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## **Earthquake, Aftershocks and Rebuilding:**

***A hermeneutic phenomenological exploration of the experiences of the Criminal Justice System for men investigated for Child Sexual Exploitation Material offences in the UK.***

Lynsey Fenwick

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Leeds Beckett University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

This research programme was carried out in collaboration with The Lucy Faithfull Foundation

Submitted: March 2024

## Abstract

***“So basically, ‘the knock’ feels like it was like the epicentre of a big earthquake, and then had these knock on effects that we weren’t even anticipating” [Hugh]***

Previous research has demonstrated collateral consequences for those convicted of child sexual offences, including Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) offences, in particular around suicide and mental health; however there is a lack of current evidence centering the experiences of the men themselves across their journey of the CJS. The aim of my research was to explore the experience of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) with men under investigation and convicted of Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM), from their arrest through to sentencing and beyond. I also aimed to incorporate how any support that they have accessed (including that from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, LFF) may have affected their experience.

After an initial scoping review to understand the research landscape I used Hermeneutic Phenomenology (HP) as a research approach and recruited nine participants (six through LFF and three through criminal justice organisations). Conducting repeated interviews over twelve months, alongside researcher directed diaries, and an ethnographic approach, I collected a rich data set. Through the engagement with HP philosophy, I was able to understand and describe the men’s experience of the CJS as being in five distinct phases, from life before their arrest, through to the life altering effects that they encountered, to their attempts to build a future. The ‘earthquake’ of their arrest and the many aftershocks epitomised their experiences, which were characterised by ‘unexpectedness’ at many points throughout their journeys. Their abilities to make connections and to manage their visibility and their identities, with the help of formal and informal support, were key to navigating the journey.

My research concludes with the implications of my findings for strategy and policy for organisations within and closely aligned to the CJS and those that provide support to those under investigation and convicted. The CJS, in relation to CSEM offences, is disjointed and lengthy, providing little help, information or support to those being prosecuted, or their families. Changes to the way that the CJS operates and manages these offences will reduce the current burden that the CJS finds itself under as well as improving the circumstances of those under investigation and convicted. Working more closely with support organisations, such as LFF, the CJS can foster an environment where improved prevention and early intervention, alongside vital, consistent and coordinated support, reduces the occurrence of these offences and improves the lives of those who have committed them and their families.

## Acknowledgements

***“If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving”***

***Martin Luther King Jr***

This quote perfectly illustrates my PhD journey. At times I ran, at times I felt like I was barely moving. That said, a number of amazing people helped to keep me going forward.

Firstly, I am indebted to the Lucy Faithfull Foundation who part funded my research and provided me with the trust, support, time and space to explore my ideas. I want to extend my thanks to my incredible, wise and patient supervisory team: Dr Rhys Turner-Moore, Dr Paula Singleton, Professor Sarah Brown and Stuart Allardyce without whom moving forward would not have been possible and who had more faith in me than I had in myself at times.

I was also lucky enough (although mostly interrupted through the joys of a global pandemic) to find some kindred spirits and PhD peers who sparked many thoughts, ideas and unconcealed perspectives across the breadth of my PhD (Francesca, Marion and Jack in particular). I am forever grateful to the participants who took part in this research; for taking the time to share their experiences, for trusting me with their stories and without whom none of this would be possible. I hope that I have done them justice. I also wish to thank those that helped me to recruit my participants, in particular those at the Lucy Faithfull Foundation and the facilitators there that gave freely and with incredible insight of their time to support me.

Lastly, none of this, not one single word, would have been possible without the care, support, hugs and wine provided by my friends and family. I dedicate this thesis to my son, Riley. Always look beyond, always follow your dreams, always aim for the stars. Sometimes you’ll fail but sometimes you’ll fly.

## Author declaration

I hereby confirm that this thesis is my own work. The thesis, or any part thereof, has not been previously submitted for any degree or comparable award.

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# 1 Introduction

This thesis represents a hermeneutic phenomenological study to explore the experience of men under investigation, charged or convicted of child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) offences across the breadth of the Criminal Justice System (CJS). This chapter will introduce my study covering my own impetus for completing the research. I will go on to explore an understanding of the CJS in the UK and across the world more widely, define CSEM and explain where it sits in the CJS. I will also describe the background research landscape that underpinned this study.

## 1.1 My impetus for this study

### ***‘Going from a high-profile life, to no life at all’ (West Yorkshire Police, 2018)***

As someone who had spent the last 15 or so years prior to my PhD engaged in one way or another working with survivors of sexual violence, the topic area of my PhD came as no surprise but the focus caught many friends and colleagues off guard.

*‘Why would you want to do that?’ ‘Why would you want to talk to them?’*

These are the questions that I have heard repeatedly for the last five years. I received advice from fellow academic researchers to be careful what I talked about during research presentations, because people do not want to hear from ‘offenders’. These comments not only highlighted to me the stigma attached to sexual violence as a topic area in general (which was something that I was acutely aware of) but the additional stigma attached to those that had committed these offences and who were navigating the CJS. It struck me that I had not consciously considered this in any detail before. To my mind it was very clear from the beginning that involving those that commit these offences in research can be a powerful and effective way to help prevent offending behaviour.

I still vividly remember my vaguely formed notion of ‘doing’ a PhD, flicking through possible ideas when I saw an advert for what eventually became this study and this thesis. I recall the striking statistics from a report I read at that time; those involved in CSEM offences account for almost 30% of suicides for all offending types and almost 80% of suicides for those arrested for a sexual offence (Key et al., 2018). Unearthing the campaign by West Yorkshire Police through my initial research (a quote from which is at the start of this chapter) has stuck in my head (and adorned a post-it note on my laptop) ever since.

## 1.2 What is CSEM?

CSEM (also known as child sexual abuse material and indecent images of children amongst a plethora of other names) is any material including any images, audio and chatroom conversations that depict child sexual exploitation (see Merdian et al., 2018). In recent years the research landscape has begun to develop in the area of CSEM, although this is still relatively limited compared with research on contact sex offending (CSO). There are clear overlaps between CSO and CSEM, there are also distinct differences between those that commit CSEM and those that commit contact offences with children, either physically in person, or through online interactions (Henshaw et al., 2017). The research related to CSEM has tended to focus on these differences/similarities (Sheehan & Sullivan, 2010), for example the crossover risk between CSO/CSEM offending (Houtepen et al., 2014), offender typologies (see for example Henshaw et al., 2017), and the risk of re-offending (Seto, 2017). This is not surprising; much of the research relating to sex offending behaviour more widely is aimed at understanding the offending behaviour and the prevention and minimisation of risk of harm, with the emphasis on the impact of offending behaviour on others, rather than the impact on the offenders themselves (Perkins et al., 2018).

Examining the growing literature base around the underlying motivation of those that commit CSEM offences, there is a reported link between CSEM offending and paedophilia/hebephilia (defined as persistent and recurrent sexual interest in children, see Seto & Eke, 2017), with those that commit these offences having been identified as being more likely to present with these sexual interests (Seto et al., 2006). Prior research has noted that those that commit CSEM were, for example, more likely to have lower antisocial tendencies and less access to children compared to those that commit CSO and that this offence, similarly to other sexual offending, is almost exclusively committed by men (see for example Merdian, 2012 and Rimer, 2021). In a similar way to those that commit CSO, offence supportive cognitions are also prevalent in those that commit CSEM offences; however, these seem to be distinct from those that commit CSO (Babchishin et al., 2018; Paquette & Cortoni, 2022; Paquette & Fortin, 2023 and Steel et al., 2020).

Having a sexual interest in children, although linked to CSEM offending is not the only underlying motivation or factor for those who commit these offences. Other research has suggested, for example, that CSEM offending can be a progression from viewing legal pornography (Winder et al., 2015); an escalatory process that can, at least in part, be explained through the effects of sexual arousal. CSEM offending has been described by the men themselves as a maladaptive coping mechanism for their problems (Kothari et al., 2021).

## 1.3 The Criminal Justice System

The CJS can be described as the system of agencies involved in the detection and prevention of crime, the prosecution of people accused of committing crimes, the conviction and sentencing of those found guilty, and the imprisonment and rehabilitation of those who have committed offences. In the UK these agencies include the police, the crown prosecution service (CPS), the court system and the probation service (see Garside & Grimshaw, 2022). There are many other organisations and charities that work alongside the formal elements of the CJS in the UK (such as Social Care, the LFF and mental health) however these organisations are not a core part of the formal agencies that encompass the CJS. The agencies and organisations involved differ slightly across the world and, although I will at points discuss countries outside of the UK, this thesis will concentrate on the system and experiences of those within England and Wales.

### 1.3.1 Purpose of the CJS

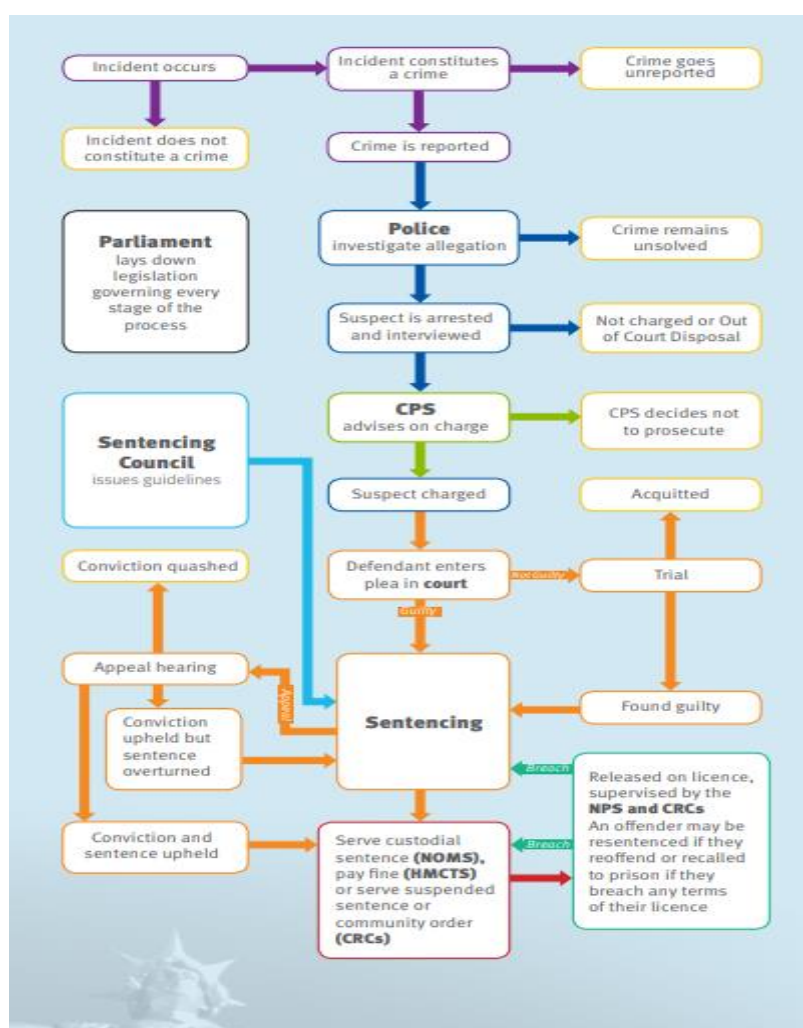
The purpose of the CJS, in the UK at least, is to ‘deliver justice for all, by punishing the guilty, helping them to stop offending whilst protecting the innocent’ (Garside, 2008 p.1), with the system having been created as a way to control crime and protect the public (McAlinden, 2017). This definition would tend to suggest that the CJS incorporates punishment alongside rehabilitation and the prevention of crime. The underlying purpose and, therefore the way that the system is enacted, however, is not as straightforward as it may initially seem. Inevitably, the CJS in the UK and beyond is influenced by the social and cultural context within which it is situated and therefore by both public and political opinion. The ‘Working together to cut crime and deliver justice’ report (OJCR, 2007), a government strategic plan delivered in 2007, stated that the central purpose of the CJS is to deliver ‘an efficient, effective, accountable and fair justice process for the public’ (p.7). By introducing concepts such as efficiency into the purpose of the CJS, this changes the ethos, and by extension, the application of the components of the system.

Adding to the seemingly opaque purpose of the CJS, there have been many critiques of the CJS, its purpose and whether the system acts fairly with regard to its citizens (for further see Sanders & Young, 2007). In relation to those that commit offences, it has been suggested that the CJS socially excludes those that are considered ‘deviant’ (McAlinden, 2016). It is this concept of reintegration, and an examination of how the CJS works in relation to those who have committed CSEM, that is one of the central purposes of this study and this thesis.

### 1.3.2 CJS structure and processes

The CJS in the UK has a number of contact points with those that commit offences, including, notably at arrest, bail, charge, conviction and sentence. The system consists of multiple processes and organisations that should work together to fulfil the purposes and aims of the system. The image at figure one depicts the main components and flow of the CJS in England and Wales.

*Figure 1 The structure and process of the CJS in England and Wales (Sentencing Council, 2023)*



The first point at which those who have committed offences have contact with the CJS is often at the point of arrest. It is a complex system as figure 1 demonstrates and negotiating it can be a difficult and bewildering process for those under investigation (Key et al., 2018 and Woodward, 2018). This applies particularly to those who have little knowledge, or experience, of how the system operates and what is involved, which is often the case for those who have committed CSO/CSEM offences (Key et al., 2018).

## 1.4 The CJS and CSEM

The CJS in relation to sexual offending, and more specifically CSEM, although broadly following the structure and processes depicted in figure 1 has some notable differences. This will be explored within this next section.

### 1.4.1 High volume of offences and investigations

There has been a significant rise in reported sexual offending and the subsequent prosecution and conviction of those that commit these offences in the UK. The volume of sexual offences recorded by the police has almost tripled in recent years (ONS, 2023) and the additional burden caused through the pandemic restrictions has exacerbated the issues (see section 1.4.2 below). However, although these increases largely reflect improvements in the recording of these types of crimes by the police and the increase in victims who have been willing to report the offences (Justice, 2019), there are still concerns around under-reporting (McGlyn & Westmarland, 2019). This is a little different when looking at CSEM offences, as many of these offences are not reported by a definable 'victim' but are often identified through other means, for example through special operations mounted by law enforcement agencies (see for example Griffin-Shelley, 2014).

Although CSEM offences have been enshrined in law in England and Wales since 1978 (CPS, 2023), only in recent years with the increased accessibility, affordability and anonymity (Quayle, 2020) provided by the internet have these offences become more widespread (Babchishin et al., 2018). In 2022 the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) logged more than 63,000 webpages showing the material compared to 5,000 before the pandemic (IWF, 2022) demonstrating the continued increase in the prevalence of these images.

