IMB at both prisons for the escort they gave me during the fieldwork portions of this thesis. In spending time with them I learnt more about prison life, internal politics and the history of the establishment than I could have expected. My experience with the Independent Monitoring Boards at HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington is that whilst their demographic makeup was relatively similar, the structure and organisation of the way they went about fulfilling their role differed. At HMP Nassington there was often more than one IMB member present and the two worked in parallel covering the duty-rota and then moving on to visit additional departments or units at random. Often members took a particular interest in certain areas of the prison, one with an engineering background, for example, took a particular interest in the workshops; another was interested in media and the arts and often spent time proof-reading the prison newspaper, 'The Nassington Bugle', reviewing the prison radio schedule and visiting the art classrooms. The HMP Nassington IMB identified with a strong IMB Chairman who was in the prison on two or three days each week. The IMB, and all of its members, were very well known and visible within the prison. At HMP Wansford Board members worked more independently and were not as quickly recognised by prisoners. There was often more than one member in the prison when I visited but this was usually because the IMB member accompanying my research visit had come into the prison for an additional day. At HMP Wansford I was more dependent on a few IMB members for escort, rather than the entire IMB. At HMP Nassington I told my IMB contact member when I would

like to visit and she let the duty rota member know to collect me from reception. At HMP Wansford I made individual arrangements with a few IMB members for specific days on which they were available to escort me.[54] These differing access arrangements in themselves highlight the main difference I found between the working practices of the two IMBs. At HMP Nassington there was a clear focus on team-work and IMB members worked together in fulfilling their duties. At HMP Wansford, members took responsibility for their rota week and then attended the monthly IMB Meeting. There was less day-to-day interaction between members and a more individual focus with all information exchanged at the monthly meeting rather than on an on-going basis. Just the differences in approach to their role and how their duties were managed demonstrates the importance of future consideration of the role and workings of Independent Monitoring Boards. In my experience IMB members exhibit considerable knowledge and expertise. They are privy to the inner workings of the prison and have access all areas. Their role and significance to prison life, their inner-workings and the discrete ways in which they negotiate power and mitigate relations between prison and prisoner means that any investigation into their working practices and experiences has the potential to provide an important insight into prison life through their eyes. In a time when securing research access is increasingly difficult (Hannah-Moffat, 2011; Simon, 2000; Wacquant, 2008) they provide not only an opportunity for access to institutions[55] but are themselves a rich source of information.

[54] With more IMB members available to escort me and the opportunity to spend time with a wider variety of Board members with whom to arrange escort and access at HMP Nassington meant that I spent more time in the field at HMP Nassington than I did at HMP Wansford.

[55] That is not to say that the IMB can invite whoever they want into a prison. At both prisons I visited, the IMB sought permission from the Director for my access. However, they provided an important link in the chain in order for me to gain research access. Vouching for me to the Director and offering to accompany me so that I drew as little on prison resources as possible.

The link with the IMB gave me a complicated status within the prison and in turn affected, at least initially, how staff and prisoners viewed me. In both prisons staff and prisoners had good relationships with members of the IMB. As Kieran put it on my first day at HMP Nassington, the IMB "*they get stuff done – they listen"* (HMP Nassington, April 2010). Often, as I was with an IMB member, I was mistaken for a new recruit to the IMB and I was constantly asked *"Are you new IMB, Miss*?" (Jack, HMP Nassington, April 2010). I benefited greatly from the good relationships that IMB members had with the inmates and staff and I found that an introduction from them often helped in quickly breaking down barriers with the men. It was as if the men were prepared to trust me because IMB members were showing their trust in me. Yet, being accompanied by the IMB in itself raised some ethical questions. The IMB were generally viewed by inmates as being there to help them, but as an independent researcher it was crucial both that the men knew they had nothing substantive to gain by talking to me and that I was not a member of the IMB.

Prison research, as Jacobs (1977) identifies, is a daily negotiation of legitimacy, content and boundaries. This makes it essential that all those who participated in the study were not confused or misled about my status or my purpose inside the prison. In order to ensure that this was the case I always introduced myself to staff and inmates as a researcher and asked IMB members to do the same. At every opportunity I sought to explain in more detail what my research was about and also to reinforce that I was a visitor to the prison and not a member of the IMB. I also repeated this at the start of every interview and made sure that I included it in longer informal conversations. Informal interaction and conversation, ranging from a few seconds to more than half an hour of discussion, shaped much of my time in the field. It helped to build a rapport with the men and also guided my research as I learnt about life inside the prison walls as an outsider. These informal interactions, whilst sometimes

seemingly trivial, form an important and necessary part of the research process (Bosworth, 2014).

One of the greatest challenges for the qualitative researcher is to communicate clearly the research process which informs the interpretation and results of the project (Haig, 1997). Deciding which particular elements of extended periods of research are important is challenging. The entire project was shaped by many different and often small interactions and experiences, which are in turn difficult to accurately describe or explain. These small interactions cumulatively provide a wealth of data which must be carefully recorded and analysed. Yet, it is impossible to include accounts of all such events during fieldwork in the final thesis, so care must be taken in selecting examples to detail. The selection limits the overall body of data that is available to anyone other than the researcher, yet much is seemingly irrelevant to the final research whilst being a significant part of the process. For example, it is difficult to quantify or explain in text the smell of a prison, the experience of a first visit to the Care and Separation Unit (CSU)[56] or the first time a 'use of force' incident is witnessed. Yet these experiences can have a profound effect on the researcher and did on me. In recording, and analysing my time in the field, my intention is to find a balance between an objective account of the results without diminishing the importance of the research experience and process.

[56] Care and Separation Units (CSU) have previously been called 'Segregation' and in the past the colloquial title 'the block' was used by both prisoners and staff. During the course of fieldwork all staff referred to it as CSU, whilst many prisoners also referred to it as the 'seg'.

2.4. Mapping the Research Process

In both prisons I initially spent time meeting different members of the IMB and learning about the prison from them. I shadowed them on their rounds, I sat in on meetings,[57] and I became familiar with people and places and the general geography of the prison. HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford, although both operated by the same company, are very different establishments, in layout, make-up, funding, provision and purpose.

HMP Nassington is a Category B local prison built. Opened in 1997 as a male adult and young offender core local and remand prison it has an operational capacity (OC) of 1,324 and remained just under full OC for the entirety of my visit. The men are housed in seven house blocks. The majority of the accommodation is two to a cell with the exception of the most recently built Greetham[58] vocational training unit[59], which is single-bedded. HMP Nassington provides a First Night Centre (FNC), a CSU, Library, Chapel, Gym and Sports Hall, as well as in-patient medical facilities.

HMP Wansford is a Category B training prison[60] opened in 2001. It has capacity for 664 sentenced male adults. The prison also has a separate Vulnerable Prisoner Unit, with its own regime and facilities (including industry workshops) for 150 prisoners. The sentence

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[57] For example, I was permitted to attend IMB Board Meetings, Segregation Management and Review Group (SMARG) Meetings, CSU Reviews, Basic Regime Reviews, Adjudications (both Judicial and those led by Senior Management), Education Planning and Safer Custody.

[58] The units in both prisons I visited have been allocated pseudonyms in this thesis.

[59] The Director at HMP Nassington encouraged all staff to refer to the prison residential blocks as units. Some officers and prisoners referred to them as wings. At HMP Wansford the consensus was less clear. In this thesis I use wing and unit interchangeably to describe the residential blocks on which the prisoners are housed.

[60] Training prisons neither accept prisoners immediately upon their sentence, nor on remand. Instead, they are designed for sentenced prisoners and provide appropriate training courses and opportunities to allow prisoners to progress through their sentence plan.

requirement for HMP Wansford is more than four years with at least 18 months left to serve.[61] The prison offers a CSU, Library, Chapel, Gym and Sports Hall.

Entering the field, HMP Nassington was initially far more daunting. On a larger site, with a large and transient population,[62] it took me an extended period to find my way around. In neither establishment was I offered keys, nor did I seek, to be a key holder. This was a conscious and considered decision, even though it left me dependent on officers or IMB members to let me in or out of a wing, classroom or workshop. The reasons for this decision were two-fold. Firstly, on a practical level I was uncomfortable with the responsibility. I did not want the burden of double-checking doors and gates were secured behind me. Secondly, and more important was a personal reluctance to be responsible in any way for 'locking up' the men. I was there to talk to them, to learn from them and ultimately to ask for their trust. I felt, as others have before (see Bosworth, 1999; although see also Quraishi, 2008; Crewe, 2009 and the differing experience of key-holders and non key-holders considered by Bosworth, 2014), that holding keys would suggest an allegiance[63] to the establishment and thereby risk alienating some of the men who would otherwise have been prepared to talk to me. I did, however, have some concerns, despite my resolution not to hold keys, that not doing so would limit my access to some areas of the establishment and could possibly even have a negative impact, in the sense that because I was often accompanied, individuals may be less willing to answer my questions. In reality, as detailed later in this chapter, because of the extended periods of time I spent in the education and industry blocks working and

[61] Although staff and the IMB felt that this was not always the case. Due to the pressure on available prison places and the availability of courses for progression and re-categorisation across the prison estate there was a consensus that sentence requirements were not always being adhered to which on occasions diluted the regime.

[62] HMP Nassington also holds remand prisoners, whereas HMP Wansford does not and in general has a more settled population as a training prison rather than a local prison.

[63] On the problems and benefits of being an 'insider' doing research see Chavez (2008); Sherif (2001) and Sixsmith et al. (2003).

chatting with the men, and due to the good relationship that staff and prisoners had with the IMB, I never felt that being accompanied hindered the research process. In addition, many of the officers, particularly at HMP Wansford, were willing to facilitate my ease of movement around the prison.

I had consciously made few decisions about whom to seek to interview before I entered the field, preferring instead to allow them to 'evolve during the research process' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 215). This 'evolution' led to the removal of the two main restrictions I had put in place relating to prisoners. I had previously decided that I would not seek to interview or undertake observations on the Vulnerable Prisoners (VP) wing of either prison, nor would I interview Young Offenders (YO).[64] These limitations were quickly abandoned once in the field. In the case of the YOs, HMP Nassington's policy of housing YOs on mixed wings with adult prisoners meant that it was very difficult to exclude them from the study. My decision to include the VP wings came about largely because of interviews undertaken with prison officers and members of the IMB at HMP Wansford[65], who extolled the interesting and diverse programmes that were being undertaken on the VP wings and in the VP workshops; *"I could not understand the prison and its working"* (IMB 1, HMP Wansford, March 2010), I was told, if I were to exclude the VP population. Having included the VP wings in my sample at HMP Wansford it was natural to continue to do so at HMP Nassington.

[64] I had decided not to interview YOs because of the small number of them across the two prisons (HMP Wansford does not hold YOs and HMP Nassington usually holds them only on remand). I had decided to exclude VPs because of my own apprehension of working with sex offenders. However, once in the field it became clear both that not all VPs were sex offenders and also that a number of sex offenders who were discrete about their conviction, and therefore less vulnerable to reprisals, who were able to live within the normal population.

[65] The population at HMP Wansford does not include YOs, so interviews and observations with them took place only at HMP Nassington.

As a guest of the IMB, I spent a lot of time on their duty rounds with them. On these I met inmates as well as staff and took the opportunity to explain what my research was about. These walk-abouts allowed me to make initial contact with a large number of men and staff, some of whom I went on to interview in depth. I chatted informally with many more. At times, with the permission of the supervising officer, I stayed in one particular area of the prison, while the IMB member continued their rounds. Over time I found that during the day the workshops and education blocks were conducive, whilst at mealtimes it was often better to be on the wing. My own timetable thereby informally mirrored that of the men.

I met most of my research participants by 'hanging around' (Bosworth, 1999, 2014), yet I was always more comfortable in some places than others. At HMP Nassington, for example, I found a natural home in the prison radio station and art classrooms, at HMP Wansford in the prison workshops. I did not experience the questions or judgment of officers about my choice of location that Bosworth (1999) documents, nor did I experience the open hostility about my presence which Quraishi (2008) describes. It is difficult to account for why this may be the case, possibly because I was known to be a guest of the IMB and present with the approval of the Director. Yet this did not prevent the frankness of some officers towards me over other issues and seems unlikely. More likely, the absence of disapproval over my choice of location can be attributed to the extent to which I continually moved around each of the prisons. I tried to visit as many locations as I could during each of my visits and then settled somewhere where I could learn as much as possible but that offered the least disruption to staff and men. Some days this was the kitchens, others the laundry. I ate chip butties from the wing serveries and drank tea with the CSU orderlies. I found myself revisiting Pythagoras's theorem in the

education block and then applying it in the carpentry workshop.[66] I became a dab hand at picking out misshapen dog biscuits and became the subject of many jokes in the telephone recycling centre with my inability to comprehend a circuit board, with Reg commenting, "*you work at Oxford and you can't do this…"* (HMP Wansford, March 2010). From a criminological perspective these encounters would be termed participant observation, yet at times as I worked alongside and chatted with the men the line between participant and observer was unclear.

These immersed observation experiences fall more clearly within the school of dramaturgical sociology,[67] the approach to observation advocated by sociologists such as Goffman (1961) and Foster (1996). While closely resembling the forms of participant observation used by qualitative researchers such as Gold (1958); Spradley (1980) and Adler and Adler (1994), dramaturgical sociology allows for what Goffman terms 'unsystematic naturalistic observation' (1961: 42). The evolving nature of this type of observation allows data to emerge during the course of the observation in line with grounded theory. Yet the need for the research to be informed by a naturalistic observation process is somewhat naïve. It seems unrealistic to suggest that the presence of a researcher inside the prison walls does not in some way influence the course of these interactions and in turn influence the observation. Should we expect the men to behave in the same way when an external observer is present, however much she participates? As Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939) question, do individuals behave differently when they know they are being observed? For Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) the potential for differing behaviour, or a reaction to the presence of a

[66] I also spent time in each prison's CSU, which proved to be some of the most emotionally and physically demanding time of my research. I also attended CSU reviews with IMB members on a number of occasions.

[67] See also Fine (1993) on the development of dramaturgical sociology and symbolic interactionism as research methodologies and their increasing acceptance by positivist researchers.

researcher, informs rather than hinders the observation process. They find that how individuals respond to research and the presence of the researcher and the actual physical research interaction can be as informative as actual data gathering. In this sense dramaturgical sociology as an observational method is particularly suited to understanding 'how people interact, form relationships, accomplish meaning in their lives, and, especially, how they construct their self-presentations and carry them off in front of others' (Punch, 1998: 184).

It seems somehow wrong, even as I write it, to say that I often 'enjoyed' the time I spent with the men in education and prison industry during the course of the observations - that I took something of value beyond the data from the tea and chats. Yet to dismiss such suggestions would be wholly inaccurate. The men and I discussed far more than their prison experience. We talked about their wives and girlfriends, their parents and their children and often their hopes for life outside on release. As I chatted to them, shared life stories and experiences, I discovered that men in prison were not necessarily bad (Drake, 2012). Some older men, who had served in the armed forces, reminisced about times past and likened the camaraderie on the wing to their time in the forces. We reached an almost comfortable equilibrium: I was not an officer, nor one of them, yet I existed comfortably around them day on day with little or no hierarchical distinction.[68] Yet in building a rapport with both the staff and men, laughing and joking, sharing stories and experiences, is there a danger that as a researcher you become too much a part of the research process and in turn begin to influence outcomes? Israel and Hay (2006) point to the dangers of a researcher becoming so entrenched in her work that she fails to see the risks in which she may be placing both herself and others, including research participants. Russell et al. (2002) chart the difficulties of building rapport

[68] On hierarchy and relationships with research participants see Funder (2005). On being a female researcher in a male dominated environment see Gurney (1991); Russell et al. (2002); Huggins and Glebbeek (2003) and Bosworth (2014). See also Rowe (2011, 2014) and Bosworth (1999) on being a female researcher working with women prisoners.

with research participants and emphasise the difficulty of assessing boundaries once that rapport exists. Yet, familiarity and a degree of normality within the place of research is necessary both for the actual process of data gathering and more importantly to provide the consistency necessary to win the trust of the research participant.[69]

To some extent I was able to mitigate this entrenchment by not going into the prison every day, instead taking time each week to write up my field notes and reflect on the data I had gathered, an approach also favoured by Quraishi in his 2008 study of Muslim men in prison. However, some researchers choose to take a different approach, involving a more consistent immersion. Bosworth (1999), for example, charts how she dealt with spending a large number of consecutive days in prisons undertaking research by drawing a distinction between 'in' and 'out', demarcated by a long drive. King writes of the need to 'unwind' after undertaking prison research as well as the 'large emotional burden' such research can place on lone researchers (2000: 299-300).[70]

One of the greatest points of emotional burden for me was deciding to leave the field for a more extended period and questioning whether I had seen or heard enough to be able to draw conclusions.[71] The decision to leave the field can be a difficult one (Ortiz, 2004; Reeves, 2010) and ultimately the need for an extended break became apparent on a more personal and emotional level. I became aware as the weeks passed that I was becoming too comfortable with prison life; the pains of imprisonment, whilst visible, seemed less acute. Yet outside, the

[69] See also Sherif (2001) who discusses how difficult it is to find a balance between insider and outsider status when conducting qualitative research, and outlines just how blurred or ambiguous the boundaries can become. On being an insider doing research see Chavez (2008). On trust in a prison environment see Corley (2001) and Liebling (2004).

[70] See also Clarke (1975).

[71] After a break of almost a year I did return to the field to gather more data.

realities of imprisonment and life inside were only too real, and my life away from the field began to be negatively affected by my time inside.

The impact of research inside the prison estate on a researcher is relatively under-documented (Jewkes, 2011). In writing about 'doing prison research' I cannot gloss over the many and varied demands that are placed on a researcher. Prisons are complex and difficult places. Researchers, like prisoners, face daily negotiations of power (Bosworth, 1999, 2014; Crewe 2009, 2011a; Drake, 2012; Sloan and Drake, 2013) and are confronted with individuals who are often at the lowest and most desperate point of their lives.[72] Although I was made very welcome by both staff and men in both of the prisons I visited, I often found it difficult to leave behind what I had seen and heard. I struggled with some of the things I saw and many of the things I heard and the very real reality of the 'pains of imprisonment'. One particular visit prompted a prolonged period of nightmares, resulting in constant tiredness, which in turn negatively affected subsequent research visits and other commitments. I found it difficult to discuss my experiences with those closest to me, choosing to distance the reality of the prison from my own day-to-day life. This in itself prompted a constant review of my methodological approach and stance even during the fieldwork process. I (and indeed those around me) questioned if I was becoming too involved in life inside the prison walls. The grounded feminist approach which was underpinning my research demanded this involvement, yet seemingly provided no guidance on how to reconcile the need for immersion, on one hand, and understanding and coping with the stark realities of collecting prison data on the other.

I am not alone in having struggled with this conflict between feminist methodology and the demands it places on the researcher. Bosworth (1999) charts her own conflict between

[72] See Harris (1997) who considers the isolation that can often be caused by ethnographic study.

methodology and research reality. In this sense, the role of the researcher and the impact of research cannot and should not be ignored. However, not all researchers believe that their role and experiences should influence or become part of their study. Some are critical of those of us who write about the personal impact of doing prison research. Ben Crewe, for example, cautions against falling down the reflexive spiral and becoming obsessed with the effect on the researcher of the data gathering rather than the data itself (Crewe, 2009: 488). For me, as I demonstrate throughout this thesis, it is not possible to separate myself from the data. I am not alone in feeling this conflict, nor in thinking that considering my own research experience and managing it appropriately can add a depth of understanding or an additional layer of texture to the ethnographic account (Drake and Harvey, 2013; Drake, 2012; Jewkes, 2011). Drake and Harvey argue that, 'there are still significant gains to be made by focusing more closely on what emotions can tell researchers about their data or subject area and about the research process itself' (2013: 1).

I have to admit that I did not enter the field expecting to have to manage or analyse my emotions.[73] Yet having fought so hard to get research access, there were days when I found it difficult to drag myself to the prison gates: concerned, almost fearful about what I might see and experience on the next visit, I tried, on the advice of my supervisor to maintain as 'normal' a life as possible outside. Yet I found that sometimes this made it harder. I felt a degree of guilt for the middle class upbringing and education that had given me advantages that the majority of the men I met could never even begin to imagine (Field notes, July 2011). As I pulled into a McDonalds drive thru on a late night journey back to Oxford after a particularly difficult day at HMP Nassington in June 2010, I was plagued with guilt about my freedom of choice to stop and get something to eat. Just that morning a young man had told me how much he craved chicken

[73] See also Rowe (2014) on situating yourself as a prison researcher as an aid to understanding and analysis.

poppers from KFC every time he saw the advertisement on the television. The simple choices and freedom I had outside of the prison seemed at odds with the relationships of equality and honesty I sought to build with the men inside who, despite as I discovered had some responsibility and some choices, had only constrained freedom.

It is important as researchers that we talk about the process and experience of doing research (Bosworth 1999; 2014; Phillips and Earle, 2010; Piacentini, 2005; Rogan, 2011b). That we chart our difficulties as well as our triumphs. There is a tendency to gloss over the difficulties that we encounter in gathering data, the upsetting and painful things we see and hear; to present ourselves as immune to the pains of imprisonment and to instead concentrate on gathering data in a clinical and focussed manner. It took me an extended period of time to even acknowledge to those closest to me the difficulties I had reconciling what I saw and heard in the field and even longer to write honestly about the impact of doing prison research. That is not to say that everything I saw and heard was bad, that all experiences were negative. I laughed a huge amount, was on the end of jokes in the prison workshops and in the staff canteen, developing an easy rapport with many of the people around me. In this thesis I write honestly about my research experience. The experience is, I believe, inseparable from the data itself and adds an additional texture and depth to the account. To some it may seem trivial and irrelevant to write about conducting an interview with a budgie on your head or sniffing hooch and I in no way seek to undermine the academic rigour or seriousness of the subject matter of this thesis, nor to cloud the experiences of the men and the very real pains they have with accounts of my own emotions and experience. However, in doing prison ethnography we commit part of ourselves, our lives and to some extent our privacy to the project. In order to build meaningful relationships of trust we must share something of ourselves. We cannot just expect men to share their lives with us without giving something of ourselves in return. Not everything in prison is bad. Prisons are not full of

bad men (Drake, 2012), despite what the popular press would lead the general public to believe. However, prisons are places where people hurt, their freedom is curtailed and they face a distance from loved ones and support networks on the outside. Those of us doing prison research are not immune from this, from the acute human suffering and emotion and it is important that we talk about it and consider its significance for our data and analysis as well as our wider lives.

2.5. Gathering the Data: Practicalities and Realities

i. Safety

Prisons have the potential to be dangerous places. Whilst I was in the field, prisoners attacked one another and I was in the prison on two occasions[74] when men were rushed to hospital following a 'swill' (or being scalded with boiling water).[75] [76] I heard accounts from staff of prisoners being taken hostage by others[77] and was shown a number of 'home-made' weapons which had been discovered. An awareness of these issues and potential dangers is essential for a researcher entering such an environment. Lee (1999) identifies that there may be a risk of physical danger inherent in any situation where violence is common. The safety of the researcher whilst in the field is therefore of paramount importance and it would be naïve to

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[74] On one of these occasions the attack was particularly serious, with the victim receiving serious facial burns. The aggressor thought that the victim had squirted shower gel over the floor of the his cell. I later found out that there had been a case of mistaken identity and the perpetrator had attacked the wrong man. The victim spent two days in hospital following the attack (Field notes, HMP Nassington, June 2010).

[75] Whilst in the field I learnt from prison staff that prisoners would often add sugar to the boiling water when they wanted to attack another inmate. The addition of the sugar caused the water to retain a higher temperature for longer. This not only allowed more flexibility when planning the attack as the water stayed dangerously hot for longer but also helped the water to 'stick' on the skin meaning that any burns received were usually deeper and more serious and also often led to more serious scarring (Field notes).

[76] At HMP Nassington I was shown homemade weapons discovered in the prison. These including what was in prison slang called a 'slash'. Made from the handle of a toothbrush sharpened to a point and with a razor blade attached to each side, the weapon caused two parallel wounds, on occasion removing a chunk of skin. The wound inflicted by a slash was often extensive and difficult to stitch and would normally leave extensive scarring.

[77] I attended a judicial adjudication at HMP Nassington for a prisoner who had held another hostage using a tin of tuna in a sock as a weapon. The perpetrator told the Judge that: *"In prison you have to improvise"* and in attempting to mitigate on his own behalf he argued that *"it wasn't a serious weapon: not like a knife"* (Christian, HMP Nassington, July 2011).

enter the field without having taking into account questions of personal safety and identifying possible risks (The British Society of Criminology, 2006).

Yancey and Rainwater (1970) distinguish two types of danger or risks a researcher might encounter: 'presentational' as a response to the presence or actions of the researcher (Bourgois, 1989; Carey, 1972) and 'anonymous' being the inherent dangers of the situation or location of research. Both of these risks present themselves to those undertaking research in prison but physical attacks on non-uniformed workers or visitors to prison are rare (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007). Since the opening of HMP Nassington there had been only one assault on a member of the IMB (Field notes, HMP Nassington, December 2011). I was acutely aware of the importance of personal safety whilst undertaking research. This informed both my decision not to hold keys and not, wherever possible, to conduct interviews in closed rooms.[78]

In practice, in neither prison did I ever feel particularly vulnerable to violence, nor did I worry for my safety, although on one occasion I was momentarily intimidated. When walking onto a wing on one on my early visits to HMP Wansford, I was bombarded with wolf-whistles and sexually loaded comments from the men on the landings above – this only continued for a few seconds and interestingly it was a comment relating to my appearance and not as sexually

[78] Before starting fieldwork I attended a course run by Oxford University Security Services entitled '*Dealing with Dangerous Individuals and Situations of Conflict*'. Whilst designed for more day-to-day situations than the prison environment the course was useful in highlighting the importance of body language and communication in both diffusing and not escalating difficult situations. It also highlighted practical issues such as where to place yourself in a room to ensure the easiest exit should a situation become dangerous.

loaded - *"She's fit…" "Nah she's a bit too skinny for me"* (Field notes, HMP Wansford, April 2010) which prompted an officer to ask the men to settle down.[79]

That incident aside, the men were always polite in their interactions with me. I was almost always referred to as *'Miss'* prisoners would often apologise for the use of colourful language around me. A number of officers suggested that this politeness was down to gender; *"they'll love you – they always like talking to women visitors"* (PCO 9, HMP Nassington, April 2010). No doubt that there was some novelty for the men in having a woman who was not a member of staff on the wing (they told me this during interviews) but observing the men with female officers I saw a similar level of politeness in their interactions.[80] One female member of the medical staff did recount being recently intimidated and momentarily frightened when a group of men on the methadone programme were late receiving their medication – but she apportioned their behaviour to their withdrawal symptoms (OS 11, HMP Nassington, June 2010). I spoke to female officers and IMB members at length about how they perceived their interactions with the men and their experiences working with them in the prison. Whilst they recognised the potential for violence they all emphasised the importance of respect and clear communication in ensuring a safe environment for all.

ii. The Question of Informed Consent: Framing Ethical Research.

Undertaking research in an ethical manner is of the utmost importance (Overholser, 2006; Shrader-Frechette, 1994). Without adherence to ethical standards in the social sciences, there

[79] I later discussed this incident with the PCO who ultimately asked the men on the wing to settle down and also with a different IMB member to the one I had been accompanied by at the time of the incident. Both attributed some of the problem to the IMB member I was with when I felt intimidated. This Board member was, I was told, viewed as ineffectual by many of the prisoners who as a result showed little respect for him. The other IMB member remarked: *"They* [prisoners] *wouldn't have done that if I had been with you*, t*hey wouldn't have dared try something like that."* (Field notes, HMP Wansford, April 2010)

[80] On the interactions between female staff and male prisoners see Crewe (2006), on staff-prisoner relationships in the private sector see Shefer and Liebling (2008). See also Liebling et al. (1999).

is a risk of harm to both research participant and researcher, but also more widely to the reputation of others conducting similar research within the discipline. Mason notes that 'the changing direction of interest and access during a qualitative study mean that new and unexpected ethical dilemmas are likely to arise during the course of … research' (1996: 166-7). This is particularly true of the dynamic research environment of the prison. Care must therefore be taken to implement a research methodology which can account for and uphold an ethical framework. The research design and methodology as well as the research tools and practices employed in this study were drawn up in accordance with the guidelines of the British Society of Criminology[81] and the University of Oxford.[82] [83]

Prisoners are particularly vulnerable research participants and the researcher must protect their privacy, confidentiality and anonymity (Barnes, 1979; Gelsthorpe et al., 1999; Gray et al.,1979). Yet within the prison environment such an undertaking can be difficult. I sought at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of the prisoners who participated in the study with one caveat (Israel, 2004; Zinger et al., 2001): I explained to everyone I interviewed, in accordance with what I had agreed with the Directors of both prisons, that if they told me anything which related to risk to their own personal safety or to the security and safety of the prison that I would have to inform prison staff. I was concerned initially that this may suggest to the men that I could not be trusted and would discourage them from continuing the interview. In reality this was not the case, the men remained happy

[81] Available on the British Society of Criminology website at www.britsoccrim.org.

[82] Before entering the field, the research design and methodology outlined in this Chapter was reviewed and approved by the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC).

[83] I also benefitted from the advice and experience of colleagues who had prison and detention centre research experience.

to speak to me and none of them revealed anything which gave me cause to break their confidence.

In order for any research to be ethical, securing the informed and voluntary consent of research participants is pivotal.[84] Yet, within the field of social research the concept of informed consent is controversial. Faden et al. (1986) distinguish between the process of obtaining informed consent from a research participant and the process of demonstrating to a supervising body or department that such consent has been given in order to meet the ethical requirements set by that institution. Thomas and Marquart further this, suggesting that 'it is not always ethical behaviour that the profession seeks, but rather its appearance, a cynical exercise at best, and a hypocritical one at worst' (1988: 83).

In light of the distinction drawn by Faden et al. (1986), in gaining consent for the research from the participants in the field, I sought to ensure that the consent was as informed as possible. I sought to '… ask questions, elicit the concerns and interests of the subject… and establish a climate that encourages the… subject to ask questions.' (Faden et al., 1986: 307). In accordance with the guidelines of both the University of Oxford and the British Society of Criminology, and as is usual practice in gaining informed consent, all those interviewed were asked to sign a consent form before taking part, which included an explanation of the caveat on confidentiality discussed above.[85]

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[84] For a comprehensive review of both the history and theory of informed consent in the social sciences see Faden et al. (1986).

[85] A copy of the consent form and participant information used in the study, and approved by CUREC is attached in the appendices. I conducted fieldwork prior to my marriage, so these documents use my maiden name of Sophie Palmer. In setting out interview dialogue in the thesis I refer to myself by the initials 'SP'.

Getting a signed consent form proved difficult for three reasons.[86] Firstly, whilst they were keen to be interviewed,[87] many of the men were reluctant to sign the consent form. As Luke expressed it: "*Yeah I'll talk to you… but I ain't signing anything"* (HMP Nassington, June 2010). Ultimately, after a number of refusals and having discussed it with my research supervisor, I embarked on a mediated approach. When I had discussed at length the implications of the research and the signing of the consent form with interviewees, if they still did not want to sign, I instead made a note of the consent in my field notes and explained this to them. A number of men were happy to sign my research diary but still refused to sign the actual consent form, expressing concern that *'they didn't like'* or '*didn't trust*' forms (Field notes, HMP Wansford, April 2010 and HMP Nassington, June 2010). I was never in any doubt that I had the informed consent of the individual, despite the refusal to sign the form. Had I been in doubt, I would not have allowed the interview to continue.

Secondly, whilst I was able to negotiate a way of achieving informed consent with all interview participants, I did not go through exactly the same process with every person I spoke. Although I made no secret of my status and openly talked about the research project and how what I was seeing and hearing would be used, I did not go into the same detail when I first met individuals, nor during informal conversations. As a result, during observation and time on the wings and in the education and industry blocks, the men and staff were not able to actively consent to being observed as research participants. They could choose to not make conversation with me, but they could not exclude themselves entirely.

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[86] I did not experience the same problem when interviewing staff, however many asked for reassurance that what they told me would not be reported back to Senior Management in a form in which it could be attributed to them. Such requests were particularly acute in staff who were more critical of management in the prisons or the company (private prison provider) in general.

[87] Dickson-Swift et al. (2007) attribute this willingness to engage in research as an attempt to break up the monotony of prison life.

Finally, many of the men I met in both prisons had low levels of literacy (see Clark and Dugdale, 2008).[88] This caused some initial problems, as the participant information sheets describing the project proved too difficult for some of the men to read, even though they had been written in very simple language. In these cases I read the information sheet aloud and in all cases gave the participants the opportunity to ask questions.[89]

I also interviewed a small number of foreign national prisoners (FNP) for whom English was not their first language.[90] While the majority had a good standard of English, on the one occasion an individual prisoner did not, he brought a fellow prisoner along to translate. However, it was neither just written language that on occasion caused a problem, nor just problems of communication and understanding originating with the participants. In the initial stages of research I struggled to drop some of the more difficult and academic terms from my speech. This effect diminished as I became more familiar with describing and explaining the research in simpler terms, but serves to illustrate the importance of effective and clear communication between the researcher and her participants within the research process. As Clive joked – *"Ah I understand you now… before you used words like my brief"* (HMP Nassington, April 2010).

Clear communication and being understood is of pivotal importance at all stages of the research process. It takes on particular significance during interviews, when the researcher

[88] See also http://www.spck.org.uk/diffusion/prison-literacy/ and http://www.toe-by-toe.co.uk/prison_project.html.

[89] See also Benitez et al. (2002) who describe their use of audio-visual equipment to secure consent from illiterate populations, bypassing the need for and problem of the written word.

[90] On FNPs in England and Wales, deportation and the 2009 move to 'hub' prisons for foreign nationals see Singh-Bhui (2007), Bosworth (2011) and Kaufman (2011, 2014). On difficulties of translation and understanding with foreign-nationals when conducting research in detention see Bosworth (2014).

must both seek to understand and to be understood in order to accurately gather and record the words and experiences of the research participants.

