

Keys to Successful Community Re-Integration

Homeless Not Houseless: Qualitatively Examining the Accommodation Experiences of People with Sexual Offences

Jessica Lomas, MSc
Belinda Winder, PhD
Nicholas Blagden, PhD
Rebecca Lievesley, MSc
Nottingham Trent University
Lynn Saunders, OBE
HMP Whatton

Accommodation is a basic human need (Maslow, 1947). For people leaving prison, accommodation contributes to reduced re-offending (Makarios, Steiner, & Travis, 2010), aids desistance (McNeill, Farrall, Lightowler, & Maruna, 2012), and enables people to achieve meaningful life goals (Tarpey & Friend, 2016). Previous research has examined post-release accommodation experiences in relation to specific, individual facilities (Pleggenkuhle, Huebner & Kras, 2015). Further research has focused narrower still, on the experiences of people with sexual offence convictions within certain facilities. Differing management policies (McCartan, Hogget, & O’Sullivan, 2018) and added levels of stigma towards people with sexual offences (Harper, Hogue, & Bartels, 2017) arguably render distinct investigations necessary. Reeves (2013) identified that social groupings within shared, transitional facilities act as foundations for a person’s identity in a way that “demonises and reinforces...the dominant discourse of ‘sex offender’” (p.383). Contrastingly, Mills and Grimshaw (2012) offer more positive views from residents within a facility solely for people with sexual offences. Where these investigations can offer valuable perspectives, the literature would benefit from greater insights into accommodation for people with sexual offence convictions on a broader level. This will enable a deeper understanding about people’s overall experiences, stimulating further discussion surrounding the importance of accommodation to people with sexual offence convictions.

This research aimed to explore accommodation and community re-entry experiences of people with sexual offence convictions, now living within any type of community accommodation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 people who had previously been convicted of a sexual offence. Data were analysed using Thematic Analysis. This paper presents the results of this qualitative analysis. It unpacks themes related to the immateriality of material things, instead emphasising psychological constructs associated with feelings of home. The findings are placed within the context of wider societal considerations, and implications regarding desistance are considered.

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Learning Goals:

- To learn about accommodation experiences and needs of people with sexual offence convictions.
- To identify psychological constructs associated with feelings of home, for people with sexual offence convictions.
- To be able to apply the findings within wider contexts of community reintegration.

Jessica Lomas is a Forensic Psychology PhD student, studying at Nottingham Trent University within the Sexual Offences, Crime and Misconduct Research Unit. Jessica works alongside the Safer Living Foundation charity, who deliver a range of projects aimed at preventing further sexual abuse. Jessica's research regarding accommodation hopes to practically inform the development of a new accommodation facility, delivered by the Safer Living Foundation. Jessica has experience working within Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, and in medium secure facilities. She currently assists teaching undergraduate psychology modules alongside her PhD studies.

Dr Nicholas Blagden is the Associate Head Sexual Offences, Crime and Misconduct Research Unit (SOCAMRU), Associate Professor in Forensic Psychology at Nottingham Trent University and trustee of the charity Safer Living Foundation. He is a Chartered Psychologist and has worked and researched within the criminal justice system and HM Prison Service for over ten years. He has taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses in psychology, forensic psychology and criminology. He has also trained police officers. His work has been funded by the HMPPS and he is currently engaged in numerous collaborative forensic projects with NTU, HMPPS, Institute for Mental Health, Ontario, Canada and Correctional Services Australia. He has published widely in international journals and disseminated research at international conferences.

Rebecca Lievesley is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology and member of the Sexual Offences, Crime and Misconduct Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University. She has worked and researched within the Criminal Justice System for around 10 years, currently engaged in various research projects including an investigation of reoffending and desistance in those serving short sentences, an evaluation of anti-libidinal medication for individuals convicted of a sexual offence and help seeking prior to committing a sexual offence. Rebecca is also a co-founder and trustee of the Safer Living Foundation, a charity established to reduce sexual (re)offending through rehabilitative initiatives and prevent further victims of sexual crime.

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Social Support Networks: Successful Community Reintegration for Men Convicted of Sexual Offenses

Tim App, BS
Dennis McNamara, CSS
Tim Sinn, MA
JoAnna Peters, BS
Counseling and Psychotherapy Center

This presentation describes the lived experience of men incarcerated for sexual offenses and released from custody in Maine. We examine the impact of a specific treatment program delivered inside and outside custody, the process of re-entry, the challenges of desistance, and in particular, the conditions and circumstances that promote or hinder their transition to living offense-free lives in the community. We begin by considering a larger custodial population of over 100 men who have all participated in a rigorous sexual offending treatment program for at least three years. The program is attachment based and its curriculum utilizes cognitive-behavioral approaches grounded in Risk-Needs-Responsivity, the Good Lives Model, Relapse Prevention, and pathways to offending. We draw on quantitative data to describe the overall characteristics of the men using demographics, admission summaries, police reports, officially recorded criminal histories, treatment reports, and discharge papers. Next, we focus on the experiences that a subsample of 29 men shared during interviews. Consistent with previous research on desistance from crime, we considered the impact of employment, education, and interpersonal relationships to understand how the program in question maintains an officially recorded recidivism rate of zero. Our results illustrate the extraordinary value of organic social support networks for the men as they navigated their reentry to the community. Finally, we discuss the policy implications of these findings and articulate some suggestions for future practice.

Learning Goals:

- At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:
- Understand the importance of social supports upon release from custody.
- Articulate the specific elements that promote or hinder desistance from offending.
- Understand the importance of multi-method research that combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Timothy F. App BS, is the President, Eastern Division, of the Counseling and Psychotherapy Center, a national sex offender management company operating in nine states, and a nationally recognized expert in the field of sex offender management. Mr. App is an adjunct Professor at Stonehill College in the Criminology/Sociology Department where he specializes in offender programming and ethics. Mr. App retired from the Massachusetts Department of Correction in 2003 following a distinguished 27-year career in which he held a variety of leadership positions, including being appointed

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in 1990 as the first Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Dennis McNamara LCSW, CSS, ATSAF a co-founder of CPC, has worked with sex offenders for over 40 years as a clinician and administrator in secure, transitional and out-patient settings. For the past 20 years he has consulted and lectured on the treatment and management of sex offenders.

Timothy Sinn MA received his Master's in Psychology, Clinical Concentration, from Bridgewater State College in 1990. Mr. Sinn's career began at the Massachusetts Treatment Center for the Sexually Dangerous where he worked for 20 years and was a Unit Director for the Civil population prior to leaving the MTC and joining The Counseling and Psychotherapy Center (CPC). Mr. Sinn is a Clinical Member of ATSA and on the Board of MATSA. He works closely with Probation and Parole under the Containment Model, currently facilitating groups out of, and with the Barnstable Superior Court Probation Department. He has done numerous trainings for Probation and Parole, State Police, Universities, ATSA, and the California Coalition on Sexual Offending (CCOSO). He conducts risk and needs assessments for sexual offenders, individual and group treatment, and supervises and trains clinical staff members.

Danielle Arlanda Harris is the Deputy Director-Research of the Griffith Youth Forensic Service and a Senior Lecturer in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. She has published more than 25 articles and book chapters and has given over 50 presentations at international conferences. Her research examines sexual aggression through a life course perspective, examining onset, specialization/versatility, desistance, and related public policy. Her study of civilly committed sex offenders in Massachusetts was funded by the Guggenheim Foundation and she recently received a grant from the California Sex Offender Management Board for a state-wide survey of community supervision practices. Her first book—which draws on the narratives of 74 men convicted of sexual offenses and released from custody—was released in December.