To combat this growth, the focus on the investigation and prosecution of offences relating to CSEM has increased. Arrests went up in the UK by over 184% between 2010 and 2015 (Key et al., 2018) with reports that the police in the UK made 1700 arrests in one year in 2023 (NPCC, 2024). Seto (2017) commented that the volume of CSEM usage was too high for either clinicians or law enforcement to effectively manage, and the volume has since increased further. Indeed, a recent review of the prosecution of sexual offences in the UK demonstrated that the sheer scale of CSEM offending does not allow the CJS to act efficiently or effectively in its current state (Justice, 2019 and Steel et al., 2022).

Inevitably these issues have the potential to impact on both the efficiency of the system and on the individuals that are involved in each investigation and conviction. The Police appear to take longer to investigate sexual offences than other crime types with 41% of sexual crimes



still without an outcome 100 days after they had been recorded, compared with around 12% for other violent crimes (Justice, 2019) and offences often take 18 months to investigate to conclusion (Rimer, 2021). Alongside this, the sentencing guidelines for CSEM offences in the UK have been re-considered, potentially increasing the severity to bring them more in line with contact offences (Dearden, 2018, enacted in May 2022). The increases have also come at a time of countrywide austerity whereby the multiple organisations involved in the CJS have had to make efficiency savings, exacerbating the challenges faced by an already overburdened system (Justice, 2019 and Steel et al., 2022).

#### 1.4.2 Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

The lockdown restrictions and subsequent increased use of online technology during the Covid-19 pandemic led to concerns by the UK authorities and academics of an increase in CSEM offending (Dabrowska, 2021 and Harris et al., 2021). Recent data has demonstrated that although most crime types decreased during the pandemic, online CSEM increased (Harris et al., 2021 and NSPCC, 2021), with the pandemic at least partly a factor (Nardett et al., 2021). At the same time that the pandemic impacted the volume of offending it also impacted on the capacity of the CJS to manage offending behaviour (Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, 2022).

The sheer scale of digital evidence that is collated as part of these investigations inevitably leads to delays, as prosecution agencies just do not have the resources to enable them to be efficiently and effectively managed (Franqueira et al., 2018; Justice, 2019 and Steel et al., 2022). Changes in technology, for example, the search and storage abilities of smartphones, means that we have the ease of access at our fingertips. Delay is a significant issue in relation to CSEM offending (Justice, 2019 and Steel et al., 2019). Those arrested often have numerous digital devices through which they have committed offences, which necessitates their examination to ascertain evidence. This results in investigations taking many months and sometimes years to complete (Kothari et al., 2021 and Rimer, 2021).

#### 1.4.3 Additional ancillary restrictions and risk management

Alongside imposing a sentence (such as a community order or custodial sentence, see figure 1), in England and Wales the Magistrate or, more likely in the case of CSEM/CSO, the Crown Court Judge can also impose additional orders/restrictions (Sentencing Council, 2023). These can be separate from the original sentence and/or part of the licence conditions. In practice, although not compulsory, it is unusual for people convicted of these offences not to be subjected to additional restrictions (see figure 2 below). These form part of the risk management strategy around those that commit sex offences (McAlinden, 2016) and are

generally imposed for reasons of public protection, rather than as part of the sentence (McAlinden, 2016).

*Figure 2 Ancillary sentences for sexual offending in England and Wales\* (Sentencing Council, 2023)*

<b>Serious crime prevention order (SCPO)</b> An SCPO may be made by the Crown Court in respect of qualifying offenders, if the court is satisfied such an order would protect the public by preventing, restricting or disrupting the involvement of the offender in serious crime.	Section 19 and Schedule 1 of the Serious Crime Act 2007
<b>Sexual offences prevention order (SOPO)</b> A SOPO may be made against qualifying offenders if the court is satisfied such an order is necessary to protect the public or any particular member of the public from serious sexual harm from the offender. The terms of the SOPO must be proportionate to the objective of protecting the public and consistent with the sentence and other ancillary orders, conditions and requirements to which the offender is subject.	Section 104 and Schedules 3 and 5 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
<b>Notification requirements</b> A relevant offender automatically becomes subject to notification requirements, obliging him to notify the police of specified information for a specified period. The court should inform the offender accordingly.	Sections 80 to 88 and Schedule 3 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003
<i>The operation of the notification requirement is not a relevant consideration in determining the sentence for the offence.</i>	
<b>Protection for children and vulnerable adults</b> A statutory scheme pursuant to which offenders <i>will or may</i> be barred from regulated activity relating to children or vulnerable adults, with or without the right to make representations, depending on the offence. The court should inform the offender accordingly.	Section 2 and Schedule 3 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006  Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009 (SI 2009/37) (as amended)

\*SOPO were replaced in 2015 by sexual harm prevention orders (SHPO) which has served to decrease the level of likely harm required prior to being imposed; however the essence of the orders remains the same. (Sentencing Council, 2023)

Those who have committed CSEM offences are all subject to notification requirements and other forms of monitoring, as well as for the majority, the restrictions related to a Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO). Being subject to the Sex Offender Register requires individuals to notify the police of their whereabouts and to do so within a specified time from conviction or release from prison (see Sentencing Council, 2023). The period of time for which someone is subject to the notification requirements depends upon the offence they have committed and the sentence that they have received. For those who have committed CSEM offences, this is likely to be at least five years. Once the convicted person is in the community (either as a result of serving a community sentence or release from prison), they will also be the subject

of a risk assessment and further intervention through the probation service (Sentencing Council, 2023). SHPOs are commonly used by the court for those convicted of CSEM. The sentencing and restrictions for those that commit these types of offences have seen an increase in both public concerns and increasingly punitive risk management responses over recent decades (see for example Harris & Levenson, 2021 and Steel et al., 2022).

## 1.5 The concept of 'Justice'

Although I have discussed the purpose, structure and processes related to the CJS, the aims of this project highlight the importance of exploring the concept of 'Justice'. In this section I highlight some of the key considerations around the concept that are pertinent to this research.

### 1.5.1 The definition of justice

Justice, in its most basic definition according to the Cambridge English dictionary (2023), is the concept of fairness, and in the context of crime, that those that commit offences are convicted. Most people would view justice within society as punishing those found guilty of committing a crime; however, the CJS has a broader responsibility, going back to its purpose, as described in section 1.3.1, to assist in the rehabilitation of those that commit crimes, and, therefore, the prevention of further offences (McGlyn & Westmarland, 2021). Although on the face of it this seems straightforward, there are many factors that impact and influence the CJS. From a policy perspective, successive governments have been elected in a large part based on their stance on crime. Success has been achieved in politics by those espousing the promise to be "tough on crime" (for example the electoral win of the Labour party in 1997, see Newburn, 2007), which inevitably has translated into harsher punishments, an increase in prison occupancy, and a reluctance to manage crime in more innovative ways (see Justice, 2019). However, current sentencing guidelines for CSEM means that many of those convicted do not serve time in prison but instead are punished through sentences in the community (Sentencing Council, 2023), with the additional restrictions reserved for those that commit sex-related crimes (as already alluded to in figure 2). Although the courts in the UK can sentence those convicted for up to 10 years in prison, custodial sentences are mostly reserved for those that make and/or share images and those that possess more extreme images (Sentencing Council, 2023).

### 1.5.2 Models and concepts of justice

The current justice system in the UK and in other countries such as the US have been developed through a crime control, risk-based justice model; this can be seen particularly with regard to sex related offences (McAlinden, 2016). In this model, the policies are designed to

capture and negate any future risk, which in practice has led to the extended monitoring of those who have committed sexual offences, such as through the Sex Offender Register (SOR), SHPOs and ongoing management of their lifestyle and activities (see for example Mann et al., 2021; McAlinden, 2016 and Pemberton et al., 2023) that were discussed in section 1.4.3 above. Although crime control and punishment are key aspects of the CJS and the model of justice utilised within the UK, rehabilitation and restoration are also notable concepts within the justice sphere. This section will explore aspects and concepts around justice pertinent to this thesis.

#### *1.5.2.1 Rehabilitation*

In the UK, rehabilitation is a key consideration that forms part of the decision-making process for sentencing for CSEM offences, as well as CSO offences (see Sentencing Council, 2023). Rehabilitation, where those that commit offences are given the opportunity to change their behaviour and become productive members of society, requires an active process on behalf of both the state/organisation and the person themselves by which steps are taken to reduce or minimise the likelihood of further offending (Merdian et al., 2017). As part of a risk management strategy, and in order to prevent future reoffending, rehabilitation is a key factor in the CJS around sex offending (Steel et al., 2022). Rehabilitative interventions in relation to sexual offending including CSEM are discussed in a later part of this chapter and will feature as part of this thesis more widely.

#### *1.5.2.2 Restorative justice*

Restorative justice, a process through which parties (including the victim and perpetrator) involved as part of an offence resolve how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future as a collective (CPS, 2023) is sometimes used in the UK as part of the justice process for sex offences, most commonly where young people have engaged in sexual harm. Although rarely used formally in the UK, restorative approaches have been used as a form of justice for sexual crimes elsewhere however it is a subject of debate more widely where sex crimes are concerned (see for example Rye et al., 2018).

#### *1.5.2.3 Procedural Justice*

‘Procedural justice’ as a concept embodies the idea of fairness for all; identifying that justice should provide all citizens including those that commit offences with a voice, treat them with respect and courtesy and that justice should be applied without bias (Murphy et al., 2014). This is an important point where those that commit offences are concerned since ‘procedurally just treatment at the hands of officials is a precondition for the justifiable exercise of state

power' (Meyerson et al., 2020 p.1). In other words, fair treatment of all citizens by the state is a fundamental requirement for justice. Murphy (2020) depicts four elements of procedural justice, these being respect, neutrality, trustworthiness, and voice. As such, the CJS (and therefore the processes that comprise it and people working within it) should be set to provide justice that is in the best interests of the community and the citizens that the system serves, be trusted to treat people equally and respectfully, and citizens should have a voice in situations that involve them (Murphy, 2020) including both those subjected to crimes and those who have committed them. Procedural justice should be embodied by the way that the justice system is constructed, how the processes involved in the CJS operate and the actions of the personnel that work within it. We already know that, for example, the way that organisations and processes are set up can be discriminatory (for example, institutional racism in policing, highlighted in Holdaway & O'Neill, 2006) and therefore when considering the experiences of those subject to the CJS the aspects of procedural justice should be borne in mind.

Alongside the moral justification for authorities not to dismiss procedural justice, evidence has also suggested that CJS approaches based on procedural justice are more effective than other deterrence-based strategies that rely on coercion or reward mechanisms (Meyerson et al., 2020). While crime control and punishment-oriented policies rely on motivations such as fear of punishment, procedural justice is more likely to encourage belief in the legitimacy of authorities, and to promote the internalisation of legal norms and voluntary compliance with the law (see for example Tyler, 2008). How those under investigation and convicted of sex related offences view their treatment has been considered in some previous research for some aspects of the system (such as by the police or courts) but not across the CJS as a whole (see Brown et al., 2018 and McCartan et al., 2021). This is also true for victims of these crimes and this will be considered in the next section. It has been argued that people care as much about procedures, as they do about outcomes, and their experiences are shaped by relational factors, such as the attitudes expressed by the authorities that interact with them (Meyerson et al., 2020). It also appears that how the police perform, and how their acts are experienced by citizens, are important for building both trust and confidence (Hollander-Blumhoff, 2016). Interpersonal experiences between individual police officers and those treated under investigation, or who have been convicted could be crucial for determining their trust and confidence in authority (Murphy et al., 2014), and in turn affect their desistance from crime and reintegration into their communities.

#### *1.5.2.4 'Victim' perspectives on justice*

I have discussed justice so far in terms of the system itself, its purpose, and the different models that underpin the concept; however, it is also important to consider what justice means

to the people involved and who are subjected to different aspects of the system. Although the majority of crimes will have at least one ‘victim’, in the UK it is not the victim that prosecutes an ‘offender’ nor arguably do they have much control over what happens to the case (McGlyn & Westmarland, 2019). There is an expectation that victims want and should receive justice but it is not clear what that does or should mean for *them* (Daly, 2006) and even the term ‘victim’ itself is not how many that have been victims of sex offences prefer to be described (see for example Ross, 2022). As they are referred to as victims throughout the CJS I will refer to them in those terms here. Indeed, there is current research interest in exploring victim-centred justice (McGlyn & Westmarland, 2019) and a growing evidence base around the ‘justice gap’ victims of sexual offences experience, linked to the punitive, traditional view of justice not necessarily representing what victims want to experience (Carroll, 2022). Daly (2017), in a link to procedural justice, identified that often victims want to have a voice within the system and for those that committed offences against them to take responsibility for them, rather than purely see them punished through a court (see also Hester et al., 2023). Victims also regard rehabilitation, or at least the prevention of recurrence of offending, as an important aspect of their perception of justice (McGlyn & Westmarland, 2019). Carroll (2022) further argued that, in fact, justice for sexual violence victims has little to do with a successful prosecution through the CJS, i.e. the punishment of those that commit the offences.

In the current system in the UK, victims are not legally represented however the level of service that they receive from the CJS is set out in the victim’s code (Victim Support, 2024) and they are able to provide a victim personal statement describing the impact on them. This does not enable them to have a voice in how the offence is managed or the nature of the sentence for those convicted. The views and perspectives of victims about the offences committed against them, those that committed them and the CJS more widely around what constitutes justice is little regarded within the system currently.

#### *1.5.2.5 ‘Offender’ perspectives on justice*

‘Offender’ is the widely used term through which those that commit offences are identified across the CJS, although the term is subject to debate (see Willis, 2017). Examining the views of those under investigation/convicted for an offence of their treatment within the CJS is important in order to consider the effectiveness of how the processes within the CJS are structured and delivered, and ultimately to assess and develop a system that delivers justice for all. This type of service user evaluation is embedded across many organisations, particularly within the public sector such as in healthcare (see for example Haggerty et al., 2011), but is lacking across criminal justice (McCartan et al., 2021).



McCartan et al. (2021) argued that those that commit sex offences experience interactions with numerous individuals, processes and services across the CJS and should be regarded as 'service users' but that little thought has been given to obtaining their thoughts and views. The prior research and evaluation that has been conducted has tended to obtain their views of certain aspects of the system such as their experiences of prison (for example Blagden & Wilson, 2020), as I have noted, rather than the system as a whole, or the concept of justice more widely. Sex offender registries, particularly in the USA, have been explored with perspectives suggesting that these are seen as unfair by those subject to them (see for example Frenzel et al., 2014 and Haynes & Cares, 2015) often due to the additional consequences that they face as a result such as loss of employment and accommodation. Prisons in the UK have incorporated the viewpoints of inmates (see Clinks, 2011), in order to develop the services provided, although less about their viewpoint on justice specifically. There is some suggestion of spill-over of the views and experience from one aspect of the CJS to another, that is, those that viewed that they had had a more positive experience of the police (or other early interaction with the system) were more likely to have further positive views on other aspects such as the courts (Brown et al., 2018 researching with those that had committed sex offences and been incarcerated). There is also a small body of research relating to the impact of the contact that the police have with those that commit offences more generally (see for example Lopes et al., 2012). This research has unearthed a link between police contact and offending behaviour, suggesting that police contact, particularly negative contact, can increase, rather than decrease, future offending behaviour (Lopes et al., 2012).