2.6. Seeking to understand and to be understood – the interview process

What do you mean, Miss? (John, HMP Wansford, April 2010)

i. Gathering the Data

One of the many and varying challenges for the researcher is to understand, capture, record and then communicate data effectively and accurately. She must listen, process and record simultaneously, often in distracting and busy surroundings. In neither prison was I permitted to carry an audio recorder. With hindsight, although frustrating, this restriction was beneficial. I was neither plagued, as others have been, by faulty recorders or inaudible recordings (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 126-7), nor was I faced with hours of audio to transcribe when I left the field.[91] I knew that the only data I had was what I was either writing down in my field notes, or taking mental note of to record later. When analysing and reporting the data, I did not have to consider how to represent or translate the different spoken styles of the men[92] [93] (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 271-3). Nor did I feel pressured to include lengthy verbatim transcriptions seeking the narrative voice (Carlen, 1994).[94]

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[91] Although I transcribed the small number of telephone interviews I conducted. I also made transcriptions of the audio journal I made each evening as I drove home from the prison. The audio journal I listened to regularly as I analysed and wrote up the results of fieldwork, both to jog my memory and remind me how I felt at certain moments, but also as an opportunity to reconsider and revisit the data.

[92] However, I have included some of the broad 'Scouse' and Manchester 'slang' I encountered at HMP Nassington in my notes and later in transcription and coding as this was an inherent character of the men interviewed. In addition, one Welsh prisoner chose to describe particular emotions in the Welsh language and then translated the meaning for me. Scouse is a term for the Liverpudlian dialect and accent.

[93] Where a research participant emphasised a particular word or section of dialogue I have marked the emphasis with a bold font.

[94] On the importance and value of transcription as a part of the research process see Bird (2005).

I kept field notes throughout. In them I recorded not only what I saw and heard, but possible emergent themes to consider further. I also noted how I felt at certain points and what I could smell and hear. I wanted to be able to recollect as much as possible about the experience. Glaser (1998) recommends against recording or taking notes during an interview or other data collection session as it can interfere with a researcher's engagement with the research participant, and in the bustling environment of the prison constant note taking was not an option. I did make take notes during interviews and periods of observation and tried to find quieter periods during the day to document what I had heard and seen. I kept a digital recorder in the car and often spent much of the journey home recording my thoughts, ideas and reflections. I usually also wrote more notes in my research diary when I arrived home, but the benefit of the recorder was that I was able to document observations as I left the prison for the day.

I found it difficult to create and maintain a rapport within an interview if I was attempting to take notes. In reality, in few other than the longer or follow-up interviews did I take a full transcript. Instead, I scribbled notes around the questions of the interview schedule[95] and in my research diary where I also recorded my field notes. Whenever possible I took a break between each interview and further observation. This helped both to alleviate some of the emotional demands of interviewing and provided a period to reflect and process what I had heard. It had the additional benefit of allowing me to expand on the notes I had taken in order to achieve the most accurate and literal picture of the views and experiences of the participant.

[95] Copies of the interview schedules for each group of participants are attached in the appendices.

These notes and recordings, together with documents given to me by prison staff and the IMB, create a large body of data which reflects what I saw, heard and experienced inside the prison walls. I am confident that it is an accurate and complete record of my time in the field, but the challenge that is then faced is, how best to express the thoughts and ideas of the research participants. I wanted to communicate the data effectively, without diluting or changing how it was at source. I felt strongly, based on my fieldwork experience, that the data most at risk of inaccurate recount was that from interviews. I was plagued with doubts about my ability to ensure that I 'did justice' to the accounts and the voices of the men I interviewed, particularly those with whom I had built a strong rapport or who had shared emotional and difficult stories with me. Indeed, this doubt and worry about reflecting and accurately representing the words of participants, substantially slowed down the writing up phases of this project as I continually sought to revisit accounts and interviews to ensure I was 'doing them justice'.[96]

ii. Building rapport

The rapport or level of trust between the researcher and the participant is important (Fetterman, 1998; Funder, 2005; Russell et al., 2002). I asked, by the very nature of my interview questions, that both the staff and the men I interviewed trust me and, particularly in the case of the men, share with me detailed and often complex experiences and emotions. The interviews proved to be the most emotionally and mentally demanding individual element of the research, particularly those with the prisoners themselves. Many of the men were very keen to talk, commenting that '*it was good to have someone to listen*' (Field notes, HMP Nassington, June 2010). The majority were keen to share family and relationship histories and

[96] On writing up qualitative research see Wolcott (1990). On concerns over wanting to 'do justice' to participant accounts see Bosworth (2014).

to attribute a cause or an event in their early life which was the reason for their criminal acts and in turn their imprisonment. A small number referred to abuse as children and violence when young, many talked of broken homes and relationships, or parents with addiction problems. Fathers talked of the strain that the distance from their children whilst in prison caused.[97] Many serving longer sentences had lost contact with their children and were often critical of their children's mother(s). Being confronted with the emotion and pain felt by these men during interviews was difficult and I was often emotional both during the interview and when I left the prison for the day. Yet with hindsight the emotive nature of the interviews has added huge value to the data gathered. The men discussed with me some of their most private and personal feelings, they talked of how they coped with life in prison and the separation from their loved ones, they highlighted the reality of the 'pains of imprisonment' and trusted me with their vulnerable moments. It is this trust and rapport that contributes significantly to my desire to communicate the men's experiences in as accurate and effective manner as is possible, and as I discussed above caused me most self-doubt and concern as I attempted to record them on the page and to communicate their feelings and experiences to a wider audience.

The prisoner interviews ranged from 10 minutes to an hour. On most occasions they were conducted one to one,[98] but never in a closed room. Instead, they usually took place in a

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[97] A large number of these fathers at HMP Nassington, mentioned positively the 'Storybook on DVD' programme (and previously 'Storybook on CD') run by Storybook Dads, which enabled them to record themselves reading a bedtime story for their children on to DVD and to send it home. A number were also participating in the 'Dads Away' course, an initiative designed by staff at HMP Nassington to teach parenting skills which culminated in a number of practical education sessions in the Visitors Centre where fathers could help their children with homework or cook together. The men who had participated in the course stressed its significance in building and maintaining familial and paternal relationships. For more information on Storybook Dads see: http://www.storybookdads.org.uk/New%20Starters%20Membership%20Info%20Pack%20CD%20&%20DVD.pdf

[98] On a few occasions a member of the IMB sat with me, with the permission of the inmate. On other occasions prisoners I had interviewed previously introduced me to their friends and then sat with them while the interview took place. These situations often arose organically but always with the consent of the participant.

quiet corner of the education block or at a quiet table in the communal area of a unit. At other times I found impromptu interviews taking place during tea break in the industrial units and a 'quick informal chat' with one man would become a more in-depth dialogue involving more of the group. Often these informal sessions provided a springboard for further more structured follow-up interviews and further interactions with a particular inmate at a later point. I tried to avoid interviewing an individual on first meeting, seeking to build a rapport or at the least gain some common ground before engaging in an interview.

I was often surprised by the men's willingness to participate. As one officer described it *"They like talking to you; they've asked if you're coming back"* (PCO 18, HMP Nassington, June 2010). This reaction is not undocumented. Gostin et al. suggest that prison inmates in particular benefit from taking part in qualitative research and engagement with a researcher (Gostin et al., 2007: 56). Many prisoners I interviewed suggested that participating provided a welcome break to the monotony of prison routine and welcomed the opportunity to talk to someone different. Often, taking part in research is an empowering experience for prisoners (Bosworth et al., 2005; Crewe and Maruna, 2006; Liebling, 1999), as they find it rewarding to have their views and ideas listened to and taken into account. With some research participants it was easier to build a rapport than others. Dickson-Swift et al. (2007) argue that in developing and maintaining rapport, the researcher perhaps seeks to both identify and expand commonalities between herself and the respondents. Yet the relationship is largely based on fixed factors of ethnicity, language, gender and class. My experience reflects this to only a limited extent. Many of the men admitted they were comfortable talking to me because I was a woman.[99] They felt less likely to be judged or ridiculed by a female. I do not, however, find

[99] See Crewe (2006) on the attitude towards and relationship between male prisoners and female officers. On being a female researcher in a male dominated environment see Russell et al. (2002).

any evidence of the rapport or relationship being substantially different when I interviewed men of different ethnicities or class. We were always able to find some common ground, a foothold on which to begin our dialogue. Interviews were on many occasions steady unprompted dialogue rather than question and answer. I had to become used to sharing information about myself, something which I initially found very difficult, from the football team I supported to whether I had ever been arrested or tried any number of illegal substances,[100] as the men themselves sought to find shared interests or experiences. This interaction in turn developed a level of trust and commonality, which allowed me as a researcher to ask deeper and more personal questions about their prison experience and their emotions. This depth is of particular importance when seeking to understand notions of coping and the realities of life experience. Jones argues that:

> In order to understand other persons' constructions of reality, we would do well to ask them… and to ask them in such a way that they can tell us in their terms (rather than those imposed rigidly and a priori by ourselves) and in a depth which addresses the rich context that is the substance of their meanings. (1985: 46).

The men I interviewed ranged in age from 19 to 76. Five of them were first time offenders; a majority had served time previously. Eight were on remand, with seven of those having served previous periods in custody. Those sentenced had sentences ranging from three months to life. Six were classified as young offenders. Three were foreign nationals, one of these had completed his sentence and was being held post-sentence under Immigration Act powers. The majority faced, or had faced, problems with addiction and six of the eight on remand were enrolled in a methadone treatment programme. Overall, the men were a diverse group - with differing backgrounds and experiences. I do not claim that they provide a representative sample of the populations at HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington. The overall size of the two

[100] My stock answer to the use of illegal substances – "*well I have tried hooch"* - never failed to get a laugh!

prisons populations and the comparatively small number[101] of interviews undertaken necessarily prevents my sample from being wholly representative. However, because of the flexibility and breadth of my sampling decisions, the additional data gathered from observation and more informal interaction and the relative freedom I was given within the prisons by their Directors and the IMB I am confident that my body of data is as rich as possible.

While at HMP Nassington I was given the opportunity to hold a number of focus groups. These were not a qualitative device that I had originally intended employing, but after careful research and consideration I decided to see what they might add to the study and the type and quality of the data gathered. Focus groups, when 'compared to observation, enable[s] the researcher to gain a larger amount of information in a shorter period of time' (Gibbs, 1997: 2). They generally involve discussion and interaction facilitated by a moderator or researcher on a common theme or experience with the aim of eliciting feelings, experiences, reactions and beliefs from the participants (see Barbour and Kitzinger, 1998; Greenbaum, 1998; Krueger, 1994; and Morgan, 1993, 1997). Powell and Single define focus groups as 'a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research' (1996: 49). MacIntosh (1993)

[101] I have struggled to put a precise number on the number of interviews I conducted. This is because of the fluid way I gathered data. Often informal conversations would become much longer and in-depth, thereby turning into interviews. On other occasions scheduled interviews turned into a quick chat or a five minute interview because of prison timetabling or other commitments and there was barely time to complete the formalities. When I was analysing and categorising the data gathered I took a pragmatic approach to what I classed as an interview. Informal interactions that unexpectedly turned into more formal and longer conversations and in which I covered roughly the material in the interview schedule, I have classified as interviews. In total I undertook 36 formal interviews with prisoners which lasted between ten minutes and an hour. I also had 43 more informal conversation with men individually or in small groups that lasted more than 20 minutes. I interviewed 8 IMB members, 2 Directors, 5 other members of the Senior Management Team (SMT), 28 Prison Custody Officers (PCO)s, 1 Workshop Manager (WM), 3 Unit Managers (UM), 1 Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator, 1 Race Relations/Minorities Officer, 1 Resettlement Officer, 1 Registered Mental Health Nurse (RMN), 2 health care workers, 2 education staff (both from Manchester College who provided the education curriculum in both prisons), 3 Home Office Controllers, the Head of Learning and Skills from G4S, 1 former prisoner from HMP Nassington who now works for an offender support charity, 1 Senior Manager from the Custodial Division of G4S and 1 former Senior Manager from Serco. Shorter informal conversations and interactions with staff, prisoners and IMB members were innumerable and added significantly to the data gathered.

recommends that a focus group be made up of between six and ten participants to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to express their experience and point of view and to ensure as much interaction as possible between the group.

The interaction between participants is an essential element of a successful focus group, as is the interaction of the moderator/researcher. Kitzinger (1994, 1995) argues that the synergy between group participants illustrates and communicates their views, beliefs and values about a specific issue or situation. It further allows members of the group to adapt or reconsider their understanding of experiences or interpretation of situations. The key characteristic which distinguishes focus groups from other forms of qualitative data-gathering is the insight and data produced by the interaction between participants (Gibbs, 1997).

Focus groups, as well as being a useful qualitative tool, have been shown to have positive impact on participants. Goss and Leinbach (1996) found that participants in focus groups took value from being viewed as knowledgeable or expert in a particular area and from being given the opportunity to work in collaboration with researchers. Race et al. (1994) found similarly that participants' self-esteem benefited positively from focus group participation as participants felt 'involved in the decision making process'. However, the use of focus groups as a research method is not without its limitations. The moderator has only limited control over the interaction between participants and whilst she can provide prompts and keep the discussion on topic, 'by its nature focus group research is open ended and cannot be entirely predetermined' (Gibbs, 1997: 3).

My experiences of facilitating focus groups was polarised. I conducted two very early in the research process that were chaotic. The men shouted over each other and I struggled to

make myself heard let alone to keep the discussion on track. Ultimately, in both sessions an officer had to intervene and I was left feeling disillusioned, frustrated and incapable. These experiences led me to abandon the use of focus groups until the end of my time at HMP Nassington. This final focus group, undertaken with men employed as Supporters[102] at HMP Nassington was completely different. The Supporters[103] formed a case study during data collection and analysis for this thesis and because of this I had built a good rapport with the men both individually and as a group. The choice to use a case study arose organically whilst I was in the field. I encountered men employed as Supporters regularly during my early days at HMP Nassington. The more time I spent with them and the more I learnt about their role and the programme itself, the more important they seemed in terms of addressing the key questions of this research project, namely those of responsibility and self-governing and their impact on prison life and experience.

Case studies are not as widely used in criminological research as elsewhere (although see Maruna and Matravers, 2007). They are often employed in the fields of education and health provision research (see Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Powell and Single, 1996 and Vaughn et al., 1996) and in particular in child development studies (see, for example, Mulligan et al., 2005). In a case study, 'a single person, program, event, process, institution, organisation, social group or phenomenon is investigated within a specified time frame, using a combination of appropriate data collection devices' (Creswell, 1994: 12) and are constructed to 'richly describe, explain, or assess and evaluate a phenomenon' (Gall et al., 1996: 549).

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[102] Not actual name of program/group of prisoners, this is a pseudonym.

[103] Supporters were introduced to HMP Nassington in December 1999 with the aim of providing support and advice for all prisoners, including those who find it difficult to cope or feel vulnerable while in custody. Selection consists of a report from the Residential Unit, Security Department, the Mental Health Team (including the RMN Team), and the Public Protection Team. Suitable candidates are interviewed prior to employment, by the Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator. The Supporters and their role are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

In undertaking the case study I set out to spend as much time as possible with men employed as Supporters both individually and in groups, in a bid to guide my later data collection, but also to secure a case narrative which 'richly and fully reports the subject's perceptions about the phenomenon being investigated' (Leedy, 1997: 158), and my final interaction with them was in a focus group. Conducting this focus group was a completely different experience to my previous attempts. The men listened to each other and built on ideas that their peers had expressed. The discussion developed organically, with little intervention from me. I left with a huge amount of data and information that had not been apparent from their individual interviews. In this later focus group I had a pre-existing rapport with all participants whereas in the first attempts I had been unknown to most. Finally, the Supporters are all, by the nature of their role, enhanced prisoners,[104] used to being able to move around the prison to fulfil their role. My experience of conducting these focus groups demonstrates that different qualitative data gathering techniques work better than others in some situations and that some are more suited to particular research participants than others. It also reveals that a researcher should never dismiss the use of one particular method because of a bad experience or a lack of successful use on previous occasions.

iii. Interactions with Staff

In my research I sought not only to chart and discover the men's feelings about imprisonment and their notions of responsibility, but also to interview prison staff. Interviewing officers as well as prisoners posed additional challenges to the research. I had to ensure that I was able to build a rapport with both groups and that neither felt I had an allegiance to the other.

[104] Enhanced or IEP4 being the highest level of regime/earned privilege in operation at HMP Nassington.

With staff, like the prisoners, I often found myself just observing, watching them at work and asking questions as they went about their everyday tasks. With them, too, I was able to build a good rapport. I ate in the staff canteen, I was on occasion admonished for feeding the drug dog a biscuit from the IMB tin and staff were generally always willing to answer my questions and to show me their workplace. The CSU staff at HMP Wansford took great pride in introducing me to their 'finds' cupboard where I learnt to differentiate between potato and fruit based 'hooch'[105] by smell and was shown a number of ad-hoc weapons made by inmates and confiscated by staff. I experienced no hostility or suspicion from them and many were very willing to be interviewed and innumerable others facilitated the research by collecting me from the gatehouse or moving with me between units.

The officers[106] I interviewed had between one and 15 years experience. All but two had always worked in private sector establishments, many of the staff at HMP Nassington having spent time working at HMP Wansford on secondment. I spent time with staff in all areas of the prison. From the gatehouse to visits, resettlement, CSU, vocational units, wings and healthcare, I sought to have the broadest possible sample.

I also interviewed executive staff from G4S and Serco. These interviews conducted by telephone demanded a different set of tools for data collection. I found them to be more

[105] 'Hooch' is a prison term for illicitly brewed alcohol. Often made from fruit, with crackers and bread added to provide yeast for fermentation. Staff were on alert to prisoners who hoarded quantities of fruit in their cells because of its use in making the illicit alcohol. Hooch is dangerous not only because intoxicated men create safety issues for the prison and its staff but also because it can cause illness. Hooch was regularly found at both prisons during my time in the field. Once discovered it was stored in a 'finds' cupboard on the CSU ready, if needed, to be produced as evidence during an adjudication. After that it was disposed of.

[106] On the role and lives of prison officers see Bennett, Crewe and Wahidin (2007); Crawley (2004); Liebling (2000); Liebling et al. (2010) and Liebling and Price (2001).

challenging to conduct than face-to-face discussions. It was far harder to develop a rapport and they were almost stunted and laborious in format, largely attributable the lack of face-to-face contact. These interviews were recorded and transcribed and then coded alongside the other data.[107]

There was also a more formal[108] part of my interactions with staff inside the two prisons. I attended a number of meetings taking place at both HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford. These included education and employment provision, Quality Improvement Group and CSU reviews.[109] In these meetings I learnt huge amounts about prison structure and regime management. I was actively encouraged to ask questions and I was often provided with background documentation to facilitate my understanding of the issues being discussed. Accounts of these meetings and of interactions and interviews with staff proved easier to transcribe and code than the data from the prisoners. The staff accounts, whilst on occasion emotive, were less emotional and more structured.

2.7. Making Sense of the Data

When I left the field, I had amassed data in a variety of formats: documents, interview notes, recordings of telephone interviews, field diaries and more general notes covering observations and research arrangements. I had spent time on the days away from the prison, coding and organising some of this data, largely with the aim of focusing my later visits. Despite this

[107] I did not get a signed consent form from telephone interview participants. Instead, I secured oral consent which was recorded. I read the participant information and consent form to those I interviewed on the telephone and sent a copy of both to them by email. One of the telephone participants requested to see a transcript of the interview we had, which I provided to him along with the recording of the interview as a digital audio file.

[108] I also returned to HMP Nassington when I was writing up this thesis to present results to the IMB and Senior Management Team in a formal setting and have an undertaking to do the same at HMP Wansford.

[109] I also attended SMARG Meetings, monthly IMB Board Meetings, Basic Regime Reviews and both Judicial and Director's Adjudications.

initial organisation of data, I spent a number of months working on analysing the data and identifying emergent themes. I used the NVivo Qualitative Analysis programme[110] to code[111] and then node the anonymised data, in order to identify themes and patterns. In using NVivo, some of my nodes became long and complex and at times confusing. To counteract this, in analysing and grouping my data I also employed close reading of my field and interview notes and the 'search and find' facility in Microsoft Word to identify regularly recurring words and phrases.[112] I detail the themes and patterns in the later chapters of the thesis, always in a format which is unattributable to individual research participants.[113] [114]

2.8. Moving Forward: Looking Back

This chapter has set out the methodological foundations of this thesis. The next three chapters contain the results and analysis of the data gathered during fieldwork. The first considers life, regimes, opportunities and relationships inside the two prisons. I question if responsible and self-governing prisoners are being created and if so, how this is happening. Chapter Four, the second results chapter, builds on the previous chapter, using a case study to consider responsibility in action, how it is facilitated and how men at both prisons respond to opportunities to take on responsibility. The final results chapter considers the impact of

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[110] On using computer programmes to analyse qualitative data see Fielding and Lee (1991, 1998); Miles and Weitzman (1995), Kelle (1995) and Reid (1992).

[111] On coding qualitative data for analysis see Boyatzis (1998).

[112] Bosworth (2014) also employed close reading in the data analysis of her ethnographic study of life in Immigration Detention and Removal Centres (IRCs) in England and Wales.

[113] On the importance of anonymity and confidentiality see Flick et al. (2004: 200 – 201) and Israel (2004).

[114] The amount of data I collected and its breadth of format meant that I had to ensure that all sources of data were stored safely and securely. Meth and Malaza (2003) underline the importance of securing data at the earliest opportunity in order to protect against theft or accidental and improper disclosure. They highlight the importance of procedures which protect data for its entire lifespan and to need to recognise that the data may still exist after the final reports and articles have been written and published. With this in mind, the data collected is stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act. See also Parry and Mauthner (2004) who outline in depth the practical, legal and ethical issues in archiving qualitative research data and Lowman and Palys (2001) who compare the different rules, ethics and legal standards relating to confidentiality in criminal justice research which are in place in Canada and the United States.

practices encouraging responsibility on the prisoners and staff at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford and asks what happens when responsibility goes wrong.

Chapter Three

Responsibility: Life and Regime

> *They can choose* […] *they either make the most of their time here or they waste it. I can't serve their sentence for them*. (SMT 2, HMP Wansford, March 2010)

> *I talk to Kerry, my PO* [Personal Officer] *all the time. She helps me make good choices. She lays it all out in front of me, real clear, like. I have options. I can choose courses and education and get skills. I can work or do education. I have to decide what works best for me and then she says they'll try and get me a place. I want to move to the VTU* [Vocational Training Unit]*, learn to be a bricky or a mechanic, but I like it on this unit, I know the lads. Kerry says I have to be brave - stop hiding away. I have to decide what works for me. Not stay here with the lads I've always known but change - you know? I'm trying to work out how I can improve myself and my life ready for when I'm out. Kerry helps with that. I'm going to be better, make better choices. I have to, for me and for my kids.*
> (Thomas, HMP Nassington, July, 2011)

> *I like being an Inductor. It gives me the chance to do more things, understand more how business works. I understand, I think, a bit about how to cost a product. They* [prison staff] *won't tell me the real costs of course, but they've explained the principles. It's great that they want to help me, they encourage me to think for myself, think about building a business plan. Use my time here to build something for when I get out.* (Fraser, HMP Wansford, May 2011)

3.1 Getting Started

When I started my fieldwork at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford, I was armed with what I thought was a comprehensive semi-structured interview schedule and detailed ideas of what I wanted to find out and how I would do this. I had written early drafts of my methodology chapter. I was aware that I might have to reconsider some of my method and adapt my questions but having been on visits to HMP Grendon and HMP Bullingdon as a Master's student and read as much as I possibly could about conducting prison research, I felt confident and prepared. What I discovered was that, in fact, I was unprepared for the reality of independent fieldwork inside a prison. I am not alone in having experienced this sense of

being unprepared. Smith and Wincup (2000) argue that it is often the case with novice researchers and something which they themselves experienced early in their academic careers. They attribute the feeling of being unprepared for 'the actual experience of doing research' (2000: 331) both to a failing in the wider literature and academic community to talk about how research can make you feel, and to the way in which some 'methodological reflections are often presented as "heroic tales"' (Smith and Wincup, 2000: 331). For me, neither was the case. I was fortunate to have a Doctoral Supervisor who was more than happy to talk to me about her experiences of prison research, to describe how it had made her feel and to also forewarn me of what I might expect. She reinforced that fieldwork was not about my own 'heroic' account, but instead about gathering the data, while not forgetting my own role in the data gathering process. I discussed in the previous chapter some of the difficulties I faced including the initial problems of gaining access and then the constant issue of ensuring informed consent, not to mention the physical and mental demands that prison research can place on a researcher. What I had wholly underestimated, however, and what is outside of what Smith and Wincup describe, was the difficulty I had in explaining what my research was about to both prisoners and staff. I was aware that I might encounter low levels of literacy and was prepared to adapt to that. What I discovered, however, was that it was all very well to write about responsibility and self-governing in a theory chapter or a literature review, but translating or adapting those questions and ideas into something I could express, question and measure inside a prison was not easy. It had seemed simple when I was writing my interview schedules: I was interested in private prisons, life inside them and responsibility. Did regimes and opportunities in private prisons create and encourage responsible prisoners? How did prisoners respond to and feel about responsibility and were there times when responsibility could become too much? In my naïvety I had thought I would just ask this, early versions of my interview schedules reflect as much. Yet, I quickly discovered that asking about

responsibility and finding out what it meant for staff and prisoners was not this simple. Even the word 'responsibility' itself[115] meant different things to different people.

In initial interviews, with the bullish confidence of an inexperienced academic, I stuck rigidly to my questions and talked confidently about responsibility and self-governance with everyone I met inside the two prisons. I was determined that if I kept asking the same questions, eventually someone would understand what I was asking about. As I updated my field notes each evening and began writing up some interview notes, I realised that, even although all I talked about and asked about was responsibility, and that I repeated the word almost constantly, I was neither learning a lot about responsibility in these prisons, nor what it meant for the men inside them.

It took an afternoon in the telephone recycling workshop at HMP Wansford for me to finally understand what I was doing wrong. On this particular day in March 2010, the IMB member I was with suggested we visit the workshops. I was a little reluctant as the men were often quite busy and I felt that I may fare better in the library or with the men in the education block. At her insistence, however, we went to the workshops. We had been in the workshop for about half an hour, chatting to staff and prisoners, when my IMB escort was called away to the CSU. Seeing her depart one of the officers suggested jokingly that I might like to *"do some work"* (PCO 6, HMP Wansford, March 2010). Keen to fill the time until my escort returned and I could head to the prison library or classrooms, I agreed. I was introduced to Reg, a prisoner in his fifties, who was the Inductor (or team leader) in the telephone recycling

[115] As I outlined in Chapter 1, I chose in my fieldwork and more widely in this thesis to steer way from the use of 'responsibilisation' which is favoured by neo-liberal scholars (Garland, 1997; Hannah-Moffat, 2005). In the field the word 'responsibility' was complex enough to communicate and ask about without trying to explain the terms 'responsibilisation' or 'responsibilised'.

section of the workshop. Over the next two hours he taught me how to strip a phone handset and begin the process of refurbishment, checking the circuit boards and the wiring of the keys. I sat at the workbench with the other six members of his team, who, despite their amusement at the novelty of having a novice participant, were incredibly helpful and forgiving of my heavy handedness and complete lack of co-ordination. While we worked, we chatted and the men told me about their work, the work they had done before joining Reg's team, their life at Wansford and their life outside. I forgot about asking questions about responsibility or self-governing, instead enjoying work-place banter and informal conversation.

When I left the prison that evening and was driving home, I recounted my day into a digital recorder as was my usual practice. The next day as I listened back and was typing up my notes, I realised that I had actually discovered more about responsibility, about how Reg and the men in his team felt about and responded to it, then I had in almost all of my previous interviews and observations. In just chatting to them and without prompt they had told me about workshop deadlines, job and unit responsibilities, unit life, relationships and aspirations, all of which were directly relevant to the ideas of responsibility and self-governing that I was chasing. This was a valuable lesson. I needed to take a step back, to observe and listen more and prompt less. In that way, I discovered, I would learn more about responsibility in prison, how the prisoners felt about it and its impact on their emotions and their wider prison experience, than I could by asking them hundreds of questions about responsibility.

From this moment, I approached my data gathering and time in the field differently. I had always wanted to understand life in the two prisons as completely as I could, but this

now became my main priority. Through understanding prison life, I could begin to excavate responsibility, investigate if and how the prisons and their staff encouraged and fostered it in their prisoners and how the prisoners themselves adapted and responded to it. With this in mind, this first results chapter considers prison life at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford. I consider how prisoners experience their arrival and the manner in which their first days set the scene for the rest of their stay. I look at how sentence management, regime and the opportunities available, encourage and foster responsible prisoners. Finally, I consider where emphasis on responsibility comes from within both prisons. Are opportunities for and encouragement of responsibility on the initiative of staff, inherent in regime or fostered by management from the top down? I consider the importance of relationships, both between the men and between staff and prisoners. I ask how relationships impact on and encourage men to take on responsibility and in turn consider how bad or unproductive relationships between staff and prisoners can result in a refusal by men to engage with the prison regime.

3.2. Admissions and Induction

I visited admissions on my first day at HMP Nassington in April 2010. I had spent time at HMP Wansford prior to this but admissions had only been pointed out to me by an IMB member as we walked by. I mentioned this to the PCO and IMB member I was walking with over from the administration block to admissions. The PCO, who had previously been seconded to HMP Wansford for a short period, laughed:

> SP*: Why is that funny?*
> PCO 15*: There's nothing to see at admissions in HMP Wansford.*
> SP*: What do you mean?*
> PCO 15*: The staff in admissions at Wansford think that it's a busy day if they have to move two prisoners - here we move 30 or 40 a day.*[116]
>
> (PCO 15, HMP Nassington, April 2010)

[116] HMP Nassington also holds remand prisoners, whereas HMP Wansford does not and in general has a more settled population.

Admissions at HMP Nassington, was indeed, always bustling. With court transports, release on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) and at end of sentence, acceptance of prisoners on remand and inter-prison transfers and hospital visits, there was a steady stream of transport vans in and out of the gates with peaks both morning and early evening.[117] [118] Over my time in the field I spent many early evenings in admissions at HMP Nassington, a number of the IMB members liked to end each of their visits with a trip to admissions, to talk to newly arrived prisoners and tell them informally about the IMB and what to expect at HMP Nassington. This was then followed up by a more formal twice weekly introductory session on the role of the IMB on Normanton Green, the prison's induction unit[119], presented by the duty-rota IMB member.[120] The Director at HMP Nassington, on a number of occasions stressed to me that: "*admissions set the scene for the entirety of an individual's stay ay HMP Nassington*." (Director, HMP Nassington, August 2011). Prisoners were treated with respect

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[117] HMP Nassington was in 2011 also holding prisoners overnight to break up the journey to HMP Frankland. This practice was something which greatly concerned the IMB at the time; both because of the extra work the processing of these prisoners placed on the already busy admissions staff, but also because many of the prisoners transferred were classified as Category A and HMP Nassington is a Category B prison. Senior staff, when I asked them about it, expressed little concern. The processing required of admissions staff was necessary, HMP Nassington was part of a wider prison estate and as such needed to play its part in overnight stays for prisoners in transit around the country. On the issue of many of the men held overnight being Category A prisoners, this was also of little concern to them. They pointed out that prison staff at HMP Nassington were responsible for re-categorisation of prisoners and had on a number of occasions in the past 12 months re-categorised a prisoner as Category A. That prisoner did not leave the prison within minutes of re-categorisation for a Category A prison and instead needed to be housed appropriately and securely at HMP Nassington until transfer to a Category A prison could take place. Senior staff felt that holding prisoners en-route to HMP Frankland was a similar, if not directly comparable, situation (Field notes August and December 2011).

[118] On first arrival at the prison men were photographed for prison records and their prison Identity Card (ID). They were searched and then sat on the Body Orifice Scanner (BOSS) chair to check for concealed contraband such as drugs or mobile phones. Their property was logged and anything they could not keep was tagged and put into property store. They were issued with a burn pack if they smoked (containing nicotine and cigarette papers) and a brew pack (containing teabags, sugar, instant coffee and long-life milk sachets). They also had a brief initial interview with staff in admissions to check for any necessary medication and, for example, if they smoked to ensure that non-smokers were not housed in cells with smokers. During this interview reception staff also conducted an initial brief risk assessment, gauging if the man needed to have an Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) opened or had any other risk factors which needed to be monitored or induction and unit staff be made aware of. Depending on time of reception they also received a meal or a sandwich and hot drink.

[119] The units in both prisons have been allocate pseudonyms.

[120] Towards the end of my time in the field in 2011 due to funding cuts to IMBs which cover members' expenses, IMB members at HMP Nassington were in the prison less than they had been previously, and one of the consequences was that an IMB member was not always available to give the introductory talk on the induction wing.

(Butler and Drake, 2007) and warmth, told what was expected of them and what they could expect in return. These expectations implicitly setting the scene for the responsibilities that the prisoners had to themselves and to others whilst they were serving their sentence.

I was visiting admissions on one occasion when a newly arrived prisoner expressed surprise at being called 'Mr Shaw' rather than simply 'Shaw'. He had served sentences in other prisons and said that he had never been called 'Mr' only ever 'Shaw'. Staff in admissions told me that his reaction was not unusual, prisoners were often surprised at being addressed with a title as this was not always the practice at other prisons[121], where men were often called simply by their surname.[122] Staff throughout the prison, however, emphasised how important they felt that the use of titles was: "*It's about respect and a balance of relationships - they need to feel like somebody - worth something - have an identity"* (PCO 36, HMP Nassington, August 2011). For other officers, the use of 'Mr' created an important contrast at times when a prisoner was in distress: "*sometimes if they're upset you use their first name, it shows you care, that you're making a distinction."* (PCO 27, HMP Nassington, August 2011). Prisoners at both prisons unanimously appreciated being called by their title and it played an important role in their self-esteem and relationships with staff. For Kris it gave a sense of normality: *"it makes you feel different, you're not a number or another prisoner. I've got a name and I'm called it. I'm not a nobody."* (HMP Wansford, May 2011). Others, too, have identified the positive impact of a dialogue of respect, good staff/prisoner relationships and the use of 'Mr' or first names by officers:

[121] The use of 'Mr' is increasingly encouraged in both public and private sector prisons. On the reluctance of some staff to do so in some public sector prisons see Crewe, Liebling and Hulley (2011) and Liebling, Crewe and Hulley (2011a, 2011b).

[122] The same practice of addressing prisoners using the title 'Mr' was also in place at HMP Wansford.