The negative way that those who have committed sex crimes are viewed by the public, the CJS and in the wider political arena could provide the foundation as to why their voices generally remain hidden and are not included in the comments and discussions around CJS provision (Blagden & Pemberton, 2010 and McCartan et al., 2021). In the Justice report (2019) that examined the way that sexual offences were prosecuted in England and Wales, the contributors included practitioners, lawyers and academics with very little of the information relating specifically to those who were subjected to the system either as victims or those that had committed offences. As I mentioned at the start of this thesis, excluding those that commit offences from having their voice heard risks missing a vital link in the chain around the prevention of sexual offending. Including these voices and their experiences across the breadth of the CJS will potentially help to identify areas where support and treatment can make the most impact.

## 1.6 CSEM in the social and cultural context

So now that I have explored the CJS, I want to concentrate on sexual offences, and specifically CSEM, and the social and cultural lens through which they are viewed by the CJS and wider society. As I have already alluded to, the CJS is influenced by public opinion and the political environment. This influence affects the general justice model that underpins the system, the laws enacted and the way that the legal system operates. Although the CJS is a collection of processes that sit within organisations and agencies, these are all managed by the individuals that work within them. Each person's perspective is coloured by their own frame of reference, their experiences and cultural context within which they reside; as human beings in the world we subconsciously conform to societal norms and values (Heidegger, 1962 and Kelly et al., 2016). With this in mind, it is important for this piece of work to reflect on the current societal view of CSEM offences and those that commit them.

### 1.6.1 Societal views and the impact of the media

Society has long considered individuals that commit sexual offences to be amongst the most heinous of people (see Tewksbury & Lees, 2006), with those that commit CSEM offences viewed as indistinct from those that commit CSO (Dearden, 2018). A quick glance through local social media groups and online newspaper threads demonstrates that these are teeming with stories around child sexual abuse and CSEM, often filled with lurid, emotive words and descriptions serving as 'click bait' both in the on and offline world (Harper & Hogue, 2015). There has, in parallel, also been a steady stream of widely circulated stories focused on high profile investigations of sexual offences (such as that of the broadcaster Jimmy Saville) and a number of television programmes relating to the topic (see Mangan, 2020). Described as both 'revolting and fascinating' (Ilea, 2018 p. 358), the idea of the 'sex offender' grabs the attention of the public.

A brief search of my local news brought up the following headlines:

*A depraved child rapist may now die in prison after the sickening crimes he carried out against young girls in Sheffield were exposed (Marshall & Kessen, 2022)*

*Sheffield man with perverted sexual interest in children downloaded child abuse images of babies<sup>1</sup> (Marshall, 2022)*

Although the UK media seems to be preoccupied with crime stories in general, articles relating to sexual crimes have been found to have much more emotionally negative language than



other crime types (Harper & Hogue, 2015). Anyone related to this crime type in the media is often labelled a 'paedophile', however it has been estimated that only about one-third of media coverage portrays paedophilia realistically (Stelzmann et al., 2020). Further, McCartan (2004) suggested that this emotionally negative reporting of sexual crime negatively influences public opinion about the risk that is posed by those that commit these offences and the way that they are dealt with through the CJS (see also Silverman & Wilson, 2002). Indeed, recent research from the USA suggested that the public may view CSEM offences and those that commit them more severely than other offences, overestimate the risk posed and be less favourable towards treatment rather than incarceration (Steel et al., 2022). Although clearly in the UK and further afield the CJS encompasses both punishment and rehabilitation, the impact of public opinion and the influence of the media could hamper efforts to manage offending and the system more effectively.

The national press has been cited as agenda setters of political and public discussion in the UK with this influence especially noticeable in the area of criminal justice (Harper & Hogue, 2015). There are clear links between the reporting of high-profile cases both in the UK (and in areas across the world) and the management of crime. The reporting of these cases not only impacts public opinion but has been instrumental in high profile campaigns that have resulted in policy change; for example, the campaign after the murder of Sarah Payne was championed by a prominent tabloid newspaper in the UK (see also McCartan & Richards, 2021; Navarro & Higgins, 2023; Robinson, 2011 and Zatkin et al., 2022). This campaign led to the introduction of sex offender notification in the UK (McAlinden, 2016). The media, and in recent years social media, comments discuss the sentencing of those that commit these offences with many comments anecdotally echoing that found by Steel et al. (2022).

The negative societal view of those that commit these types of offences is longstanding, pervasive and identified through both research and the media including social media. Inevitably these views influence not only the public but those that work within the CJS and those that govern it.

## 1.7 Summary

This section sought to outline the concept of justice and the structure and processes related to the CJS, particularly in relation to CSO and CSEM in the UK. The way that justice is enacted is a complex issue with currently neither the perspective of victims' nor those that commit offences' being incorporated into the structure, processes or management of the CJS. There is a growing interest, however, in this area of research and a push for this to translate into practice to develop and improve the way that the CJS operates. In sexual crimes, in particular,

the need for prevention and novel, innovative ways to manage the seemingly ever-increasing volume of sexual offences could be key.

## 1.8 Collateral consequences of the CJS

*“They may as well just walk up to you and hang a banner around yourself that says ‘You’re Jimmy Savile, version 2.’” (West Yorkshire Police, 2018,)*

The term “invisible punishment” was first used by Chesney-Lind and Mauer (2002) and Travis (2002) to describe the additional consequences for those convicted and incarcerated alongside the formal sentences for their behaviour. The additional and unseen effects of incarceration have been noted elsewhere; for example, Western and Pettit (2010) refer to the invisible inequality created by the nature of incarceration, identifying that even upon release the social and economic inequality remains. The issues that those who have been incarcerated face upon release and the additional restrictions that those convicted of sexual offences have imposed upon them both in the UK and further afield mean that they experience ‘collateral consequences’ (Tewksbury, 2010 p. 607), whereby they experience additional and unintended consequences such as loss of employment and difficulty locating appropriate housing. Collateral consequences are pertinent in the UK, USA and beyond and are both part of the formal process whereby, for example, those convicted will have restrictions placed on where they can live and who they can live with, their use of the internet etc. (see for example Tewksbury, 2012) but alongside this they experience additional unintended consequences. A good example of this is the restriction of location of residence, imposed, for example, to ensure that those convicted cannot live near children, can mean that these men cannot find suitable accommodation in their area, which impacts on their life stability, their ability to get a job and potentially brings them in breach of their licence which requires them to reside in an appropriate residence (Levenson, 2008). The lack of access to the internet, in today’s world, can severely hamper their ability to find work but also to take part in normal, routine activities such as accessing online banking, or watching television (Justice, 2019 and Tovey et al., 2022).

The current climate of high-profile sexual violence cases, reported widely in the media and referred to in section 1.6.1 of this thesis, has further fuelled public interest, with perpetrators of any type of sexual offence facing issues such as stigma and negative labelling (Jeglic et al., 2013). This has the consequence of exacerbating the collateral issues that those convicted of sexual offences face and although this may not appear to be of consequence to onlookers or members of the public the actual impact could work to lessen the stability and increase the risk for this population of committing further offences (see Tewksbury, 2012). This section sets

out to consider the additional consequences faced by those convicted of sexual crimes, the impact that this can have on them and their families, and discuss what underpins these.

Prior research has suggested that being under investigation/convicted of CSO/CSEM offences impacts widely on the lives of those convicted, negatively affecting their quality of life as a result (see for example Kothari et al., 2021 and Tewksbury, 2012). Law enforcement officers in the UK have acknowledged the wide and destabilising impact of the investigation/prosecution process across a myriad of aspects of the lives of those that they have arrested (Key et al., 2018). One police officer noted that: “We go in and turn their world upside down and walk away” and another that “We walk out after throwing the hand grenade in” (Kothari et al., 2021, p.4). The obvious shock and trauma individuals experience at the point of arrest is clear, even from the perspective of CJS professionals although the current research literature surrounding this point is limited. There is also a growing acknowledgement of the impact on the friends and family of those investigated and/or convicted, as well as the individuals themselves (see Armitage et al., 2023).

Consideration of the research around collateral consequences as detailed in the previous section, the impact of the CJS (both intended and not) as a result of their offending behaviour appears to affect many areas of their lives and in order to consider this in a more structured way, I felt that it would be helpful to consider their ‘quality of life’. This is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2018 p.3) as:

*An individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. A broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, personal beliefs, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment.*

Therefore, quality of life can be seen as a broad ranging concept that is related to personal well-being. Research has suggested a number of different domains and measures relate to quality of life; the following domains comprise Lehman’s Quality of Life scale (Lehman, 1988): *work/education; leisure/ participation; religion; finances; living situation; legal/safety; family relations; social relations and health*. Using these domains in qualitative research with men under investigation/convicted of CSEM offences helps to consider the wider, holistic impacts on them and their lives.

Based on the prior research in this area (see for example Harris & Levenson 2021 and Tewksbury, 2012;) the quality of life of those who have committed CSEM offences and are subsequently arrested and convicted is likely to be impacted from their very first contact with the CJS. Successful reintegration is most often measured through the perspective of the agencies involved in the CJS and judged on reoffending, or at least on reconviction rates

(McCartan & Richards, 2021) rather than through the perspective of those convicted themselves. Understandably there is a clear focus on desistance from offending and the prevention of re-offending through rehabilitation; however social reintegration back into the community and the opportunity to change could be key to both desistance and an improvement in their quality of life, both of which appear to be interlinked (Mann et al., 2021).

As well as identifying ways in which the lives of men under investigation and convicted of CSEM offences have been impacted, it is important to consider what might exacerbate or help these effects and some of these will be highlighted in the next sections.

### 1.8.1 The effects of Labelling and Stigma

Prior research with those convicted of these offences has suggested that labelling and stigma theories help to explain some of the impacts.

#### 1.8.1.1 Labelling

Labels are commonly used as a way to describe aspects of our identity and how we see ourselves (e.g., father, husband, psychologist, etc). In recent years, labels applied to others, particularly medical or criminological labels for example 'offender', 'paedophile' and 'schizophrenic', have been seen to be stigmatizing, harmful and hamper the individuals themselves and more widely the community (see Knight et al., 2003 and Willis, 2018). This labelling does not just reduce a person to a label, a category, it can be disempowering and dehumanising, defining people regardless of both the accuracy of the label or the level to which the individual themselves identifies with it (Willis, 2018). Labelling theory suggests stigmatization via a negative 'label' can have an impact by being both one of the causes and effects of criminal behaviour (Willis, 2018). As I have already alluded to, the ingrained negative attitudes of those working within the CJS and the public more widely, towards those investigated and convicted of sex offences is pervasive (Robbers, 2009). Indeed, individuals that commit sex offences, including CSEM offences, are commonly viewed and portrayed as dangerous, predatory and unable to control their offending behaviour, despite the fact that these views are generally inaccurate (Tewksbury, 2012).

With regard to the 'sex offender' label, this relates to a highly heterogeneous group of people that commit these types of offences (McCartan et al., 2021). Although the label applies to an act that they have committed rather than an aspect of that person's identity or personality (Willis, 2018), as I have started to describe in previous sections, those that commit sex offences are defined by others by that act. These labels are persistent across the media, forensic practices and the CJS; for example, in recent research focused on suicide ideation (Kothari et al., 2021), the included excerpts from law enforcement officers in the UK showed

them to describe those under investigation as 'paedophiles' and as fitting or not fitting the stereotype of a 'sex offender'. Previous discussions (for example see Kras, 2021) have centred around the concern that even though they may not actively and consciously ascribe to the label themselves, those take on the label that is ascribed to them, which can have potentially adverse effects on future offending and reintegration (Kras, 2021). The use of labels potentially reinforces stereotypes and stigmatization (Harris, 2016), so their use by individuals working within the CJS and more widely through the media could have a damaging and negative impact on the future of those they are ascribed to.

A recent study (Blagden et al., 2018) with those that had been convicted of a sexual offence against a child and also had a sexual preference for children, explored the impact on their psychosexual identity and highlighted how their sexual preference was entwined within each individual's identity. When a sexual preference was labelled as 'deviant', it caused anguish and conflict and affected their ability to manage relationships. These issues could be exacerbated by the belief of the participants that their sexual interest was fixed and unchanging, leading to further feelings of stigma and shame (see also Cantor & Fedoroff, 2018) and therefore something that they needed to control in order to manage their offending behaviour. This conflict within themselves and their identity could potentially therefore have significant effects on how they are able to negotiate the impact that the CJS has on them. Identity management is something that is seen as an important part of both negotiating the 'sex offender' label and as a result of treatment programmes (Evans & Cubellis, 2015). Disidentification (see for example Yip, 2016) is also seen within those that commit sexual offences, who distance themselves from the 'sex offender' identity in order to retain a positive sense of self.

### *1.8.1.2 Stigma*

The stigma attached to the 'Sex Offender' label, has been shown to lead to an ongoing sense of stress and vulnerability for those that have committed sexual offences (Tewksbury, 2012). Stigma has been defined as "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" (Goffman, 1963, p.13), something that marks people as being apart from others in a negative way and in the case of this population devalues them. Those labelled as 'sex offender' are depicted as 'other' (something that I have touched on across this introduction), that they are less worthy of living a normal life and almost dehumanised (Ilea, 2018). As humans we think less of others that do not fit into our social expectations (Goffman, 1963) and as we have seen from how those that commit these offences are viewed by society, that would seem to fit here. Stigma can have negative effects across the lives of those impacted by it - psychologically, emotionally and socially (Tewksbury, 2012). When looking at the risk of suicide in those that had committed

CSEM offences, Key et al., (2018) found that the helpline operators at LFF identified stigma as a key theme across their work on the helpline with those that had committed these offences. All of those that contacted the helpline were concerned with the social stigma related to their offending behaviour and the study found that this stigma was related to suicidal thoughts, amongst other impacts.

This stigmatisation serves to single them out from the rest of society, both from their own internal stigmatisation and the external stigmatisation from others making them feel like an outsider (Schultz, 2014). Stigmatisation is not specific to those that have committed sex offences however, others that have committed criminal acts are stigmatised (Willis, 2018), relatives of those that have committed sex offences (Evans et al., 2023) and more broadly other groups such as young mothers (Wenham, 2016), those with illness or disorders such as bowel disease (Dibley, 2014) and those with mental health issues such as schizophrenia (Knight et al., 2003). In particular, it will be interesting to think about this in relation to similar stigmatisation for those with severe psychiatric conditions that have committed offences (Tregoweth et al., 2012).

Lastly here it is also important to mention the stigma attached to families of those convicted of CSEM/CSO offending. Courtesy or secondary stigma, changing their identity to being a family member of a 'sex offender', can have a profound impact on those affected (Armitage et al., 2023 and Evans et al., 2023) with often little help or support or even recognition from those in authority or the CJS of the issue.

### *1.8.1.3 Shame and guilt*

The concepts and experience of shame and guilt for those that commit offences are prominent across the literature around sexual offending and can have a significant impact on those that commit offences as this section will discuss. Brennan et al. (2018) analysed posts posted online within 'Reddit.com' from those that had committed sexual offences and found 'shame' to be the most pervasive emotion expressed. Shame is an inward facing emotion and suggests a 'flawed self' (Leith & Baumeister, 1998), related in this instance to the labelled identity of 'sex offender' and the feelings about themselves from committing these offences and committing harm against others. There was also a suggestion within this research (Brennan et al., 2018) that feelings of shame led to minimization of their offending behaviour and maladaptive coping mechanisms such as the use of alcohol. Although guilt also featured highly within this research; guilt tended to relate to the incident or behaviour, as opposed to being directed inward at the self, and was more likely to be linked with change and self-growth. Shame is linked to negative feelings, whereas guilt is a more positive emotion and the experience of these different emotions can affect outcomes for individuals (see Dearing et al.,

2005) with those who experience guilt less negatively impacted than those whose predominant emotion is shame. The participants in the study conducted by Key et al. (2018) all expressed shame and guilt, however in that study the two emotions were not distinguished, making it difficult to ascertain whether the expression of guilt over shame can have a more positive outcome (see also Sandbukt, 2023). Although the study does link these emotions to other aspects of the impact on the participants, such as low mood, suicide and hopelessness, by not distinguishing between them it is unclear which may affect the impact of the CJS or how.

#### *1.8.1.4 Coping skills*

The background and coping skills of those who have committed offences could also affect how they are able to manage the experience of the CJS (see Hoffer et al., 2010). Coping is an important aspect of another study that I would consider as pertinent to this piece of work. The case study of two men that have committed sex offences undertaken by Kloess et al. (2018), both in terms of their original offending behaviour (which in this case was online grooming rather than CSEM) and their ability to manage the impact of their arrest and subsequent conviction is enlightening here. Their arrests were considered by the participants, at the time, as provoking a range of both positive and negative emotions, but with hindsight as a turning point; a life changing event. This resonated in relation to the impact of the CJS for men that have committed CSEM that has been described previously (for example Key et al., 2018). It was interesting that both participants were able to describe at least one positive aspect of their experience of the CJS, discuss 'turning points' and consider their abilities to change. It may be that this is deemed to be the ability to use more active coping skills, although the wider aspects of any impact are not discussed per se in this study. It is not clear, however, whether either of these participants had undergone any form of treatment, although this seems likely as one of the participants was interviewed in prison where therapeutic programmes are part of the prison experience (Levins & Crewe, 2015). Treatment may have affected their experiences of the CJS, as they described and interpreted it, viewing it through the lens of treatment, potentially providing them with the tools to identify and focus on the positives.

Consideration of stigma and shame with CSEM offending individuals is important in relation to coping mechanisms and the interplay with other aspects of themselves such as their mental health and loneliness. Stigma and shame can provoke coping mechanisms that could be unhelpful, impairing help seeking behaviour, increasing isolation and substance misuse (Evans & Cubellis, 2015), all of which can be a risk for offending and a barrier to seeking help (Furst & Evans, 2015). Outside of their own coping abilities, there are other important, relevant factors to individuals' abilities to cope with CSEM investigations and prosecution. The response and support of their friends and families could be important here. All of the



participants throughout the study undertaken by Key et al. (2018) noted the importance of social support and this has been a theme through many studies (Evans & Cubellis, 2015 and Kras, 2021). Bailey and Sample (2017) noted that the family can manage the strain of one of them having a conviction for a sex offence as a unit and together can reduce some of the negative impacts and risk of recidivism. Further, it is important to recognise that coping mechanisms and the ability to remain resilient are changing and dynamic, and that changes in circumstances and support could affect their ability to cope (Rutter, 2006).

#### *1.8.1.5 Identities*

I have already touched on the stigma, shame and impact of the 'sex offender' label on those who have committed CSO and CSEM offences. This label, their offending behaviour and the subsequent impact of the CJS can be seen to have a profound effect on their identity (see for example Hamilton, 2017 and Willis, 2018). Further, rehabilitation and reintegration require an environment and opportunities to build and maintain a positive identity (Petrich, 2017). Identity is not one single, stable aspect of ourselves; we have many facets to our identities. Identity is a powerful concept related to many aspects of ourselves and our lives (Vignoles et al., 2011). Labelling and the way that those that commit sex offences feel that they are viewed by others can be internalised and can impact on their abilities to rehabilitate and reintegrate (Hamilton, 2017). The disruption of their perceptions of who they are (i.e., their identity) can be debilitating. It is important to develop a narrative identity and ways to transition (from what) to be able to reintegrate back into the community and society more widely whereby their offending behaviour is viewed as something that they did and that can be changed, rather than as part of who they are (Hamilton, 2017).

#### *1.8.1.6 Mental Health*

Prior literature around those that commit sexual offences including CSEM suggests a link between mental health, offending and the CJS; however, the actual relationship and mechanisms remains unclear. Mood disorders, low self-esteem and personal distress are prevalent in CSEM offenders (see Gillespie et al., 2018 and Houtepen et al., 2014); it is not clear whether there is a causal mechanism involved between these aspects and committing CSEM offending. Other work has identified higher levels of depression and hopelessness for those convicted of sexual offences who have been subjected to social stigma, assault or harassment and those unable to find employment or with housing issues (Jeglic et al., 2012). However, again, this research is not child sex offender or CSEM specific. In the study by Brennan et al. (2018), they found that depression and isolation were prevalent amongst those that had committed sexual offences.



Although research has seemed to suggest that mood disorders are likely in those that commit CSEM offences, there is little research related specifically to this population (of note is Seiser et al., 2023, and Steel et al., 2022). Those that are already under investigation or who have been convicted have been found to have severe levels of depression, anxiety or stress in comparison to the general population (Gillespie et al., 2018). This research was carried out post-arrest and so it is impossible to determine at that time whether the mental health issues were present or absent on arrest, or whether the subsequent involvement in the CJS was the instigator, or exacerbator of those issues. The five participants in the study conducted by Key et al. (2018) all described prior and undiagnosed mental health issues. Lower levels of mental health based on comparative measures taken after an intervention (the Inform Plus programme run by LFF, the programme is explained in more detail in section 1.11.3 below) suggested that there is a link between that programme and the positive change that the men experience (Gillespie et al., 2018). However, the reasons, nature and aspects of the programme linked to the changes could not be pinpointed through this study and would require further examination.

Lastly, there is an emerging research base linking deteriorating mental health with family members of those convicted of CSEM. Family members including the partner of the person that had committed the offence and their children are more isolated, lose social support and report suicidal feelings as well as depression further exacerbated by the associated stigma that they feel being associated with someone that has omitted CSEM (see Kavanagh et al., 2023).

#### *1.8.1.7 Suicide and the CJS*

The work completed by Key et al. (2018) around those that had committed CSEM, Hoffer and Shelton (2013) around those that committed sexual offences more widely, and in a general community-based probation sample of offenders (Mackenzie, et al., 2018), has highlighted the heightened suicide risk for those with contact with the CJS (see also Sandbukt, 2023). The study conducted by Mackenzie et al. only included seven participants, none of whom were serving their community sentence for CSEM or CSO; however, their reasons given for suicide risk would seem to resonate with these populations. Themes from this research included experience of loss of support by partners/families and loss of control in areas of their lives that were as a result of the CJS process. Feelings of depression and suicidal thoughts seemed to coincide with times where they lacked achievement, or felt hopeless about the future.

In the study completed by Hoffer and Shelton (2013), this included both CSO and CSEM offenders but did not distinguish between the two, and as this study related to those that had committed suicide, they were unable to speak to the individuals themselves. They utilised

interviews of family alongside the suicide notes of those that had been investigated for child sex offences. The authors noted that a number of stressors with the police investigation, (for example criminal or legal issues that came up as a result of the investigation), were cited as a stressor in every case. Other factors such as physical and mental ill health, relationship issues and financial problems were common but not ubiquitous. Of those that had taken their own lives, 26% did so within 48 hours of arrest, again suggesting a causal link between their suicide and a key point of the investigation.

In interviews of those convicted of CSEM offences, Key et al. (2018) identified that all of the participants noted suicidal ideation as a result of the police investigation and they all noted feeling stigmatized, shame and guilt. Again, this was a small study with only five participants and although none reported prior arrest for other offences, it is not clear if they were CSEM only offenders.

A recent study conducted by Steel et al. (2022) with 78 men that had been convicted of CSEM offences showed that around one-fifth of those involved in the study had attempted suicide and over 70% of the sample had suicidal ideation; a considerable increase over the general population. The main factors related to suicide appeared to be the exposure of their offending to their families and the possibility of going to prison. Operation NOTARISE (police led operation targeting those committing CSEM offences) resulted in 24 suicides from those arrested (3.2% of those arrested), the estimated economic and social cost of which has been estimated to be £34.8 million (Kothari et al., 2021). This is of such concern that the College of Policing (an independent body that provides training, support and helps to set standards in the police in the UK) has produced operational advice relating to suspects' suicide for officers who are investigating CSEM offences (College of Policing, 2021). This advice includes the need to assess and mitigate for immediate risk. An in-depth understanding of the experiences of those who have committed CSEM seems to be missing in the literature, but is required to understand how to mitigate the risk of suicide amongst this high-risk group.

## 1.9 Summary

This section has explored some of the collateral effects that CSEM offending and the subsequent interactions with the CJS can have on the lives of those who have committed offences, and more widely, their families. The impact on their quality of life is key to help them to manage their identities, the changes in their lives and their abilities to reintegrate back into their communities. This is linked with their abilities to desist from offending which will be covered in the next section.

## 1.10 Desistance from offending

Rehabilitation and desistance from offending are two important concepts, as they are central both to the CJS and to those that commit sex offences' abilities to reintegrate back into the community (McAlinden, 2016 and Willis, 2018). However, unlike the formal processes of the CJS, reintegration for those that have committed offences is not a process shaped and defined through structured, organised rituals (Maruna, 2011) and as a consequence is much less established and therefore potentially less likely to achieve success. Although there has been a prolonged interest by both academics and practitioners around desistance from offending generally there is a growing but relatively recent research base around the desistance of those that commit sex offences (see Brown, 2024 and McAlinden et al., 2017).

Desistance from offending is not simple. Complex social factors and individual personal processes are required to enable someone to refrain from reoffending (see Farmer et al., 2016; Mann et al., 2021 and McAlinden et al., 2017). Personal identity changes, alongside other significant life aspects, such as employment and supportive relationships, can prove crucial in an individual's ability to refrain from further offending behaviour and to reintegrate (Hornle et al., 2024 and McAlinden et al., 2017). Other pertinent factors in desistance that can be attributed to the impact of the CJS seem to be more social and relational (see Babchishin et al., 2023). The treatment of, and relationship between, those subject to the restrictions and the individuals managing their sanctions, such as an offender manager, and the way in which those that are convicted are treated, influences their experiences and the impacts (Mann et al., 2021; McCartan et al., 2021; Moss, 2022 and Pemberton et al., 2023). Those that received a more welfare-oriented approach tended to be more positive about the experience than those that received a more penal oriented one. This welfare-oriented approach is more likely to engage those that have committed offences and had an effect on desistance (Healy, 2012 and Hornle et al., 2024).

Links suggested between identity and relational aspects of change that are important for desistance is something to consider within this piece of research. Informal social controls (for example, employment and intimate relationships) have been suggested as key turning points in the desistance literature (see Hornle et al., 2024; Laub & Sampson, 1993 and Weaver & McNeil, 2015). More recent research specifically related to those that had committed sexual offences found that the picture was less clear (McAlinden et al., 2017). Whilst there is a link between these informal, social, relational aspects and desistance with some of those who have committed offences, desisting in part to maintain their relationships, others found that the restrictions and intrusions caused by the CJS (such as removal from the family home, loss of employment etc) put added pressure on these relationships (Mann et al., 2021). In

particular, the requirement to disclose their offending behaviour to new partners made forming new intimate relationships a difficult and sometimes unpalatable experience (Mann et al., 2021). Therefore here, the additional sanctions and restrictions placed on those convicted of CSEM is likely to disrupt these relational aspects and could jeopardise their ability to reintegrate and desist.

There is an interesting link between 'redemption' and desistance. As part of their move away from offending, those who have committed offences need to create what have been termed "redemption scripts", a recrafting of their life stories (see Richards et al., 2020). This is the idea that they are essentially a 'good' person, and need to delve back into their past self to bring forth their 'true' 'good' selves rather than craft a new identity (Maruna, 2011), linking back to the identity work explored in the previous section. However, the situation is more difficult where sex offending is concerned because those that commit these offences find it very difficult to develop redemption scripts because of the way that 'sex offenders' are viewed both by society but by extension, themselves (Maruna, 2016 and Richards et al., 2020). It is important for them to be able to move away from the view that this offending is a fixed trait and related to them as a person and understand it as an act that they have committed, which they can choose not to commit again in future (Kras, 2014). There is also a link between the formal sanctions and restrictions of the CJS (including the shock and fear it produces) that can aid the promotion of the necessary change required for desistance (Farmer et al., 2016 and Mann et al., 2021), whereby just the potential of having to go through the process again is enough of a deterrent.

The last thing to consider in this section for CSEM specifically, is the likelihood of reoffending. Measuring the rate of reoffending is difficult and there are disparities between rates of recidivism (where individuals are reconvicted of a CSEM/CSO offence) and self-reported reoffending. Seto and Eke (2015), suggest from their research that there was a 9% recidivism rate for repeat offences of CSEM and Elliott et al. (2019) found in their longitudinal study a 2.7% recidivism rate for those reconvicted. Although arguably a relatively low reconviction rate, reducing the likelihood and environment within which reoffending happens is an important aspect of CSEM/CSO management and a key function of the CJS as has been demonstrated through the previous sections in this chapter. Research conducted by Project Dunkelfeld (see Beier et al., 2021) as well as on an intervention utilised in the UK (Mews et al., 2017) both suggested that a higher proportion of those that commit offences continued to view CSEM than has previously been acknowledged.

### 1.10.1 Summary

Desistance is a key concern for the CJS and the wider public and political arena; however the reoffending rate, underpinning processes and support mechanisms are not well defined across the CJS to ensure that those convicted of CSEM can desist from offending and reintegrate smoothly back into the community.

## 1.11 Interventions and Support

We have seen when discussing the CJS that the current system in the UK, alongside punishment and risk reduction, contains elements of rehabilitation and that there is a link between rehabilitation, desistance and reintegration. Treatment programmes and interventions for those convicted of sexual offences are well established; however there has been much debate about the efficacy of these interventions (see Marshall, 2018) and the relevance of traditional programmes created for CSO for those who have committed CSEM offences (Ly et al., 2018).