> a key innovation by the private sector has been in promoting a more constructive staff/prisoner relationship. PCOs are encouraged to treat prisoners in a more positive manner, for example through the use of first names and mentoring schemes.[123] (National Audit Office, 2013, cited in Tanner, 2013: 13)

Being spoken to nicely and treated with respect mirrors Liebling's findings that often prisoners in private prisons report being treated with greater respect by staff than those in public sector prisons (2004: 17). This was certainly reinforced by men I spoke to who had served other sentences or parts of their sentence in public sector prisons, as Milton put it:

> Milton*: It's different here…*
> SP: *Different how?*
> Milton: I don't know… It feels different…
> SP*: Different bad or different good?*
> Milton*: Different good… it's… it's just better, I think. The officers - they nice* [sic]*. You know where you stand. It's fair.*
> (HMP Wansford, April 2010)

I asked many of the men I interviewed about their admission to and first days at HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington. For many it was a frightening and distressing time, often more so at HMP Nassington which, as a local prison, received men straight from the courts or on remand. A number of the men I spoke to at HMP Nassington had spent their first night ever in prison at HMP Nassington. That is not to say that newly arrived prisoners at HMP Wansford were not frightened or distressed on arrival. Many got off the 'bus'[124] hugely

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[123] I, too, found a number of mentoring schemes in place in both prisons. The Supporters at HMP Nassington are detailed later in the results chapters. Other mentors included IT Mentors at HMP Nassington and Education Mentors at HMP Wansford.

[124] 'Bus' is a prison term for secure transport vans operating between prisons and between court and prisons. On a visit to HMP Nassington an escort officer from Geo Amey who held the contract for prison transport, allowed me to sit in one of the transport vans. I found it to be incredibly dark, claustrophobic and distressing and that was without the 'cell' door fully shut, the van moving or the emotional uncertainty of what I would face when I arrived at my final destination.

apprehensive about a new prison, with new unit peers and different regime and often, because of the sentence requirements of the prison, facing relatively long periods of imprisonment.

At both prisons, new arrivals spent their first night on an induction wing or in a dedicated first night unit where they could become acclimatised and were checked on regularly by staff because of the increased risk of suicide and self harm on the first night in custody or in a new prison (PSI 74/2011; NOMS, 2013). The next morning all new arrivals began induction programmes on dedicated induction units[125], Stibbington at HMP Wansford and Normanton Green at HMP Nassington[126]. Induction programmes generally lasted between three and five days and included a gym induction, an introduction to the Chaplain, a general health check by a prison Doctor and an education assessment. PCOs met with prisoners individually to devise initial sentence plans or development plans and set out the expectations that they and the prison had of the prisoner.

During induction at HMP Nassington an officer also delivered a group class to all new arrivals which detailed essential information about the prison and highlighted sources of help. I was able, on a number of occasions, to sit in on this class, each time led by a different PCO. On each occasion the men were spoken to with a degree of frankness I found surprising. Dialogue, engagement and communication were encouraged. In every session the PCO stressed that the aim at HMP Nassington was not to manage a prisoner through their sentence and to '*just lock them up'* but to engage with them (Field notes). In the class, the rules and expectations associated with the prison Compact were set out. The Compact, in simple terms

[125] The names of the units at both prisons have been allocated pseudonyms.

[126] At HMP Nassington those prisoners who requested a detox programme from either drink or drugs were moved to Normanton Red the morning after their arrival and completed their prison induction from there. Those requesting detox remained on the detox unit for 14 days and received the necessary medication to aid the reduction of their dependency. They were also able to participate in a specially designed Detox Gym Programme.

a contract, set out the expectations that the prison had for the individual prisoner and in turn what the individual could expect in return. Senior Management said it '*added clarity'* and '*accountability'* (Field notes, HMP Nassington, July 2011) for both them and the prisoner. In setting out expectations in contract form, the prison was in fact, in the first days of an individual's stay in the establishment, asking them to take on responsibility. The prison was telling men that they had to fulfil certain obligations and that there were certain expectations of them. Failure to do so had the potential for negative consequences, including a lack of progression through the Prisons Incentives and Earned Privileged Programme (IEP) or, in the worst cases, a regression.[127] I was often told by PCOs that prisoners who '*worked with us' and 'made the most of their time here'* (Field notes) were those who successfully progressed to IEP 4 and the relative benefits afforded by that status. In the same way the prison set out what the individual prisoner could expect from it, a safe environment, access to courses and sentence progression and supportive and caring staff. There was almost a sense, initiated by the Compact and followed through by staff at induction of, 'we're all in it together'. Whilst this may seem like a nice ideal, in practice the men told me it was in fact not always a reality in prison life post induction. They pointed to situations in which they felt they met the expectations that the prison had of them but that the prison in turn failed to deliver what it had undertaken to do. In many cases the problem of failing they identified was an absence or seeming lack of opportunity for employment in a specific area, or a place on a course required for their sentence progression. Certain jobs and courses were certainly more coveted than others at both prisons. Men were frustrated at having to wait for places on courses or particular courses necessary for their sentence progression being unavailable to them. Employment, education and courses formed an integral part of life and regime in both prisons and were central to reinforcing expectations and responsibilities.

[127] For an evaluation of the IEP system see Liebling et al. (1999).

3.3. Regime and Opportunities

Following induction, men at both prisons were allocated to a suitable unit[128]. The units at HMP Wansford are categorised as follows:

- Waplode: Vulnerable prisoners unit
- Cowbit: Vulnerable prisoners unit
- Pinchbeck: Education unit
- Spalding: General unit
- Thornhaugh: General unit
- Stibbington: First night and induction unit
- Barnack: General unit
- Bainton: Healthy living unit

The units[129] at HMP Nassington housed prisoners according to sentence, IEP level or work detail (i.e. on the Vocational Training Unit):

- Baston:
  - Green: Sentenced Prisoners
  - Blue: Sentenced Prisoners
- Fotheringhay:
  - Brown: Education Unit (Sentenced)
  - Blue: Vulnerable prisoners of all status
- Lutton:
  - Red: Enhanced sentence and remand
  - Green: Sentenced prisoners
- Exton:
  - Brown: Remands/Under 12 months (including YOs) (Education Unit)
  - Blue: Voluntary Testing Unit (Education Unit)
- Empingham: All prisoners who are unsentenced including YOs (Education Unit)
- Normanton:
  - Red: Detox
  - Green: Induction
- Greetham: Vocational Training Unit (split into 3 blocks)

[128] The units at HMP Wansford have been allocated pseudonyms to annonymise the prisons visited.

[129] The units at HMP Nassington, like those at HMP Wansford have been allocated pseudonyms to annonymise the prisons visited.

Life in both prisons, irrespective of the unit a man was housed on, was characterised by routine and timetable: unlock, mealtimes, work, gym and library visits and roll call. At times, as a researcher, the rigidity of the timetable was frustrating. Interviews or conversations over lunch on a unit were cut short or interrupted by the need for the men to be back behind their doors at specific times. Many prisoners, PCOs claimed, welcomed the routine:

> *Often outside of prison their life can be mad, no routine. Often dossing down on a friend's floor. Not sure where they'll be the next day or night. You should hear some of the stories they tell - you couldn't make it up. The regulars - you know - those who are always in and out - they like to share their stories with us - what they've been doing since we last saw them. It's usually crazy, nothing fixed, no home, no job nothing ordinary. Many like the certainty here - the routine. They get fed, they have a roof over their head, they know where they are.*
>
> (PCO 22, HMP Nassington, April 2010)

The desire for the routine provided by prison was confirmed to me by the mother of a prisoner at HMP Nassington in the car park of the prison early one morning. She was waiting for a visit and approached me and asked if I was the researcher from Oxford her son had told her about. It turned out that I had interviewed her son the week before and he had told her about the interview and what I had asked about. She told me that her son had been in and out of prison for over ten years, largely due to petty crimes committed to fund a drug dependency. She said she almost always knew when it was time for him to go back to prison, his life would become increasingly chaotic and he would get arrested (see Crewe, 2005). She said that she often felt that getting arrested was a choice he made, almost a cry for help and the

need for both the detox and the routine that time in prison provided (Field notes, HMP Nassington, July 2011).[130]

Routine was created by the careful timetabling of prison days, and in both prisons there was a heavy emphasis on normalisation (Grant and Jewkes, 2014; King and Morgan, 1976), meaning that regime and opportunities were focussed on creating an environment that was as close to life outside of prison as was possible. Staff told me that prison life should be as similar to 'normal' life outside the prison as it could be, although as one PCO told me *"we all think different things are normal - don't we? I bet my 'normal' day is different to yours and both of ours are completely different to what a day in the life of one of these men is like on the outside."* (PCO 32, HMP Wansford, May 2011). The emphasis on normalisation, I was told by senior staff, came from Board level of the company. The website of HMP Wansford expresses this emphasis openly:

> [At HMP Wansford we] seek to normalise prison conditions as far as possible and reflect life in the outside community. Our aim is to create an environment in which staff and prisoners feel safe, and causes of prison stress are minimised.
>
> (HMP Wansford Website)

At both prisons the emphasis on normalisation included expectations of proactivity on the part of prisoners. Men were expected to be in work or education and to use their time constructively and meaningfully. Prison was not, I was told by a Unit Manager *"the holiday camp the Daily Mail says it is"* (UM 6, HMP Nassington, August 2011). Yet, one of the many

[130] This is the only dialogue I had with a member of a prisoner's family during the course of empirical work for this project and I did not solicit the contact. I did, however, ask the prisoner's mother if it would be permissible for me to use what she had told me in my thesis and she agreed. I did not have a consent form with me at the time, as I was outside of the prison, but gave her a copy of the participant information and she signed my research diary to agree. Whilst the interaction with the individual's family member was helpful, to extend the research to include others would have changed the nature of the project and its focus on prison life. For studies on prisoners' families and the effect of imprisonment on them see Condry (2007, 2011), Codd (2008) and Comfort (2007).

pressures identified by senior prison management at both HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford was their ability to provide enough hours of purposeful work and meaningful activity for the men during regime hours and then getting men to engage and participate in them. Staff were seemingly constantly frustrated by men who refused to participate in education or to take on employment and identified these men as being particularly troublesome to manage: "*They've got no wages to buy canteen so they steal from one of the others. Then they fight"* (PCO 20, July 2011, HMP Nassington); "*they're bored so they fight"* (UM 2, HMP Wansford, May 2011). I regularly heard from men at both prisons that they were bored. When I suggested education, the response was almost always that they had their basic English and Maths certificate[131] and did not see the point of or need for more education. Another regular challenge for staff, particularly for those on the units and in the workshop, was keeping prisoners who had a job in that job. Some refused to work and others would be sacked for failure to attend or for their dangerous and bad behaviour. As an industry based PCO put it; "*they have to understand this is a workshop, with tools and machines. I can't have larking around - it's dangerous for me and the other men*" (PCO 1, HMP Wansford, March 2010). A large number of them in the workshops at HMP Wansford resented having to start out on the relatively boring and physically hard[132] section that made hair nets. Instead, they wanted to work in jobs that they either saw as more prestigious or that paid higher wages. Discontented workers, they turned up late, worked slowly and quit their posts.

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[131] Many were also keen to achieve a basic IT qualification if they had not already, but spaces on the courses, particularly at HMP Nassington, were limited and many of the men were disillusioned with the waiting time. To counter this some unit-based IT training was provided as a voluntary extra on some units in the evening (although not all units had the computer facilities to provide this) with prisoners with IT qualifications acting as mentors to other prisoners to help develop their computer skills and also to provide opportunities for education homework or extension tasks to be completed. The prisoner mentors in these roles were easily identified by their uniform of a red polo-shirt.

[132] I did not understand the explanation of making hair-nets being a 'physical' job until I saw the men working the netting machines. The machines, which looked a little like a stunted bicycle with a seat at the back, worked in a similar fashion to a spinning wheel and bound the edges of elasticated netting to make hair nets. The men had to pull the rough net through the machine with their hands, bind it using the machines pedal to control the stitches and then cut it. Many of the men had their fingers bound due to the repetitive action of pulling the net through the machine and the blade and the netting caused friction sores.

A different problem existed at HMP Nassington. As a local prison it had a far more transient and mobile population which meant that the dynamic and skill set of groups of men working together in the workshops changed regularly, and it was, at times, difficult to maintain continuity both of service to customers but also in fostering teamwork and skills to improve productivity. Many prisoners did embrace the opportunities to use their sentence productively. As Mo put it: "*I want to work"* (HMP Nassington, July 2011). Darren, a bricklayer and builder when not in prison, was making the most of his sentence and gaining a City and Guilds Qualification in Brick Laying. As he put it:

> *I can do all the practical parts, that's pretty easy. I reckon I've built more walls and houses than Jamie* [the instructor] *has! I learnt on the job - you don't make mistakes with expensive materials! The writing and coursework is a bit harder but I want the qualification. I think I'll be able to get better work when I get out.*
>
> (HMP Nassington, June 2010)

At both prisons, senior staff were keen to provide meaningful and 'real' jobs and educational opportunities for prisoners. At both HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford officers emphasised the importance of realistic working days and useable and transferable skills. They recognised that prisoners responded well in jobs that were challenging and provided an opportunity to develop, at the same time as they could appreciate that some of the men would never master the skills necessary to progress: *"some of these lads will be stuck on the* [hair] *nets forever"* (PCO 1, HMP Wansford, March 2010). Work opportunities across both prisons varied. At both prisons men were employed in unit-based roles such as painter, barber, cleaner. They could also find work in the wing laundry and servery or in wider prison maintenance or infrastructure roles, for example in the prison kitchens or working as gardeners and handymen in the grounds of the prison. At HMP Wansford the VPU ran a

successful commercial laundry and in the industrial workshops opportunities varied between making hairnets, door mats for a well-known discount chain from offcuts of industrial carpeting, assembling security lights to be sold at Do-It-Yourself stores, to book and computer recycling and telephone refurbishment. At HMP Nassington the metal fabrication and powder coating workshop was a commercial success and was often busy making bed bases and table legs and chairs for other prisons. The laundry, whilst rarely servicing outside contracts was busy and bustling. In the Aramark shop, staffed by prisoners, men likened themselves to Tesco workers, "*it's like internet shopping Miss, except you have to order by paper and you don't choose your delivery time*" (Be, HMP Nassington, July 2011). They were fiercely competitive with each other but worked closely as a team, always double checking orders in fear that mistakes in their picking and packing would effect their end of week 'accuracy bonus' and therefore reduce their wage.

For those in the workshops, as in the Aramark shop, individual and group responsibility was presented as and considered to be an inherent part of good teamwork and vice versa. Staff in both prisons fostered this sense of both, communal and individual responsibility and teamwork on residential units and in the workshops. The officers in the workshops claimed to be part of a wider workshop team that included prisoners and workshop customers, working together to get a job out to deadline and to sufficient standard. Pivotal to this sense of teamwork were the workshop Inductors. Experienced and skilled prisoners, who had spent a length of time in the workshops, could work their way to becoming team-leaders or Inductors, responsible for small groups of other prisoners and their work, in various areas of the workshops. Indeed, many of the men I spoke to in the workshops wanted to one day become an Inductor and were hopeful of promotion if a vacancy arose:

Jay: *I want to be an Inductor.*
SP: *Why?*
Jay: *It's good – ain't it?... you get to do more stuff – you're trusted.*
SP: *And you get paid more don't you?*
Jay: *Yeah – that'd be good, too.*

(Jay, HMP Wansford, March 2010)

The workshops of both prisons relied on merit-based promotion. At HMP Wansford all new recruits to the industrial workshop started off by making hairnets. Described as a '*bums on seats'* job (Field notes, HMP Wansford, April 2010) it tested the men's ability to work consistently and carefully and gauged how well they worked to deadlines. While some, officers told me, would never graduate from making hair nets because they lacked the aptitude for a different role within the workshop, others would quit because "*it's boring and physical"* (ibid.).

At both prisons there was an emphasis in the industrial units on commercial competitiveness. Staff, and prisoners, were keen to compare their work with business and industry outside of the prisons. Thus Mark, the Workshop Manager told me:

> *It's run like a business, it has to be. We have to make money, cover our costs. I came here* [to HMP Wansford] *from industry, from Rolls Royce. This workshop is run just like that – same rules, same principles. If we are to compete as a commercial workshop we have to act like one – it's what our customers expect.*
>
> (Mark, WM 1, HMP Wansford, June 2010)

This kind of claim mirrors the private prison providers corporate claims about working prisons which 'have an established and vibrant working culture from which business can benefit' (prison provider website, May 2014); aspirations that they proclaim on their website describing the benefits for outside businesses that working with the prison workforce can bring:

- All our prisons have a range of secure workspaces for businesses to utilise.
- Businesses are supported by a Senior Management Team, business support facilities and qualified instructors.
- We have a dedicated workforce with a variety of skills which can work around business' needs with the minimum of bureaucracy.
- We already have 400 prisoners working 40 hours a week and many more working reduced hours in support functions.

(prison provider website, May 2014)

There was certainly a degree of commercial awareness amongst the men working in the industrial workshops and they were encouraged to take on responsibility for engaging with customers and ensuring productivity and output: *"we have to do 'customer interaction'. Like when the driver comes in from the external supplier. I have to talk to him and make sure he's got what he needs and I know what the lads and I have got to do.*" (Josh, Inductor HMP Nassington, April 2010). The men on the whole liked the responsibility that they had for quality assurance and meeting commercial deadlines. They expressed that the pressure made it feel like a 'proper job' (Field notes) in which they learnt skills that they could transfer to life on release. Often they were proud of what they had made: *"Look - I made that"* (Sergio, HMP Wansford, May 2011); and they were on the whole grateful for the work opportunities and chances for development that were on offer as Piotr put it: "*God – if my mum could see this* [pointing to the unit catering trolley he had just cleaned] *I never did nothing to help her – not even the washing up"* (HMP Wansford, May 2011).

There were high expectations of the men both from officers and because of the competitive pressure to secure contracts for the workshop: *"I expect the same from the boys here as I would and did outside. They work - but they work to my standards and they're high. I have a responsibility - they have a responsibility"* (WM 1, HMP Wansford, June 2010). Inductors felt responsibility to their team to ensure that orders were out on time and in turn to

ensure that new orders were received. Josh, an Inductor at HMP Nassington working on the book recycling contract, spoke particularly of consequences and the responsibilities they brought:

> *It's my job to get the order out, to hit the target. It can be hard, the deadlines are tight sometimes. I feel it's my fault if we don't get the load out on time. It's boring here if we ain't got any work and Danny* [the PCO] *says we won't have work if we don't get it out on time and up to standard because the customer will take it away. I don't want that to happen for me or the boys. We have to be reliable.*
>
> (Josh, HMP Nassington, April 2010)

Josh and other Inductors articulated a commitment to ensuring that they and their team created or built a good product and met their production targets and thereby felt they had done everything in their power to ensure that their external contracts would continue and that they and their team would have work to do. This view was fostered and encouraged by staff who were frank about the commercial competitiveness of getting and keeping external contracts and the consequences for the meaningful regime and work opportunities for the men if they lost them:

> *If they don't do the job right or on time we don't get another contract. It's as simple as that. It's hard to get them good work, keep the contracts. Not every business wants to be employing prisoners. The lads know that. They know that if we lose the good work they'll either have no work or have to do something they like less - it's up to them - it's incentive quality assurance… they don't want to have to count buttons.*
>
> (PCO 36, HMP Nassington, June 2010)[133]

There was also a stark sense of ownership over projects and over each workshop as a whole. Teams working on different projects, whilst accepting help from others if they were struggling

[133] I asked the IMB member I was with what the PCO meant about counting buttons. Apparently in some prisons (although they could not tell me which) when work was scarce prisoners in the workshops spent their days sorting coloured buttons into single coloured sets. At the end of the day, when the men returned to their units, officers remixed the buttons together to be re-sorted the next day. I later heard the same story from a prisoner, although he told me he had never experienced it in any prison and thought it was prison folk-lore as opposed to it actually happening (Field notes, HMP Nassington, June 2010).

to meet a deadline, were often reluctant to do so. Instead most wanted to do it themselves, almost to prove that they could. This was a sense felt more widely across the two prisons, in the workshops and in the kitchens in particular. Men employed in the kitchens worked hard to get meals out on time and met with immediate feedback on the day's meals when they returned to their home unit. Those in the workshops were expected to sort out problems for themselves whenever they could with staff stepping in to help only if it was absolutely necessary: *"we don't get help - I mean in a good way. We have to fix it ourselves, its not anyone else's job. We have to do it"* (Tyler, HMP Nassington, June 2010). Senior staff told me that encouraging the men to take on responsibility for tasks and for fixing things when they went wrong, rather than staff just stepping in, was part of a wider strategy to improve esteem and encourage the men to engage both with the regime and with each other (SMT 8, HMP Nassington, July 2011).

An emphasis on engagement and self-help was also apparent in the education block and art classrooms at both prisons and on the VTU at HMP Nassington. The men on the VTU spent their mornings in the classroom learning the theory behind the afternoon's practical task and then putting what they had learned into practice. The marriage of paper learning with practical tasks had great benefits. As one officer put it:

> *They tell me they hate maths and can't do it. Well they have to. They have to work out Pythagoras's theorem. They tell me it is irrelevant. It's not and they soon realise that when they have to join the corners of a structure or pitch a roof. Suddenly it's important.* (PCO 40, HMP Nassington, August 2011)

Practical work, teamed with basic mathematics and literacy and sold to the men as the skills essential for work on the outside, encouraged positive engagement with topics many of the men would otherwise have refused to engage with. Some continued to refuse and found that

their progress through the course was hampered. Some eventually did engage, others had to leave the VTU and take on a job elsewhere. Officers on the VTU were proud of the achievements of the men they taught and the progress they made. In the motor vehicle workshop, the officer in charge felt a personal responsibility to the men he taught. Second-hand cars, which could be stripped down and rebuilt, he told me, were becoming increasingly hard to source, even with an increased budget from management. He felt frustrated that the men he was teaching were continually having to strip back different parts of the same car or the same engine rather than being able to take on new challenges by working on different models or cars with different problems. The sense of responsibility and care he felt, was one of many examples of officers demonstrating that they felt part of a wider prison team, as was fostered and encouraged by management.

As a rule, at neither prison did I enter a prisoner's cell or 'pad' unless I was invited to do so, viewing that it was their home and private space where they should be free from unwanted interruptions. Even upon invitation it was extremely rare that I would go in, preferring to chat to the men in the more open communal areas where we could be seen by staff and other prisoners. One of the very few exceptions to this were the 'budgie' cells on some of the general units at HMP Wansford. On these units, enhanced prisoners could, subject to permission and review, keep up to two pet budgerigars. These had to be kept inside the cell and were not allowed into the communal areas on the unit. Due to his restriction, once I discovered the programme and was keen to find out more, I had to visit individual cells accompanied by a PCO or an IMB member.

HMP Wansford is not alone in allowing prisoners to keep budgerigars as pets (Field notes, May 2011)[134] [135] but it is not common. Intrigued about the programme and its benefits I visited a number of prisoners who kept budgies as pets. Wes told me: *"She's good company - it's good to have something to look after - to care about - without me she's helpless - more helpless than me"* (HMP Wansford, May 2011). PCOs told me that they often saw a change in the men once they had received their birds, that they relished the opportunity to look after another living thing and to have responsibility for it (Field notes, May 2011). One PCO suggested the programme helped to encourage trust and build relationships: "*they learn you have to invest, that building a bond is a slow process and it goes two ways*" (PCO 19, HMP Wansford, May 2011). An IMB member agreed: *"It gives them an opportunity to be responsible for something. To care for something. I think it helps them to build relationships, to communicate"* (IMB 1, HMP Wansford, May 2011).

I met three different men with pet budgerigars at HMP Wansford in May 2011. Each of them emphasised the benefits they got from having a bird (or, in two cases, birds).[136] They liked the company that having an animal in their cell provided, but more than that they felt they benefitted from the dependency the bird had on them, from having responsibility for it. Shane, who talked openly about previous self-harm and suicide attempts, told me that "*when I think I can't do this… I then have to think what would happen to her* [pointing to his

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[134] I could find no official data on how many prisons had an aviary and allowed men to keep and train budgerigars. Daily Mail reports suggest that HMP Isle of Wight (24 January 2012) and HMP Frankland (27 February 2014) allow budgies and in some cases other birds to be kept. Prisoners and staff at HMP Wansford thought that very few prisons allowed this (based on the number of many who had to give up their birds on transfer and based on the experience of men who had spent time in other prisons and had not encountered such a programme). HMP Nassington does not have a budgerigar programme.

[135] In June 2014 the Daily Mail ran a report that HMP Oakwood, a G4S operated prison, was allowing prisoners to care for guinea pigs, rabbits and dogs. A G4S spokesman said 'Animal therapy is a common technique used to develop a sense of responsibility and ownership for prisoners' (The Daily Mail, 15 June 2014).

[136] I spoke to one of these men whilst a budgie sat on my head. It is difficult in writing about the experience of prison research to actually chart some of the unusual and unexpected things you see, hear and experience. I had certainly not anticipated conducting an interview with a bird on my head!

budgerigar] *I have to look after her*" (HMP Wansford, May 2011). Staff mirrored this attitude, whilst in no way claiming that a pet budgerigar was a cure-all, they felt that having the birds allowed men to express emotions and to feel needed, something which many of them struggled to do.

One of the men housed on Spalding ran the prison aviary and reared the birds. This prisoner, a pensioner, did not want to be interviewed for this study but did talk to me about his birds. Having bred birds as a hobby before he came to prison he had relished the opportunity to develop the existing prison aviary and to train other prisoners to breed and look after the birds.[137] The men with budgies were competitive between themselves over skills and tameness. Fashioning perches and stands out of cardboard and string in their cells and encouraging the birds to sit on their heads and shoulders. The home-made perches and swings were not officially allowed in the cells, but staff turned a blind eye providing that they were not causing anyone else any inconvenience. On occasions, if a prisoner took his '*bird playground*', as one PCO described it (Field notes, May 2011), to the extreme, they did intervene but otherwise they took a step back. Many PCOs welcomed the addition of the birds to the units and Senior Management stressed that the benefits were great particularly given how little it cost to run: *"It doesn't cost a lot to run. We have a prisoner who used to breed birds on the outside, so he rears the birds. The men have to feed them and care for them. It's really self-maintaining"* (SMT 5, HMP Wansford, May 2011).

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137 I asked officers and the IMB about harm to birds and they could recall no such occurrences. Officers had on occasion both temporarily and permanently removed a bird from a prisoner, but these occasions were rare. The greatest hardship often came when prisoners were transferred to other prisons who did not have an aviary or allow the birds to be kept and the individual then had to be separated from his birds. The birds were either put back into the prison aviary or re-homed with another prisoner.

The ‘budgie programme’ as it was colloquially known amongst staff and prisoners at HMP Wansford provides an example of the relative flexibility of opportunities available at both prisons. Senior staff and unit staff, whilst restricted by budget and security constraints were keen that every prisoner who showed flair or initiative or had a particular skill-set was allowed to develop:

> *If we can afford it and it’s safe - we’ll give it a go. There’s not a ‘one size fits all’ approach to this. In some ways there has to be some flexibility, a case-by-case basis - we can’t cater to every whim or wish, but if an individual has skills and they’ll benefit him and the wider prison environment - why wouldn’t we utilise them and encourage it?* (SMT 8, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

At both prisons staff took the opportunity to utilise the skills of prisoners and in turn to add to or enrich the life and regime of the prison. Whilst there was an implicit suggestion of the cost-saving benefits that this had, there was an emphasis that prison life was not necessarily one of ‘one size fits all’, instead focussing, where the opportunity arose, on allowing the men, within reason, to use and develop skills that interested them or they felt were useful. Many staff at both prisons were inclusive, strove to build relationships with the men and to provide them with suitable opportunities to make the most of their sentence. Both prisons generally rewarded proactive individuals and initiative, although they were not always consistent in doing so. At HMP Nassington the prison radio station, which was also home to the prison newspaper ‘The Nassington Bugle’, was a great example of initiative and prisoners and staff being allowed to play to their strengths and to use their skills for the wider benefit of the community, all within a wider discourse of development and responsibility. *“We’re part of a wider community - it’s not just a job”* (Eric, HMP Nassington, June 2010).

Men and staff across the prisons were encouraged to take initiative and to make suggestions for improvement or changes. As one SMT member said: “*I tell them if they have*

time to complain about it they have time to do something about it." (SMT 8, HMP Nassington, July 2011). This is rather simplistic and presumes that prisoners have the opportunity and freedom to change the things that they are unhappy about within the confines of their prison lives. However, it demonstrates once again the emphasis on proactive action on the part of prisoners and a move by the prison to turn responsibility for individual development and change over to prisoners themselves.

3.4. Sentence Management

Inherent to regime and prison life is sentence management and progression through the prison system. Both prisons placed an emphasis on the importance of personal officers.[138] These officers were generally proactive in their approach to engaging with prisoners in sentence planning and personal development.[139] David Garland (1997: 191-192) found that long sentence prisoners in Scotland were encouraged to engage with personal development files, successful completion allowing them to participate in a 'sentence planning scheme which allows them to take part in the government of their own confinement'. At both HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford prisoners were urged to take part in sentence planning. Personal Officers at both prisons put an emphasis on freedom and choices. They were often frustrated by prisoners who refused to engage or participate and whilst there were negative consequences for a failure to engage, such as a lack of movement through IEP, officers recognised that they could not force men to engage, stating that *"they have to be here, they*

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[138] Many officers at HMP Nassington worked closely with the Offender Management Unit (OMU) who managed the Offender Assessment System (OASys) (which holds information about each prisoner's sentence and prison record to date) in a bid to ensure that they knew as much as possible about their prisoners and that records were kept up to date. However, the Head of Offender Management told me that some officers were better than others at keeping up to date and some cut corners. She said that OASys was only as good as the information that was put on it and not only was there a difference in diligence and standards between prisons, there was also a difference in approach and standards between officers at HMP Nassington. Those PCOs who passed on only the bare minimum of information or did not consult the OMU were a cause of constant frustration for her (Field notes, HMP Nassington, July 2011).

[139] Although a number of PCOs at both prisons explained that it was, at times, easier to be more proactive with some prisoners in their sentence management than others, particularly those who refused to engage.

don't have to comply, but there are sanctions if they don't" (PCO 22, HMP Nassington, August 2011). At both prisons PCOs expressed that it was not up to them to manage the men's sentences for them, but to keep them safe and to guide them through the process, the rest was up to them: *"They have to do the time - how they choose to spend it is up to them - my job is to guide them and to keep them safe"* (PCO 11, HMP Wansford, March 2010); "*It's their life. They did what they did to end up here - that's not my business. They need to move on and use their time here - it's about choices"* (PCO 15, HMP Nassington, April 2010).

Staff were, however, flexible and responsive where it was possible to be so. In the same way as they responded to individual needs and utilised skills in the workshops and education classrooms, they generally responded to individual needs of prisoners both in sentence management and job provision with the aim that as many men as possible engaged with the system and were proactive in serving their sentence. Victor provides one such example. Described by CSU staff as a 'lost case' for change, Victor was an elderly man who was a regular repeat visitor to HMP Nassington. He was homeless and committed a string of thefts each winter in a bid to be sent to prison, and specifically HMP Nassington. He told me that "*he didn't like other prisons"* (HMP Nassington, July 2011), and that he committed crime in order not have to spend the cold nights sleeping on the street. He was equally selective with where in the prison he liked to live, causing fights and disruption on the units at every opportunity until he was sent to the CSU. One SMT member observed that it would "*be more efficient to just send him there from admission, but we have to follow the rules. It's not a good use of staff time"* (SMT 8, HMP Nassington, August 2011). Victor was, however, an asset to the CSU, working as an orderly and taking a great deal of pride in his work: "*It's the only job I can have on here* [CSU] *but it's ok – I get to make tea and toast for the Judge - he's nice. Do you want a cup of tea, Miss? Toast? We've got jam…"* (Victor, HMP Nassington, July 2011).

This may seem like an odd example, yet typifies the individual approach taken by staff wherever possible. There can be no doubt that housing Victor on the CSU was easiest all round, as a PCO put it "*he's a total pain on a unit, until he's moved to CSU. He upsets everyone until they can't take anymore*" (PCO 14, HMP Nassington, July 2011), but even then Victor was encouraged to make the most of his time in prison. It was generally felt that he would be back again the next year when it got cold, so the aim was not to rehabilitate but to allow him to get as much benefit as he could from his time in prison.

Many of the men I interviewed were positive about the relationships they had with their personal officer, enjoying the emphasis on dialogue and the opportunity to be involved. As Zane put it: *"I have options - I know that - Jen* [PO] *- explained to me. I have to make my choices. They're* ***mine****"* (HMP Nassington, July 2011). A dialogue of choices, however, was not without its problems. Some men were incredibly disillusioned with the system, Hamid telling me that: *"they tell us we have choices, that it's our sentence, that we have to manage it and use it. Then you want something and they just say no… how is that a choice?"* (HMP Nassington, June 2010). Officers recognised that the limited choices and control that they could offer could be frustrating for some inmates but also for staff:

> UM 5*: We ask them to be proactive, to take control of their time here and then they ask to move units or do a course that they think will help them and we have to say no.*
> SP*: Why?*
> UM 5*: Because there's not space or there is a security risk or they don't meet the criteria or just that there's a waiting list and they're on it but they have to wait. The men here, they're not very good at waiting. They want everything now. They say 'I've made my choice - I want to do it now'. Sometimes they just want to move units and be with their mates but that can't always happen. There's a lot of men here and they can't all live with who they want to. We can't make everyone happy.*
> SP: *How do they react?*

> UM 5: *They get frustrated. It can make them angry or upset. Others switch off and withdraw - that's difficult - they wanted something, made a decision and then they feel let down by us. It can be hard for us as well - it's like we dangle a carrot. We say do this, make choices, engage with the system. They do it and then we take the prize away and say 'oops, sorry, no we can't help you with that.' You can see why they get pissed off sometimes. We come across as being unfair or inconsistent but it's not our fault. Often we're as helpless as them - we can't create space on courses or find funding.*
> SP*: What happens when you say no?*
> UM 5*: It depends. Some shrug their shoulders and get on with it, some kick off. Either way, it damages trust, the relationship - you know. Sometimes I feel like I'm letting them down, but I'm pretty helpless as well, I have to do what my Manager tells me to do and that's to require men to engage with the system and comply and tell my PCOs to require the same.* (UM 5, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

Other staff expressed similar sentiments. They felt that when proactive sentence management on the part of prisoners worked it was a great asset, with men able to feel more in control of their sentence and their life in prison and that this in turn positively influenced both how they spent their time and how they engaged with others. However, when it did not work, when men engaged and tried to make choices but these options, whether realistic requests or not, were refused, it could, in turn, lead to disillusionment. This disillusionment led Daryl, for example, to rebel against a system which he believed had let him down:

> *It's stupid, why should I do what they say? I wanted to do the STOP* [Substance Treatment and Offenders Programme] *course, they told me I had to do courses, that I had to make a suggestion, think about what would help me. Think about my sentence progression and moving forward. Then they say I'm not suitable and can't do it. How am I supposed to do the courses I need if they won't let me.*
> (HMP Nassington, April 2010)

Others simply refused to engage at all with their personal officer or in the management of their sentence. As Kai observed: *"I came here because I made crap choices, I've fucked up. Then I have to decide what I'm doing - she* [his PCO] *doesn't understand. I just want to do my prison and not have to think - it's bullshit"* (HMP Wansford, June 2011). It was clear at both

prisons that men responded differently to being asked to be pro-active in the management of their sentence, some reacted positively, relishing the opportunity to be more involved, others tried to engage but were then disillusioned with the outcome. Still others were simply unable or unwilling to engage at all.[140] I asked many of the Senior Managers at both prisons about their emphasis on engagement of prisoners with sentence plans and they argued consistently that it was an essential part of the prison regime. They emphasised that choice and engagement in how they spent their sentence was integral to the pro-activity and engagement they sought to foster amongst the men and in the wider prison.

When I asked PCOs about the emphasis on engagement with sentence management demanded by Senior Managers they had conflicted views. Many recognised the value of this engagement and agreed that it in theory formed an essential part of the regime. However, they expressed concerns that Senior Management were not realistic in their expectations, that they had set targets and ideals of engagement and dialogue with prisoners but that these were not wholly realistic to deliver on the wings. Officers pointed to men who refused or were unable to engage and then responded negatively by rebelling against regime or behaving badly, resulting at best in them being written up by unit staff and at worst in wider behavioural problems and disruption on the units. PCOs reported feeling quite powerless (Crewe, 2009) to respond to this behaviour or to adapt their expectations of the men accordingly. As one PCO put it:

> W*e're told to ask the men to take part. We're encouraged to give them choices, to talk to them nicely and build a relationship - that's what management want - we have to know our prisoners. The problem is that there's no help when that doesn't*

[140] I consider those men who were unable or unwilling to make the choices demanded of them by the the regime at both prisons in Chapter 5 of this thesis. These men, whose values were not aligned with those of the prison, often found having choices, taking on responsibility for managing their behaviour and their sentence and engaging with the demands of proactivity promulgated by staff to be impossible to manage.

> *work. We're on the ground every day. We know the lads, we know what works and what doesn't and sometimes involvement and choices doesn't work. Lads don't want to engage with us and the system or they can't. We keep telling them* [Senior Managers] *that but they don't listen - we have to do it their way.*
>
> (PCO 39, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

A discourse of engagement, responsibility and proactivity was certainly central to expectations from Senior Managers in both prisons. Management led by example and their interactions with prisoners emphasised the duty that the prisoner had to engage with the regime and to make positive choices, in effect putting the onus for managing their sentence onto the men themselves. In the next section I consider what Senior Management thought about responsibility and engagement amongst the prison population and how they encouraged and fostered it within the prisons and encouraged their staff to do the same.

3.5. Responsibility From the Top Down

One of the many benefits of my escort arrangement with the IMBs at both prisons was the access it brought me to the IMB office in the administration block. It provided a great place to write up notes, hold interviews with staff and on occasion just to sit and reflect on what I had seen and heard earlier in the day. The main benefit it provided, however, was contact with Senior Management and the Director of each prison who had their offices close by.[141] Bumping into them whilst making a cup of coffee or in the stairwell as I was entering or leaving the office allowed me to develop an easy rapport with many of them. I was able to tell them where I had been on a particular day and what I had seen and ask follow-up questions. Very often they would then offer their own opinion on it or add to the information I had. On occasion I was invited to accompany them as they left the administration block and went

[141] My location also meant I had close access to many of the administration staff who were an invaluable source of information about timetabling and help in tracking down particular staff I wanted to talk to. They also, with permission, were able to provide me with documentation about regime, courses and on occasion minutes of meetings.

about their business on the units and workshops. With hindsight these informal and often brief interactions were of more value than the longer formal interviews I conducted with a number of them. Away from the formal setting of an interview and in brief daily discourse, the Senior Managers were far less guarded in expressing opinions or justifying policies and decisions. I was able to follow up on adjudications I had sat in on, ask questions about particular courses or training opportunities with the aim of trying to understand as closely as possible how they viewed them and the reasoning behind them.

Regular, informal and formal access to Senior Management allowed me to gain an insight into the overall management of the prisons. I wanted to know what management thought about responsibility and how and if they encouraged their prisoners to be responsible. Were Senior Managers themselves aware of the emphasis on responsibility, choices and self-governance I was seeing in practice throughout both prisons or was it a by-product of something else?

Senior Management appeared to be aware of the emphasis they placed on responsibility. They were keen to show me that prisoners had choices, that it was their choice how they spent their sentence, that prison staff could only encourage and guide but not insist: "*They can choose, we provide opportunities, they either make the most of their time here or they waste it. I can't serve their sentence for them*" (SMT 2, HMP Wansford, March 2010). Management spoke of partnerships between the prison, staff and the prisoners in order to gain the best sentence outcome for the individual. As the current Director at HMP Nassington puts it in his welcome on the prison website:

> Whilst security is always paramount within a prison, challenging offending behaviour is pivotal to our success. Through integrated prisoner management systems prisoners start to work towards their successful planned release from the moment they enter the prison. Our employees are highly trained in the necessary skills required to operate a modern prison, management are clear on leadership and direction and our values are interwoven into how we carry out our work on a daily basis. Everyone, both employees and prisoners alike, are treated with respect and are expected to offer respect in return.
>
> (HMP Nassington Website, 2014)

In such announcements and in everyday encounters, there was a discourse of expectations, choices and responsibility with clear consequences for failures to make the right choices or to meet expectations: *"I've moved him onto Basic* [referring to the lowest level of IEP]. *He's had numerous chances - he has to realise that actions have consequences"* (SMT 9, HMP Nassington, July 2011). Senior Managers rewarded those who took on responsibility or 'ownership' of their actions: *"He's owned it - that's great. I've given him a burn pack."* (SMT 4, HMP Nassington, July 2011), a response that, in turn, fostered a sense of community and partnership, but also quietly encouraged the men to engage and behave. In effect using what Ben Crewe (2009, 2011a) terms 'soft power' to manage the prison population and incentivise their good behaviour, in turn making the population easier to manage. Senior Management and unit staff portrayed themselves as being on the prisoners' side and that they were all part of a wider team working for the good of the prison community. This was clearly reflected in an adjudication I observed at HMP Nassington when a Senior Manager told a prisoner: "*you're lucky it's me and not the Judge*[142] *today*" (SMT 8, HMP Nassington, August 2011), almost emphasising a distinction between outsiders and insiders and suggesting that he as an insider was being fairer or more lenient than the outside Judge would have been.[143] The

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[142] A local District Judge visited HMP Nassington once a month to handle some adjudications. The majority were handled by members of the Senior Management Team. I did not sit in on any adjudications at HMP Wansford but was told about the process and given other information by staff and the IMB.

[143] In this case the Senior Manager was not particularly lenient, but what was interesting, was the implicit emphasis on insider teamwork, suggesting that an outsider, the Judge, would not have been so lenient in his decision.

incentive for senior staff to encourage responsibility and incentivise responsible behaviour amongst prisoners is clear. Men who engage with regime and who are mindful of their actions are easier to manage. The greater the number of prisoners who take on responsibility for themselves and their behaviour, the less problems there may be for prison management. In this sense, the encouragement of responsibility and engagement amongst prisoners by Senior Management is self-serving. Yet, this is not how senior staff portrayed their emphasis on responsibility. Choosing instead to emphasise that it was for the good of the men that responsibility and engagement with the regime was encouraged. They uniformly disliked and refuted my suggestions to them in interview and more informally that encouraging and incentivising responsibility, positive choices and engagement with regime amongst the prison population made the management of the men easier. Instead they argued that any ease of governing was not the reason for the approach which they took in managing the prison but merely a welcome by-product. However as Gary comments:

> *It's all about responsibility, making choices - everything. What are they? There has to be something in it for them* [staff]. *Nobody does nothing in here without a reason, screw*[144] *or lad*[145]*. No officer will do nothing for you that doesn't suit them. So if I do it for them, what's in it for me. Why should I?*
>
> (HMP Nassington, April 2010)

The emphasis on responsibility, self-governance, proactivity and choice as well as the high expectations of prisoners that I witnessed on the units, in the workshops, in education and more generally around both prisons, started at the top. There were high expectations of staff as well as prisoners, Senior Management seemed keen to foster an environment where there were opportunities for growth and progression amongst both staff and prisoners and expected

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[144] 'Screw' is prison slang for PCO. I heard this particular slang rarely and mainly from older or longer-term prisoners.

[145] 'Lad' is prison slang for another prisoner.

that all work together for the overall benefit of the establishment. However, what is clear is that responsible prisoners who engage with regime also provide benefits for prison management and staff. A group of prisoners who work with staff and who mirror the values of the prison makes day-to-day management and organisation easier. Staff are able to govern and impose order not by harsh expressions of power and demands of order but instead by promulgating standards and expectations that are assimilated by the prisoners, in turn allowing the power of the prison to be exercised more softly (Crewe, 2009, 2011a).

3.6. The Relationship Between HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford

When I first visited HMP Wansford, the Director of HMP Nassington was also Acting Director at HMP Wansford. As I discussed in the previous chapter, I had encountered numerous delays and problems in securing research access for the empirical stages of this project. Having had my research access approved by the previous Director before she left her post, I feared the Acting Director might revoke or amend the arrangements I had in place. Instead, in my first meeting with him he did almost exactly the opposite. I was told that I could go anywhere and speak to anyone. If an IMB member needed to go somewhere else providing an officer on the unit or area I was, did not mind, I should stay and finish my interview or observation and a PCO would then accompany me to the next place I wanted to visit. He did, however, add one additional caveat to my research at HMP Wansford. He felt strongly that I should also visit and conduct interviews at HMP Nassington and broaden my sample. He told me that, whilst they were very different prisons, I would see a lot of similarities and a lot of differences, both good and bad, between the two. Fortunately, the IMB at HMP Nassington agreed to accompany me on research visits in the same way. The Director's insistence on the extension of my research to include HMP Nassington was merely the first signifier of the relationship that existed between the two prisons.

In 2010 HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington regularly worked together, shared knowledge and initiatives and senior staff at both prisons were often seconded to the other. One Senior Manager told me that this was essential, providing an opportunity for a skills exchange but also prevented either management team or individual manager from becoming complacent as it provided new challenges and exposure to different staff and a prison population with somewhat different needs. (Field notes, HMP Nassington, July 2011). It also provided an opportunity for a relative change of scenery with a Senior Manager describing it as a "*good working break"* (SMT 2, Wansford, March 2010), providing the opportunity to work with different staff and prisoners with different needs and offering different challenges. The exchange of knowledge between these two prisons, operated by the same private company,, I was told, was essential. Managers had to learn from others within the company and to exchange skills and experiences because this was something that competitors also providing private custodial services and public sector prison staff were not prepared to do. In 2011 this close relationship between prisons in the group and exchange of staff was also extending to HMP Birmingham, with the Healthcare Manager from HMP Nassington seconded to HMP Birmingham for a number of months during the transitionary period.

The exchange of knowledge and information and secondment of staff between HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington is an important factor for this study. Whilst they are very different prisons, in character, purpose and provision, HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford operate regimes with similar expectations and values. Emphasising expectations, normalisation and responsibilities there were apparent consequences in both institutions for prisoners who fail to do so. The fact that Senior Managers at both prisons worked so closely

together explains many of the similarities, particularly in emphasis on expectations and responsibility, I noticed between the two research sites.

3.7. Summing up: What is Responsibility?

Ideas and expectations of responsibility and self-governance were apparent throughout all areas and facets of life inside both HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington. From the expectations that are set out to the men as they arrive, the way they are treated on reception, the Compact signed at induction; to opportunities for progression at work, to the emphasis on involvement and management, wherever possible, of your own sentence, both prisons seemingly sought to empower the men to think about their own lives and to provide opportunities for them to make choices. The men were asked, in turn, to take responsibility for or ownership of their actions and to be proactive in planning and using their time in prison. Responsibility was inherently linked with expectations. Prison management and unit staff had high expectations of the men which they communicated in words and actions in every area of regime and prison life. Prisoners wanting to fulfil or achieve those expectations often depended on good relationships with staff. Indeed, building and maintaining good relationships between staff and prisoners was encouraged by Senior Management and passed down by unit staff both in how they dealt with and treated the men in their care and in how they managed and shaped the opportunities available to them. Similarly, senior staff framed regime and opportunities for prisoners in language of expectations and responsibilities. They spoke of choices and normalisation, of partnership between the prison and prisoners to achieve the best outcome and consequences for failures to make positive choices and to take on responsibility. The overview of prison life in this chapter demonstrates that responsibility, opportunities for it and the encouragement of it were essential to the regime at and life in both prisons.

I have touched briefly in this chapter on how having choices and opportunities for and encouragement of responsibility made the men in both prisons feel and how they reacted to them. In the next chapter, I build on this and look in more detail at responsibility in action. I consider how an emphasis of and expectation of responsibility is encouraged in both prisons. I ask how the men feel about and respond to opportunities to be more responsible. I identify and evaluate the key elements of feeling and being responsible. I ask what it means to prisoners to feel responsible and to take on culpability for their behaviour and choices.

Chapter Four

The Elements of Responsibility

I've taken his tobacco away today – he has to take some responsibility.
(SMT 4, HMP Nassington, August 2011)

I feel like someone. I have a job, a role. I can teach others, lead a team. I have responsibilities, duties. But it's hard - I owe myself but I have to look after the others as well…It can be hard, you know, the officers tell me I have to lead by example, because I'm trusted and have skills, that's ok - I like it but you know sometimes I need to worry more about me, my prison, my life afterwards. Get some space from thinking about everything. (Reg, HMP Wansford, April 2010)

You have to build relationships, you have to know your lads - 'know your prisoner' - I think that's the official line. If I know what's going on in their lives, know what makes them tick I can help them to see what's best for them, for their time here. If they make the decisions for themselves - about what they want to do, education or work etc. then they're gonna go aren't they? I can't be doing with men getting sacked or quitting every five minutes it wastes too much time. If they are doing something they want to do they cause me far less hassle.
(PCO 28, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

4.1. An Overview

In the previous chapter I considered life inside the two prisons I visited, examining how regime, relationships and opportunity were used to encourage prisoners to become more responsible for themselves and for others. Chapter Four builds on that chapter to consider responsibility in action, how it is facilitated and further, what it meant for men at both prisons. I identify and evaluate its key elements using data from interviews with staff and prisoners, a case study, and time spent in observations in all areas of the prisons. I consider what it means to prisoners to feel responsible and to have responsibility.

Initially, I use the 'Supporters'[146] initiative at HMP Nassington as a case study and evaluate what responsibility and self-governing meant to the men involved in high-trust jobs within the prison. The Supporters are a small group of trusted prisoners trained to provide support to other prisoners on admission and at low times throughout their sentence.[147] I identify elements that for the men are essential to feeling and being responsible. I consider the impact of responsibility on the small number of prisoners working as Supporters at HMP Nassington. Having identified the elements which are essential for both feeling and being responsibility, I analyse these in turn and consider the extent to which they are evident in wider prison life at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford. Finally, I evaluate what these elements add to our understanding of responsibility and self-governing and the role that they play in private prison life.

4.2. A Case Study in Responsibility: Supporters at HMP Nassington

As discussed in Chapter 2, the decision to use a case study evolved whilst I was in the field. I encountered men employed as Supporters regularly during my early days at HMP Nassington. The more time I spent with them and the more I learnt about their role and the programme itself, the more important they seemed in terms of addressing the key questions of this research project; namely those of prisoners being responsible and having responsibility and in turn the impact of responsibility on prison life and experience.

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[146] This initiative has been allocated a pseudonym.

[147] Particular times of difficulty identified by the Supporters included first admission and/or a prison transfer, a return from court with a long sentence, those prisoners on Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) – particularly those who have met their tariff, the death of a relative or friend, the release of a cell mate/ prison mate, coming to terms with offences committed, the refusal of parole and the breakdown of relationships on the outside, including limited or no contact with their children. On IPP sentences see Annison (2014).

I set out to spend as much time as possible with men employed as Supporters both individually and in groups, in a bid to guide my later data collection but also to secure a case narrative '[which] richly and fully reports the subject's perceptions about the phenomenon being investigated' (Leedy, 1997: 158). To this end, I shadowed them in their work and interviewed a number at length. I also interviewed the Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator who is their staff link, questioned staff and other prisoners about how they viewed the Supporters' role and impact and finally held a focus group with all but three of the men then employed as Supporters.[148] Using different qualitative tools resulted in a rich body of data that revealed how this specific group of men understood responsibility and opportunities to self-govern and in turn how this made them feel. These themes, which are identified and discussed at length below, then informed my wider data collection and analysis. Whilst not universally visible in the wider body of data, these themes were on the whole reflected and reinforced in the data I gathered outside of the Supporters' case study.

4.3. Supporting and Listening: A Prison Job?

Supporters were introduced to HMP Nassington in December 1999, two years after the prison opened, to provide support and advice for all prisoners, particularly those who find it difficult to cope or feel vulnerable while in custody. It is an in-house initiative developed by HMP Nassington.[149] Those men who wish to be considered for a job as a Supporter must obtain a report from their own Residential Unit, the Security Department (including the Offender Management Unit (OMU)), and the Mental Health (RMN) team. Suitable candidates are interviewed prior to employment by the Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator who also supports

[148] Two of those Supporters not at the focus group were on rota to work in admissions at the time the focus group was held. One was on a visit.

[149] Though staff and a prisoner at HMP Nassington were aware of a similar 'Buddy' programme is in place at HMP Durham and told me that peer mentoring happened in a lot of prisons. Edgar et al. (2011) outline buddying and peer mentoring schemes and the positive effects these can have in their 2011 report for The Prison Reform Trust.

all Supporters with training and advice throughout their period of employment. Applicants must fulfil all of the following criteria:

- Adjudication free
- IEP 4 (The highest level of Incentive and Earned Privilege)
- No history of bullying
- No current or previous offences for drug supply
- No failed Mandatory Drug Tests (MDT) or Voluntary Drug Tests (VDT)
- No current or previous sexual offences
- No history of demonstrating prejudicial behaviour

All Supporters receive training on suicide and self-harm awareness and recognising risk. They attend a monthly Supporters Meeting and, if required, attend the monthly Safer Prisons Policy meeting.

The following description, taken from the HMP Nassington Introduction Booklet, provides a summary of the Supporters' main role;

> Supporters are prisoners who have been trained with appropriate communication and listening skills to assist staff in the prevention of suicide in custody. Working on a rota basis, one Supporter will be available in the admission department from 2pm Monday to Friday and 12.30 pm on a Saturday. Two Supporters also see prisoners in the first night centre. They will be responsible for speaking to all new receptions and noting any concerns regarding vulnerability of the new arrivals. Any concerns will be forwarded to the staff. The following day the subject of any concerns from the previous night will be visited to offer support and to assess the current situation. There will also be a Supporter available on the induction unit as well as a Supporter visiting each unit daily. The Supporters are also included in the induction process, ensuring that all new arrivals are aware of the availability of Supporters at HMP Nassington. If you need to speak to a Supporter ask a member of staff.
>
> (HMP 'Nassington', Introduction Booklet p. 25)

The Supporters have relative freedom to move around the prison. Each man is issued with a 'passport'. The passport, in practice a plastic bound log book, is carried at all times when on

duty and is signed by unit staff when the Supporters leave their home unit and then signed when they arrive on the unit they are visiting. It is retained by staff on that unit (or by admissions staff when working in that area of the prison) until they leave. It is then checked and signed when they return to their home unit. A Supporter may be asked to spend the night in the Care Suite, First Night Centre or on a residential unit with a vulnerable prisoner who needs support. Additional pay is available for this and over-night stays are on a rota basis, although on occasion a particular Supporter may depart from the rota with the permission of the Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator, for example, if another Supporter has a particular rapport or a relationship with the prisoner requiring overnight support. Supporters also play a significant role on the induction wings, in admissions and support prisoners through induction as they transition into life in the prison.

In contrast to HMP Nassington, HMP Wansford, like almost all prisons in England and Wales, has adopted the Listener Scheme operated by the Samaritans. Started in 1991 at HMP Swansea, the scheme trains prisoners, in a similar programme to its civilian volunteers, to listen and provide support to other prisoners in times of need. The scheme aims to cut the number of incidences of self-harm and suicide in prison. It seeks to provide comfort, in confidence, to prisoners in times of distress and depression (Samaritans, 2012). Prisoner Listeners volunteer for the role and, once approved as suitable for the role by prison security, are selected and trained by Samaritan volunteers. Listeners receive a certificate once they have successfully completed training and they must sign a Compact that binds them to the same policies as Samaritans volunteers. The Compact requires absolute confidentiality to the individual being supported. The requirement of confidentiality continues after the Listener has left the prison and even remains in place after the death of the individual to whom listening services have been provided (Samaritans, 2010).

In many respects the Supporters scheme takes the Listeners further - offering more trust, demanding greater responsibility and requiring prisoners employed as Supporters to work closely with staff for the benefit of other prisoners and the wider prison community. Many of the differences between the schemes highlight the unique nature of the Supporters. For example, the Supporters are given the freedom to move around the prison, whereas Listeners support within their own residential unit. Supporters are given the duty to inform staff of the need to open an ACCT book if a prisoner is believed to be at risk of self-harm and provide integration into prison life through liaison with staff, and in turn receive support from staff themselves. Listeners, on the other hand, must keep everything they hear confidential other than in support meetings with Samaritan volunteers. The requirement at HMP Nassington for Supporters to liaise with prison staff forces the men to make difficult decisions and fine-line judgements about what may be kept confidential and what must and should be reported to staff, as well as to create, manage and maintain good relationships with staff.

In the following sections I outline the demographic of the Supporters employed during my time at HMP Nassington, evaluate their role and significance further, consider how and what they themselves think about their role within the prison and ask whether they are responsible prisoners or not.

i. Case Study Demographic

The 18 Supporters who participated in the case study were all sentenced.[150] Two were serving their first custodial sentence, one of whom received a lot of teasing from the group for his insistence on having committed the 'perfect victimless crime'. 16 had previously served part of a current or previous sentence in the public estate. One was registered as a disabled prisoner and wore a prothesis.

The men varied in the amount and nature of experience in their role. One of them had previously been a prisoner Listener in a public sector prison and another a 'buddy' under a similar scheme in operation at HMP Durham. Many had no experience of supporting or caring for others prior to taking on the role. The longest period anyone whom I interviewed had been a Supporter at Nassington was 20 months, with the least experienced having been employed for only three weeks at the final focus group and still shadowing more experienced Supporters. 17 of the group were adult sentenced prisoner and one was a YO.

The majority of the men I interviewed were Category C prisoners[151] housed on the Greetham unit. Greetham is the newest unit at HMP Nassington and the only one with all single cells. Divided into three residential units, it houses a large Vocational Training Unit (VTU) which provides opportunities for City and Guilds qualifications in bricklaying, plastering, joinery, motor vehicle studies and painting and decorating, as well as a

[150] The make-up of the group changed during my time in the field with Supporters being removed from post or moved to other establishments and in one case released having served his sentence.

[151] Whilst HMP Nassington is a Category B prison, at the time of my research visits it was holding an increasing number of men who had been re-categorised as Category C during their time at HMP Nassington. These men often struggled, because of a lack of available places, to get a transfer to a Category C establishment. This was the cause of much frustration. One of the biggest sources of this frustration was that HMP Nassington did not offer, as a Category B prison, the necessary courses for Category C prisoners to be able to continue on their sentence plan ready for release. The Annual Report of the HMP Nassington IMB in 2013, eighteen months after I left the field, highlights that transfer to Category C prisons from HMP Nassington has become much better.

requirement for participation in education courses including Maths, English and IT Whilst it is not an enhanced unit[152], it is generally viewed as a good unit on which to be housed because of the single cells and quality of accommodation. Both Officers and prisoners emphasised that because of the requirements for entry to the VTU courses, which include that a prisoner must achieve a Level 4 of IEP[153], and be free from both adjudications and drugs, are so demanding many of the '*trouble makers*' (PCO 12, HMP Nassington, August 2011) do not fit the criteria to be housed on the unit. Davey, one of the Supporters housed on Greetham, told me:

> *It ain't as tough on here Miss. The druggies[154] and wasters and that can't get on to the courses and there aren't the fights.* (HMP Nassington, August 2011)

The Supporters and prison staff recognised and were keen to highlight the necessary skills and good character demanded of the Supporters. They stressed that that the role required a level of 'steadiness' and emotional maturity that many prisoners, particularly younger men, were not able to manage. Only one of the Supporters at the time of my field work was a YO and it became apparent that there was a consensus of opinion that YOs were generally not able to keep a job in this field for any length of time. As Tim put it: *"They [YOs] just want to meet their mates on other units and hang out"* (HMP Nassington, August 2011) with Mick

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[152] HMP Nassington has only one enhanced unit: Lutton Red. Regular references by both prisoners and some IMB to Greetham being an 'Enhanced Wing' was a source of much frustration to Senior Managers at HMP Nassington throughout my period of fieldwork.

[153] This is the highest level of IEP at HMP Nassington which employs a 1-4 classification system for IEP. Level 1 is referred to by staff and prisoners as 'Basic'. Being put on to 'Basic' regime is a punishment and involves a move to another unit where all Basic regime prisoners are housed and a loss of privileges including access to television. Although during my visits Senior Managers were keen to correct both officers and IMB members who used the term 'Basic', preferring that IEP 1 or Level 1 was used instead. As one senior officer put it *'it's not Basic, it's a different regime that's all'* (SMT 6, HMP Nassington, August 2011). However in the majority, despite the protests of Senior Management IEP 1 was almost always referred to as Basic or Basic Regime.

[154] Davey initially referred to 'smack heads' but when the IMB member accompanying me asked for a clarification of what a 'smack head' was he chose the term 'druggie'. He also initially described 'wasters' as 'wankers' but the IMB member I was with suggested he choose a different description and he settled on 'wasters' because: " *you know what I mean now, Miss and it almost sounds the same*" (HMP Nassington, August 2011).

concurring that: *"The youngsters have no idea, they just think it's better than cleaning or less boring than education"* (HMP Nassington, August 2011).

This lack of success by YOs[155] was attributed to the level of maturity and experience the role demanded. The men felt that the reason for the success of the current YO member of the group (Charlie) was a level of maturity and calm not exhibited by previous young men. The older Supporters believed that YOs sought the role because they believed it to be a 'nice' job but were then either daunted by the workload or unable to manage the relative freedom or emotional burdens that came with it. The responsibility and trust were, in other words, too demanding. Mick an experienced Supporter likened the YO trainee Supporters he had worked with in the past to training a dog - they behaved on a walk but when given the freedom to run off the lead forgot their name and did not come back because the freedom was so exciting they forgot that they were trusted and needed to be responsible. Older prisoners in contrast only ran a few metres away before they returned to their trainer.[156]

ii. Gathering the Case Study Data

Having identified the Supporters as a significant group, I spent time learning as much about the programme as possible. Initially I asked questions of the IMB members accompanying me and talked to prisoners employed as Supporters whenever I encountered them.[157] I began to

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[155] See Gudjonsson et al. (2009) on the prevalence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Scottish young offenders. Also Young et al. (2011); Harpin and Young (2012) and Gudjonsson et al. (2012).

[156] At the time of the focus group in which Mick made these comments I was surprised by their eloquence. Mick was the Supporter I had got to know the least during my fieldwork as he was quiet and reserved and let others answer my questions. I later learnt that he had been a senior civil servant before his entry to prison and had a Postgraduate Degree from a London University.

[157] Supporters at work are very visible within the prison, their work uniform includes a bright orange polo shirt and fleece with 'Supporter' embroidered front and back. The Supporters interviewed highlighted the importance of this visibility and stressed that this often enabled them to build a rapport with vulnerable prisoners in need of support as they moved around the prison.

include questions about the Supporters in interviews with both prisoners and staff. I spent time with the Suicide Prevention Coordinator who recruits, trains and manages the Supporters and was given all of the training and recruitment literature to review. As I began to gain a better understanding of the role played by the Supporters, I started to spend more time with them – often in admissions when they met new entrants, offering support for those who were in custody for the first time and those who had returned from Court with a sentence that was longer than had been hoped for. During their breaks, over a cup of tea, I talked to them about their role, how they thought about it and their motivations for undertaking it. I also often encountered Supporters in the prison grounds making their way between units as I, too, was, travelling around the prison. We almost always stopped to talk for a moment or two and I learnt much about their working practices and the structure of their day from this. Most importantly I also learnt how they were feeling at that particular point in their working day and what had triggered those feelings. These informal interactions added greatly to the data gathered and enriched my understanding of both their role and their experience of the role.

4.4. The Elements of Responsibility

In interviews, observations and the focus group discussions with the Supporters, it became clear that issues of responsibility were paramount.

i. Relationships, Motivations, Communication and Team-work

The men expressed varying motivations for becoming a Supporter. Many said that they had felt vulnerable when they were first in prison and wanted to provide support to others as a consequence. Three had received support from Supporters at HMP Nassington prior to becoming one themselves and expressed a desire to 'return the favour'. They all recognised the role as being a 'good job' within the prison, "*We're trusted, it's a good job, I like it."* Tim

told me (HMP Nassington, July 2011). However, there was a consensus that it was a job without comparison that carried with it a heavy burden and a large responsibility. Pete in particular stressed the constant thought and awareness that was necessary at all times: *"We have to think all the time. Should we visit this bloke, are we safe? Get our passport signed."* (HMP Nassington, August 2011).

The men often talked passionately about their work. They were proud of the role they played in the prison and held themselves to high collective standards, standards which in themselves created a burden of responsibility, as Liam identified;

> Liam*: It's not just a normal job…*
> SP*: What's a 'normal' job?*
> Liam: *Like on a unit - a barber or a cleaner or in the kitchens. If they have a shit day at work nothing changes. You go back to your pad. If I have a shit day then I can't help the guys.*
> SP: *Help the guys?*
> Liam: *I don't pull my weight… I can't… what if I screw up and… [long pause]*
> SP: *and…?*
> Liam: *I screw it up for the others.*
>
> (Liam, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

Despite the burden of the work and responsibility that the group expressed to me that they experienced they also felt that many other prisoners who were not Supporters identified it as a '*cushy*' or '*easy*' role without recognising the responsibilities that went with it (Field notes, HMP Nassington, August 2011). For example, the men were skeptical of others' motivations for applying for the role, feeling that many wanted the opportunity of the relative freedom that the role provided, without realising the burdens and responsibilities that went not just with the job but also with the freedom of the passport. Indeed, the men regularly and unanimously highlighted the burden of the freedom afforded to them by their passport, and were at times

frustrated at the contrast to how this freedom was viewed by other prisoners. They recognised that the freedom of movement provided by the passport made the role attractive to individuals seeking to act as couriers or simply to visit friends on other units or merely to illicit news from around the establishment. The group expressed concerns that this undervalued the achievements and responsibilities of the Supporter team in supporting other prisoners in times of need.[158] The men stressed that it was their responsibility to ensure not only that they did not abuse the freedom, but also to ensure that other prisoners did not take advantage of it either. Naveem, a non-Supporter and relative newcomer to HMP Nassington, whom I interviewed at some length, confirmed the groups observations about other prisoners preconceptions about the freedom and easy nature of their role;

> SP: *Did you meet a Supporter at admission or induction?*
> Naveem: *Yeah.*
> SP: *Did you talk to them?*
> Naveem: *Yeah - when I got here.*
> SP: *Was it useful - what did you talk about?*
> Naveem: *Prison.*
> SP: *Did they explain their job?*
> Naveem: *Yeah.*
> SP*: And…?*
> Naveem*: They got it good.*
> SP: *How?*
> Naveem: *With all that walking about and hanging[159] and stuff - they got it nice.*
> SP*: But they're moving around to support other guys on the units.*
> Naveem*: Nah - they're hanging.*
>
> (Naveem, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

The Supporters I interviewed were frustrated by attitudes like Naveem's. The freedom associated with their passport was not an easy route to visiting friends but instead come with a

[158] See also below – Safety and Vulnerability for a discussion of the Supporters passport.

[159] Slang for hanging around/talking/socialising. I had to have quick lessons in prison/street slang from both IMB members and officers and even prisoners during my early days in the field.

responsibility to be managed. Their consensus was that those who they worked closely with appreciated and understood what they were doing, and they were then unconcerned with the attitudes of others, providing that they did not interfere with their work or put pressure upon them to courier items or pass on messages between units. Yet, as Zac says, this in itself creates a burden of responsibility that many Supporters in training - particularly YOs - cannot always manage;

> *You have to kinda split yourself… be a Supporter, do the job and then be you. It's hard sometimes. I've got a mate on Lutton Green but I can't really talk to him when I'm there to see someone or they'll sack me.*
>
> (HMP Nassington, August 2011)

Many asserted that not everyone could 'hack' being a Supporter: "*It ain't for everyone"* Zac noted (HMP Nassington, August 2011). How then, do those successfully employed as Supporters cope with the burdens of the role day-to-day? With the support of each other and good teamwork, they told me. They stressed the importance of any new additions to the group fitting in, in order for the team to work effectively across the prison and its population. What was of pivotal importance, they identified, was the support of the Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator and her team. She had high expectations of them, but they could expect the same from her in return. The men and the staff involved with the scheme also believed that the monthly Supporters Meeting and training with the Suicide Prevention Co-Ordinator was pivotal in allowing them to share experiences and to pass on skills, identify further training needs and talk through difficult situations.

Spending time with the men employed as Supporters was often enjoyable. I got to know them all well. They were a close group, not necessarily all friends but work colleagues with a good rapport and a bond. With this in mind, I was interested to find out how they supported

each other in their roles and also to understand better the relationship that they had with staff. The men agreed with my initial observation that the support that they provided to each other was pivotal to the success of the team in fulfilling it's role: *"Nah, we all hate each other Miss – can't you see* [in jest]*"* (Zac, HMP Nassington, July 2011). In the focus group they described a number of incidences when a particular Supporter had encountered a demanding or emotionally difficult incident whilst at work and had then been supported by the rest of the group to both deal with and cope with the incident, with Simon stressing: *"You just have to talk it out – next time it could be you who needs him – it's what we do"* (HMP Nassington, August 2011). They were keen to talk about the support that Gavin had recently received when he had experienced a difficult night providing support to another prisoner in the Care Suite.[160]

Gavin, a Supporter in his mid-thirties, was serving his first prison sentence. He and another Supporter had recently been asked to support a newly sentenced prisoner who was finding it difficult in prison. The man was struggling to come to terms with his offences, the length of his sentence and the breakdown of his relationship with his family as a result.[161] Gavin spent the night in the Care Suite[162] with the struggling man, who wanted to talk through the guilt he felt about his offences. He outlined a number of violent sexual offences against young girls. Gavin who had young daughters, of a similar age to the victims, asked the man to not share any more detailed information about his offences with him and instead used his training to talk to him about ways of moving forward in order to make the most of his time at HMP Nassington and outlining those who were available to provide support. The details of

[160] Discussed during the Supporters focus group, August 2011 and recorded in the field notes.