This section will explore the theoretical underpinnings of current risk and rehabilitation models used within the CJS and interventions, introduce The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF) and the interventions and support more widely that those who have committed CSEM offences can access.

### 1.11.1 Theoretical underpinnings

#### 1.11.1.1 *Risk-Need-Responsivity model (RNR)*

The concept of the RNR was first developed in the 1980s and has been used both within the UK and further afield as a way to assess and rehabilitate people convicted of offences (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). The RNR model is based on three principles; that criminal behaviour can be reliably predicted, that treatment should focus on the higher risk 'offenders' [risk] and the importance of addressing criminogenic needs in the design and delivery of treatment [needs]. The model also highlights that treatment should be delivered in a way that is most suitable for each person [responsivity].

Although analysis of the model's effectiveness in the recidivism of those that commit sex offences (see Hanson et al., 2009), the translation of the model into practice has led to concerns about its use and efficacy (Polaschek, 2012). The use of RNR, although still prevalent across the CJS, and implementation of its principles across probation agencies has proven challenging with its interpretation (Viglione, 2018). Interventions and support are not solely restricted to being on the basis of RNR, the Good Lives Model (GLM) has emerged in

recent years as another model that can support the rehabilitation of those that have committed sexual offences.

#### *1.11.1.2 The Good Lives Model (GLM)*

In having a good quality of life, working towards a 'good life' is seen as an important goal (see Bouman et al., 2008) and in relation to criminality subjective poor wellbeing has been linked to criminal recidivism, which forms the basis of the GLM. The GLM was conceived as a theory for rehabilitation for those that had committed offences (Ward, 2012) and has more recently been referred to as a practice framework for rehabilitation (Prescott & Willis, 2022). The GLM incorporates a strengths-based approach (working proactively towards wellbeing needs and a good life) and is a move away from the traditional risk-management based approaches to treatment (Willis et al., 2013). The model was developed to counter some of the acknowledged limitations of risk focused approaches and concentrates on developing strengths (Willis & Ward, 2011).

The GLM has been used to underpin a number of interventions for sexual offences (Prescott & Willis, 2022), and CSEM offences more specifically (Dervley et al., 2017), such as the Inform Plus programme which is run by the LFF and is detailed below. As with all models and theoretical frameworks, the way that it is interpreted and used within practice will impact on how effective it is (Prescott & Willis, 2022). Although the GLM can be used in a complementary way alongside RNR (Willis et al., 2012) there are acknowledged tensions between the two with RNR focused on recidivism through punishment and justice, whereas the GLM focus around recidivism is on quality of life and care (McNeil, 2009 and Te Wenkel & De Werd, 2012).

#### *1.11.2 Interventions for those committing CSEM*

There is an acknowledgement, as I have discussed in section 1.2 that there are distinct differences between those that commit CSEM offences only and those that commit other sexual offences. Interventions for sexual offending were originally focused on CSO and historically there have been a lack of interventions specifically aimed at those committing CSEM and other online offences although more recently interventions for CSEM offences have been developed and introduced (see Dervley et al., 2017 and Perkins et al., 2018). Currently there are a number of organisations able to provide support in this way to individuals, although there is no therapy support that can be accessed through the NHS and many therapists are not willing to work with those who have offended (for example see Scheela, 2001). This can make seeking help and access to services difficult.

### 1.11.3 The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF) and Inform Plus

The LFF is a UK based child protection charity working with professionals, families and individuals that commit child sex offences in order to prevent child abuse (Dervley et al., 2017 and Gillespie et al., 2018). The LFF have developed a suite of support services for both those that commit sex offences and CSEM specifically, and their families, including a helpline and online resources; one such intervention is the Inform Plus programme.

The Inform Plus programme is a 'community-based, psycho-educational and risk-reduction group work programme' (Dervley et al., 2017 p.48). It utilises a dynamic group approach, alongside theories such as GLM and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT, see Rimer 2021), tools and other content derived from the literature and the practical application of 'what works' with those that commit CSEM offences (Dervley et al., 2017). The Inform Plus programme provides a 'safe group environment in which those who have been arrested for CSEM related offences can explore their behaviour and seek practical advice in order to avoid future re-offending' (Lucy Faithfull Foundation, 2022). It is a prevention course, designed to offer information, support and practical advice to people who have committed CSEM offences, with sessions based on aspects specific to CSEM such as relationships, the CJS and achieving change.

The programme has between six and ten participants and although originally conducted face to face, the programme was facilitated online as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic enabling a wider range of people access to it. There are ten sessions that last around two and half hours with a facilitator preparation meeting and debrief before and after each session. The programme covers material that helps participants to better understand their offending behaviour, the impact of the behaviour on them and their families and self-care, the effect of offending on the child victims as well as information about the CJS, identifying goals and strengths to help them to build a positive future and strategies to help prevent reoffending. The Inform Plus course aims to provide participants with strategies to assist them to manage their offending behaviour (see Rimer, 2021). Involvement in the programme is usually through contact with the StopItNow! helpline; an initial meeting is completed prior to enrolment on to the programme. The courses have been run at a variety of locations across the UK but are in the main run in Surrey, Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Participants enrolled on the programme are invariably at different stages of the CJS.

### 1.11.4 Other interventions and support

Alongside LFF, there are other organisations, interventions and support that those that have committed CSEM offences can access (Jackson et al., 2022). Organisations in the UK such



as StopSO, Safer Lives and the Safer Living Foundation provide services aimed to support people who have sexually harmful thoughts, those under investigation for, or convicted of CSEM and CSO offences. There is also support through Circles UK who work in the community with volunteers to provide a supportive group of people to help someone who is at risk of committing further sexual offences to desist from their behaviour. More recently circles reboot has been introduced (see Bradshaw et al., 2023), a shorter circle that is aimed specifically at those that have been convicted of CSEM offences. Additional support, including the use of telephone helpline and cognitive behavioural therapies specific for CSEM within and outside of the UK are available in patches (see for example Adebahr et al., 2023, and Latth et al., 2022). Lastly, due to the mental health and suicide concerns already depicted about this population (see sections 1.8.1.6 and 1.8.1.7) the support of healthcare services can be vital.

#### 1.11.5 Do these interventions and support help?

Although there are now a number of interventions from organisations aimed at those committing CSEM offences, little evaluation has been done relating to how these programmes impact those that commit these offences. A recent review of the landscape in relation to the provision of interventions specifically aimed at CSEM offending identified a lack of coherent response, limited interventions and a lack of funding or evaluation for those that are present (Perkins et al., 2018). This report suggested that initiatives around education, prevention and deterrence should also be further developed. The intervention and support offered through Circles UK has garnered some attention and evaluation (see for example Thomas et al., 2014) as has now an evaluation of the CSEM specific 'Circles Reboot' (Bradshaw et al., 2023). This evaluation of twelve different circles identified positive outcomes for the core members (the person that had committed CSEM). There has been some evaluation of LFF's Inform Plus programme in relation to managing offending behaviour (Dervley et al., 2017 and Gillespie et al., 2018), although in-depth qualitative research work with CSEM users is sparse in the literature, either as academic research or in terms of detailed programme evaluation (Rimer, 2021).

Most evaluations of treatment programmes, including prior and ongoing evaluations of Inform Plus, have been done utilising quantitative methods (Dervley et al., 2017). A recent evaluation of Inform Plus that used a qualitative approach focused on how thirteen programme participants perceived the benefits of the programme related to the cessation of their offending behaviour (Dervley et al., 2017), rather than the impacts of the CJS specifically on the participants. Three themes were elicited through this study; firstly, the programme encouraged self-reflection, allowing the participants to develop individually appropriate strategies for



managing their behaviour. Second, the ability to share their experiences with others in a group setting may help to reduce the feelings of loneliness and isolation that are related to stigma but also as to why they engaged in the behaviour in the first place. Third, the programme helped them to feel positive about their future. There was an acknowledgement that the change alluded to by the participants was not solely related to the programme; without a wider evaluation or comparison of the programme and other aspects that could have an effect it is difficult to be able to identify how and on what the programme has had an impact. It is likely, taking into consideration the potential impacts of the CJS, that if treatment programmes are able to affect wider impact, they may also reduce re-offending and improve QoL.

Outside of this evaluation, there has been other research that has incorporated the perspective of those that have participated in Inform Plus but not as qualitative research or evaluation. Rimer (2021) as part of his research (and although he does not specifically reference Inform Plus) considers the strategies used on a CSEM offence specific psychoeducation programme. Rimer explicitly noted that the paper is not to determine the effectiveness of the programme. This research included observation of 81 people within in-person programme sessions alongside interviews and focus groups with those within that group that agreed. Rimer concluded that the programme increased the participants discipline to manage their own risk and acknowledged however that he was only able to recruit those that had already been arrested but were pre- sentence and were all those that had sought help.

There are some concerns in relation to the use of intervention programmes. By concentrating on the offending behaviour of the participants and focussing on the label 'sex offender', which means that treatment can serve to further fix and solidify these representations (Waldram, 2010). This can obscure treatment participants as human beings with different lived experiences. Mann et al. (2021) found that the participants, who were all convicted of sexual offences, were positive about the interventions that they attended but also identified the stigmatizing aspects of the interventions, which they felt served to further entrench the 'sex offender' label. From previous research there is a suggestion that those that commit CSEM only offences tend to have a lower recidivism rate compared to either contact sex offenders or more general offending populations (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2022 and Seto & Eke, 2015). The landscape is therefore far from clear with contradictory or limited evidence on both the efficacy of interventions (see Brennan et al., 2019) and their likelihood of reoffending (see Babchishin et al., 2023).

## 1.12 Unheard voices - why should we care?

Taking this back to the impetus for this study, I wanted to draw together why I think that it is important to complete this piece of work. This introduction has identified that there appears to be a limited evidence base of research that forefronts the perspective of those that commit CSEM offences, that there has been little of their input into the way that the CJS works or the services provided for them to support them not to reoffend and there is little support to help them to reintegrate back into the community - something that may be vital for their desistance from offending and their wellbeing. This section will consider why incorporating the perspective of those that commit offences on the effects on them from the CJS is important.

Although it has been deemed to be a minority of individuals with problematic online sexual behaviours that will commit online sexual offences (Babchishin, 2014), the recent evidence noted across this chapter has suggested that these offences are much more prevalent and still increasing as time goes on. Sexual crime has been identified as a “silent-violent epidemic” (Chasan-Taber & Tabachnik, 1999) with recent research concerned with the ‘justice gap’ for victims/survivors and some academics and practitioners calling for the introduction of more interventions at an earlier point for those that commit offences (Harper et al., 2017). Schemes that encourage those who have (or are concerned about) inappropriate sexual thoughts about children to access targeted and effective interventions (Beier et al., 2015) could have a significant impact on the extent of child sexual abuse. To uncover what approaches are effective and what aspects impact on reoffending and reintegration requires in depth qualitative research with those that commit these types of offences.

Organisations working in this arena have argued that the prevention of sexual crime should be considered a public health issue (Harper et al., 2017). However, to successfully employ such an approach requires a cultural change in how potential ‘sexual offenders’ are viewed by the public, government, law enforcement and other agencies that work within the CJS. Those with thoughts of sexual harm, or those actively accessing CSEM, should feel able to seek help; however, the current punitive political stance and negative, stigmatised public view will need to radically alter for change to take place. Thinking about the statistics and current issues surrounding the investigation and prosecution of sex offending, particularly CSEM, there are academic and practitioner calls to rethink how the system is enacted (see for example Armatta, 2018; Justice, 2019 and Rye et al., 2018).

Taking all this into consideration, effective prevention of CSEM, reduction in reoffending and management of the volume of these offences requires a better understanding of those that commit these offences and what methods and interventions work for those that have

committed CSEM. This can only be achieved effectively through qualitative research that explores their experiences.

## 1.13 Research Aims

I have identified three aims for this piece of research:

1. To identify and examine the current research landscape on the impact of the CJS for men investigated for sexual offences against children, specifically where these impacts have been reported from the perspective of the men themselves.
2. To explore the effects that contact with the CJS has for men investigated and convicted for CSEM offences.
3. To explore the effects that support, both formal and informal, can have on the impact of the CJS for men investigated and convicted for CSEM offences.

The first aim will be addressed through a scoping review of the research literature. This will focus on men investigated for sexual offences against children in general, rather than only CSEM, as there appears to be little CSEM related research. The second and third aims will be addressed through a qualitative longitudinal study with men that encompasses their experience of the CJS from arrest through to sentencing and beyond and their experiences of support.

This thesis will detail the methodology and methods used to explore these three aims, set out the findings from the studies and situate these into the current research landscape. This thesis will conclude with the implications of the findings.

## 2 Scoping Review

### 2.1 Introduction

As I explored in the introductory chapter to this thesis, the CJS is considered a way to control crime and protect the public, but it also acts to socially exclude those considered 'deviant' (McAlinden, 2016). In the UK, as well as the sentence received as a result of conviction for a sex related offence, those convicted are also subject to additional control measures and risk management processes (see for example McAlinden, 2017 and section 1.4.3). Alongside these formal processes, there are unintended collateral consequences that can be felt by those under investigation, and their friends and families (see section 1.8).

There is a growing research base with regard to the motivations of those that commit sexual offences against children (for example see Marshall, 2018 and Steel et al., 2021), alongside research into offence desistance (see Mpofu et al., 2018). There is also evidence around the impact on professionals within the field (for example Cronje & Vilakazi, 2020) but there seems to be a much smaller body of evidence related to the perceptions of those who have committed the offences themselves (see Brown et al., 2018). Further, most research on the effects of the CJS with individuals that have committed offences appears to have been conducted with those who have been formally convicted and in prison (see Tewksbury, 2012). This is unsurprising as access to populations that are under investigation is fraught with difficulties; however, some of the research evidence would seem to highlight the investigation stage as being a specific issue in relation to the impact on individuals, particularly with regard to suicide (see Hoffer et al., 2010 and Key et al., 2018).

In order to comprehensively map the evidence available in relation to the experience of the CJS for men under investigation/convicted of CSEM (and more widely, for men under investigation/convicted for child sexual abuse) in a rigorous and transparent way and to situate the results of my own empirical studies into the current research evidence, I completed a scoping review (see Pham et al., 2014). A scoping review is an appropriate method to identify and consider gaps in academic knowledge, to scope a body of literature, and consider the way that a concept or topic has been researched (Munn et al., 2018).

This review (as is common for scoping reviews; Peters et al., 2015) is not intended to provide a critical appraisal of the evidence in relation to a specific question, but rather to provide an overview of the state of the evidence base. Following on from the introductory chapter the important aspect of this review was to identify research from the perspectives of the individuals under investigation/convicted, rather than from the perspectives of professionals or others involved in the CJS.