[161] I later learnt that a number of this prisoner's offences had been committed against members of his own family.

[162] A specially equipped cell which allows a Supporter to cell share with a vulnerable prisoner at risk of self-harm or in distress over night to provide support.

the offences the man shared unnerved Gavin and he sought support from other Supporters. One of them brought the issue to the Suicide-Prevention Co-ordinator, who in turn arranged for Gavin to receive additional support so that he could continue to help the prisoner moving forward but without detriment to his own mental health.

This incident and the response to it, underscores a number of significant elements essential to the Supporters and their role in the prison. Firstly, it highlights, the important role they play in supporting others. Secondly, it demonstrates the important relationship that existed between the Suicide Prevention Coordinator and the Supporters. Thirdly, it demonstrates the good relationships, sense of teamwork and group responsibility that the men who work as Supporters have for each other, with one bringing the needs of another to the attention of the Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator.

The Supporters often forged significant friendships that transcended their role.[163] They also regularly spoke of the significance of mutual support and the professional and personal friendships that they had built: *"we wouldn't have been mates if we weren't Supporters – I can't be doing with YOs",* Mick acknowledged (HMP Nassington, August 2011). At times they were surprised by the strength of the bonds they had built and identified this as a positive but unexpected outcome of their employment as Supporters: "*He's a better mate than I've got outside, even lads I've grown up with. I trust him"* Simon told me (HMP Nassington, August 2011).

Just as good relationships existed between the Supporters so too, they forged strong relationships with the staff with whom they worked in the FNC and on the Safer Custody

[163] On prison friendships see Corley (2001).

Team. The Supporters were co-ordinated and recruited by the Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator whom they felt was supportive and '*on their side'*. The Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator herself talked of being part of *'the caring team'* and admitted that she found it very difficult if any of them broke her trust and had to be removed from the group (Field notes, HMP Nassington, July 2011).

The men were noticeably comfortable in admissions where they worked on a rota basis greeting new admissions and on occasion more familiar faces with warmth and good humour:

> [Supporter to a prisoner being let through to a holding cell in admissions]*What are you doing back here – you said you weren't ever coming back…*
>
> (Field notes, HMP Nassington, April, 2010)

All of the group had a good rapport with staff in admissions and the officers valued their role in the department. More importantly for the group, they felt that role of the Supporters within the prison was supported by the staff in admissions. They felt they were part of a wider team and they thought that staff demonstrated through their actions their appreciation: *"we don't always get a thank you – but they make us a brew and we have a laugh"* (Dan, HMP Nassington, August 2011). The prisoners believed their actions in admissions were crucial to their wider role within the prison. It allowed them to recognise vulnerable individuals and then to not only provide ongoing support but also to inform FNC and wing staff of their concerns. Working in admissions also ensured that every prisoner entering the establishment knew that Supporters were available to them if needed: *"it's the orange shirts – everyone knows who we are"* (Zac, HMP Nassington, August 2011).

The support the Supporters received from each other and from most staff was remarkable.[164] They were well integrated into prison life and were generally trusted to take decisions and to work with staff to support those in need. Yet, the incident outlined above in which Gavin was left disturbed and troubled by a night in the Care Suite shows how vulnerable they could be as a result of their responsibilities and the relative freedom of their passport. The men said that they generally felt safe when moving around the prison and undertaking the tasks associated with their employment, even on the occasions when they were locked in the Care Suite over night to support a vulnerable prisoner. However, they identified a number of specific issues that had, in the past, made them feel vulnerable or unsafe or had the potential to do so in the future.

All recognised the freedom associated with their passport. However, they were extremely concerned, both in the focus group and in individual discussions, with making me understand the additional vulnerability and burden associated with that freedom. Mick described it as being "*both a blessing and a curse"* (HMP Nassington, August 2011). Whilst it gave them the freedom to move around the prison, it also required them to be responsible for the sensible and consistent management of that movement. The majority had been asked by other prisoners to courier goods or messages between units and, they said, they had refused. Zac felt that it "*wasn't worth the risk*" (HMP Nassington, August 2011). After a while, as they became more established in their role, other men on their units "*knew better than to ask*" (Simon, HMP Nassington, July 2011). However, it was not just the illicit requests from other prisoners to take advantage of their freedom of movement that concerned the men and caused a burden of responsibility, it was also the knowledge that a number of staff viewed

[164] Support for the Supporters and their work was not unanimous amongst staff. Some PCOs felt that they posed an additional risk because of the freedom they had to move between units. One remarked that their passports and having to '*monitor them'* created extra work. (Field notes, HMP Nassington, June 2010).

their movements around the prison with suspicion. They expressed a reluctance to visit any unit too regularly, even when a particular individual was in need of support, for fear that staff would consider it a security threat and the individual Supporter could then lose their job. The fear of the loss of the job was very acute for a number of the Supporters, categorised as Category C and hoping for a move to a Category C prison. They feared that the loss of their job could affect their progression through the prison system and in turn their transfer to another prison. A number of the men acknowledged that there were times when they were unable to do their job as well as they would like to, for fear that in doing so they would raise staff suspicion because they were moving between units too often. The responsibility of managing their movement and having to be hyper-vigilant about where they went and for how long was for the Supporters the biggest burden of their role. They felt conflicted, they had a desire to do their job as well as possible and to travel around the prison to support other prisoners. Yet, they had to protect themselves and ensure that they did not raise staff suspicions by visiting a unit too often or moving around the prison too much. This conflict left many of the Supporters feeling helpless. As Simon put it:

> *I have to choose. Do I do my job as well as I can or do I risk my Cat C. I have to worry about myself but I'm supposed to think about others. I've tried to explain it to the PCOs but they don't get it. They say, "if you're doing your job you have nothing to worry about". But we do. You get on the wrong side of one of them* [meaning a PCO] *and you're screwed. They'll report you. Take your job, your passport. You don't visit a unit when asked you get reported and the same could happen. What are we supposed to do?*
>
> (HMP Nassington, July 2011)

The conflict felt by the Supporters highlights a very real problem with fostering and encouraging responsibility amongst prisoners. The Supporters were trusted and self-monitoring prisoners who engaged with regime and worked closely with staff to improve the

prison environment. In turn they lessened the workload of staff by supporting vulnerable and troubled prisoners. Yet, as prisoners they were never fully trusted or engaged with by staff. Their movements were inevitably scrutinised and this scrutiny left them troubled and feeling undervalued. Their engagement with regime and positive choices could, in fact, only get them so far. Indeed, by being responsible and having a job in which they were trusted, they exposed themselves to greater risk. If they were not careful, taking on the role and being responsible for themselves and for the well being of others, could have negative consequences for them, in the form of more intense scrutiny from staff at the least and losing their job or a negative report on their sentence record at worst. Mick described the responsibility of the passport as:

> Mick: *a double edged sword*
> SP: *What do you mean by that?*
> Mick: *It's great to move around, to get out of the unit, to have some freedom. But you have to constantly monitor yourself. Think - should I go to Lutton Red? I probably ought to do the Empingham job, I haven't been there this week. I don't mean to be negative. Bite the hand that feed me and all that… The thing is if I don't watch out it might bite me.*
>
> (HMP Nassington, July 2011)

In using the colloquialism of 'biting the hand that feeds' Mick sums up one of the biggest problems with encouraging responsibility amongst prisoners. Those that take on responsibility, engage with regime and make positive choices, can become too responsible and, the moment they overstep the mark, the prison, rather than using the soft power it has in encouraging responsibility, unleashes the full force of its carceral power. As Ben Crewe observes 'prisons coercive potential is always coiled in the background' (2011b: 513).

ii. Work/life Balance

An unexpected and regular topic of conversation that arose in discussion with the Supporters centred on the distinction between work and home. This was something, I have to admit, that I myself was not very good at sticking to with them. I had such a good rapport with this group of men I would often find myself chatting to them when visiting Greetham for other reasons and talking about their work with them when they were not at work – something which they later told me they would in general prefer not to do – "b*ut we'll make an exception for you Miss*" (Tim, HMP Nassington, August 2011).

Whilst they generally enjoyed their work and found it rewarding, they were keen that its demands and responsibility should not be underestimated. It was felt that the role was something to be valued and a position where they could both make a difference to others, but also learn key skills themselves, and they were generally proud to be employed as Supporters, with Dan expressing that: *"It's not just about helping others – I'm learning stuff for and about myself – that's the best thing"* (HMP Nassington, August 2011). They were insistent, however, that the demands of the role required a structured period of time off and a distinction between home and work. Interestingly, they emphasised the importance of their uniform in providing this. When they had their orange T-shirt on, they were at work. The rest of the time they could be more themselves, just another prisoner on the unit. This division also created a sense of relative normality in their prison life, offering an additional benefit of the role.

With this work/life distinction in mind, those Supporters living on Greetham expressed concern at vulnerable prisoners who needed particular support being placed on a unit with a large number of resident Supporters. Their view was that vulnerable prisoners were purposely being placed on Greetham, even though they did not necessarily meet the IEP requirements to

be housed on that wing, simply because of the number of Supporters who were also resident. Such an outcome, they felt, was motivated by a desire from senior staff to *"make their lives easier"* (Dan, HMP Nassington, August 2011). They were concerned that this move blurred the difference between work and home for them. Tim expressed it as "*yes, I will always talk to and provide support for X*[165] *when he needs me and I'm at work, but I don't want to be his friend or socialise with him away from work*" (HMP Nassington, August 2011). Other Supporters housed on Greetham agreed, expressing concerns that the blurring between work and home had the potential to impact negatively on their ability to do their job effectively, as they were unable to have the time-off they needed to deal with and manage the demands of their job.[166]

The Supporters' concerns about the blurring of work and home boundaries raises a number of questions which are considered and addressed in the later stages of this thesis. Does there become a time when responsibility is too much? Can responsible prisoners always cope with the demands placed upon them? Is prison management expecting too much from a particular group of prisoners and passing excessive responsibility on to them? Many of these questions also came to the fore when I discussed the issue of confidentiality with the Supporters and asked how they decided what to share with staff and each other, and what to protect.

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[165] I have removed the name of the prisoner from this extract. The prisoner mentioned had mental health issues, was not interviewed by me during the course of the research and I doubted his state of mind in being able to provide informed consent. I also discussed this with one of the RMN team who agreed with my observations.

[166] I was concerned about the burden that the Supporters communicated to me on this issue and with their permission, invited the Chair of the IMB into the end of the focus group so that they could talk to him about this. He undertook to follow up with senior staff to ensure that vulnerable/difficult prisoners were not being housed in particular areas purely because of the residential location of a relatively large number of Supporters.

iii. The Responsibility to Care

The men talked at some length about the question of confidentiality and their duty to other prisoners. They pondered what to keep confidential and what to share. Unlike prison Listeners, Supporters do not give an undertaking of complete confidentiality. Instead they may share information with staff that relates to the safety and well being of the prisoner with whom they are working. They are also obliged to pass on information that may effect the security or safety of the prison.[167] They will discuss problems and issues with colleagues both in the formal Supporters Meeting with the Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator but also informally when together. They also report any concerns relating to suicide and self-harm to staff, recommend the opening of an ACCT and fill in a log if they have spent the night in a Care Suite with a prisoner in need of support.

One man, who had previously been a Listener elsewhere, found that being a Supporter was less onerous. Prison Listeners interviewed at HMP Wansford acknowledged that the demand for total confidentiality was at times difficult to manage and that their support meetings were too infrequent. The lack of support workers on site on a daily basis at times created a burden for the Listener, with Nige expressing that: *"there's no one here I can talk to about it when Chris* [Samaritans Support Worker] *isn't here"* (HMP Wansford, May 2011).

The Supporters, in contrast, emphasised the importance of being able to talk to each other and to staff immediately and to share the burden that the role sometimes placed on them. They felt that they were well trained in the importance of confidentiality and discretion

[167] During the focus group the Supporters were interested to hear if I had needed to break my undertaking of confidentiality because of anything I had heard while in the prison. I had not. They were interested to hear examples from me of things I thought would cause me to report information to Senior Management. They too provided examples of when they would and would not break confidentiality and it was really useful to hear their observations on the issue.

but were never concerned to communicate with other Supporters or staff when necessary both for the good of others but also for their own well-being: "*You have to talk about it, you just do, or you'd go mad",* Simon admitted (HMP Nassington, August 2011). The burden of confidentiality creates an extra burden of responsibility and decision making for prisoners who are already taking on additional responsible roles, by asking them to support other inmates whilst being unable to seek the same for themselves. The Listeners Scheme was introduced partly as a response to high levels of suicide and self-harm in public sector prisons (Liebling, 1992; Samaritans, 2010), yet seems to pass on the responsibility of support for prisoners in times of emotional need and despair onto other prisoners and into the prison community itself. Was this a bid to distance prison authorities from the issue of suicide and self-harm or merely a by-product? This is a question I raised in discussions with the Supporters at HMP Nassington in an attempt to reconcile my own questions and concerns about prisoners being able to provide support to other prisoners, but also being faced with the need for almost complete confidentiality. Jim, who had been a Listener at another prison and was now a Supporter at HMP Nassington, drove the discussion forward in the focus group and the other Supporters helped me to reconcile some of my own doubts but also helped to clarify my understanding of the difference between being responsible and self-governing as an individual and having a responsibility or a responsible job, which in turn entailed a responsibility to others. The key distinction between individual responsibility and having a responsible job within the prison is exemplified by the differences that exist between the Listeners Scheme and the Supporters Scheme.

Listeners take on a responsible and important role in supporting other prisoners. However, they work alone with the possibility of talking to a Samaritan support worker if needed. They are not at any time doing the bidding of prison staff, they are independent and

ion their own. The Supporters, on the other hand, are both asked to take on a responsible role and to themselves be responsible and self-governing. Their role asks them to engage in wider prison life to work closely with staff to facilitate regime and for the wider benefit of the prison and its staff. For example, they are tasked to report incidences of self-harm or suicidal feelings so that it can be appropriately recorded and can recommend that an ACCT be opened. They work hand-in-hand with staff to support prisoners. At times, they appear to become quasi prison officers, responsible for passing information on to unit staff and promulgating expectations to prisoners. I heard one Supporter say to a prisoner, *"you can't behave like that here. They* [staff] *won't have it. You have to behave or they'll write you up. You have to stop the nonsense"* (Field notes, HMP Nassington, July 2011). By encouraging good behaviour and pointing out what was and was not acceptable, the Supporter is taking on the implicit role of a prison officer. Expressing what the expectations of the prison are and, in turn, what the consequences for failure to meet those expectations might be. Such behaviour, taking on the responsibility for communicating expectations and consequences, provides a clear example of the benefit to prison staff of responsible prisoners. Prisoners themselves regulate others meaning that staff do not have to.

In creating the prison Supporters scheme, senior staff told me that they had not sought to pass on the responsibility for preventing suicide and self-harm to prisoners. Instead, they sought to provide a team of trusted prisoners with a framework in which they can work to make decisions and support other prisoners in times of need whilst being supported by and working closely with prison staff (Field notes, HMP Nassington, July 2011). This framework has, in practice, created prisoners who take their job seriously and who are 'responsible prisoners', able to support others, make decisions, but also gain life skills for themselves. However, this responsibility is not without cost to the Supporters themselves. As I outlined

above, the Supporters felt conflicted about their role and the freedom of their passport. Feeling pressure to tread a careful line between being responsible and doing their job and not showing too much initiative or exercising too much freedom for fear of negative consequences from staff. As I discuss in detail later in this thesis, for some prisoners, the burden of responsibility was too much, causing them emotional distress and on occasion being identified as a trigger for self-harm. For others, when responsibility was too much, they resisted authority and in turn faced negative consequences for failure to comply. Yet despite this, staff in both prisons persisted in encouraging responsibility amongst prisoners. The benefits to the prison of responsible prisoners is clear and the encouragement of responsibility and engagement with regime is without doubt self-serving for Senior Management and PCOs. Officers told me that prisoner who '*engaged*' or who were '*active in their sentence plans*' were more motivated and easier to manage (Field notes, HMP Wansford, April 2010). As one PCO put it: *"it's easier to open a dialogue if they think we're working together for something"* (PCO 18, HMP Nassington, June 2010).

Responsibility, whilst having both positive and negative effects, was an inherent part of life in both prisons. In the final sections of this chapter I look in more detail at how men felt about responsibility. What it meant to them and the component parts that together made them feel responsible. I consider those elements identified by the Supporters Case Study at HMP Nassington as being essential to being and feeling more responsible. These include: motivation, communication and team-work, staff/prisoner relationships and work/life balance. I consider each of these in turn and review where else these qualities are evident in prison life at HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington and, in turn, what these characteristics of responsibility, feelings, emotions and interactions can reveal about responsible prisoners in practice.

4.5. Elements of Responsibility: A Wider Analysis

The Supporters felt that their role came with a great degree of responsibility. Their daily employment demanded that they themselves be, and become, more responsible, for their own actions and decisions and for the care and support others. The case study highlighted that communication and team work, their relationship with staff and each other and their work/life balance were all important elements of both having responsibility, being equipped to deal with that responsibility but also feeling responsible. In this section I consider each of these elements in turn and provide examples from wider prison life at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford where these elements are evident.

i. Communication and Team Work: With each other and beyond

The Supporters identified that communication and teamwork were essential for the successful completion of their task within HMP Nassington. They were proud of their ability to communicate with each other and with staff and wanted to demonstrate to staff that they were able to work together as a team. This teamwork, however, came with inherent burdens and responsibilities. They expressed concern about *"pulling their weight"* and *"not being weak"* (Focus Group, Supporters, August 2011). They wanted to provide emotional support to each other and felt responsible for the overall service that they, as Supporters, provided within the prison. For them the responsibility of the job and providing support to other prisoners was coupled with a responsibility to their other team members to communicate effectively, to do their job as well as possible and to ensure that they were not the weak link in the team.

Similar sentiments were not uniformly apparent across the men I observed and interviewed who were not Supporters. Those in education felt little group responsibility, some

even felt little duty to themselves - merely taking education classes because *'they were forced to'* and '*it got them out of their pad'* (Field notes, March 2010). Such men were just passing the time rather than seeking to acquire new skills or better themselves through education. Singular working unit workers, such as barbers, expressed a similar sentiment, feeling a sense of pride in their own singular achievements, rather than feeling part of or responsible to a wider group. In contrast, men employed as unit cleaners expressed a duty to the group of unit cleaners and also to the wider unit community. Ollie described the sense of duty or responsibility he had to not only those he worked with but also those who lived on the unit: *"It's about respect and pride, the guys have been out unit [sic] and the landing and stuff should be okay when they get back - that's our job"* (HMP Wansford, April 2010). Unit staff encouraged this sense of responsibility for unit upkeep and pride amongst the unit based workers. PCOs would return from another unit to their home unit and comment how much cleaner or better kept it was than where they had just been.

Such friendly rivalry between units was often encouraged. Whilst I was in the field at HMP Nassington, in response to complaints from prisoners about cold food arriving to the serveries from the central kitchens and missing portions, Wing Servery Journals were introduced to each unit. Senior Officers hoped that it would provide a constructive outlet for complaints about food and encourage servery staff to take responsibility for helping to solve the problem by keeping better records of mistakes, thereby cutting the amount of time officers spent dealing with complaints about food or chasing up missing portions. When I left the field, it remained unclear to me if the journals were in fact having that desired effect. Some units were very inconsistent in filling them out and the constant complaints of missing portions or wrong meals, and the consequent demands on staff time, remained. What had happened, however, was that the journals had become a source of pride and competition

amongst the units that were filling them out consistently. Wing food representatives (reps) proudly took their journal to the monthly cross-unit meeting and reported to senior officers that they had filled them in each day: *"even when there's nothin' missing, we still record that - it's a proper record",* Glen told me (HMP Nassington, August 2011).

After the meeting I talked to the Senior Officer responsible for the journals' introduction about their effect and the informal inter-unit competition servery journal competition that they had caused:

> *They haven't quite had the desired effect, we hoped that they would make the kitchens accountable to the serveries and vice-versa and make the men understand that they all had a role to play in the smooth running of the establishment. That they'd take some pride, be more careful, more responsible. Maybe that was a little ambitious. This inter-unit rivalry though - I think it's still a good outcome - those that are doing it [filling the journal in] are taking some pride, some responsibility - but just differently - that must be interesting for you - that's what you want to know about isn't it? Maybe we should have a prize…*
>
> (SMT 4, HMP Nassington, August 2011)

The introduction of the servery journals may have failed in its initial purpose of encouraging accountability between the unit serveries and the prison kitchens, but it still managed to encourage responsibility as a by-product, in the responsibility the servers on some units had taken on to ensure the regular updating of their journal. The introduction of the initiative also demonstrates the recognition of the inherent importance of responsible prisoners for prison life. The SMT member expressed that he had hoped that the initiative would help the servery and kitchen staff to realise that *"they all had a role to play in the smooth running of the establishment"* (ibid.), clearly in itself seeking to pass responsibility onto prisoners themselves to aid and manage the smooth running of their surroundings.

A shared goal and an emphasis on teamwork and group responsibility, as well as a similar sense of inter-group competition, was also apparent in the industrial workshops at both prisons: *"We have to work together to get the job out"* (Bill, HMP Wansford, April 2010). Staff expected the men to *'pull together'* and *'work as a team'* (Field notes, HMP Wansford, Workshops, March 2010). They also expected those who had been in the job for a longer period to teach the newer recruits. This was something the men welcomed, Fletcher saying that: *"it's good to be able to help the others – it makes you feel good"* (HMP Nassington, August 2011). However, for some, like Anthony, the responsibility of teaching others provided a challenge: "*it's not a hard job to learn, but it's hard to teach - I'd rather not do it, but I have to"* (HMP Wansford, April 2010). Good communication and inter-group relationships were strongly encouraged in the workshops in both prisons. Staff commented that it improved group cohesion and interaction: *"they hold each other responsible for their output and the quality control of the units* [outside lighting units they were assembling]*"* (PCO 7, HMP Wansford, April 2010). The men expressed similar feelings about responsibility to the group: "*if we get a load rejected it hits us all – I worry that it's my stuff that was bad'"*(Bill, HMP Wansford, April 2010).

Sources of, and opportunities for, responsibility often came from novel initiatives and in unexpected ways. As I outlined in the previous chapter, senior staff in both prisons were keen to encourage and sought to create responsible and self-governing prisoners in their establishments and implemented top-down regimes and practices to encourage this. The motivation of senior staff to encourage responsible prisoners who engage with regime is clear. Responsible men whose values are aligned with those of the prison are likely to be easier to manage. However, it was not just senior staff who encouraged responsibility amongst the men and provided opportunities for them to take on responsibility or to make choices. Often more

informal initiatives implemented by units or officers in the workshops, kitchens and in education also fostered and encouraged responsibility among the men. From buddying prisoners together to support each other, both on home units and in the workshops, to involving men in the kitchens in menu costings, provided an overall sense of mutual responsibility and encouraged good relationships both between prisoners and between prisoners and staff. For the men, individual and group responsibility was an inherent part of good teamwork and vice versa. This sense of communal responsibility and teamwork was fostered by staff in both prisons, both on residential units and in the workshops. Prisoners felt that, on the whole, staff were there to help them and to work with them - that they were all part of a larger team. These relationships, how prisoners were spoken to and their sentences managed, in turn contributed to their feelings of responsibility and often encouraged a desire to manage themselves and their behaviour both for their own well-being but also that of the wider establishment.

ii. Relationships

As I discussed in Chapter 3 there was often an exchange of staff between the two prisons, with senior staff particularly from HMP Nassington being seconded to HMP Wansford. One of the consequences of this was similar attitudes across both prisons to regime, sentence management, expectations of staff and prisoners and, as a consequence, responsibility and the encouragement of it in the prisons populations.

When I first entered the field in March 2010, the Director at Nassington, was also acting Director at HMP Wansford, covering for a period of time before a new Director was appointed. In my first days in the field, whilst I was still finding my feet, he regularly pointed out to me differences between what I was seeing at HMP Wansford and what I might expect

to see at HMP Nassington. Differences in provision and regime, rate of admission of prisoners and changes to population. Such differences were only to be expected given the difference in the population and purpose of the two prisons, with HMP Wansford being a training prison and HMP Nassington a local prison. Yet, he also told me that his aim was that the experience of the men in the two prisons was the same. For him, all prisoners should be treated with respect, given opportunities to be their best and to make the most of their sentence (Acting Director, HMP Wansford, March 2010).[168] He and his Senior Managers had high expectations of themselves and of their staff, but also of the prisoners in the establishment.

One Senior Manager I asked about engagement with the regime and the high expectations he and prison staff had of prisoners, told me:

> Y*ou assume that all the men here always feel like people. Many have had troubled and difficult lives on the outside and experiences you and I could never begin to imagine or understand. They can't trust, they're used to being let down. Before we can ask them to be proactive, to be responsible as you put it, we need to help them to understand that they can trust others, build relationships. We have to provide consistency. They need to understand where the boundaries are, what happens when they cross them and trust that we will be consistent in our response when boundaries are crossed and rules are broken. Once they realise that we're consistent, they know where they stand and they can start to build relationships and make some positive choices about how they want to spend their time at Wansford.* (SMT 1, HMP Wansford, April 2010)

Consistency and a dialogue of respect was certainly encouraged in both prisons. Staff often worked hard to build relationships with prisoners, to understand their needs and to encourage them as much as possible. Often, staff assisted with simple things, like taking a moment to

[168] A similar sentiment was echoed by the new Director of HMP Wansford appointed to the vacancy, when I interviewed him in July 2011.

help with reading a letter from home or finding them a brew pack[169] when there was a mistake in the canteen[170] order. Kip put it more simply: *"they talk to you nice and stuff"* (HMP Nassington, April 2010). Being spoken to nicely and treated with respect, mirrors Clare McClean and Alison Liebling's findings that often prisoners in private prisons report being treated with greater respect by staff than those in public sector prisons (2008). I was on units in both prisons when men were told quietly by staff:*"don't do that - you're better than that",* (Field notes) when they began to misbehave or high jinks went too far. Staff encouraged men, through their relationships with them and by example, to take more responsibility for themselves, to think about their actions and to consider wider implications. Rich describes it simply as: "*being treated more like a person"* (HMP Wansford, May 2011) and that, in a nutshell, is exactly the environment and relationships that were fostered by staff in both prisons. From the moment men came into admissions, when they were addressed as 'Mr' and offered a cup of tea, right through induction and then on to unit and work life they were treated with respect and as individuals by (almost all) staff. This, in turn, created reciprocal expectations between staff and prisoners, which fostered in the prisoners a sense of personal and wider responsibility: a sense that the men were themselves culpable for their behaviour, good or bad. Staff in turn were able to govern in a muted fashion, not through exerting overt power or threats to '*write them up*', but instead by what Ben Crewe (2009, 2011a) terms 'soft' power, expressing disappointment at bad behaviour and hope for better choices moving

[169] Prison term for a bag containing teabags, sugar and long-life milk cartons. These are usually given to prisoners on admission to tide them over until a canteen order can be processed and prison accounts set up. A similar term is 'burn pack' which refers to loose leaf tobacco and cigarette papers given at admission to prisoners who are smokers.

[170] Prison term for the weekly (twice weekly for some IEP levels) orders from the prison shop. Items which could be bought included toiletries, long life food items to supplement meals and tobacco. The canteen provision in both prisons was outsourced to Aramark and orders packed by prisoners on site for distribution to the units.

forwards.[171] Men expressed that they *"did not want to let* [their PO] *down"* (Field notes, HMP Wansford, April 2010). It was as if, once they had been shown trust and consistency, many men recognised that they, too, had to invest in the relationship, through their good behaviour, in order for it to continue. Men taking on responsibility for their behaviour to ensure that the good relationship with staff was maintained and support from them continued.

Staff were able to use their relationships with prisoners and 'soft' expressions of power to encourage responsibility, whether for actions or misbehaviour. In the same way as the Supporters felt a responsibility to the Suicide Prevention Co-Ordinator and her team because of the strength of the relationship they had with her, so too, did prisoners on wings and in workshops feel a responsibility to staff with whom they had a good relationship. That is not to say that all staff were liked or indeed had good relationships with prisoners. One PCO at HMP Nassington in particular was referred to by name in a number of prisoner interviews as being disliked and unreasonable. Shafiq went so far as to say *"I fuckin' hate him"* (HMP Nassington, July 2011). I interviewed this PCO in August 2011 and many of his observations and comments were contrary to what I had heard both as expectations of staff from Senior Managers and from other PCOs. He stated that the men on his unit *"just had to do what he said"*. He also told me that *"I was wasting my time trying to find responsible prisoners... they can't be responsible"* (PCO 37, HMP Nassington, August 2011). Observing him at work, I saw that he made little effort to foster relationships with the men on his unit, instead sitting in the office, or when he was on the observation console barking at any man who came towards him to ask a question. This was reflected in the way prisoners dealt with him. They were often

[171] On 'soft' power in prison see Crewe (2009) and (2011b). Ben Crewe also uses the metaphor of 'tightness' to explain how power is experienced in prison: 'power is experienced as both firm and soft, oppressive yet also somehow light. It does not so much weigh down on prisoners and suppress them as wrap them up, smother them and incite them to conduct themselves in particular ways' (2011b: 522).

rude, flippant or simply ignored him. It was interesting to see how the men reacted so differently to a PCO who did not treat them with respect or employ 'soft' power and whose work style was contrary to the wider staff of the prison. In contrast to PCOs who treated them with care and respect and whom they *'did not want to let down'* (Field notes, HMP Nassington, August 2011), a number of the men showed an almost total disregard for this officer and behaved accordingly expressing that *'he would write them up anyway'* (Field notes, HMP Nassington, July 2011) so their behaviour was irrelevant.

Good relationships between staff and prisoners and a dialogue of expectations and team-work across the wider prison establishment helped to foster men who took on responsibility for their actions and who felt responsible. So, too, did a drive by Senior Managers and prison staff to create as 'normal' an environment as possible inside both prisons. Prison life reflecting life in the outside community was also the aim at HMP Nassington and senior staff and PCOs at both prisons worked hard though the prison regime to provide opportunities for the men to experience as 'normal' a life as possible whilst they were in prison. This 'normalisation', particularly the emphasis on a working day and a separate home or unit life, in turn, impacted on feelings of responsibility.

iii. Work/life balance across the prisons

The distinction between work and home life and a sense of normality whilst in prison was not something I had expected. Neither had I anticipated its importance for responsibility and the creation of an environment in which responsibility and responsible prisoners could be fostered and encouraged. Both staff and prisoners stressed the importance of a home life on the unit and a work life in their job or education placement and in turn a sense of normality about their day. The Supporters emphasised the importance of removing their orange uniform when they

were not at work and their duty to and responsibility for others thereby ceasing. Men in the workshops and in education liked working with peers from other units and then going home to their own unit at the end of the day. Rishi observed that: *"it's good to work with lads who aren't from my unit – it's kind of like going to work outside"* (HMP Nassington, July 2011). Many of the men I interviewed talked of the different relationships they had with men on their home units and men at work. This was particularly true of Inductors and those prisoners involved in mentoring or teaching such as those involved in 'Toe by Toe'[172] and other education[173] mentors who felt that they had work colleagues when off the unit working, but friends on their home unit.

The work/home distinction and 'normalisation' of prison life through this distinction was very much fostered by both senior and unit staff and in the general day-to-day life of the prison. In April 2010, on the initiative of CSU staff at HMP Nassington, a relatively large and unused storage room on the CSU was made into an orderlies room. Newly refurbished with soft chairs and a table, as well as a noticeboard and tea making facilities, the room provided the CSU orderlies with a break room and somewhere to be when the CSU went on to lock down. CSU staff said: "*we've tried to make it like a staff room for them – somewhere they can go on their breaks and read the paper and when we need to lock-down - it's better for them*" (PCO 9, HMP Nassington, April 2010). Staff on the CSU were keen that their orderlies had appropriate facilities and were made to feel that their work was valued. They were all keen that the men should have a space of their own, where they could get away from the

[172] 'Toe by Toe' is an education literacy programme run by The Shannon Trust. Prisoner mentors are trained to teach other prisoners basic literacy skills one on one. Once the scheme is established in a prison it can become almost independent – managed, staffed and administered by prisoners themselves with little monitoring by staff necessary. For more information see www.toe-by-toe.co.uk/prison_project.html

[173] For example at HMP Nassington mentors teach basic IT Skills on some units each evening and are available to help with education cell-based work. They are clearly identifiable by their red shirts.

sometimes pressurised and unpredictable environment of the CSU. The CSU Unit Manager likened their need for a break and space to her own: *"I need to get out of here at lunchtime and clear my head, or just take 2 minutes in the office - they* [orderlies] *need to do the same"* (UM3, HMP Nassington, April 2010). The Unit Manager recognised that the prisoners' feelings and experiences were similar to her own and, in turn, appreciated their needs.

Yet, not all prisoners at HMP Nassington welcomed attempts by staff to create a normal working day or working environment for them. A change in the working day for men employed on an industrial project inside the prison fuelled much discussion during my time at HMP Nassington in August 2011. Senior officers and industry staff were excited by the delivery of a new porta-cabin, equipped as a break room for the men employed in the metal and powder-coating workshop. The new porta-cabin provided facilities for the men to have their lunch without going back to their units, as well as serving as a break room and locker room for them. The officers thought that this was an excellent innovation, that it would bring a greater degree of normality to the men's working day and bring their day more in line with what a working day might look like when they were released. The porta-cabin also had the additional benefit that less staff were needed to organise movement between the workshop and units for this group of men and that unit staff had less men to manage over the lunch-break. The men, however, were outraged at this change to their day and working routine. Matt saying: *"They don't let us back on the wing – we have to eat here and it's sandwiches not hot food – it's not fair"* (HMP Nassington, August 2011). A senior officer commented on the same issue later the same day in August 2011 said:

> *We're asking them to do a normal working day – I can't and don't go home for lunch, you don't, my staff doesn't – it's not an unreasonable expectation of them – they need to learn that this is what life is like outside of here – they have to take ownership of their lives.* (SMT 4, HMP Nassington)

Normality and responsibility, in this light, are closely related. Prison staff sought to create a more normal working environment for this group of men through the porta-cabin provision, albeit with the added benefit to them of reduced staffing needs and efficiency. Coupled with this normality, came a demand from the prison staff that the men accept this change and take ownership of their lives. In other words, accepting that normalisation and responsibility go hand in hand.

4.6. Responsible Prisoners: A Step Too Far?

Responsibility within the prison is not a simple construct, it is multi-faceted and appears in different forms. Nor can it be viewed or evaluated in isolation. Throughout the two prisons I visited, prisoners were asked to be responsible both for themselves and their own actions and at times to be responsible for others. This responsibility was expressed and visible in many different ways, from the responsibility given to the Supporters at HMP Nassington, not only for their own free movement but for the support of others, to Inductors in the workshops charged with ensuring an order was ready to go out on time, to the wing-serveries being asked to take on responsibility for reporting back on missing or incorrect meal provision. Having responsibility, and feeling responsible, was for the men inherently linked to their wider life inside the prisons. It linked to an ethos and a wider demand from senior staff, which filtered down, for prisoners to take ownership of their actions and behaviour and in turn their sentence and eventually their life outside. This ethos, fostered through the encouragement of good relationships between staff and prisoners, clear expectations and team work, as well as an emphasis on normalisation of the prison day often helped to improve the mens self-esteem.

Officers encouraged men to take 'ownership' of their actions and to recognise the impact of their behaviour on the wider community, whether on a home unit or in an industrial workshop, encouraging them to assist in the creation of a cohesive environment across the wider prison establishment.

In both prisons, those men who showed promise and dedication, who communicated well with staff and other prisoners, were quick to work their way through the ranks to gain positions of trust and responsibility. This was actively encouraged by staff at all levels across the prisons. Yet staff, without exception, took for granted that this responsibility was both desired by the prisoner and would have a positive impact. Jon, whom I met at HMP Wansford in March 2010 during one of my first visits, was not only a great example of this progression to a position of increased and indeed growing trust and responsibility, but also of someone who had reservations about being asked to work so hard on his own reform. Serving an eight year sentence, he was at the time of interview[174] employed as the Inductor on a computer recycling project and had recently passed a number of Microsoft certified exams related to his work which he had had to fund himself. The workshop staff were proud of him and his achievements. Staff admitted that he now had more technical knowledge in some areas then they had and that he was therefore taking on more and more responsibility for the organisation and administration of the team and how its work was managed. Jon welcomed this recognition of his qualifications and was initially quite brash about his achievements and the increased duties that had followed. Yet, when I interviewed him away from the rest of his team he expressed some concerns about the increased responsibility he was being given:

[174] When I returned to HMP Wansford in 2011, Jon, was still in residence but no longer an Inductor in the workshops, having been moved to the Vulnerable Prisoner Unit because details of his offences had become known to others in the prison population.

> *Don't get me wrong – it's great – I like the work but I don't like to have to teach the others or to make decisions, but it's expected of me. Sometimes I worry about not getting it right. What happens then?* (HMP Wansford, March 2010)

The better he performed, the more trust and responsibility Jon was given, a policy that, he worried, put him at risk. His greatest concern, as the interview text above suggests, was that he was increasingly being held responsible for the behaviour of some members of his team:

> *Just as I think I'm on top of it – they* [officers] *give me more – they pulled me up last week because the lads were larking about – but it's not my job to stop that.* (HMP Wansford, April 2010)

Jon was being asked to not only be responsible for the work and output of the men in his team but also increasingly to be responsible for maintaining order, something which he felt was a step too far and a burden that was too much. When I asked him whether he had discussed his concerns with officers in the workshop, it became clear not only that he had not, but also that Jon had no plans to do so. Labelled a dependable worker, he was loath to raise a fuss, for fear both that he might be sacked from his job and that he would be ridiculed by his workmates.

I interviewed other Inductors at both prisons and none expressed such sentiments as strongly as Jon. Some acknowledged a certain pressure in taking responsibility for the output, complaining that, at times, meeting the targets was difficult. Nobody other than Jon had been asked to take on responsibility for maintaining order, and most said that it would be something which they would be uncomfortable with doing. The worry of taking on responsibility for others was, however, echoed in interviews with education mentors and with the Supporters. A number of the men spoke of their jobs as a burden particularly, when the role concerned for the the well-being or behaviour of others. The Supporters felt that

managing their passport and the pressure to not move around too much but still do their job could at times become a burden that was too much to bear: *"sometimes it's hard - you have to think all the time - about yourself - about others - some days I think I can't do this tomorrow"* (Tim, HMP Nassington, July 2011).

Other men expressed concern that in being a trusted prisoner, leading a team in the workshop or being a Supporter, they were alienating themselves from fellow prisoners because they shared similar concerns or pressures to those of staff. Sharing values and expectations that aligned them more with staff than with their fellow inmates: *"I have to worry that we meet the deadline, so does Alan* [Workshop Manager], *the lads they don't care so much. It's just a job to them"* (Rob, HMP Wansford, April 2010). Simon was worried that being a Supporter made other prisoners think he might *"be a grass[175]"* because *"I tell them they have to do their time and make the most of it - not get depressed and shut yourself away. I believe that that's right - it's the only way to get through a stretch but sometimes I sound like a PCO"* (HMP Nassington, July 2011). Davey, a Supporter, found himself sympathising with staff:

> *It's really frustrating. Night after night he* [a prisoner being supported by the Supporters] *cuts up. He says that he won't. He doesn't do it in the Care Suite but then he says he's okay the next night, that he doesn't need a Supporter or the Care Suite. Then he goes back to his pad and cuts up. It's such a mess, he makes so much work for us, for the officers, for Julie* [Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator]. *So much extra work - it's selfish - other lads need help, too. I can see why staff get pissed off with him.*
>
> (HMP Nassington, July 2011)

[175] Colloquial term for being an informer or source of information to staff.

Some prisoners who accepted and engaged with the regime felt that this alienated them from other prisoners: "*they call me a nonce*[176]*"* Yaqoob told me; *"I'm not. I'm in for Class A. It's because I'm doing education, trying to get better and learn something. They* [other prisoners] *think that means I'm weak"* (HMP Wansford, April 2010). Xavi worried about competing pressures to behave like the regime and officers demanded but also wanted to fit in with other men on the unit:

> *I have to watch my back. I like an easy life so I go to work, don't cause a hassle, do what they* [officers] *want, but sometimes you have to kick-off. Push about a bit - show you're not under their thumb - if not the other lads think you're weak and I don't need that.*
>
> (HMP Nassington, April 2010)

Such anxieties raise important questions about the growing practice of staff actively encouraging prisoners to take on responsibility for both themselves and others. Is there a point when such demands can become too much? How much responsibility is too much? How ethical is it for a prison to ask prisoners to be obliged to maintain order or offer the care and education of other prisoners?

Such questions are not isolated to private prisons, nor indeed to prisons in England and Wales. Recently documented widely by the American media (see for example ABC News, 2013 and NCR, 2012), prisoners in the United States are being trained and employed to work inside prison hospices. The programmes which started from a need to provide safe and compassionate palliative care in Angola State Penitentiary in Louisiana have now spread more widely (albeit slowly) to other prisons in the United States.[177] Like many prison hospice

[176] 'Nonce' is widely used prison slang, used to refer to sex offenders, particularly those men convicted of offences against children.

[177] On prison hospices and prisoners working inside them to care for other prisoners see also Cloyes et al. (2013); Lunn (2005) and Wright and Bronstein (2007).

programmes, Angola State Penitentiary's programme heavily relies on prisoner volunteers, rather than conscripts. Each year, 16 prisoners are selected from an applicant pool and receive extensive training before beginning their work:

> With the volunteers, particular emphasis is given to the complex emotions associated with death. Not only do the volunteers have an important impact on the lives of hospice patients, but it also provides them with important opportunities to reflect on their own lives and thus appears to have an important therapeutic impact on them.
>
> (Osofsky et al., 2004)

A study published by Angola prison found that 'the prisoner volunteer involvement has a ripple effect resulting in empowerment and positive actions' (Angola, 2011, web source), and that the staff noticed a change in the offender volunteer as he gives of himself to another person. Angola State Penitentiary is keen to emphasise the positive outcomes of prisoners providing palliative hospice care to others and the wider benefits that it brings to the prison as a whole:

> The tremendous amount that the prisoner volunteer appears to gain through participation on the interdisciplinary team and through providing service to a dying prisoner is matched only by what the dying person receives and by the impact of prison hospice on the culture of the prison as a whole.
>
> (Angola, 2011, web source)

Senior and unit staff at both HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington expressed similar views about the programmes in their own establishments. They seemed largely unaware of any negative effects of responsibility, unconcerned that such demands could become too much for some men. There was little or no reference to any negative consequences of passing on responsibility to prisoners and asking them to care for or manage others.

In the next Chapter I consider the impact and effect of responsibility on the men at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford and on their experience of prison life. Does the burden of caring for and supporting others in the case of the Supporters, or taking responsibility for outside work contracts and the training of others like Inductors really always benefit prisoners? What is the overall effect of responsibility on prisoners? Do they take responsibility for their own actions? Are they able to self-govern, or is the burden of responsibility at times too much? Might it cause wider problems for the prison community and for the men themselves?

Chapter Five

When Responsibility is Too Much

> *I came here because I fucked up, I fucked up bad. Does that not tell them* [meaning PCOs] *that I make shit choices? I don't want to think, choose - have choices, make decisions. Talk to them. I want to do my time, keep quiet; be left alone.*
>
> (Don, HMP Nassington, April 2010)

> *We expect prisoners to behave well. It is not difficult. They need to be able to know when they've overstepped the mark, respect the rules and not push the boundaries. They need to be active, be busy, go to work. Prisoners who are bored, who do not engage with the regime, they cause trouble.*
>
> (SMT 5 HMP Wansford, June 2011)

> *They just have to think that I'm doing what they want that's all. In my head I can do what* ***I*** *want. On the outside I just have to show them what they want, comply, go to work and all that stuff. That gets them off my back. It doesn't always work. Sometimes they* [meaning staff] *push me too far - I kick off - I end up on Basic.*
>
> (Ryan, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

In the previous two chapters I considered life inside HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford and showed how responsibility is encouraged and fostered inside the prison walls. Much of what I have described has been positive: prison staff offering opportunities for personal development and choices; men actively responding to challenges to participate, taking on responsibilities in the prison workshops, keen to fill in servery journals and engage with the regime. Others went further, caring and supporting other prisoners in their role as Supporters or working as Inductors to lead teams and pass on skills. However, not everything I saw and heard about responsibility and its emphasis at HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington was good. Not all men responded positively to demands for responsibility, engagement and self-management, nor were they able to manage the expectations of staff that they become responsible for themselves, culpable for their behaviour and for their sentence. There were occasions when responsibility and demands for self-monitoring were simply too much.

In this chapter I consider what happens when men cannot manage or refuse to engage with the expectations that both prisons asked of them. I consider how men responded when demands for responsibility were too much as well as the consequences that this inability or refusal to align themselves with the values of the prison had for them and for the wider prison. I argue that in encouraging responsibility amongst prisoners and providing them with choices, prisons are not, in fact, handing over power to the men themselves. The prison remains powerful, jealously guarding its control and its carceral power. However, in encouraging engagement with the regime, by asking prisoners to align their values with the prison itself, the prison is able to exercise its power more softly. Power is exercised not through direct order or force, but through communication of values and expectations, as prisoners are asked to become responsible men who govern themselves and make choices about their sentence and their wider life. However, when men refuse to make these choices or are unable to govern their lives, the prison no longer governs softly, demonstrating that its carceral force has only been temporarily cloaked in softness. I also consider wider positive and negative aspects of responsibility, considering what feeling responsible (or not) means for individual self-esteem and how being able or unable to manage their sentence and the demands for engagement from the prison influenced how the men viewed themselves.

5.1. Responding to Responsibility

It is clear from my interactions with men in both prisons that many relished the opportunities that an environment where responsibility and initiative were encouraged provided. However, as I have already mentioned, this was certainly not the case for every man I met. Many struggled to take on responsibility, to become responsible for themselves and to moderate their own behaviour. Some found it hard to engage with the regime, Ed saying:

> *I don't understand what they* [officers] *want from me. I'm here - I can't go anywhere. Just let me do my time. Keep quiet, out of trouble. I don't want to participate. Do the bloody courses - I don't need them. I need to keep out of trouble and get out. I can plan my life then, I can't think about the outside when I'm in here - it's too depressing - I remember what I'm missing out on.*
>
> (HMP Nassington, July 2011)

For many the expectation of participation, the emphasis on responsibility and requirement of involvement was unwelcome. Instead, they wanted to pass their sentence quietly without engaging with the regime or taking on responsibility for themselves or for their sentence. As Brian put it: *"I just want to do my prison* [meaning serve my sentence]. *I don't want all of this shit. Tell me what to do and I'll do it"* (HMP Wansford, May 2011). However, the desire to '*keep your head down'* and just pass the time was often interpreted by staff as a refusal to engage or to participate and, in turn, to take on responsibility. Docility was not an option, proactivity was demanded. Men who refused to engage were written up for non-compliance or passed over for opportunities that might benefit them or advancement through IEP. Staff told me that it was not their responsibility to manage the lives and sentences of offenders for them (Field notes). Men needed to make choices for themselves and to work with the system:

> *They can choose. They work with us, with the regime or against us. There are rules. We're not out to get them, but they have to see that actions have consequences. Positive actions have positive consequences. Make bad choices and the consequences are negative - that's fair - that's what life is like - it's the real world - they have to understand that - that's how the world works. I want the best for all the guys but I can't mother them, that's not my job.*
>
> (UM 6, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

As they became pressured to consider and monitor their behaviour, to take responsibility for their actions and to face consequences if they did not, prisoners worried about their inability to do so. They expressed concern that they could not and were not able to make the right choices or to manage their lives, Ule saying: *"I'm not known for making good decisions - ask anyone. But I have to in here - all the time I have to think about what I'm doing because its my fault if I screw up"* (HMP Nassington, April 2010). Men were aware of their behaviour and their actions, hyper-vigilant, concerned how what they did and said and how they behaved might be viewed by staff, displaying many of the characteristics of docile bodies that Foucault describes in *Discipline and Punish* (1975).[178] [179] Prisoners self-monitored, worried that they would get something wrong and be considered by staff to be not complying or refusing to engage. This worry and concern about self-monitoring itself created an additional burden, as Stefan explained:

> *I can't get it right. I keep my head down and don't socialise on the wing. They say I'm refusing to engage, not building relationships, not making the best of being here, not taking opportunities. I socialise, fool around, they write me up. I don't know what they want. I just want to keep my head down, my nose clean and get out.*
>
> (HMP Nassington, August 2011)

[178] See also Foucault (2000).

[179] For analysis of Foucault and consideration of the importance of the self and the body see Gordon (1999), Ransom (1997) and Sawicki (1991).

Luis concurred, describing his sense of anxiety over his behaviour: *"I have to think all the time. It's this constant worry. How will they* [PCOs] *think about that? Is my behaviour okay? Is this what they want from me? It's too much"* (HMP Wansford, April 2010). PCOs were often dismissive when I asked them if the men felt under pressure or were worried about the expectations of them. In the words of one, for the men, matters were simple: *"they should feel under pressure, they need to behave. It's not much to ask"* (PCO 20, HMP Nassington, July 2011). For another, "*it* [engaging with regime] *was simple. It's a basic life skill, it's in their best interests. You have to live by society's rules and they have to live by the rules here. It's designed to help them, not worry them*" (PCO 35, HMP Nassington, July 2011).

Senior staff, too, expected prisoners to be proactive. At all levels officers often seemed unrelenting in their demands for engagement with the regime by prisoners. These demands were, however, communicated quietly, not through harsh missives or barked orders but softly, framed in terms of expectations and goals. Prisoners were told that staff were: '*working with them to improve their future*' and were there to '*keep them safe and ensure they made the most of their time in the prison'* (Field notes). Nonetheless, there were clear consequences for those who refused. Engagement with the prison regime and, in turn, responsibility for or 'ownership' over actions and sentence planning were not optional but required:

> PCO 27*: They have to take part. They have to be involved in life on the unit and when they're at work.*
> SP*: Involved how? Why is that important for you?*
> PCO 27*: That's how it works here. It's what we do.*
> SP*: But what if men can't or won't - what if they can't manage to be responsible for themselves or their sentence planning? What do you do then?*
> PCO 27*: It's not optional, they have to be involved. We give them choices. The more involved they are, the more choices they have, but they all have choices.*
> SP*: And what if they can't make them or make the wrong ones?*

> PCO 27*: That's their problem. They make the wrong choice - they have to deal with it. That's life. They won't progress through their sentence. They won't get the best from being here. We can only do so much for them.*
>
> (PCO 27, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

Many men, however, expressed concern about managing the relative freedom they had to make choices and to be involved in planning their sentence and were concerned about making the wrong choice:

> *I like being told what to do, being organised. It's the best thing about a long stretch - not having to think too much, just let the days pass - you know, count them down to HDC, but this time it's end date for me I think. No, I just want to do my time - without any hassle. I can't do that here, they* [PCOs] *won't let me: I have to be involved or I get hassled. They won't tell me what I have to do, I have to decide for myself. How does that help me? I don't want to think, to make decisions. I hate it. I don't want to have to be responsible. I don't want to think - it makes the days pass slower.* (David, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

David was not alone in not wanting to make choices or '*to think*'. "*I want to sleep my time away*", Dante admitted,

> [but] - *they won't let me. They make me have a job or do education. If I don't they write me up or I don't get paid. How am I supposed to know what I want to do? I don't know nothin' but prison and young offenders. It's what I know. I can't plan for anything else and I don't want to plan while I'm here. Just do my time, get out and see my mates. Nothin' changes.* (HMP Nassington, April 2010)

Some men excoriated the PCOs for inconsistency. They could not understand what officers actually wanted from them. "*They say I have to be active, to take part",* Huw scoffed. "*What does that mean. That I should go to work? I did that, they said that wasn't enough. I needed to be better. What does that mean? What's better?"* (HMP Nassington, July 2011). Others, like Deuce, thought staff were deliberately setting them up to fail:

> *The smile doesn't reach their eyes. They pretend they're your mate, like we're all pals, but of course they're not. They're waiting for you to screw up. Giving you the 'freedom' to screw up - make a mistake - then they pounce on you - write you up - put you on Basic. It's all about choices, working together, until you don't make the choices they want. Then you've had it. They've got you.*
>
> (HMP Nassington, July 2011)

Others, willing to engage with staff and wanting to make plans for their sentence and choose courses, expressed frustration when they were then not able to get a place on the course they had chosen, blaming PCOs for lying to them or letting them down:

> *They told me I needed to do courses, to work through the list. I had to show willing, so I did. I applied for a course, a thinking behaviour thing, CB something, I think - it's one I need, my sentence plan says so - I have to do courses. Then they* [prison staff] *said I couldn't do it, that I wasn't bad enough. I didn't have the attributes - what does that even mean? What's not bad enough? I'm in prison what else do I have to do? I want to do a course. It's their fault - they lie.*
>
> (Jake, HMP Nassington, April 2010)

Many men who did engage with the regime and who on the face of it appeared to be proactive, taking on responsibility and making (good) choices about how they spent their time in prison felt coerced. They complied with the regime and engaged in the way that staff demanded, simply to have a quiet life:

> *You have to talk to them about what you want, what you hope for the future. What your plans are for when you're out. I don't want to plan my life, my sentence, my future or my time here, but they hassle me - say I have to think about it - make decisions. It's easier to give them some cock and bull story. Let them think I'm making plans. I don't care.* (Nils, HMP Nassington, April 2010)

By appearing to comply and engage, Gordie felt he was beating the system: *"I do what they want me to do. It makes my life easier,"* he said, *"I don't have to believe any of it. I just have to do it, then I can go back to my pad and do as I like"* (HMP Wansford, April 2010). In this,

Gordie mirrors what Ben Crewe charts in his work at HMP Wellingborough where he found prisoners 'feigned compliance' (2007: 272) with regime. For Filza pretending to comply and engage with regime made him feel powerful, that he was *"getting one over on the PCOs"* (HMP Nassington, August 2011).

However, not all men were well-equipped to manage or respond to demands of responsibility. Many did not seek to beat the system but instead felt helpless to respond to it. This helplessness manifested itself in many forms, from refusals to engage with the regime, violence to others, disruption and on occasion self harm. In the next section, I consider what happens when responsibility goes wrong. How do those unable to take on and manage the responsibility and engagement demanded by the prison cope? Despite all the benefits of responsibility to some men that I outlined in the previous chapters, are there times when requiring prisoners to be responsible causes harm, distress and pain?

5.2. When Responsibility 'Goes' Wrong: Burdens, Pain and Resistance

During a week in late July 2011, I spent an unusual amount of time on the CSU at HMP Nassington, largely because of a prisoner who had serious mental health problems awaiting transfer to a suitable secure unit. In the short term he was being housed on the CSU. The individual was spitting at staff both through the grill in the door and when the door was opened, he had also thrown warm water[180] through the grill into the face of a PCO during one of the mandatory 15 minute checks. This one prisoner was putting a huge amount of strain on the healthcare staff, the RMN team and on staff in the CSU. Consequently the IMB visited daily and as I was accompanying them, I went as well. I was actively discouraged to engage

[180] I spoke to the officer concerned about the incident and he expressed relief that it was just warm water and not urine and stated that, whilst the current situation was difficult, *"there were far worse"* (PCO 40, HMP Nassington, July 2011).

with this prisoner because of his volatile and unpredictable behaviour and was certainly reluctant to do so both in terms of putting myself or others at risk but also because there could be no chance of informed consent. So I felt it prudent to take a step back.

I have to admit to being frustrated by the length of time I was having to spend on the CSU. I was in my last days in the field and keen to gather as much additional data as possible. In terms of research I thought that the CSU, whilst interesting, provided little opportunity to interact with staff or prisoners. Most men are locked behind their doors. Those who are housed on the CSU while waiting for space on a VP wing have more freedom, but are often on a VP unit for socialisation, therefore not around on the CSU to talk to. Staff are busy, and in the circumstances in late July 2011, had their hands full with the disruptive prisoner. I spent a number of mornings hanging around on the CSU. I spoke to a few men through their doors but found it difficult to build any sort of rapport with them with a metal door between us and when I could only really see their eyes if they were close to me or we had to shout to each other if they were further into their cell. Instead, as is often the case with prison research, I sat and waited (Bosworth, 1999, 2014), and chatted with the orderlies as they went about their jobs on the unit. It was while waiting on the CSU without any clear purpose and drinking coffee with the orderlies, that I met Harry. I had heard a lot about him in SMARG Meetings and CSU Reviews and knew that he was straining staff resources on the CSU, in addition, to the mentally ill prisoner I mentioned above. Harry was on constant watch, with a PCO stationed outside his open cell door.

A prolific self-harmer Harry had made regular attempts to take his life. I did not seek to interview him, nor even particularly to engage with him in any way, concerned that any

interaction might upset what staff described as a very difficult and tense situation. Yet he sought me out. After gaining permission from the officer watching him,[181] he came over and sat with a group of orderlies and PCOs with whom I was chatting.

Harry revealed, viscerally, the negative consequences of demands for responsibility. Described by staff as a '*poor coper'* who struggled with prison life (Field notes), Harry was certainly not alone in struggling with prison life. The inability of some prisoners, both male and female, to cope with the 'pains of imprisonment' is well documented (Crighton, 2006; Liebling, 1992; Hannah-Moffat, 2001, 2005; Snow, 2006, Power et al., 2003; Towl et al. 2002). It often expresses itself in bouts of self-harm or attempted suicide. Harry chose self-harm. One of the orderlies, Ian,[182] who was far braver than I in broaching the subject, asked Harry directly why he self-harmed. I was surprised by Harry's willingness to talk and also his frankness:[183]

Ian: *Why do you do that to yourself?*
Harry: *What?*
Ian: *Don't be a muppet - cut yourself - why?*
Harry: *It makes me feel better.*
Ian: *What? It has to hurt.*
Harry: *I'm frustrated. I feel lost - being in here.*
Ian: *We're all in here.*
Harry: *Yeah, I know but I can't do it.*
Ian: *Do what - prison?*
Harry: *Yeah, it screws me up.*

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[181] I was later told that usually, on the CSU, Harry would not have been permitted to leave his cell on request. However, because of the additional stress and break in regime and routine caused by the mentally ill prisoner then being housed on the CSU, Harry was permitted a small deviation from the normal rules in place and allowed to come over and talk to me.

[182] I later asked Ian why he had been so keen to ask Harry about his self-harm. He said that he wanted to understand better. The orderlies saw the demands that Harry placed on staff, the mess he made both of his cell and of himself when he did self-harm, and he wanted to understand what would drive someone to be so desperate. He told me that self-harm was common on the units but that in his ten years in prison he never seen a prisoner so determined to hurt himself as Harry was.

[183] This conversation actually took much longer than I have outlined in the text extract. For succinctness I have cut out many of the additional questions Ian and others asked to pad out and develop the conversation, so what I set out above paraphrases the main content of the conversation rather than providing a word for word account.

Ian: *What does?*
Harry: *The PCOs - they talk at me. Tell me I have to change and I can't.*
Ian: *I don't understand - what do you mean?*
Harry: *That I have to stop being bad. I can't stop being bad. They told me that's my choice, but I can't stop doing bad things and when I can't stop I feel helpless. Cutting…it helps. It makes me feel better: takes the pressure away. It makes them* [PCOs] *watch me, too. I can't do bad things or cut with them around.*

(Ian and Harry, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

Throughout the conversation Harry emphasised how lost he felt. The staff, he perceived, were not there to help him. Instead they put pressure on him to make choices and to change. In encouraging Harry to engage with regime and to take on some responsibility and make choices that he felt unable to make, staff left him, he said, feeling helpless and lost. This helplessness, he continued, contributed to his need or desire to self-harm. Other prisoners, too, struggled to cope with or manage the requests from staff for proactivity and responsibility. I met a number of men who expressed feelings of helplessness because they felt they were unable to manage the responsibility and pro-activity demanded of them. *"I can't manage it, all these choices,"* Goa complained. "*This shit about looking after my sentence. I can't do it. It makes me feel like shit - like I'm a failure. Everyone else can do it - why can't I?"* (HMP Nassington, April 2010). Arthur expressed that he had too many choices, which made him feel pressured: *"Every time I see my PO he makes another suggestion of something I can do. I don't want it, I don't want suggestions or help or options. I want to be home. He don't* [sic] *tell me how to do that - that's all I want"* (HMP Wansford, May 2011).

It was not just those men who felt unable to cope with responsibility who self-harmed. Others, frustrated at themselves for their docility and self-restraint and the way they had been co-opted into compliance with the prison's ideals, expressed their anger against themselves by harming themselves or their property - trashing their cell or destroying their belongings. 'For

these prisoners, then, frustrated by their own submission and self-restraint, resentment was expressed against the self as well as the institution' (Crewe: 2007: 269). One of the characteristics of the dialogue and emphasis on engagement and teamwork that staff fostered in both prisons was that there was no single body or person in the prison wielding power. Even the Director at HMP Nassington spoke in terms of the wider prison community and working together. Prisoners who were frustrated with the institution found it difficult to identify a power or a person against whom to rebel or express their frustration. Without a body against which to express their frustration men took their feelings out on themselves and their property:

> *I smashed up my cell. It felt good. Like I'd got control. No one telling me what I had to do. I could get angry, not have to think about it. Shut the door and smash the TV - it felt so good, Miss. I'd do it again but, shit, Basic is tough. I don't want that again but, shit, it felt good to smash it up.*
>
> (Roger, HMP Nassington, August 2011)

Tally went further in expressing his frustrations, using the language of the prison to frame his argument: *"They say I have choices. Well, I've exercised that choice. I've flooded my pad. It's my pad, I can do what I want - they told me that - it's my fucking sentence"* (HMP Nassington, March 2010). For Effie, the very act of damaging property or being violent removed the pressure of responsibility pushed on him by the prison:[184]

> *They tell me I can do it. That I have to do it. Be responsible for myself, behave. Make sure I'm okay. Well I can't. They don't listen. I can't make them listen. they talk at me not to me. The PCOs, they're like clones. They all say the same thing. I have to behave myself, be good, it's what **I** have to do. Well I won't and I don't. I smash my pad or I get in a fight. They won't listen so I have to show them I can't behave, be trusted. A fight does that. I kick off. Then they put me on Basic. I have to behave then, but they don't preach at me like they do the rest of the time. They*

[184] See McEvoy (2001) who charts the tactics of paramilitary prisoners in confronting and resisting prison regime. Their methods included evasion and refusal.

> *think they're punishing me. Putting me on Basic, taking my telly and my canteen. They're not - it's a break. I get away from it - all the noise, the hassle. They tell me what to do. I do it.* (HMP Nassington, June 2010)

Many, like Effie, were skeptical of responsibility and choices even being offered to them, questioning the motives of staff and pointing out that they were in prison for making bad choices.[185] Such men wanted to know why staff thought that they should be trusted with any decision:

> *How do I know what would help me? They're the experts. I'm just a prisoner, like all the others. The judge sent me here. They have to sort my sentence, my time, what I have to do. Not me. Why would they trust me with that - I don't. I don't need the hassle of that.*
>
> (Usain, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

This nihilism and mistrust led some to refuse to participate. Ken was clear: "*I don't want choices. It's too risky, too uncertain. Officers, they're waiting for us to make a bad choice, a mistake, so they can get us, catch us out. I don't fall for that. I've been in here too long. I'd rather be written up or on Basic than do what they want* (HMP Nassington, June 2010). Others raised questions about the motives of the prison officers: "*Why would they give us options? What's in it for them?",* Kyle wanted to know. (HMP Wansford, April 2010). Dean saw clear motive on the part of prison officers:

> *They want it to be our fault - don't they? When we get it wrong, then they can turn 'round and say it's our fault. That we did it. That way they don't get into trouble with the bosses, they don't have to worry. They can sit in the office and just say "he wanted to do that. It's not my fault - he didn't get it right. Keeps their nose clean, don't it?* (HMP Nassington, June 2010)

[185] See Drake (2014) who argues that for there to be compliance in prison there must also be trust.

Stuart, aged 76, was the oldest prisoner I interviewed. He, too, was skeptical of staff motives. A prolific thief and conman he had been in out of prison for almost all of his adult life:

> Stuart: *I first went to prison when I was 19, just a boy. Prisons were different, not like they are now. I'm 76 now…*
> SP: *How many prisons have you served time in then?*
> Stuart: *I dunno. I've lost count. I've moved around. Different sentences, different prisons. This is the worst.*
> SP: *You mean Nassington?*
> Stuart: *Yeah. I hate it here but they won't transfer me…Because I'm old…*
> SP: *Why don't you like it here? What's different?*
> Stuart: *Maybe it's not the worst, it's not the prison as such, that's ok - as they go. It's the way of doing things.*
> SP: *What do you mean?*
> Stuart: *All this nicely, nicely, 'Mr', 'We're working together' ,'I'm your mate' crap. The screws - they act like you have choices, but you don't. It's no different to how it ever was. You have to do what* ***they*** *want. You have to be compliant. If you don't comply, they write you up, they just do it smiling and being polite rather than telling you that 'you're a dick-head and looking for a fight'.*
>
> (HMP Nassington, July 2011)

In this conversation Stuart suggests that prison life has not actually changed that much, that the dialogue with prison staff, the language of choices and responsibilities is in fact a smoke-screen which disguises governing and exercises of power by prison staff. Baz, who had served time in more than 20 prisons told me that, whilst prison staff today talk of responsibility, choices and engagement with the regime, for prisoners nothing had really changed[186], the historic demands of the prison remained the same:

> *Nothing's changed. It's all still the same. Same screws, same rules, same sentence, same crap food. Now they have to speak to you nicely. Talk to you about values and teamwork, options, choices. This 'all in it together stuff' that they obsess*

[186] Both long term prisoners, Baz and Stuart demonstrated what Ben Crewe (2006) describes: that often long term prisoners are particularly astute at charting and describing changes in penal regime and management style and categorising and characterising the significant changes and, in turn, their impact for prisoners themselves.

> *about. They don't mean that. While before they'd have clipped you round the ear and marked your card, now they sit in the office on the sly and just wait for you to slip up. Then they're on you - you never know when it's going to be but it's like a ton of bricks.*
>
> (HMP Wansford, May 2011)

Other prisoners told me that they did not believe that they had choices; that the choices and options for their time in prison that staff pressed on them were false, an opportunity to catch them out or watch them fail.[187] The pressure from prison staff for men to make choices was often too much, particularly for those prisoners who did not seek out or want to take on the responsibility and proactivity that the prison demanded of them.

During my time in the field many men talked to me about struggling to manage the demands placed on them to participate and be proactive. They often found demands for them to be responsible to be difficult to deal with, to comprehend and to manage. Many were often skeptical of the prison's motives for encouraging participation. Men described responsibility and choices as '*adding stress'* and '*an extra burden'* or simply '*too much'*. Even some of the men who were positive about opportunities to take on responsibility and for engagement at times found it to add pressure or worry. The Supporters, as I outlined in the previous chapter, found that their responsibility came with a burden. Jon, the Inductor, was worried by the increasing demands that came with his trusted and responsible status in the prison workshop at HMP Wansford as he was increasingly asked to reprimand his team for bad behaviour, rather than just lead their work.

What became clear to me during my time in the field, and even more visible as I was coding and analysing the data I gathered, is that managing responsibility and its relative

[187] See McDermott and King (1988).

benefits and harms can best be viewed on a spectrum. Towards one end, men like the Supporters are able to manage their responsibility and gain from it. They relish the opportunities it provides and engage with the prison regime to create a better environment both for themselves and others. However, they are mindful of the burden of their responsibility, and at times this burden can become overwhelming. Other men, like Harry, are at the other end of the spectrum: overwhelmed by even simple demands for engagement and confused by the offer of choices. This confusion manifests itself in resistance, in the form of a refusal to engage, at best, or violence to oneself or others, at worst. Another group of men fall at this end of the spectrum. These men actively refuse to engage with the regime and actively resist attempts by prison staff to co-opt them to share the values of the prison (see McEvoy, 2001). Most men fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum: able to take on some responsibility they engage proactively to some extent.

Yet, these positions on the spectrum are not fixed. Responsibility does not exist in a vacuum and prison life does not remain the same. Demands, relationships and problems both within the prison walls and outside influence an individual's ability to manage or cope with responsibility at any given time. In turn, it changes how they feel about having responsibility and being responsible or self-governing. Men move along the spectrum, their ability to cope with and manage the demands of responsibility fluctuating with the dynamics and demand of prison life. However, the demands of the prison for men to share its values, to self-govern and engage with the regime are not that flexible. They do not fluctuate. Staff expect men to engage and behave at all times. Refusals to make choices and engage are seen as defiance and resistance and punished. In demanding proactivity, engagement and self-management prison staff have a 'one size fits all' approach: a blanket expectation that failed to take into account the differences in individual abilities to cope with and manage the demands of responsibility.