## 2.2 Aim of the review

To my knowledge there has been no other review that has been conducted solely on this area of research evidence. The aim of the review was to provide an overview of the published literature, and identify gaps in the knowledge base, using the scoping review guidance (see Peters et al., 2017) and PRISMA ScR extension checklist (Tricco et al., 2018).

The overarching question for this review was: *What empirical evidence is known about the impact of the CJS on men under investigation/convicted for child sexual offences from the participants' perspectives?*

## 2.3 METHODS

### 2.3.1 Protocol

A protocol for this review was completed and registered at the Open Science Framework (see appendix 1). Since the protocol was registered, one change has been made. Initially, I had planned to review Google for additional literature; however, in line with other related previous scoping review papers and guidance when reviewing literature for empirical studies, I altered the inclusion criteria removing Google (see for example Abbott et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2017 and Seidler et al., 2018). This meant that I could concentrate the review on the current empirical evidence and research papers related to the topic as the scope and breadth of the review should be in line with the objective which was to uncover the current landscape of empirical evidence.

### 2.3.2 Eligibility criteria

To enable me to identify appropriate and relevant literature, I developed a search strategy that was underpinned by inclusion criteria detailed within this section. The review included empirical research articles and excluded book reviews, editorials and other literature types that would not include specific first-hand research findings. There was no date limitation.

The inclusion criteria were shaped by the Participant-Context-Concept framework recommended for scoping reviews (Peters et al., 2017).

#### 2.3.2.1 Participants

The review was limited to men to fit with my own participant scope, as most sexual offences are committed by men (See for example Modelli et al., 2012). Research with men under investigation or convicted of the specified offences at any point within the CJS was included. The participants were required to be 18 or over, as this project concentrates on adults that offend.

#### 2.3.2.2 Context

Research could be from any location, worldwide. Research conducted with men that had not been under investigation was excluded as this project focuses on the impact of the CJS specifically. Research that included participants not involved in the CJS as well as those involved in the CJS were included as long as the findings related to those involved in the CJS were reported separately. The language was restricted to English and with men that were under investigation/convicted for a sexual offence against a child/children including both contact and/or non-contact offences. Studies that had participants that had committed

offences against adults were included as long as the findings related to those who have committed offences against children had been reported separately, or 80%, or more, of the participants had offended against children, rather than adults.

The search was limited to research that specifically utilised the perspectives of the individuals either under investigation or convicted, about the impact of the CJS on them and their lives. Studies that included research conducted with those that had committed offences and relevant other participants, for example family, friends and CJS staff, were included as long as findings related to those that had committed offences were reported separately. The review included any research method (i.e. quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods), this was of particular interest to help determine the types of research used where the perspective and experience of the men themselves was of interest to the researchers. All formal aspects of the CJS, such as arrest, police, and court, were included but initiatives that were not a compulsory part of the formal CJS for example interventions such as the Inform Plus programme and Circles, were excluded, unless specific themes/aspects related to the impact of the CJS in the findings/results that met the inclusion criteria.

#### *2.3.2.3 Concept*

For the purpose of this review, 'Impact' refers to the way in which the lives of the participants had been affected by contact with formal aspects of the CJS. This was interpreted broadly and included aspects such as the effect on their work, relationships and housing. Research solely related to desistance of offending was not included. Qualitative studies exploring other topic areas were included if one, or more, themes within the findings related to the impact of the CJS. Research relating to the effectiveness of treatment programmes with regards to offending behaviour was only included if the study specifically considered the impact on the quality of life of the men. The full inclusion/exclusion criteria can be found in appendix 2.

### *2.3.3 Search and information sources*

Identifying studies relevant to this review was achieved through the three-step approach advocated for by Peters et al. (2017). First, a search for prior systematic or scoping reviews matching the inclusion/exclusion criteria revealed no relevant reviews. The second step was to conduct an initial search utilising two online relevant databases. As this is a topic relating to criminology, psychology and health, I chose to utilise PubMed and Scopus, as an initial cursory review of these databases provided relevant literature. Once these stages had been completed, I refined the search terms to search available databases for all relevant literature. As this topic overlaps between health, psychology, criminology and social justice, this stage of the strategy included the following databases: PUBmed, Scopus, Psycinfo, Ethos, Open

access theses, Hein online, Social care online, and Sage journals online. The search terms for this final stage can be seen for in Table 1 below. A review of the reference list of studies selected for the review was also completed. Searches were carried out at two time points. The first search was conducted when the protocol was published in March 2022 and the second search was conducted in April 2023 just prior to the review by the second reviewer.

*Table 1 Search terms used within PubMed search (table created by the author)*

Search Terms	<p>(child* AND sex* AND offen*) OR (online AND child* AND sex*) OR (child* AND porn*) OR "CSEM" OR (child* AND abuse AND image*) OR "CSAM" OR (child* AND abuse AND sex*) OR (indecent AND child*) OR "child sexual exploitation material" OR (internet AND sex* AND child*) OR (Child* NEAR sex* AND Assault) OR p?edophil* OR hebephile* OR ephebephil* OR (child* AND Molest*) OR (sex* AND offend*)</p> <p>AND</p> <p>"procedural justice" OR "spill over" OR register OR registration OR police OR conviction* OR desist* OR prison OR probation OR justice OR court OR policy OR investigation OR arrest OR detention OR caution OR prosecut* OR charge OR jury OR legal OR sentenc* OR custody OR incarcerat* OR correction* OR suspect OR parole</p> <p>AND</p> <p>treatment OR "treatment evaluation" OR identity OR "good lives" OR "quality of life" OR stigma OR suicide OR "mental health" OR shame OR well-being OR labe?ling OR collateral OR coping OR "life change" OR transform* OR rehabilit* OR emotion* OR experience* OR support OR perception* OR perspective* OR view* OR respons* OR impact* OR effect* OR influen* OR consequence* OR repercussion* OR ramificat* OR (mental AND ill) OR stress* OR distress* OR trauma* OR withdraw* OR isolat*, OR lonel* OR re-integrat* OR adjust* OR transition</p>
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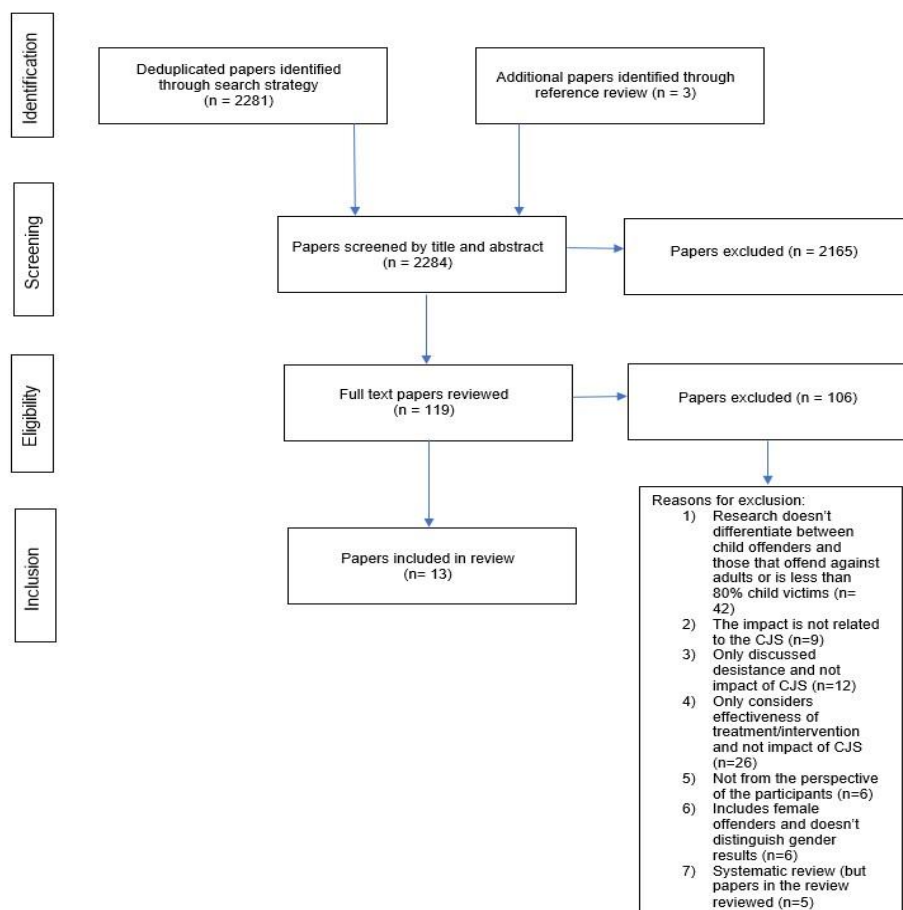
### 2.3.4 Selection of sources of evidence

Duplicates were removed prior to screening, screening of the 2281 results was completed using the inclusion and exclusion criteria for titles and abstracts before moving on to full text screening. If it was not clear from the title/abstract screen whether a paper should be included or excluded, then the full text was checked. As a result of this search 119 papers were selected for full text screening (see Figure 3). The reference lists for each of these papers, was reviewed and yielded an additional three papers to include into the final cohort.

Although Arksey and O'Malley (2005) do not advocate the use of an additional reviewer, in order to reduce error and increase reliability, it was recommended elsewhere that a team approach should be used to check at least a proportion of the search results (Levac, 2010 and Peters et al., 2020). A second reviewer, a trained PhD student, was therefore employed to review the results from the title and abstract search (see Abbot et al., 2018) and agreement was initially 85%. Disagreements were discussed until agreement was reached on all papers.

The final number of included papers was 13 (see Figure 3 below)

Figure 3 Diagram depicting search, screening and selection process (created by the author)



### 2.3.5 Data extraction

The information from the included papers was charted using the following criteria (Peters et al., 2017):

*Author, Date, Country of Origin of research population/research, Purpose of the study, Sample size and population, Type of child sexual offence (s) committed by participants identified within the study, Stage of CJS for participant, Methodology/Methods, Outcomes, Theories/concepts highlighted through research and Author identified limitations and suggestions for further identified research.*

Data was charted using Excel to compile a table of results from the included papers and to manage those that were excluded. As this is a scoping review completed to see the research landscape, no critical appraisal of the papers was completed.



### 2.3.6 Analysis of the included papers

The reporting checklist for scoping reviews was utilised when reporting the results (Tricco et al., 2018) and was in line with previous recommendations (see Levac et al., 2010 and Peters et al., 2017), along with prior scoping reviews that have been completed around participants' perspectives and experiences (see Kaasboll & Paulsen, 2019 and Thomas & Harden, 2008). The results section comprises two parts. Firstly, a descriptive, numerical analysis (see Levac et al., 2011) is presented, summarising the information from the data extraction. Secondly, as this review was conducted to map and identify gaps in the current evidence base, synthesis of the papers was conducted using thematic analysis to better understand the breadth and depth of the prior research, in line with prior reviews and prior scoping review guidance (Chung et al., 2020; Jesus et al., 2016 and Tricco et al., 2016). The full texts were uploaded into MaxQDA, (software that assists in qualitative analysis of texts). Using the process depicted in prior scoping reviews (see for example Chung et al., 2020), an overview of the key aspects of the experience of the CJS was constructed through data driven inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), synthesising the evidence from that presented using different methods across the included papers (i.e. qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods). All evidence from all papers, regardless of the method used in the research, was subjected to an open coding process (see Dixon-Woods et al., 2005). The findings and discussion sections from each paper were reviewed and compared, with notes made. Once this had been completed the sections and the initial notes were used within a more formal coding process, guided by the systematic, six phase process described by Braun and Clarke (2006), the detail of the process can be found in section 2.4.2. This analysis allowed considerable flexibility for integrating different types of evidence and allowed a holistic view of the evidence presented.

The focus of the thematic analysis was the participants' experience of the CJS. Three overarching themes were constructed from the data: *Striving for an ordinary life*, *Perceived unfairness of the consequences of the CJS* and *Tensions between the past and future*. The overarching themes and subthemes are listed in Table 2, with a description in the section below.

## 2.4 RESULTS

### 2.4.1 Descriptive characteristics of the included papers

Thirteen papers were selected as having met the inclusion criteria. There were seven papers from the USA, four from the UK and two from New Zealand. All of the participants had been investigated and convicted, and being told most (i.e., from eight of the papers, 62%), had already served their sentence prior to involvement in the research. There were no papers where

participants were still under investigation at the time that the research started. All of the studies targeted a particular aspect of the CJS, for example offender notification legislation, or a particular point in the process, such as the impact of the release from prison. None of the studies took a holistic view of the experience across the breadth of the CJS or on all aspects.

Only one of the papers was a thesis (Woodward, 2018) and just under half (six) of the papers published in the last five years. Of these more recent papers, three were from the US and three from the UK. Six papers used qualitative methods, five quantitative and two mixed methods. The qualitative studies (and the qualitative aspects of the mixed methods studies) all used semi structured interviews with three of the studies (Blagden & Wilson 2020; Russell et al., 2013 and Wills & Ward, 2011) being longitudinal in that the participants were interviewed on a number of time points before and after release from prison. Analysis for the qualitative papers was mostly completed through thematic analysis although one paper (Tovey et al., 2022) used IPA as their approach.

Authors identified small sample size as a limitation for those utilising qualitative methods, with the largest qualitative sample size being forty-two and the smallest being five. Sample size and population, for example that all the participants were from the same geographic area, were cited as key limitations across the studies as was the fact that much of the research related to self-reported data. Further research was suggested across the papers and mostly sought to manage the limitations so for example papers suggested broadening the research out to larger sample size, to additional geographic areas and replicating the research as it had been completed within the Covid-19 pandemic which may have affected the results (Steel et al., 2022).

Table 2 below depicts the characteristics of the included studies.