5.3. An Expectation of Responsibility: Demands and Inflexibility

Despite the difficulties experienced by some prisoners in managing responsibility and their skepticism of the motives behind it, there was an overarching expectation of self-governance from prison managers and staff. Men were expected to engage positively with the regime, to be proactive and ultimately to be responsible.

The usefulness of responsible prisoners for prison staff is obvious. Men who are able to moderate their own behaviour, who govern their own actions and take responsibility for themselves and on occasion for others require less overt governing and management by the prison, in fact fulfilling the neo-liberal ideal of responsible, self-governing citizens (Dean, 1996, 1999; Foucault, 1975, 1979; Hannah-Moffat, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2005; Lemke, 2001; O'Malley, 1992, 1999, 2000; Rose, 1989, 1996; Smith, 1995). The encouragement of responsible prisoners has obvious benefits for prison operators, as Garland identifies: '[the] ultimate goal of this enterprise is to produce the self-confining, prudent individual whose behaviour is aligned with the goals of the prison authorities' (1997: 192). With responsible prisoners, staff are able to govern softly (Crewe, 2011a), exercising power lightly (Foucault, 1975) and without the exercise of that power seeming immediately oppressive. The soft exercises of power described by Ben Crewe (2009, 2011a) were visible in every-day interactions between staff and men at both prisons. The emphasis on team work between staff and prisoners, the 'we are all in it together' ideal and the expectation of staff and men working together for a better prison environment can, in fact, be seen as soft exercises of power, as a mode of governing. The prison regime governs through expectations of engagement and responsibility rather than through harsh exercises of power. However, the prison's punitive power remains in the background (Crewe, 2011b: 513). Just because men are asked to be

responsible for themselves and their sentence, to engage with regime and work with staff in the management and planning of their sentence does not mean that the prison is not exercising power, it is merely governing in a more muted fashion.

In their demands on prisoners, staff are still demonstrating their power, albeit softly, and shrouded in a cloak of choices, options, obligations and duties. They appear to be situating power with prisoners: handing over control of sentence planning and shaping prison life to the men themselves. Yet, prisons in fact jealously guard their power and control. In asking men to be responsible and to make choices they are asking men to comply with their expectations quietly, exercising their power softly. However, when men refused to engage or comply, the carceral power of the prison is unleashed. Men who refused, or were unable to take on responsibility, disappointing the expectations and demands of prison staff, feel the full force of punitiveness.

An expectation of responsibility, proactivity, of self-governing and engagement with the regime and sentence planning influenced every area of life in both prisons. From the moment men arrived, signed the prison Compact and completed their induction, staff emphasised the choices, freedoms and responsibilities that the men had. There was an expectation of engagement, an assumption that men both wanted to take on responsibility and were capable of doing so. This assumption was not flexible. It did not adapt to the differing needs of men, nor to their differing abilities to respond to and cope with the demands of responsibility. Responsibility and the ability to self-regulate were uniformly expected. On occasions when men refused to take on responsibility or proved unable to self-govern, the full coercive, constraining power of the prison was unleashed (see Crewe, 2011a). Staff viewed individuals'

refusal or inability to engage with regime or to take on responsibility for their behaviour and their sentence as acts of defiance or rebellion, and these were punished.

Hannah-Moffat argues that prison authorities use a refusal to take part in regimes which encourage responsibility and empowerment to legitimise repressive acts within the prison (2001: 176). Much of what I witnessed at both HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford confirms this. Refusals to engage or acts of resistance resulted in a move onto a lower (if not the lowest) level of IEP. Prisoners who failed to engage or behave in the way staff thought appropriate reported being written up for small acts of wrongdoing, which usually would have been let slip. Groups of men on a unit who clubbed together to resist staff demands for engagement with regime and proactive good behaviour were separated. I was told the '*worst offenders*' were '*shipped out*' to another prison (Field notes), with others spread across different units in the prison to disperse the power of their resistance.

From the SMT member at HMP Nassington, who told me that he had taken a prisoner's tobacco away because he needed to take on some responsibility (SMT4, HMP Nassington, August 2011), to the PCO who argued that a prisoner had '*chosen'* to be moved onto Basic regime because he had refused to take responsibility for his behaviour and that of his cell-mate (Field notes, HMP Nassington, April 2010), staff justified the punishment of prisoners using the language of choices and expectations. Expressing their disappointment that men '*had chosen not to comply'* staff claimed they had, in turn, been '*forced to act'*. When questioned further about consequences for failures or refusals to engage, staff at both prisons, did, indeed, use the refusal as a justification for their actions. Senior Managers told me that '*all prisoners had choices'* and that '*the consequences for all were the same'* (Field notes).

In framing the negative consequences for refusal or inability to manage engage and self-govern in the language of choice, Senior Managers suggest that the prisoner was himself complicit in the decision to punish him. That he was a willing and able part of the process because he had a choice and he made the wrong one. Therefore, for prison staff it is simple: there are consequences. In having a uniform expectation of the ability of men to take on and manage responsibility, HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford are at best unaware of and at worst ignoring the differing needs of their prisoners. Mary Bosworth in reviewing the handbooks of prisons in the United States found that 'the handbooks rely on a language of managerialism that presents inmates as just another "client group" or customer base' (2007: 67). It is this view, which at worst disregards and at best misdefines the distinct nature of the prison as an institution of punishment and misunderstands its place and role within larger society. The prison is not just another corporation or institution: its 'clients and customers' have committed a wrong against society for which their liberty has been curtailed. In expecting all men to be able to take on responsibility for themselves and to engage proactively with prison regime and their sentence, prison management assumed, incorrectly, that all men were able to do so. This, unfortunately, as outlined above is not the case. Not all men in the two prisons were able to cope with and manage the demands of responsibility and this, in turn, not only often left them feeling disillusioned and helpless but also resulted in sanctions by prison staff.

Responsibility, however, is not all bad. While expectations and demands left many feeling disillusioned or upset and unable to cope, some relished the opportunity to be proactive, make choices and take on responsibility. For them, imprisonment had a positive impact both on how they felt about themselves and how they interacted with and dealt with others.

5.4. Feeling Like 'A Responsible Man'

Men in prison and masculinity has been considered in many forms since Gresham Sykes's seminal text, *The Society of Captives* (1958). Academics have considered the intersection of masculinity in a variety of ways from power and relationships with staff (Crewe, 2009); sport (Sabo, 2001); identity (Earle and Phillips, 2009); mental health (Kupers, 2001); prison organisation (Carrabine and Longhurst, 1998); emotion (Crewe, 2014); health (de Vigianni, 2006); elderly men (Crawley, 2005, 2012; Crawley and Sparks, 2005); to friendships between prisoners (Corley, 2001) and social hierarchy (Carter, 1996; Crewe, 2005, 2009; de Viggiani, 2012; Drake, 2012). However, 'one of the more remarkable features of criminology until recently has been its ability to marginalise and render considerations of gender to the realms of the unproblematic' (Carrabine and Longhurst, 1998: 16). Still, questions of gender[188] can be problematic. A detailed review of theories of masculinity and broader gender theories are outside of the scope of this thesis. Yet, it is clear from the data I gathered in the field that obligation and feeling culpable was for many men inherently linked with their self-esteem and how they felt about themselves as men. Many of the Inductors and prisoners who worked in the workshops told me that their jobs, the duties they had and the skills they were learning made them feel good about themselves. Ben told me that learning skills made him:

> *Feel like a better father, a better boyfriend. I'll be able to provide more when I get out, I hope. I'm learning a trade - getting skills. That means I can earn well - I hope - that's what I'm supposed to do - provide for my family. I'm not supposed to be away. In here, while my kids are growing up. Coming to prison, leaving them - it was awful. It's my fault I'm here, away from them, my Missus has to do it all alone. I miss them all so much. Visits aren't the same, I can play with the kids and stuff, but I miss bed time and seeing them wake up. I can't get that time back with them. I have to do what I can here to make it better for them. Get a job - be a better dad.* (HMP Nassington, June 2010)

[188] I use gender with the meaning construed by Connell (1987, 1995) and Newton (1994) in that gender for any individual or group is a socially constructed phenomenon whilst a person's sex is based on biological foundations.

Toby explained how having responsibility made him feel in terms of values and trust:

> *When you get sent inside, you lose everything. I lost my flat, my family, my girlfriend. My mates - they can go to the pub after work, have a laugh, play pool - do what they want - I can't. I lost my freedom, for a while I thought I was going to lose my self, lose my mind. Prison makes you weird, you obsess, have too much time to think, to worry, to regret. […] It's better now. I have a job in here. I'm learning something. I like to help teach the others. I'm allowed to do some demonstrations to new lads, show them how the machines work. The officers trust me - I think - I've shown them I'm alright. Having something, doing something - it makes me feel like me again. Like maybe I haven't lost everything.*
>
> (HMP Wansford, April 2010)

For many of the men, being trusted and having choices made them feel better about themselves and helped them feel that they were taking on the role that society and their communities expected of them. Fahid explained to me that having choices and being able to participate in planning his sentence made him feel more like the role model and decision maker his culture expected him to be:

> *In my culture, for Muslims and that, men are important. We're the head of the household. We have to go out and work, provide for our families. Look after our wives and sisters. Lead them all. I can't do that from here, they have to do it without me - that's not right - that's not the culture - that's not what a man does. But I can show them that I still can be me when I get out. I need to do this, make my prison time good for me. Show that I'm still a husband and still can be. Not disappoint my family, my community, no more.*
>
> (HMP Nassington, July 2011)

Rick, who led a team in the commercial laundry at HMP Wansford, felt that the responsibilities of his job had become a part of who he was:

> *Having this job, responsibility, working my way up - it's helped me. It doesn't just keep me busy - it's more. Before I had a job in here, something to do I felt pretty helpless - lost - like I had no purpose. I had nothing to do with my time*[189] *except read or watch TV - I didn't want a job cleaning. Now I like coming to work, doing my job. Making sure that everyone is okay - doing their job. It's important to pass the time, let's face it - I've got a lot of time to pass before I'll be out. Work is really important, it's who I am in here - Rick from the laundry.*
>
> (HMP Wansford, April 2010)

For many men the opportunity to make choices and to take on responsibility made them feel better about themselves.[190] They felt able to take some control over their lives and over how they spent their time in prison. In this sense responsibility played an important part in improving how the men felt about themselves. Many said that they felt less helpless or less lost when they were able to make choices and be involved. Bosworth (1999) and McEvoy (2001) argue that behaviours and acts which would be viewed as insignificant or unimportant in normal life, can in a prison environment become assertions of selfhood. In the same way, often, outside of the prison walls responsibility and making choices are seemingly insignificant. Having the opportunity to make choices that shape our lives is taken for granted. Inside the prison, the responsibility that those outside of prison take for granted takes on a new importance. Having the opportunity to be responsible and make choices gives men the opportunity to feel that they have some control over their own lives. For Daryl that meant that *"there's one less thing I've lost by coming to prison"* (HMP Nassington, April 2010).

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[189] Lee (1993) argues that prison causes many men to have an altered perception of time, with time passing more slowly and days merging into each other. Prisoners told me that this was somewhat the case, although they particularly emphasised that they felt they had lost their weekend, or "*that Friday feeling"* as Tally put it (HMP Nassington, March 2010) This 'loss' of a weekend, they said, was because of increased hours of lock up which happened on a weekend. Whereas on the outside they would normally associate a weekend with increased freedom, time to socialise and time off work, weekends in prison, whilst often a break from the Monday to Friday routine of work meant an increased amount of isolation and a limit on time to socialise.

[190] On the impact and effect of regimes that seek to create or encourage responsible prisoners on women in prison in Canada see Hannah-Moffat (1999, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005) and Carlen (2002). On prison regimes in Canada see Axon (1989a, 1989b).

A number of academics have argued that men in prison are hyper-masculine (Sabo et al., 2001b; de Viggiani 2012; Ireland, 2000; Toch, 1998; Sim, 1994) largely due to the prison environment, with its macho and 'muscle bound culture' (Sabo, 2001). London (2001: 57) characterises prison as a 'world without softness'. Hsu Hua Fu (2005) goes further:

> A prison culture of masculinity shapes the prison macho. Boys don't cry. The prison macho is a real man who always hides his feelings and performs like a tough guy. These characteristics are much different from what happens in everyday life in the social spheres. (2005: 1)

In my experience this was not always the case. Yes, men postured and acted the 'tough guy'. Many were obsessed with lifting weights in the gym and building muscle - getting bigger (Sabo, 2001, de Viggiani, 2012). In both prison gyms the treadmills and cardio machines were almost always empty, while the free weights were bustling as men challenged each other to lift more weight and increase their repetitions. There was a sense that the bigger your muscles, the more weight you could lift the tougher you were - 'a better man'.[191]

A number of men told me that they were considered to show vulnerabilities, that they acted tough to protect themselves. Staff confirmed this, one telling me: "*he kicked off today, punched another lad. He told me he didn't want to but he had a point to prove - he couldn't lose face"* (PCO 18, HMP Nassington, June 2010). There were often fights or small acts of aggression as men sought to establish their place in the pecking order and gain power or status on the wing.[192] Yet, despite this macho culture, the posturing, the competition and the

[191] Gym instructors in both prisons were almost constantly frustrated with the men's obsession with weight lifting and building bigger arms and broader chests. They tried to encourage men to undertake more balanced workouts that included a mix of cardio exercise and weight lifting and provided courses on healthy eating and healthy living. These were well attended because they were a pre-requisite to gym access, but as one instructor told me: *"we're fighting a losing battle - it's all about weights - they can't run for a bus but they can bench press their own body weight, so that makes it okay"* (OS 4, HMP Wansford, April 2010).

[192] On hierarchies and power in the male prison estate see Crewe (2009).

violence, during my time in the field, I saw a different side as well. I witnessed many acts of kindness and generosity between the men. There were genuine friendships and support networks.[193] That is not to say that there were not also rivalries and conflicts, but as one PCO put it: *"what do you expect, put 70 men together anywhere in the world, they're not all going to get on - it's human nature"* (PCO 6, HMP Wansford, March 2010). I saw more men cry (and shed more tears myself) in my months in the field than I could have anticipated. Men told me how much prison 'hurt'. The distance from their loved ones, the loneliness and often the guilt of their crime or the detrimental impact it had had on their life and that of their family caused real distress. So, too, did the curtailing of their freedom. Men expressed feeling '*cut off'* and *isolated'*. Some told me they felt '*worthless'* or would be '*better off dead'* because that would *'be less shameful'* (Field notes). I, too, was not immune to the pain that the men felt, it troubled me and I found myself guilt ridden for the freedom I had and the things I took for granted. One evening in my research diary[194] I wrote:

> *Difficult day today. I cried again - by myself in the office. Interviews were good - good data - lots to think about. Things to follow up on - want to visit the radio station again - they're keen that I do their version of desert island discs - could be fun? Not sure I should inflict my eclectic mix of Brahms and Chesney Hawkes on anyone though? Radio could be another way of recruiting participants? Met Ed again on the unit. He told me his girlfriend had finished with him. Told him she couldn't cope with the distance. He said "how does she think I feel?- I'm here - I've got no one. No one to talk to about it. No one to help. She's gone to her mum's - I'm stuck here - I can't do anything to make it better, make it right". Feeling guilty, for everything I take for granted. Home, relationships, support. F* [my partner] *is away so much and I miss him but I can get on a train, talk on the phone when I want. This is different. Ed, all the men, they're so dependent on help and support from outside but they don't always get it. Small things rock them so much*

[193] On prison friendships see Corley (2001).

[194] I carried my research diary in the prison at all times, using it to write notes and observations and record emergent themes. I also regularly wrote in it each evening when I left the field. Whilst I also used a digital recorder and recorded my experiences and thoughts as I drove home each evening, I found the act of writing in the notebook in which I also recorded my observations to be useful as I could refer back to it whilst in the prison to be reminded how I was thinking about particular themes or elements of data at particular points. I also found that writing as well as speaking into the digital recorder helped me to process what I saw and heard in the field. On processing the emotional demands of prison research see Drake and Harvey, (2013) and on the value of autoethnography see Jewkes (2011).

> *in there - create big reactions - real hurt - they cry - they're not so hard - not what I expected. Do they cry more in front of me, tell me about their relationships - how they feel because I'm a woman? Ed says he feels powerless - he was going back to his cell to block it out. His parting comment - "that's the only home I've got - says a lot about me doesn't it."*
>
> (Research Diary, HMP Nassington, April 2010)

Men told me that they found prison life difficult. Their loss of liberty, distance from their family and isolation making them feel like a failure or *"less like a man"* (Andy, HMP Wansford, April 2010). Vince told me that prison made him:

> *Feel worthless. I can't do anything from in here. My mum, she's really ill, she worries about me all the time. I've told her she shouldn't worry - that I'm ok. I worry she might die while I'm in here. I don't know what I'd do if I wasn't there. It's not how it's supposed to be is it? I'm her son, her oldest son, I'm supposed to be there to look after her now my Dad's gone, but I'm not. I'm not because I'm in here and in here I can't support her. Be there for her. I can't do what a son's supposed to do for his mum.* (HMP Nassington, July 2011)

A number of men told me that not being there for their families '*like a man was supposed to be'* distressed them and in turn impacted negatively on how they felt about themselves, expressing that '*it was a man's job to look after his family'* (Field notes). For others, loss of choice, the very rigidity of the prison day caused distress: *"Sometimes I just need a break, you know, time by myself. Other times you want to talk. You can't do that in here. When the door closes at night, you're by yourself. There's never people around when you need them"* (Hugo, HMP Nassington, April 2010).

Many men told me that prison 'hurt', they were affected by different things and experienced the pain in different ways but they all felt pain. Expressing worries about missing out, describing pressure from home, missing family members, feeling guilty and struggling to manage the demands of prison life, the expectation that they take on responsibility for

themselves and their sentence adding to the pain and burden of their imprisonment. Hamid found having choices to be too much and they left him questioning who he was: *"It's too much, I have to do courses, keep out of trouble, do all of this crap. Why? What does it mean for me? I don't know who or what I am anymore. I'm just another prisoner"* (HMP Nassington, June 2010). For Noah being asked to make choices and take responsibility for his behaviour made him feel weak and needing "*to man up"*:

> SP*: Tell me about your sentence plan Noah. How involved are you in it?*
> Noah*: I hate my sentence.*
> SP*: Your sentence or your sentence plan?*
> Noah*: Both. But the plan - it's fucked up. I can't do it. I have these meetings with my PO. He says I have to behave, look out for myself and stop worrying about everyone else.*
> SP*: Isn't he right?*
> Noah: *Yeah - probably. But it's more fucked up than that - he says I have to make a plan for my time here. I can't do that. I tried, I make bad choices, then it just gets worse - I get it wrong.*
> SP*: You could try again?*
> Noah*: No, I can't.*
> SP*: Why not?*
> Noah*: I can't do it, I can't make the good choices, do the right things for me. I get it wrong. I always get it wrong.*
> SP*: How does that make you feel?*
> *Noah: Like shit, like I'm not the same - weak. Everyone else can do it. Sort their life out, sort their head out. I need to man up and sort it out - but it's hard.*
>
> (HMP Nassington, August 2011)

A number of men told me that their own inability to '*get their sentence plan right'* or '*behave themselves'* made them feel negatively about themselves. They felt that they had failed or '*were thick'* or *'weak'* or must '*just be bad'* (Field notes). Many told me it was even harder when men around them were being praised and gaining trust from staff for taking on responsibility and making positive choices. Oscar told me that:

> *Seeing others manage, it makes it worse. It's not that I don't want to do right, behave. You know, change. I'm trying, I really am. But I can't. It just gets worse. Every time I try and don't get it right, it makes me feel worse. It makes it harder to try again. I get really low - watching the others just laugh and joke their way through - making it all look easy. I can't do that. It makes me feel thick - like why can they do it when I can't?*
>
> (HMP Nassington, July 2011)

For men in both prisons the expectation of and emphasis on responsibility was a double edged sword. For those who were able to take on responsibility, engage positively with regime and make good choices, there was a clear benefit. Men felt better about themselves and felt that they had a contingent freedom and some ownership over their lives. For men like Noah the pressure to be responsible added to the pain and problems of prison life. Men experienced an additional burden, a heaviness (King and McDermott, 1995: 90) or tightness (Crewe, 2011b: 522) that weighed them down. They worried about their inability to be responsible, to regulate their behaviour and make choices that shaped their future. Men were often disillusioned and despondent as they watched others around them take on the responsibility that was offered and use it positively.

5.5. A Summary: Positives, Power and Pain

In this chapter I have described what happens 'when responsibility goes wrong' and in turn how feeling responsible or conversely not being able to manage expectations of responsibility made the men feel about themselves. I have outlined how men felt and were treated by staff when they were not able to manage their behaviour and engage with the regime or chose not to do so. Unfortunately, the response from staff to both, those who

chose not to engage and those who were unable to do so, was the same: a response of punitiveness and disappointment.

From my interviews and observations I can identify three types of men who were unable or unwilling to take on responsibility. The first group chose to refuse to engage with staff and regime, not willing to make choices and to take on responsibility, many viewing the refusal as an act of resistance (see McEvoy, 2001). The second chose to 'act responsible', on the face of it engaging with the regime, behaving and demonstrating to staff that they were responsible and could be trusted to regulate their behaviour. These men put on an act and complied with what was wanted by staff in order to have an easier life. As Gilly put it :*"as long as they think I'm on scheme, that's all that matters. I don't have to be, they just have to think that I am"* (HMP Wansford, April 2010). The third group of men felt unable to be responsible and make choices. They they were unable to regulate their behaviour, and this manifested itself in an appearance of refusal to engage with the regime. Despite their efforts they found the demands to make choices and self-govern to be impossible. This failure often made them feel helpless and despondent. Their failures and the burden of demands of responsibility adding to the difficulties and pain they already faced.

At the same time, prison staff were unsympathetic. There was an overarching and unrelenting expectation of engagement and self-management. A blanket belief that responsibility was good for everyone. Staff believed that all men could and should be responsible. That they should make decisions and take ownership of their time in prison rather than expect to be told what to do. Those who were not engaging with what the

prisons wanted and expected from them felt the full force of the prison's punitiveness which for many only added to the pain and despondency they already experienced.

In the final chapter of this thesis I consider what the account of responsibility at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford contained in the previous chapters adds to our understanding of how power and control are used by prisons and understood by prisoners. I outline the many positive aspects of the emphasis on responsibility at both prisons and consider the benefits. I also review the negatives, the additional burden that demands for self-governing and the care and support of others can have for prisoners. I consider what responsibility and responsible prisoners mean for prisons and prisoner and caution that, the blanket encouragement of responsible prisoners, while attractive and convenient for prison management, is not necessarily a good thing. For many prisoners the burdens far outweigh the benefits. The encouragement of responsibility and engagement with the regime by prison staff is not a sign that the location of power within the prison has moved, nor that prison is any less punitive or harsh, but merely that it is framing its carceral power in different terms. The pain and difficulties for men in prison remain acute and demands for self-regulation only add further pressure.

Chapter Six

Moving on: Responsibility and Private Prison Life

> *I've painted the* [private prison providers] *money van being robbed - look, look at the cash machine - outside Tesco* [pointing to a painted canvas]. *They're getting robbed. That's 'cos they fuck me off.* (Clarke, HMP Nassington, July 2011)

> Prisons mean business. They are large organisations. They consist of many paid staff, bricks and mortar, beds, security devices, professional practitioners of ancillary services. They are expensive to build. They are expensive to operate. But they are easy to fill. (White, 1999: 243)

> *It's alright here really. I mean, a prison is a prison, isn't it? At least the private ones are new, that means they're cleaner and the pads are bigger. Screws are still screws though and you're still locked up. The size of your pad doesn't change that.* (Baz, HMP Wansford, May 2011)

6.1. An Overview

In the final chapter of this thesis I review the data I have outlined in the previous three chapters. I consider what this material adds to our understanding of responsibility in prison, how the demand to shoulder burdens makes men feel and the wider benefits of obligation to prisoners and the prison. In turn, I consider the drawbacks and limitations of the model of regime observed, which required men to answer for their incarceration, exploring the negative effects this style of governance may cause. Using the data gathered at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford I question the impact of responsible prisoners for prisons and the effect of responsibility on men themselves. I argue that whilst there is a benefit to seeking to foster environments in which prisoners are enabled to self-govern, a careful balance must be maintained. I also take the opportunity to consider in more detail what the data gathered tells

us more broadly about responsibility and life inside private prisons and how this adds to our understanding of the place and role of private prisons today.

6.2. Responsibility: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

In the previous three chapters I described how staff at all levels in HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford encouraged prisoners to act responsibly and take the lead in certain tasks and aspects of their daily life behind bars. I then depicted a variety of responses to these opportunities and demands, paying close attention to the men's accounts of how responsibility made them feel. I also considered what happened when responsibility went wrong, when men refused or were unable to take on the demands for self-governing and engagement that the prison asked of them.

For those men who were able to manage the demands of responsibility, who engaged proactively with the regime and governed their behaviour, the rewards were great. Prisoners relished the opportunity to progress in the workshops, taking on positions of trust and managing the work of other prisoners. They told me they were gaining new skills, building new relationships and that the opportunity to make decisions about their time in prison made them feel good about themselves. Some expressed having choices as being '*one less thing lost*' through incarceration (Field notes). Others felt that, in taking part in managing their sentence, they were actively shaping their own future. Prison staff fostered environments in which, they believed, responsible prisoners flourished. Many officers worked hard to build good relationships with prisoners, to engage with them in sentence planning and discussing opportunities and options for them both within the prison and outside. Senior staff spoke of teamwork between officer and prisoner and told me that staff and men alike were responsible for the creating and shaping of the environment in which they lived and worked.

The prison jobs of many men meant working closely with staff, often sharing both their values and their frustrations. Inductors in the prison workshops worked side by side with Workshop Managers to ensure orders were delivered on time and that the work completed was to a good standard. The Supporters worked closely with admissions and unit staff in providing additional support for those prisoners who were struggling with prison life. Supporters reported to staff their concerns about other inmates well-being and could recommend the opening of an ACCT (in itself a great responsibility). Staff appreciated the work that the men employed as Supporters did. They recognised that the Supporters took some burden for the care and support of prisoners off their shoulders. One told me that he "*couldn't imagine working a night-shift without a Supporter*" because "*they do so much*" (PCO 19, HMP Nassington, July 2011). The Supporters themselves had relative freedom in moving around the prison and enjoyed the supporting nature of their work. Yet, the freedom they had, in itself, created a burden for them as they trod a careful line between doing their job properly but not moving around the prison too much for fear of arousing suspicion amongst staff. They were forced to be ever vigilant, monitoring their movements and behaviour to ensure that they were not penalised. In this sense the Supporters provide a perfect example of prisoners whose values are aligned with those of the prison. In working to support other prisoners, Supporters not only take on roles which otherwise would be left to prison officers but they also self-regulate, policing their own behaviour and actions. Conscious of how their movements and behaviour may appear to staff and in fear of losing their trusted status they control and review their movements and behaviour. Having to be hyper-vigilant, however, was a source of worry. A burden which troubled them greatly and at times they struggled to manage to find a balance between doing their job properly and policing their movements around the prison. For whilst the Supporters passport gave them the freedom to move

around the prison, it was a contingent freedom, subject to the discretion of prison staff and could be taken away for the smallest perceived infraction.

Not all men responded positively to demands for engagement with the regime. Nor did they want to make decisions about their time in prison or plan their future. Instead, they wanted to pass their sentence quietly without having to think about their behaviour or to take on the values of the prison. Yet, their desire for a quiet life in prison was not met with approval by staff. Docility was not the ideal behaviour desired by the prison, it demanded engagement and proactivity (see Crewe 2011a: 460). Describing men who would not participate in sentence planning or who withdrew from social contact on the wings as '*troublesome prisoners'*, these men were put under increased pressure to conform and behave in the way the prison expected. They were pressured to take part, to be active, their withdrawal seen as defiance. Others, in their desire for an '*easy'* life in prison, put on a false front to staff. They appeared to engage with the regime, taking steps to manage their sentence but did not believe in what they were doing. These prisoners did not share the values of the prison or meet the expectations of staff, yet they appeared to do so, choosing to conform to a limited extent to make their time in prison easier. They told me that they did as they were asked in order to appease prison staff, so that they were no longer classed as '*problem prisoners'* and could pass their time in prison as quietly as possible.

Other men were more overt in their rejection of the prison's values. For some this was an active choice (see McEvoy, 2001). They did not want to be responsible. Instead, they chose to resist, breaking rules and failing to fulfil expectations. The consequences for these men were harsh, they were stripped of their privileges because they '*couldn't be trusted to behave',* they were often made an example of in an attempt to demonstrate to others the importance of compliance and engagement with the regime.

Some prisoners, rather than choosing to reject the values of the regime, were unable to adopt them. These men were not resistant to the regime but unable to manage the demands that it placed on them. They felt unable to make choices and argued that they should not be trusted to behave themselves or to manage their sentence. "*I was sent to prison for a reason",* Sam told me "*because I can't behave. I mix with the wrong men, make bad choices. I can't make better ones in here, so why ask me - it's stupid"* (HMP Nassington, July 2011). Yet, the prison was insistent in demanding compliance with its values. These demands left many prisoners frustrated and feeling helpless. Unable to manage the demands the prison placed on them to govern themselves and plan and manage their sentence they felt like failures. Worried and desperate they vented their frustrations on themselves and their property. The pressure to behave, to be responsible manifested itself in acts of rebellion or cries for help: from flooding a cell to acts of self harm. Yet staff often saw these acts as examples of an individual's refusal to engage with the regime, as acts of resistance, commenting that; '*he needs to learn to behave'*, a suicide attempt '*wasn't a cry for help, he was just throwing his toys out of his pram. He's frustrated because he didn't get his own way'* (Field notes, HMP Nassington, July 2011). Staff were often unsympathetic to those unable to engage with the regime, they viewed their behaviour not as cries for help but as acts of resistance, misunderstanding the needs of their most vulnerable prisoners.

Men responded differently to expectations that they 'be responsible' and expressed their frustration with demands in different ways. Yet, despite the differing responses to their demands, the expectations of prison staff of all prisoners remained the same. There was no flexibility in expectation: all men should engage with the regime and take ownership of their actions and their behaviour. They should take the opportunities given to make choices about their sentence, take

ownership of their decisions and ultimately govern themselves, regulating their own behaviour and, on occasion, the behaviour of others.

The utility of responsible prisoners for prison staff is clear. Men whose values are aligned with those of the system, who share the same goals as prison staff and the wider prison regime are easier to manage, they conform and comply. In assimilating the values of the prison (Garland, 1997), these men fulfil the neo-liberal ideal of responsible self-governing citizens (Dean 1996, 1999; Hannah-Moffat, 2011; Lemke, 2001; O'Malley, 1992, 1999, 2000; Rose 1996, 1989). The prison is able to govern these individuals with less direct intervention through muted exercises of power (Benhabib, 1987; Cruikshank, 1994, 1996, Dean, 1999, O'Malley, 1992, 1999, 2000; Rose, 1986, 1989; Smith, 1995). Once their values are aligned with those of the prison they do not only self-govern but are able to govern others: by exemplar behaviour but also through overt acts (Garland, 1997). The prison encourages this action: asking workshop Inductors to be responsible not only for the output of their team but also for their behaviour. Passing the duty to govern self and others onto prisoners themselves. With prisoners who regulate their own behaviour the prison is able to govern softly (Crewe, 2009, 2011a) and wield its power lightly (Foucault, 1975). Governing through expectation and reward rather than with threats and harsh actions.

Whilst not harsh and corporal, this soft power in itself can cause pain. It lacks clarity and transparency (Crewe, 2011b), leaving prisoners confused as to both its source and its processes. The exercise of this soft power is anonymous, men unaware of the initial source as expectations and values are communicated to them by officers who talk of, *'all being in it together'* and *'pulling together as a team'* (Field notes). It leaves men confused as to who holds power over them, who is making the demands that they be responsible and take on the values of the prison. Similarly, its processes are unclear, decision making illogical, 'prisons decision making defies

logic or constancy' (Crewe, 2011b: 514), and this alienates and disillusions many men. Prisoners are told to make choices, yet when they exercise choice they are told they have not made the right decision or that choice is denied, *"I have to do a STOP course, my PO said ok - I'll get you on it",* Finley told me, *"but then the paperwork came back and it said no. I asked my PO why - he said, 'it didn't say'"* (HMP Wansford, May 2011). This lack of clarity left many men frustrated, adding to the confusion and general insecurity of the prison culture (Drake, 2012). The anonymity of the decision maker, the person or body holding the power and making the decisions leaves them without a body or person against whom to rebel or protest. As Ben Crewe puts it, in the modern prison 'power is everywhere, yet there is no central power to resist. Responsibility always lies "somewhere else"'(2007: 269). Many of the men I spoke to identified with this lack of a central body against which to protest. They told me that when they got angry or frustrated they '*could not'* or '*would not*' direct their anger at officers because "*It's not their fault. They're only doing what they're told to do"* (Csaba, HMP Wansford, May 2011). In the same way prison managers, the men told me, were not to blame because they had to follow the rules. Men, rather than raging against the people who locked them up and made the day to day decisions about their lives, blamed the system. In placing blame on a wider system, outside of their reach and control men had no one against whom to direct their verbal or physical frustrations, some turning instead on themselves.

For those who did seek to express their frustration against someone other than themselves the choices varied. Some blamed prison officers, some prison management. Others found fault with the Judge who had laid down their sentence, Karsten saying: "*the judge that sentenced me it's his fault. He could have suspended the sentence, I wouldn't have had to be here - doing this shit work. Then I wouldn't feel like this"* (HMP Nassington, April 2010). Few blamed Government policy or politicians. For Clarke, who is quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the

private company who operated the prison were responsible for his frustrations with incarceration and decisions he perceived as unjust. He expressed his anger at the company through his art work which depicted a money transport van, operated by the same company, being robbed by men wearing the red overalls of the HMP Nassington Basic regime.[195] He told me:

> *Everything is* [the private prison providers] *fault. I hate it here. It's not like other prisons - they make money from you. That's not right, is it? That's why we're stealing their money* [in the picture]. *We're taking back what's ours.*
>
> (Clarke, HMP Nassington, August 2011)

In demanding engagement with regime, HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford sought to mould prisoners who were more easily governable, who assimilated the values of the prison. In turn, this meant that prisoners could be managed with 'soft' exercises of power: governed with a discourse of expectation, reward and expressions of disappointment rather than with harsh missives and barked orders. In turn, prisoners appeared to be given more freedom. Freedom to choose how to shape their prison life by taking part in planning their sentence and engaging with the opportunities offered: freedom to move around the prison, in the case of the Supporters, or the chance to meet with external customers when they visit the workshops. Yet, this freedom is contingent, the prison carefully monitoring its use and its boundaries. Men who overstepped the boundaries of allowable freedom are firmly pushed back.

The term 'soft power', whilst useful in explaining how behaviour was generally regulated and how power was used, is misleading when it comes to how prisoners experience its use. There was nothing soft about how they felt about and experienced the power and control exercised over them. Men at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford still experienced pain from imprisonment,

[195] The requirement for men on Basic to wear the prison issue red overalls was stopped during my time in the field.

despite the soft exercises of power. The lack of somebody to rebel against suggests that for those forced to turn on themselves, the pain of imprisonment can be even greater, when governed by soft power. The power, the demands, however softly framed, were still repressive and experienced as heavy or smothering (Crewe, 2011a). Demands for change, to be more responsible, to govern and moderate their own behaviour remained exercises of power. What has changed with the demand for responsibility from prisoners is not the exercise of power or the desire for prisoners to change for the better, to behave and to conform. It is where the responsibility for that change is situated that has moved. In demanding that prisoners govern themselves and participate actively in the management of their sentence, prisons are saying that they are no longer responsible for the behaviour and reform of the men they house, instead the responsibility and the burden for that transformation and the moderation of behaviour falls to prisoners themselves.

In asking prisoners to take on responsibility for their own reform, to regulate their own behaviour, prison staff govern through expectation and encouragement. They speak nicely to prisoners, seeking to build relationships with them and encourage them to engage with the regime and to align their values to those of the prison. In passing on responsibility for reform to prisoners, the prison, is not, however, relinquishing its power. Nor in exercising soft power has the carceral sting of punitiveness been removed from imprisonment. Men unable or unwilling to meet the demands and expectations of the prison feel the full force of its carceral power. Sykes argues that the pains of imprisonment are no longer corporal (Sykes, 1958), however, the pains remain in a different form. Now the pains are caused by frustrations, feelings of failure and despair that result from an inability to manage the demands of responsibility insisted on by prisons. The pain is caused not to the body but to the mind, by systemic policies and institutional practices (Crewe, 2011b). Policies that are unrelenting and inflexible in their demands on prisoners. Unable to adapt

or respond to the differing needs of men, the blanket expectation of engagement and proactivity, ownership over actions and regulation of their own behaviour causes many men to despair.

An emphasis and expectation of responsibility in prisons is not uniformly bad. It is the blanket expectation, the inflexibility of the practice that causes the problem. Many men are able to respond positively to the demands of self governing, relishing the opportunities for self development and decisions they can make to shape their future. This is certainly positive. However, many men are not able to manage responsibility or to govern their actions and behaviour and the rigidity of governing does not allow for this inability. Men who are already vulnerable, struggling with prison life are faced with additional pressure and this adds to their pain. It adds to the burden of their imprisonment as their inability to conform with what is asked of them is misinterpreted as refusal and the carceral force of the prison unleashed.

My interest in responsibility in prison was sparked by Stephen Pryors 2001 report entitled *'The Responsible Prisoner'*. Over ten years later, my research at HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington has certainly found responsible prisoners, men who govern themselves and took pleasure in having choices. 'Giving people responsibility, or allowing them to retain it while in prison, means accepting that they are not wholly bad or wholly dangerous, or wholly irresponsible' (Pryor, 2001: 1). Many men at both prisons were capable of taking on responsibility to varying extents and the benefits to them of this engagement are clear in the early chapters of this thesis. They reported feeling '*more like men'* and had '*hope for the future'* because they were able to make choices and involved in making decisions which shaped their prison life. However, demands for self-governance, requests for responsible behaviour caused pain and anguish to men unable to manage the expectations. In the same way that not all men in prison are bad, neither is everything about responsibility and the demands it places on prisoners good. The unrelenting and

inflexible demand for engagement with regime, for prisoners to be responsible causes many men pain and anguish. There is a place for responsibility in prison, for responsible prisoners, but the demands of responsibility are great. Some men are unable to manage them at all, for others the constant self-monitoring and hyper-vigilance, trying to second guess how staff may view their actions of behaviour adds pressure to an already pressurised and demanding environment. There is a danger that 'the more we see prisoners as people capable of behaving responsibly, the more we come to expect them to do so' (Pryor, 2001: 1). We must ensure at the same time that we do not expect too much.

6.3. Private Prisons: Regime, Responsibility and Expansion

I set out in this thesis to understand the importance and role of responsibility to private prison life. As I have shown, responsibility was central to life and regime at both HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford. At both prisons there was a general expectation on the part of Directors, Senior Managers and PCOs, that prisoners took responsibility for themselves, their behaviour and their sentence. Men were expected to 'constructively engage' (Attrill and Liell, 2007: 195), to take on the values of the prison and govern and police themselves. The demand for responsibility was overarching, forming the central element of regime. Prisoners 'should' and 'must' behave, 'it's their responsibility', I was told. There was little or no understanding from senior staff or those on the units and in the workshops that some men might not want to be responsible, or are not able to be so. I observed what I described earlier in this thesis as a 'one size fits all model' of responsibility. Staff at all levels expected that all men would both be able to take on responsibility and wanted to do so. Officers told me that prisoners taking on responsibility and making choices was an inherent part of regime. They assumed that responsibility, the freedom to make choices, was something that men desired. For staff there was no question that prisoners would be unable or

unwilling to take on this responsibility. Their approach to an overarching expectation of responsibility assumes what could be described as a 'rational choice model' of responsibility (Cornish and Clarke, 1986, 1987; Gul, 2009; Simpson, 2000). Staff assumed that all prisoners were in fact able to make rational choices, to take on the responsibility that they and the regime demanded of them. As I have shown throughout this thesis, not all men were able to make the rational choices demanded of them. Whilst some men relished the opportunities that being responsible provided, others were unable to take on responsibility or in some cases refused to do so. Yet, despite the inability or refusal of some men to take on the responsibility demanded of them by staff the expectations of responsibility remained constant and inflexible.

I highlighted in Chapter Three that the overarching demand and ethos of responsibility that shaped regime at both HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford originated with Senior Management. The emphasis on responsibility, self-governance, proactivity and choice, as well as the high expectations of prisoners that I witnessed on the units, in the workshops, in education and more generally around both prisons, started with Prison Directors and Senior Management. There were high expectations of staff as well as prisoners. Senior Management seemed keen to foster an environment where there were opportunities for growth and progression amongst both staff and prisoners and expected that all work together for the overall benefit of the establishment. However, what is also clear is that responsible prisoners who engage with regime also provide benefits for prison management and staff. A group of prisoners who work with staff and who mirror the values of the prison makes day-to-day management and organisation easier. Staff are able to govern and impose order not by harsh expressions of power and demands of order but instead by promulgating standards and expectations that are assimilated by the prisoners, in turn allowing the power of the prison to be exercised more softly (Crewe, 2009, 2011a).

The utility of responsible prisoners for prison staff is clear. Men whose values are aligned with those of the system, who share the same goals as prison staff and the wider prison regime are easier to manage, they conform and comply. In assimilating the values of the prison (Garland, 1997), these men fulfil the neo-liberal ideal of responsible self-governing citizens (Dean 1996, 1999; Hannah-Moffat, 2011; Lemke, 2001; O'Malley, 1992, 1999, 2000; Rose 1996, 1989). The prison is able to govern these individuals with less direct intervention through muted exercises of power (Benhabib, 1987; Cruikshank, 1994, 1996, Dean, 1999, O'Malley, 1992, 1999, 2000; Rose, 1986, 1989; Smith, 1995). Once their values are aligned with those of the prison, they do not only self-govern but are able to govern others: by exemplar behaviour but also through overt acts (Garland, 1997). The prison encourages this action: asking workshop Inductors to be responsible not only for the output of their team but also for their behaviour. Thereby passing the duty to govern self and others onto prisoners themselves.

The greater the number of prisoners who take on responsibility for themselves and their behaviour, the less problems there may be for prison management. In this sense, the encouragement of responsibility and engagement amongst prisoners by Senior Management is self-serving. Yet, this is not how senior staff portrayed or thought about their emphasis on responsibility. They chose instead to emphasise that it was for the good of the men that responsibility and engagement with the regime was encouraged. Directors and Senior Management uniformly disliked and refuted my suggestions to them in interview and more informally that encouraging and incentivising responsibility, positive choices and engagement with regime amongst the prison population made the management of the men easier and in turn their own roles and those of their staff easier as well. Instead they argued that any ease of governing was not the reason for the approach which they took in managing the prison but

merely a welcome by-product. They were asking men to engage with regime, make choices and to plan their sentence, not to make them easier to manage whilst in prison but for their own benefit. In emphasising normality, responsibility and choices as an inherent part of regime they were trying to prepare men for the life and choices they would face outside of the prison walls.

The arguments made so strongly by Directors and Senior Management about their motivations for enshrining responsibility and choices in regime: that it helped to maintain a degree of normalisation within prison life that in turn, they hoped, would benefit men on release sits somewhat at odds with what Lilly and Knepper (1993) call the 'corrections-commercial complex'. Proponents of the 'corrections-commercial complex' argue that private prison companies do not only provide prison services, but also have an interest in increasing demand for private prisons and the support services around them. The increased demand, in turn, would increase their own potential profit. Shlosser (1998) terms this the 'prison industrial complex' and describes it as a 'a confluence of special interests that have given prison construction […] an almost unstoppable momentum' (Shlosser, 1998: 52).[196] Angela Davis (2003) argues that private prison operators are expansionist in nature and that it is in their interests to expand the prison estate and to increase demand for prison places. I put this suggestion of inherent expansionism in privatisation to the Directors of both prisons and to a number of Senior Managers in interviews with them. They uniformly told me that this was not the case for them. One told me that such an intention was unnecessary, as:

[196] See also David Garland (2001b) who argues that the 'penal industrial complex' is self-perpetuating and has its interests vested in continuing profits (2001b: 197-8).

> *There will always be an increasing demand for prison places from the private sector. Prison stock across the country is getting old and is not fit for purpose. The expansion is not in the size of the estate per se, it's in the proportion of the estate that is operated by the private sector. We build and operate good and successful prisons. There will always be a demand for them - we don't need to create that demand.*
>
> (Director, HMP Wansford, May 2011)

Another Senior Manager, when I asked him about the significance of the emphasis on responsibility and choices that was enshrined in the regime told me that:

> *The lads need to have choices. To have to make decisions and face consequences. That's how the world works after all. I don't want to see them back here again in a year because they're shocked by life on the out - if that's the case then we're not doing our job. We're not a warehouse.*
>
> (SMT 8, HMP Nassington, May 2010)

Staff told me that the emphasis on choices, proactivity and normality I witnessed at both HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington originated at the highest level of the company. Staff at all levels regularly emphasised the importance of rehabilitation and trying to prevent re-offending through programmes in place in the prison and how facilitating this was inherent to their role in the prison and to the role of the prison in general. Throughout both prisons the emphasis on normality, making choices and taking on responsibility that was demanded of prisoners asked them to engage with their sentence and spend their time in prison productively and, in turn sought to prepare them as much as possible for life on release.

There can be no doubt that the number of men and women in prison in England and Wales is continuing to increase (Howard League, 2014) and that the private sector plays a continuing and growing role in the provision of prison places as well as an increased role in

the criminal justice sector. In April 2014 14,716 men and women were serving their prison sentence or time on remand in privately operated prisons (Ministry of Justice, 2014a) and the private sector is increasingly prevalent in the Immigration Detention Estate (Bacon, 2005; Bosworth, 2014). The commercial nature of private prisons and the demand for prisons to make money whilst still meeting the requirements of their contract are high. At both HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford Directors and Senior Managers were under pressure to meet commercial targets and satisfy the company board. One Director who had recently joined the prison from the public sector told me that he found he had less autonomy than he had hoped for in the private sector because of financial pressures from the company board:

> Director: *If you'd cut me in half I'd have said HMP*
> SP: *So why are you here?*
> Director: *I wanted a new challenge. I was promised more autonomy to run the prison, more freedom on a day-to-day basis.*
> SP: *And?*
> Director: *It's early days, but it seems the financial constraints and having to report to the Board mean there is less autonomy than I had hoped.*
>
> (Director, HMP Wansford, May 2011)

That being said the Senior Managers and Directors I interviewed and spent time with, whilst stressing the importance of commercial success and meeting targets, argued that it was not their role to warehouse men nor to pass judgement on their sentence. They after all, they told me, did not make the decision on who should be sent to prison and who should not nor how many were imprisoned.[197] They were providing a place for men to serve a custodial sentence passed by the courts and asking them, though the regime emphasis on engagement and

[197] See Garland (2001b: 198-99) who argues that a distinction can be drawn within the 'penal industrial complex' between 'organising' and 'perpetuating' causes of mass imprisonment. Organising causes being, for example, public responses to crime, legislative and judicial decisions and perpetuating causes being, for example, the vested interests of private organisations in increased involvement in custodial services and therefore increased profit.

responsibility to take an active part in planning the time they spent in custody. Whilst private prison providers themselves may be expansionist in nature, seeking increased shares of the market and increased profits, the staff I met and interviewed during my time at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford were not. Whilst Directors and Senior Managers felt under pressure to manage budgets effectively and to meet targets they were set, they also sought to encourage the men at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford to engage with regime and to make the most of their time in prison.

6.4. Responsible Men: Final Thoughts

This thesis has concentrated on life inside two private prisons in order to reflect on how prisoners respond to and feel about opportunities and demands to take on responsibility. Throughout the dissertation I have shown that notions and ideas of responsibility are visible in everyday prison life. Officers incentivise and encourage prisoners by offering them greater autonomy, giving them choices and, in turn, asking them to take ownership of their actions. They ask men to take an active role in running the workshops and more generally in the prison, taking on responsibility both for themselves and for others. Involvement in and responsibility for sentence plans is encouraged and a failure to engage or an unwillingness to take on responsibility has negative consequences. The emphasis on and expectation of responsibility is a mode of governing, a way of exercising 'soft' power over men and maintaining order and control.

In governing softly, through a discourse of choices, options and teamwork the prison has not relinquished its carceral power. Instead, in exercising it more softly, refraining from overt demands and framing exercises of power in a dialogue of engagement and choices it

seeks to govern by co-opting compliance rather than forcing it. This in itself is self-serving for the prison. Responsible prisoners are less likely to contribute to disorder, they govern themselves, monitoring their behaviour and at times the behaviour of others. They are hyper-vigilant, aware of their actions and they police themselves in line with the expectations of the prison. Men who buy into the teamwork and mutual culpability that prison staff pitch to them are easier to manage, their values aligned with those of the prison. In turn, responsible prisoners contribute to managing other men, lessening the burden and workload for staff. For those men who are able to engage with the regime, to take full advantage of the opportunities like leading teams in the workshop, gaining new skills and steady progression through IEP that engagement with the regime brings, there are clear benefits to 'being responsible'.

Those prisoners successfully co-opted by the prison into sharing its values and taking ownership of their actions and behaviour reported feeling valued, part of a wider community and felt that they had more of a purpose: a role or place in the prison community. These men liked being trusted and having choices - saying that having the opportunity to make decisions made them feel that they had '*lost one less thing'* by being incarcerated. Men who took on responsibility and made the positive choices so desired by prison staff told me that being proactive and making those choices, made them feel '*more like a man'*.

However, not all men benefitted from being asked to take on responsibility. Many told me that demands from prison staff that they engage with the regime, make choices and ultimately govern their own behaviour added to their struggles in prison. For these men responsibility added an additional burden, a heaviness (King and McDermott, 1995), a tightness (Crewe, 2011b) that increased the pain and difficulty of their imprisonment. This pain was exacerbated by the response of prison staff and management to their struggles. The

uniform expectation, by staff, of engagement with the regime and sentence planning providing no options or any flexibility for those unable to engage. Men were expected to play a part in their own reform and for those unable to do so the consequences for failure were great. These consequences, in turn, only added to their pain and their struggle. Some, unable to manage the demands the prison placed on them to govern themselves, felt like failures. Worried and desperate they vented their frustrations on themselves and their property. For these men the pains of imprisonment, whilst no longer corporal (Sykes, 1958, Crewe, 2011b) have not diminished.

I set out in this thesis to not only consider the significance and role of responsibility in prison but also to go some way in filling the gaps that Heylar-Cardwell (2012) identifies about what is known about life inside private prisons. In investigating the significance and role of responsibility at HMP Wansford and HMP Nassington, I have also been able to explore private prison life. In focussing on responsibility, considering the small scale ways in which men and staff interact, how they felt about or reacted to opportunities which encouraged them to be responsible, I have shown how power is negotiated in two private prisons and in turn the significance of responsibility to that. The data I gathered at two very different private prisons gives a glimpse of what life is like for the men who serve their sentence inside them and the staff who work there. Not everything I witnessed and heard in the field was good, but neither was everything bad. I met staff who cared about their job and for their prisoners. I met others who delighted in the power they had and used it to belittle and humiliate offenders. I saw an emphasis on cost-cutting and meeting performance targets but also a genuine desire for creating good opportunities for men and a response to particular needs or the development of individual skills. The emphasis on being responsible at both prisons clearly benefitted some men, but hurt and burdened others. I cannot draw sweeping conclusions that generalise the entire prison estate in England and Wales or even

every private prison. What this thesis provides is a snap shot of life inside HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford at a particular moment in time. It adds to what we know about life inside private prisons in England and Wales, how power is negotiated and experienced and boundaries enforced. This thesis shows how men experience and respond to the requests and demands of prison staff that they take on responsibility for themselves, their sentence and in some cases responsibility for the care, support and leadership of other prisoners. Through an analysis of the importance and role of responsibility inside two private prisons, this thesis adds to our understanding of how power is negotiated, used and experienced inside the private prison. It outlines the positive and negative impact that the demand for responsibility can have on prisoners and cautions that the demands of 'being responsible' can for some prisoners became characteristic of the 'pains of imprisonment'.

Whilst this thesis has added to what we know about private prison life and sought to provide a picture of how men experience, cope with and feel about responsibility, our task, as prison ethnographers is perpetual. As long as men and women are behind bars, suffering the very real pains of imprisonment, we should continue to allow them to be heard. In 'doing ethnography' we have the opportunity to go some way to giving them a voice and try to understand prison life. More importantly, we can shape and influence future policy and hope to go some way to lessening the discomfort and pain of imprisonment.

Appendix One

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The Responsible Man: A Study in Two Private Prisons

Consent Form- Prisoners

Name of Responsible Investigators: Sophie Palmer (DPhil Student, University of Oxford), supervised by Dr Mary Bosworth

Taken from the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee Protocol:
[Please circle your answer]

Have you read the Participant Information Sheet? Yes/No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? Yes / No

Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions? Yes / No

Have you received enough information about the study? Yes / No

Who has explained the study to you? Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms _____

Do you understand you are free to leave the study/interview:

- at any time
- without having to give a reason for leaving
- and without affecting your sentence/IEP
- there are no benefits to your sentence or IEP for participation Yes/No

Do you understand that this study has been approved by the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee:

Yes / No

Do you understand that personal data will be identified using only a number code or random pseudonym, will be accessed only by members of the research team and will be destroyed after a period of 10 years.

Yes / No

Are you aware that all information will be kept strictly confidential except in the rare circumstances in which it is judged that you or someone else is at risk of serious harm or puts the safety and/or security of the prison at risk (in which case only information necessary to an emergency would be communicated)

Yes / No

Do you agree to take part in this study? Yes / No

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

[NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS] _____

Signature of Researcher _____

Date _____

[NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS] _____

One copy is for the Participant to keep; one for the researcher

Appendix Two

CENTRE FOR CRIMINOLOGY
FACULTY OF LAW

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The Responsible Man: A Study in Two Private Prisons

Consent Form - Staff/Officers/IMB

Name of Responsible Investigators: Sophie Palmer (DPhil Student, University of Oxford), supervised by Dr Mary Bosworth

Taken from the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee Protocol:
[Please circle your answer]

Have you read the Participant Information Sheet? Yes / No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? Yes / No

Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions? Yes / No

Have you received enough information about the study? Yes / No

Who has explained the study to you? Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms _____

Do you understand you are free to leave the study/interview:

- at any time
- without having to give a reason for leaving
- that there are no benefits or incentives for participating in this study Yes/ No

Do you understand that this study has been approved by the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee:

Yes / No

Do you understand that personal data will be identified using only a number code or random pseudonym, will be accessed only by members of the research team and will be destroyed after a period of 10 years.

Yes / No

Are you aware that all information will be kept strictly confidential except in the rare circumstances in which it is judged that you or someone else is at risk of serious harm or puts the safety and/or security of the prison at risk (in which case only information necessary to an emergency would be communicated)

Yes / No

Do you agree to take part in this study? Yes / No

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

[NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS] _____

Signature of Researcher _____

Date _____

[NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS] _____

One copy is for the Participant to keep; one for the researcher

Appendix Three

CENTRE FOR CRIMINOLOGY

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The Responsible Man: A Study in Two Private Prisons

Participant Information for Prisoners at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford

Who am I?

My name is Sophie Palmer and I am a postgraduate Law student at the University of Oxford. My research is supervised by Dr Mary Bosworth.

Why am I here?

I am here at HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington to do research. This research is my Doctoral Thesis, which is a postgraduate degree. I have spent over 2 years so far working on this and it will take another 18 months to two years to finish.

What is my research about?

My research is about privately run prisons like HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington. I am interested in what life is like within them and how serving your sentence or part of it in a private prison like HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington may be different to serving it in a prison that is not privatised. I am interested in the regimes here and what you think about them. I am also interested in the effect on you of being here in a private prison. I am particularly interested in responsibility, how you may have responsibility in your job in the prison and in other areas of life here and what you think about it.

I hope that by hearing from you about what the regime here is like and what is expected of you I can draw some conclusions about the wider role and place of the private prison in the modern world. You will know that in modern times many things have been privatised, for example the railways and electricity and gas companies. Many researchers have said that private prisons are different because they are private. I want to find out what life here is like for you and if you think they are different in any way.

How can you help with the research?

I would like to interview a number of prisoners (I will also be interviewing staff). The interview will last about 30-40 minutes and I will take notes. I will ask some questions about you and about your life here at HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington. I will ask you what you think about many different things such as education and work and recreation opportunities and your experience of them here at HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington.

I will also be observing life here more generally and visiting the units and workshops. If you don't want to be interviewed for the study or don't have time, I'd still like to hear what you think and to learn about your life here so if you see me on your unit or in the workshop I would be happy to talk to you.

What does taking part in the research mean and how will the information you give be used?

When you agree to take part in the research I will ask you to sign a consent form. I will sign this as well. This form explains that you agree for your answers to be used when I write up the research. The form also explains that the answers you give will be made anonymous so that no-one other than me and my supervisor know who said what. When I write up the results of the study I will give you a pseudonym (or a name that is not yours) which I will allocate at random. The form also explains that I will keep your confidence, I won't tell anyone specifically what you say to me nor that it was you that said it, **unless** you tell me something which suggests that you or another person may be at risk of harm. *You may change your mind about helping me with my research at any time and there are no negative consequences for you if you decide to not take part in the project or continue to take part in the project.*

How can I find out more?

I will be in the prison in the next few days doing some observation of what life here is like so you can ask me questions then. If you want to talk to me you can ask your Unit Manager to contact the IMB and I will try and arrange to come and meet you.

What do I do if I want to take part?

If you want to take part then tell your Unit Manager who will let me know and arrange to make an appointment for us to meet so that you can ask any extra questions and so that we can arrange a time for you to be interviewed.

Appendix Four

CENTRE FOR CRIMINOLOGY

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The Responsible Man: A Study in Two Private Prisons

Participant Information for Staff/Officers/IMB at HMP Nassington and HMP Wansford

Who am I?

My name is Sophie Palmer and I am a postgraduate Law student at the University of Oxford. My research is supervised by Dr Mary Bosworth.

Why am I here?

I am here at HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington to do qualitative research. This research is for my Doctoral Thesis, which is a postgraduate degree. I have spent over 2 years so far working on this and it will take another 18 months to two years to finish.

What is my research about?

My research is broadly about privately run prisons like HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington. I am interested in what life is like within private prisons. I would like to find out how serving their sentence or part of it in a private prison may be different to serving it in a prison that is not privatised for the men here. I am interested in the regimes in place for the men and what you think about the opportunities for prisoners. I am also interested in how you feel prisoners respond to opportunities and regime. I am also interested in how you think prisoners respond to being in a private prison and what you think about working in/being an IMB member of a private prison.

The main focus of my research is about responsibility. I am particularly interested in how prisoners may have responsibility in their job in the prison and in other areas of life here and what they and you think about responsibility.

I hope that by hearing from you about what the regime here is like and what is expected of you by more senior staff/IMB Governing Council etc. I can draw some conclusions about the wider role and place of the private prison in the modern world.

How can you help with the research?

I would like to interview a number of staff and IMB (including PCOs, Members of Senior Management, Unit and Workshop Managers, RMN and healthcare staff etc). The interview will last about 30-40 minutes and I will take notes. I will ask some questions about you and about your job/ role here at HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington. I will ask you what you think about many different things such as education and work and recreation opportunities for prisoners. Your involvement in sentence planning and how you manage your relationship with prisoners and engage with them.

I will also be observing life here more generally and visiting the units and workshops. If you do not want to be interviewed for the study or do not have time, I would still like to hear what you think and to learn about your role here so if you see me on your unit or in the workshop I'd be happy to talk to you.

What does taking part in the research mean and how will the information you give be used?

When you agree to take part in the research I will ask you to sign a consent form. I will sign this as well. This form explains that you agree for your answers to be used when I write up the research. The form also explains that the answers you give will be made anonymous so that no-one other than me and my research supervisor will know who said what. When I write up the results of the study I will give you a pseudonym (or a name that is not yours) or a numerical identifier which I will allocate at random. What you tell me is confidential. I will return to the prison on completion of my research to report my findings but anything you tell me will not be attributed to you and you will not be identified in any form verbally or in the written word.

You may change your mind about helping me with my research at any time and there are no negative consequences for you if you decide to not take part in the project or continue to take part in the project.

How can I find out more? What do I do if I want to take part?

I will be in the prison in the next few days doing some observation of what life here is like so you can ask me questions then. If you want to talk to me I'll be based in the IMB office in the Administration Block. You can leave a note for me in their pigeon hole and I will try and arrange to come and meet you. I will also be travelling around the site with the IMB so feel free to stop me at any point.

Appendix Five

CENTRE FOR CRIMINOLOGY
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The Responsible Man: A Study in Two Private Prisons

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Prisoners

1. Explanation of Research and Answering Questions (because of possible low literacy levels this is an opportunity to read the participant information sheet with the prisoner)
2. Signing of Consent Form – explain the following:
    a. Confidentiality clause
    b. Anonymity
    c. Free to leave at any time with no consequences
    d. No benefit (i.e. sentence reduction or incentives earned) for participating in the study
3. Opening
    a. How long have you served at HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington?
    b. What is the length of your sentence? (Don't necessarily need to know/ask this).
    c. Is this the only prison where you have served that sentence? (Have you also served a sentence time at HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington (i.e. other prison to where interview is taking place).
    a. Can you tell me more about your day/a typical day?
    d. Possibly ask what they think responsibility means? What is responsibility, how does it make you feel?

4. Privatisation

    a. Are you aware that HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington is a ‘contracted out’ or ‘private’ prison? What does this mean for you?

    b. If you have served time in another prison how does HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington differ?

    c. How is it the same?

    d. When/how did you notice a difference?

5. Work and Regime

    a. What work do you do?

    b. What are the opportunities for work like here?

    c. What skills have you gained?

    d. Responsibilities? Advancement?

    e. What other opportunities for work would you like to have?

6. Education

    a. What education programmes are you enrolled in/ have you completed?

    b. What are the opportunities for education like here?

    c. What skills have you gained?

    d. Responsibilities?

    e. What else would you like to be able to learn or gain qualifications in?

7. Socialisation

    a. What about socialisation?

    b. Tell me more about your day/week?

    c. Length of time for socialisation/time out of cell?

    d. Facilities? What do you do

e. Interaction with other inmates?

f. Interaction with Prison Officers?

g. Responsibility for managing relationships/behaviour/interaction?

h. Possibly ask about induction/admission (depend on time/interaction/opportunity)

8. Care Plan/Relationships with Staff

a. Have you got a care plan/sentence plan?

b. Is it useful?

c. How involved were you in making your plan?

d. Does it encourage you to be responsible/make choices?

e. Or... to take control of your sentence and to manage it?

f. How did your PO help in drawing up the plan?

g. Would you have liked more input in drawing up the plan?

h. What is your relationship like with staff? What are they like?

i. Do you see the Director (Governor) or Senior Managers?

j. What do you think about them?

9. Responsibility/Self-Governing

a. Do you think that the regime and life here encourages you to be more responsible?

b. Do you have to make choices or decisions? Can you give me an example? What happens if/when you don't or don't want to?

c. How is this different from other establishments where you have spent time? Can you have more responsibility/freedom to make choices? Is that good?

d. How does it make you more responsible? (Does it? Do you think you are?)

e. Is getting/being responsibility a good thing? Do you feel responsible? Or think you have choices/can make decisions for yourself?

f. How does being responsible/making decisions make you feel?

g. Is it always good/bad (as appropriate depending on answer). What are the benefits/ drawbacks?

h. Would you like more opportunities to make choices or take on responsibility or be involved with your sentence planning?

10. Coping

a. How does having or not having responsibility make you feel?

b. Is it a good thing? Do you want to make choices/decisions/be involved?

c. What effect do you think it will have on release?

d. Are there times when being responsible for you (sentence plan, work, education) is too much? (Can use duties/obligations/choices)

e. How do you cope if/when it is too much?

11. Closing

a. Opportunity for more questions

a. If I have follow up questions would you be happy to talk to me again?

b. Confirmation of what will happen with the interview data

c. Thanks

Appendix Six

CENTRE FOR CRIMINOLOGY
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The Responsible Man: A Study in Two Private Prisons

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Staff/Officers/IMB

1. Explanation of Research and Answering Questions
2. Signing of Consent Form – explain the following
    a. Confidentiality clause
    b. Anonymity
    c. Free to leave at any time

3. Opening
    a. What is your role at HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington?
    b. How long have you worked at/been involved with the IMB at HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington?
    c. Is this the only prison where you have worked/been on a board? If so - where? (Have you also worked at/ visited or been seconded to HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington (i.e. other prison to where interview is taking place).
    d. Where did you work before joining this company? (useful in workshops/education?). If commercial, do you bring skills/expectations from that role to this? (IMB where do you work, interesting for demographic etc.)
    e. Can you tell me more about your work/role? What are your responsibilities/duties? Can you tell me more about your day/a typical day?

4. Privatisation

    a. Are you aware that HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington is a ‘contracted out’ or ‘private’ prison?

    b. What do you think this means in terms of working here? Your job/role/conditions?

    c. How do you think HMP Wansford/HMP Nassington being private impact on prison life for the men here?

    d. Do the men realise the prison is contracted out? Do they highlight differences? How? What are the differences?

    e. Would you work for another prison operator/the prison service?

    f. What do you think of the company?

    g. What about management structure/style? (not to management)

    h. Do you see/work with the Controller?

5. Work and Regime

    a. What can you tell me about regime/opportunities here?

    b. What are the opportunities for work for the prisoner like here? Are there enough? Do the men make the most of them?

    c. What skills can prisoners gain? Are there opportunities for progression? Development?

    d. Are regime/opportunities providing prisoners with opportunities/incentives to be responsible? Are men encouraged to do something productive/engage?

    e. Responsibilities? Can you give me some examples? Do the men like/take on opportunities for responsibility?

    f. Should there be more/different work opportunities?

    g. Do the men express frustrations about work opportunities?

6. Education

    a. What do you think about the available education provision?

    b. What are the opportunities for education like here? Examples?

    c. What skills can/do prisoners gain?

d. Do these help/encourage them to be more responsible? How

e. Responsibilities? Examples? Progression?

f. Should there be more/different educational opportunities? Different courses/ qualifications?

7. Socialisation (link a,b,c into a question on responsibility if opportunity)

    a. What about socialisation?

    b. Length of time?

    c. Facilities?

    d. How do prisoners interact with other inmates?

    e. How do prisoners interact with Prison Officers? Are good/productive relationships encouraged/fostered? Is this on your initiative? Is this encouraged by management?

    f. Responsibility for managing relationships? Who has this?

8. Care Plan

    a. Are you involved in creating/managing care plans/sentence plans?

    b. Do you involve the prisoner in this?

    c. Does the plan/ do you encourage the individual to be responsible for themselves/ their plan?

    d. Or... to take control of their sentence and to manage it?

    e. How much input do prisoners have in drawing up their plan? Does this vary? How?

    f. What sort of choices/options can you give prisoners who want to be involved in their sentence plan?

    g. What do you think the effect of a prisoner having an input into his plan - good/bad?

    h. Do prisoners always want input into their plan? What happens if they don't want input/to be involved?

9. Responsibility/Self-Governing

    a. Do you think that the regime and life here encourages prisoners to be more responsible?

b. How is this different from other establishments where you may have visited/worked?

c. Is responsibility/involvement/engagement encouraged by Senior Management?

d. Does regime/life/expectations here make the men more responsible (or seek to)?

e. Are responsible/self-governing prisoners a good thing? (positives/negatives - any comments).

f. What is the impact of more responsible prisoners? - Is it always good/bad (as appropriate depending on answer)?

g. Can all prisoners be/become responsible?

h. What do you think responsibility means for the men?

i. What does responsibility mean for you?

j. If prisoners are more responsible, does that make them easier or harder to manage? Are there positive and negative consequences? Can you give me some examples?

10. Coping

a. What impact, in your experience, does more responsibility or having choices have on the men?

b. Is it a good thing?

c. What effect do you think (or they think) it will have on release?

d. Are there times when being responsible for (sentence plan, work, education, other) is too much for them?

e. How does this lack of ability to cope 'too much' manifest itself? What are the consequences? How do prisoners react? How do you/other prison staff/management react? Are there consequences?

11. Closing

a. Opportunity for more questions

b. Confirmation of what will happen with the interview data

c. If I have follow up questions would you be happy to talk to me again?

d. Thanks

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