*Table 2 Included studies and their descriptive characteristics (table created by the author)*

Author, Year	Country	Purpose and Design	Sample Characteristics	Type of offence and Stage of CJS	Methods	Findings including theories	Author-identified limitations
Levenson, J.S., Cotter, L.P., 2005	USA	Describe impact of residence restrictions on the reintegration of those that had committed sex offences and their understanding of the law. Quantitative survey study.	135 participants, adults aged mainly between 25 and 64, 68% white with the rest a mixture of racial backgrounds.	97% child victim under 18, all participants convicted and under probationary supervision	Quantitative- Questionnaire completed within group therapy and statistical analysis	Restrictions on residence prevented nearly half from living with supportive family. Over half had had to move location/residence and 25% unable to return to their own home. Increased isolation, emotional and financial hardship and lack of support. Most participants stated that the restrictions would have no impact on offending as if someone wanted to access children it had nothing to do with where they live.	Self-reported data and not objective and only captured urban areas in one location and should be extended.
Griffin, V.W., Evans, M., 2021	USA	Exploratory study to look at racial differences and collateral consequences within stigmatisation framework. Comparison of the experiences between white and ethnic minority participants.	306 participants, age not reported, specific numbers not reported for ethnicity	83% child victims, all convicted and had served a sentence	Quantitative- Used validated survey tools to measure stigmatising shame, perceived efficacy of the registry and collateral consequences. Postal survey with additional open-ended questions.	Included labelling theory and stigma theory. White people reported more likely to be verbally harassed, increased isolation. Participants were negative about the registry even when asked to report something positive.	Convenience sample rather than a targeted sample, possible issues of temporal ordering and lack of community and cultural context.
Willis, G.M., Ward, T., 2011	New Zealand	The aim was to apply the GLM to a sample of released 'child molesters' and explore whether the primary goods identified in the GLM translate to those released from prison. To explore which participants were satisfied more easily than others	16, aged 20-79 years and no other characteristics specified	All convicted, imprisoned and released.	Mixed methods- Risk of recidivism, GLM assessed through questionnaires and then participants were interviewed 1-, 3- and 6-months post release although not all participants undertook all interviews.	Participants rated between different GLM goods as being moderate/high importance and these did not change over the 6 months. The success in attaining goods changed over the 6 months. Independence, achievement and belonging were difficult to achieve as reintegration and obtaining employment etc remained difficult. Those that had positive re-entry experiences at an early point retained good attainments at 6-month mark. Little correlation between risk and GLM, older participants seemed to attain GLM more successfully.	Small sample size and low statistical power affected generalisability and validity, exploratory project that should be replicated.

		and why and to look at the relationship between re-entry experiences and GLM goods. They also assessed static and dynamic risk.					
Levenson, J.S., Cotter, L.P., 2005	USA	Exploratory study to better understand the positive and negative intended and unintended consequences of community notification on 'sex offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration. Two research questions- What are their experiences and perceptions of Megan's law? And do different types of notification strategies produce different effects?	100, all adults aged 18 and over	All convicted and had served sentence, over 90% child victim offences	Quantitative- Recruited from outpatient treatment study. Questionnaire designed to cover research questions and completed by participants within group therapy session. Analysis through statistics.	Majority of offenders experienced stress, isolation, loss of relationships and feelings of fear and shame. Less than a third experienced loss of job, threats and harassment. Less than a third felt that community notification made communities safer. Most identified that their victims were known to them so threat of stranger offending is lower but exaggerated through the media.	Self-reported data bias and one location and may not be representative of other states in US.
Blagden, N., & Wilson, K. 2020	UK	Study to understand the perspective of those convicted of a sexual offence about a prison set up for those types of offences,	12, aged 22-73 years	At least 80% offended against children, all convicted and in a specific prison	Qualitative and longitudinal study, semi structured interviews repeated at specific time points and analysed using Thematic Analysis	Prison for individuals with sexual convictions: it facilitates space that allows the prisoners to change, relationships between staff and prisoners was constructive and helpful, there were however obstructions to their change even within that environment.	Suggests further research required to investigate if co-locating those that commit sex offences together in prison is the most beneficial idea for treatment engagement
Woodward, D., 2018	UK	PhD thesis, research designed to evaluate the reintegration experiences of 'child sex offenders' in a	10 men that had committed sex offences (as well as 11 professionals), all aged from 20s-70s	All child related sex offences, all post-conviction and post sentence	Face to face qualitative interviews, participants were recruited through offender managers in the	Although each participant's journey is different, they share commonalities; their convictions led to significant life disruption. Themes included: employment, loss of a normal life, acceptance of self, fear, isolation and loneliness, loss of relationships. Included theories around stigma and labels.	Small sample size and in a specific geographical area means not generalisable so would be useful to replicate this

		specific community in UK			community, analysis identified themes		elsewhere and to complete a longitudinal study to review the longer term life course.
Russell, G., Seymour, F and Lambie, I, 2013	New Zealand	Study to understand reintegration from the perspective of 'child sex offenders' by talking to them about their reintegration before and after their release from prison. The aims were to describe their expectations and subsequent experiences and then the associated factors that hinder/help their reintegration.	9, aged 31-63 years	All child related sex offences and released from prison	Mixed methods- Participants had their recidivism risk measured via validated assessments and then three semi structured interviews were completed, one pre and two post release. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.	Six major themes were identified in expectations that participants had prerelease, centred around reactions from those in the community, accommodation, social support and employment. Post release there were seven themes, these included negative community reactions were stressful, employment is important, social support is important and probation officers are unsupportive. Most of the participants struggled to integrate and this didn't change much for the 6 months they were involved in the research, those that were optimistic prerelease coped better post release.	
Tovey, L., Winder, B., Blagden, N., 2022	UK	The study examined the lived experiences, challenges and barriers 12 British men with sexual convictions faced as they sought employment in the UK.	12 participants, aged 38-65 years	Over 80% had offended against children and were all post-conviction	Qualitative- Used IPA and participants were recruited through a poster advertising campaign at a prison and from those involved with a rehabilitative foundation. Data collected through interviews.	Participants described that employers and public saw them as 'monsters', employers held stigmatised views but that they didn't believe that these were always fair. Two superordinate themes- stigma as a barrier to employment (disclosure bombshell) and autonomy and control (employment giving meaning and purpose, self-isolation and loneliness) they are unemployable but employment is essential for identity, social status	IPA does not allow for generalisability, there could be bias because they had volunteered and were motivated to seek employment. Future research to broaden out the participant population would be helpful.
Steel CMS, Newman E, O'Rourke S, Quayle E., 2022	USA	Exploratory cross-sectional study represents one of the first targeted investigations of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts amongst	78, no age range specified	All CSEM offences, post-conviction	Mixed method approach to analyse suicidal ideation, suicide attempts and interaction with investigators. Used a validated instrument to	19% of participants reported attempting suicide at some point after being made aware of the investigation into their use of CSEM, 73% reported significant suicidal ideation, higher suicidal ideation than reference sample that incorporates the general public. 44% felt that they had been treated fairly during the investigation, 18% that investigators showed compassion and understanding	Only applicable to CSEM offending, completed during COVID-19 which may have had an impact. Retrospective and not longitudinal.

		convicted CSEM offenders			measure suicidal ideation and the other aspects under investigation. Statistical analysis.		
Harris, D., 2014	USA	To what extent do the theories of desistance from non-sexual offending explain desistance for those that commit sex offences?	21 participants, aged 31-78	All child related sex offences except for one participant, all convicted and sentence served.	Qualitative- Semi structured face to face interviews, analysis through narrative analysis, producing themes. Recruited participants in therapy.	Two groups of desistors, natural and cognitive transformation. Men that had a varied offending history (ie not just sex offences) did not identify as 'sex offenders'. Cognitive transformation to some degree was seen in 86% of the participants and this was related to treatment/therapy. No evidence of substantial social control related to desistance and the CJS.	Bias of sampling only those in therapy, did not cross check desistance with official records.
Harris, D., Pedneault, A., Willis, G., 2019	USA	The aim of the study was to examine the narratives of 42 men incarcerated for a sexual offense and now living in the community. The extent to which each man discussed desiring, pursuing, and attaining the specific primary goods in the GLM since the time of their release from custody was explored.	42, aged 24-79 years	41 had committed sexual offences against children, all convicted and had served sentence in prison and released prior to research.	Qualitative- Recruited through participation in an outpatient therapy programme post sentence. Semi structured life course interviews completed and thematic and content analysis was used to determine results.	Relationships and friendships (95%) and life and survival (76%) were the most reported goods. Barriers to achieving the goods were discussed, most commonly participants reported a sense of loss around their relationships. They also had difficulties gaining employment and financial strain. Knowledge was the only good consistently achieved by participants.	Can't generalise to females and people living in other locations/countries. Bias in sampling - only those in active treatment.
Kothari, R., Key, R., Lawrenson, J., Farnham, F., Underwood, A., 2021	UK	This study investigated the experiences of CSAM perpetrators from the perspectives of law enforcement officers (n = 16), CSAM	5 CSEM perpetrators, but also 16 law enforcement individuals and 6 helpline operators. Participants were white.	All CSEM, convicted and sentence served	Qualitative- Semi structured interviews with each participant and thematic analysis.	Themes related to the CSAM participants: psychological impact of arrest, coping with the investigation, cognitive distortions, shame and stigma and professional support. The uncertainty around the legal procedures (related to prosecution, bail and trial in court) is a risk factor for suicidal behaviour. Offenders are often unaware of the legal process and have not had previous formal contact with law enforcement prior to their arrest for CSAM offences.	Small sample size, only in one geographical area (UK) and no variability on ethnicity. Further research should also include the impact that the portrayal of these offenders in the

		perpetrators themselves (n = 5), and help-line operators who have provided support to CSAM perpetrators through the Lucy Faithfull Foundation "Stop it now!" helpline (n = 6).				This can result in uncertainty, perceived loss of agency and correspondingly intensified feelings of a loss of control, which in turn results in hopelessness regarding the future and increased suicidal risk. Here, the most frequently cited periods of risk following arrest were bail, charge, and sentencing, which is consistent with previous research.	media has on both offenders and the general public and may be a barrier to help seeking.
Levenson, J, 2008	USA	The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the impact of residence restrictions on sex offenders in Broward County, Florida. Specifically, the intent was to explore the financial, psychosocial, and practical impact of housing restrictions on sex offenders' community adjustment.	109	88% offended against children, all convicted and in outpatient treatment in Florida	The authors designed a survey for the purpose of understanding the impact of residence restrictions on sex offenders as well as participants' perception of the utility of these laws. Some of the questions were derived (with permission from the authors) from surveys used in previous research (Levenson & Cotter, 2005; Levenson & Hern, 2007), and other questions were added by the current author. Data was analysed statistically using SPSS	The majority of sex offenders (64%) said that the distance requirement applied to them was Florida's 1000-foot statewide condition of probation. About 28% reported that they were required to live at least 2500 feet from prohibited locations due to a local ordinance. Between one-quarter and one-half of sex offenders surveyed reported that availability of housing was diminished for various reasons because of residence restrictions. Residence restrictions appear to interfere with social support and stability for most registered sex offenders	Self-reported data, sex offenders may be motivated to exaggerate negative issues. Not been able to corroborate any data obtained. Future research is needed to determine the efficacy of sex offender zoning laws.

#### 2.4.2 Themes and subthemes from the analysis of the included papers

As previously noted, I used the process described by Braun and Clarke (2006) for the thematic analysis. Firstly, the process involved reading and familiarisation with the data from the papers involved in the review. Initial notes were made of aspects of potential interest and then initial codes were created across the dataset (see Chung et al., 2020 and Price et al., 2020); examples of these codes include mental health issues and loss of employment. These initial codes were reviewed across the studies and subthemes (such as managing vulnerability and being with others) and overarching themes (such as striving for an ordinary life) were generated followed by reflective refinement, definition and naming of each theme. There was a total of 116 codes generated leading to the twelve subthemes and three overarching themes with example extracts from each of the subthemes. Lastly, the analysis was finalised and depicted within the table below (Table 3) which demonstrates the themes and subthemes.



*Table 3 Themes and Subthemes from the analysis of the included papers (table created by the author)*

Overarching Theme	Subtheme	Sources with data relevant to the subtheme	Example extract
Striving for an Ordinary Life	Managing Vulnerability	Woodward (2018), Levenson (2008), Russell et al., (2013), Kothari et al, (2021), Woodward et al., (2021), Willis and Ward (2011), Levenson and Cotter (2005), Levenson and Cotter (2005- 2), Blagden and Wilson (2020), Tovey et al., (2022), Steel et al (2022), Harris (2014), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>The impact carries on even 13 years since my arrest. Afraid to go outside. Do not want to meet neighbours. Afraid my own children will find out or that they will be harassed by other children in the neighborhood. (Levenson &amp; Cotter, 2005)</i>
	Building meaning in their lives	Woodward (2018), Russell et al., (2013), Woodward et al., (2021), Willis and Ward (2011), Blagden and Wilson (2020), Tovey et al., (2022), Harris (2014), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>In a sense, a job was synonymous with motion, activity, and feeling purposeful. Conversely, unemployment signified being stagnant (Tovey et al., 2022)</i>
	Being themselves	Woodward (2018), Russell et al., (2013), Kothari et al, (2021), Woodward et al., (2021), Blagden and Wilson (2020), Tovey et al., (2022), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>Living in the community as men with child sexual offences meant the participants lived with and managed their own self-identity and stigma. Each man had his own unique way of appreciating who he was and his place in the community. They had differing levels of acceptance of the child sex offender label and adopted different techniques to manage this. (Woodward, 2018)</i>
	Being with others	Woodward (2018), Levenson (2008), Russell et al., (2013), Kothari et al, (2021), Woodward et al., (2021), Willis and Ward (2011), Levenson and Cotter (2005), Levenson and Cotter (2005- 2), Tovey et al., (2022), Steel et al (2022), Harris (2014), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>Sex offenders frequently described themselves as forced to live farther from support systems, employment, social services, and public transportation. (Levenson, 2008)</i>
	Acceptance and hope	Woodward (2018), Russell et al., (2013), Woodward et al., (2021), Willis and Ward (2011), Levenson and Cotter (2005- 2), Blagden and Wilson (2020), Tovey et al., (2022), Harris (2014), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>Overall, the majority of the content in responses focused on negative aspects of the registry, with only 26% coverage of positive aspects by Blacks, and only 7% coverage of positive aspects by Whites. Within remarks on the positive aspects of the registry and community notification, a theme of community and social support arose. Specifically, some were motivated to show their community that they were a good person, as they wanted to be accepted (or reaccepted) by their community. (Griffin &amp; Evans, 2021)</i>

Perceived unfairness of the consequences of the CJS	(In)Justice	Woodward (2018), Levenson (2008), Russell et al., (2013), Kothari et al, (2021), Woodward et al., (2021), Willis and Ward (2011), Levenson and Cotter (2005), Levenson and Cotter (2005- 2), Blagden and Wilson (2020), Tovey et al., (2022), Steel et al (2022), Harris (2014), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>Then they put the picture up and within a week three quarters of people wouldn't talk to me anymore. The ones that would just wanted to say nasty things. The cops, campus police were chasing me around all the time, harassing me and finally . . . I had 12 more credits to go and I just couldn't take it. I couldn't deal with it. So, I left. (Harris et al., 2019)</i>
	Being treated as an individual	Woodward (2018), Levenson (2008), Russell et al., (2013), Kothari et al, (2021), Levenson and Cotter (2005), Levenson and Cotter (2005- 2), Blagden and Wilson (2020), Tovey et al., (2022), Steel et al (2022), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>Rather than passing judgement on people's crimes, prisoners claimed to assess their peers based on their in-prison behaviour. As Arthur put it, 'you accept the person for what he is in prison, how he comes across to you, rather than what he's done'. (Blagden &amp; Wilson, 2020).</i>
	A sense of ownership and control	Woodward (2018), Levenson (2008), Kothari et al, (2021), Levenson and Cotter (2005- 2), Tovey et al., (2022), Steel et al (2022), Harris (2014), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>They were all limited in terms of employment type and they displayed negative 'can't-do' attitudes, rather than adopting a more positive approach of 'can-do.' James adopted the latter and this helped him to succeed. He did not have to disclose his offences and this was the primary reason why he achieved his goals and the others did not. (Woodward, 2018)</i>
Tensions between the past and the future	Managing risk	Woodward (2018), Levenson (2008), Russell et al., (2013), Kothari et al, (2021), Woodward et al., (2021), Levenson and Cotter (2005), Levenson and Cotter (2005- 2), Blagden and Wilson (2020), Tovey et al., (2022), Steel et al (2022), Harris (2014), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>Importantly, many offenders emphasized their need for social support and believed their risk increased with isolation from supportive family and friends. For example, they commented, "I believe you have a better chance of recovery by living with supportive family members" and "What helps me is having support people around.... Isolating me is not helpful." (Levenson &amp; Cotter, 2005-2)</i>
	Connections	Woodward (2018), Levenson (2008), Willis and Ward (2011), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>"Relationships and friendships" was the only PHG where participants reported both achievement and failure. Although some participants had meaningful relationships and friendships, others did not. The positive accounts of the former and sense of loss and bitterness in the narratives of the latter emphasize the critical importance of such relationships in the lives of these men. Furthermore, many spoke of having had a supportive family in the past, but now felt restricted from meeting or reconnecting with friends (Harris et al., 2019)</i>
	Treatment and support	Woodward (2018), Levenson (2008), Russell et al., (2013), Kothari et al, (2021), Willis and Ward (2011), Levenson and Cotter (2005- 2), Blagden and Wilson (2020), Tovey et al., (2022), Steel et al., (2022), Harris (2014), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>Three offenders were seen by mental health professionals at arrest, but noted that this contact was not pivotal to managing suicidal ideation or risk; in fact, offenders stated that even if they were feeling suicidal at arrest, they would not have disclosed this due to a desire to leave the police station as quickly as possible (Kothari et al., 2021)</i>

	Personal change	Woodward (2018), Levenson (2008), Russell et al., (2013), Willis and Ward (2011), Blagden and Wilson (2020), Tovey et al., (2022), Harris (2014), Harris et al., (2019).	<i>Finally, some offenders indicated that Megan's Law forced them to be honest with others in a way that had not previously been possible for them, and that honesty resulted in support. (Levenson, 2008)</i>
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### 2.4.3 Striving for an Ordinary Life

Across the papers a key theme was of the men striving to return to their prior lives or to live lives that could be described as 'usual', or 'normal'. It became clear to them that this was difficult to achieve as a result of their offending, and much of their discussions related to the impact on their everyday lives. This was true for both the qualitative and quantitative research findings, and in part, was the focus of some of the research (for example Levenson & Cotter, 2005, Russell et al., 2013 and Woodward, 2008), whilst identified as part of the research in others (for example, Harris, 2014). There were a number of subthemes for this theme and these are explored in this section.

#### 2.4.3.1 Managing Vulnerability

This subtheme is characterised by the ways that the men demonstrated their vulnerabilities and the ways that they tried to cope with their lives and health pre and post arrest. Some of the men reported mental health difficulties and that these had been undiagnosed and spanned from before their arrests. This can be seen as a pattern across many of the stories from participants in both the quantitative and qualitative studies. For example:

*The majority reported undiagnosed mental health difficulties for which they had not received the appropriate help (n = 4; depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and anxiety were referenced), and two had attempted suicide or engaged in self-harm pre-arrest. (Kothari et al., 2021)*

The men convicted for sexual offences across the three countries represented within this review had lengthy sentences and then ongoing restrictions. This length of time, inevitably, increased the likelihood of additional impact on the men and their families such as physical assault and property damage for many reasons, as demonstrated in the extract below, but also across other papers in this review.

*Overall, location was not associated with negative consequences, except that living in Tampa was significantly related to reported job loss ( $r = .15$ ;  $p < .05$ ). As the length of time on probation (and exposure to notification procedures) increased, so did the incidence of physical assault ( $r = .19$ ;  $p < .05$ ), property damage ( $r = .17$ ;  $p < .05$ ), and consequences to household members ( $r = .20$ ;  $p < .01$ ) (Levenson & Cotter, 2005-2)*

The men had all found ways of trying to cope with their situation and these vulnerabilities, including for example the use of spirituality and religion and support through healthcare professionals. This was successful to varying degrees, dependent mostly on them as individuals and the individual experiences that they had had as these excerpts depict.

*The last prominent theme observed within positive responses was spirituality and religion. This was particularly relevant within Black respondents, who made mention of church, prayer, and faith. Referring to the sex offender registry, one Black respondent wrote: "It've [It is] helped me a great deal. When you have a little faith there're nothing impossible for you in having your freedom." Similarly, one White respondent described their positive coping with registration, "I turned my heart to the Lord and I'm faithful in church." (Griffin & Evans, 2021)*

#### **2.4.3.2 Building meaning in their lives**

This subtheme incorporates the meaning that participants attached to their lives and the changes related to this as a result of their offending behaviour, and by consequence, the CJS, for example around their employment and their ability to forge a new life in their community. Employment in particular is an important aspect of people's lives and often is a way that we identify ourselves; an aspect of the lens through which we understand the world and our role within it (Tovey et al., 2023). Many of the men across these studies lost their original employment and struggled to gain new employment, in particular in the field in which they had previously worked.

*Two of the men spoke about the effects on employability, with the child sex offender conviction and the attached label almost negating any opportunities in this area, whilst stricter licence conditions for internet offenders made job searching harder (Woodward, 2018).*

*Despite these difficulties, participants reflected on the intrinsic value of working for a living, particularly the associated satisfaction and increases in self-esteem. "I've never been on the dole before. A stink experience, it is going to pay my rent, going to pay my food and stuff and it is going to keep me going until such time as I can get a job, although it is not much". (Russell et al., 2013)*

The impact of loss of employment rippled out further than the loss of the job itself, it also fundamentally impacted on their abilities to fend for themselves and take care of their families, making them often dependent on the state and other people. The sense of 'achievement' that working could foster and develop was not the only aspect of their 'project' (Ashworth, 2016) that was affected for the men. When we look at the research around 'primary goods' (from the GLM as discussed previously, Ward, 2002), the men's experience is at a point where they are just managing to live, rather than thrive. This lack of being able to thrive, which is encapsulated by the below quotation, can be seen, for example, in their lack of being able to join normal activities, such as sports or other groups. The impact of their offending, and subsequently the CJS, required the men to get 'back to basics' and this was a difficult concept, particularly for the men that had had good standing in the community previously.

*The primary goods of achievement and belonging were least fulfilled among participants one month post-release. Difficulty finding employment was reported commonly as a barrier towards fulfilling the primary good of achievement, and many participants stated that joining cultural, sporting or other groups to fulfil the good of belonging were long-term goals, but that other goals such as securing permanent housing and employment took precedence. While*

*fluctuations were observed in mean attainment ratings for achievement, attainment ratings for belonging remained consistently low relative to the attainment of other primary goods. Fluctuations in attainment ratings for achievement were associated with participants identifying non-employment-related activities that satisfied the good of achievement three months post-release; for example, house furnishing and gardening (Willis & Ward, 2011).*

Being part of a community is something that is an integral part of what it means to be human and the loss of this can have a profound effect (McLean & Maxwell, 2015); conversely being able to build and develop this aspect of their lives was extremely beneficial to the participants in these studies and their abilities to move forward.

*They [the participants that had committed offences] presented a satisfactory sense of being a part of the community and this was important because it helped them to feel less of an outcast and more of a valued member of society (Woodward, 2018)*

*Building a life. Participants believed that building a new life after leaving prison was important to be able to successfully reintegrate. Important aspects of building a new life included believing that they had the capabilities to attain certain goals or manage prospective situations, being happy with who they are, as well as being part of society or a family, and the planning of future goals or aspirations (Russell et al., 2013)*

#### **2.4.3.3 Being themselves**

Self-image and self-identity are linked through much of the background literature to the experience of this population of men that commit these types of offences and was discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis. Labelling, shame and stigma all affected how the men saw themselves. This subtheme specifically relates to the impact on their self-identity, their self-image and their ability to feel like, and be, themselves after their arrests. In line with other literature in this area (see Kras, 2021), the studies here indicated that the men struggled to feel like themselves and they felt that they were seen not as themselves by others; their label as a 'sex offender' became paramount.

*They may as well just walk up to you and hang a banner around yourself that says 'You're Jimmy Savile, version 2'. (Kothari et al., 2021).*

*I feel labelled; once you are accused you are garbage (Levenson & Cotter, 2005).*

*His use of the phrase 'lowest of the low' illustrated the comparison between his current self-perception of being lowly and having once been highly thought of by others. (Tovey et al., 2021)*

The coping mechanisms that the participants previously used to manage their offending behaviour could not be utilised and they were exposed, altering their abilities to manage their self-image.

*... they also described the fragility of these distortions, stating that they were difficult to preserve when faced with the reality of their offending, making it impossible for them to maintain a positive sense of self (Kothari et al., 2021).*

#### 2.4.3.4 Being with others

This subtheme is characterised by the effect that their offending behaviour and subsequent involvement with the CJS had on their relationships with others and the wider community. A lack of integration in the community was a common experience described across the reviewed studies, both in terms of isolation from others but also their own self-imposed withdrawal.

*They were, in the main, lonely and isolated in the community with very little in terms of meaningful social interaction with others. This was apparent across all the participants, regardless of their history (Woodward, 2018)*

*... there was a prevalence of statements indicative of isolation and stigmatization. Feelings of isolation from the community were prevalent; Self-imposed isolation by avoidance of certain places and social situations ..., as social distance may be used as a preventative response to anticipated stigmatization (Griffin & Evans, 2021)*

One study considered racial differences and identified that white respondents reported a higher incidence of issues with others than the black participants (Griffin & Evans, 2021). In particular, white participants reported higher incidents of verbal harassment, the loss of friendships, being asked to leave businesses and being removed from social groups than their black counterparts.

Some of the studies dwelt on the importance of a support network for these men. Specifically, in relation to suicide risk, a support network (however that is constructed for them) was found to be key in reducing risk, although there was some speculation about how that might work. This issue around suicide risk and the importance of a support network could potentially be extrapolated out to other areas of their lives; a social network and community was a vital factor in their abilities to both build a life and manage the risk of offending.

*A personal support network that actively and positively supports an offender through the investigative process appears to be crucial in mitigating the level of suicidal risk. It may ameliorate the experience of shame, encourage offenders to focus on the future, and therefore alleviate feelings of hopelessness (Kothari et al., 2021).*

In the study by Blagden and Wilson (2020), they also discuss the importance of community within the prison system. Being managed within an establishment set up for men that had committed sexual crimes meant that their relationships with other prisoners and staff was better than in other prisons. This is perhaps unsurprising; the staff had chosen to work in a specialist environment and although there may well have still been some kind of hierarchy, the men all had the same 'sex offender' stigma.

*[the men showed] surprise at being treated in a decent manner and being "blown away" at how qualitatively different this experience was from previous establishments. Many participants made comparisons to life in previous prisons to highlight how different staff-prisoner relations are in this prison (Blagden & Wilson, 2020)*

#### 2.4.3.5 Acceptance and Hope

There were some positives that participants reported, particularly around how they found hope in, and an acceptance of, their altered way of life. This is related to the coping mechanisms that they used, and gives glimpses that cement ideas around attributes and actions that helped them with the ability to see positivity and hope.

The CJS brings with it a number of aspects, touch points, within the system and people that work within it, and these provide different types of impact as a result. Registration onto a monitoring system, such as the Sex Offenders' Register in the UK and registries used in the US, is something that happens in a similar way in all the countries within this review. This type of monitoring does not necessarily deter offending (Schultz, 2014), however some of the men in two of the studies found that this was part of their way to reintegrate. In particular, it was reported as a way of demonstrating to friends, family and the wider community their desire and ability to change; to make amends, to rebuild their lives and to step away from the 'sex offender' label. This has been an enduring point, as the research from both 2005 and 2018 (see the excerpts below), suggest this same point to a certain extent with some of the participants.

*Some of the men took ownership of signing the register, some abhorred it. For a few of the men, ViSOR [violent and sex offenders register] was seen in a positive light, as registration was a way to demonstrate how they could be trusted by adhering to the requirements (Woodward, 2018).*

*Many clients noted that Megan's Law had some positive effects on them [the clients]. For instance, about one third of participants reported an increased willingness to manage their risk because of neighborhood vigilance, and most were motivated to prevent reoffense to prove themselves to others (Levenson & Cotter, 2005).*

Their arrest, for some men, was also a positive; a way to break their offending cycle, a thought to draw that line in the sand away from the person that they were and to move towards a more hopeful and positive way of life.

*two offenders also experienced some relief on arrest, and associated this with existing feelings of self-disgust and hatred (Kothari et al., 2021).*

It is not clear from this study if this is a fleeting thought, or if this is something that is more long lasting. Positivity was linked to how well the men could achieve a 'good life' (as in the GLM, Ward, 2002). A positive early experience once they left prison had a lasting impact on them and conversely a difficult re-entry made life harder.

*All correlations were positive, suggesting that positive re-entry experiences were associated with higher good lives ratings. ... In other words, primary goods attainment six months post-release appeared to be associated with more positive earlier re-entry experiences Good Lives ratings, recidivism risk, and age (Willis & Ward, 2011)*



#### 2.4.4 Perceived unfairness of the consequences of the CJS

Perceptions of fairness and justice threaded through the research in this review. Issues around fairness were much more widespread than just how the men felt about the CJS as a system/process. In fact, many of the men felt that it was entirely appropriate to be punished and hopefully rehabilitated for their crimes. However, there were many additional consequences of the CJS, and it was these unintended and collateral consequences that were the main sources of perceived unfairness and injustices. These were pervasive and spanned different aspects of the participants' lives, although they were slightly different for different men in the different studies. The subthemes are discussed below and include the concept of (in)justice, the men's abilities to take ownership and control of their lives and what it meant to be treated as an individual.

##### 2.4.4.1 (In)Justice

This subtheme is characterised by the concept of justice both from the perspective of the men and more widely. Justice, in its broadest definition, is much wider than just receiving punishment for committing a crime and the ongoing restrictions, and was explored within the introductory chapter of this thesis (see section 1.5). The men here did not always feel like the consequences and outcomes of going through the CJS were 'just'. Woodward (2018) identified that although the CJS was not necessarily just aimed at punishment, by committing these offences, the men were singled out as inherently dangerous, which necessitated their lives being taken over by the restrictions from the state.

*apparent from these accounts [is] that the government sees the protection of the public as of paramount importance, and the participants often had to negotiate their way through life and live alongside any restrictions in place (Woodward, 2018).*

In particular, public disclosure can happen in both the UK and US and this was seen as problematic and unfair by the participants.

*Clients were asked to rate their perception of the fairness of disclosing various types of personal information about sex offenders to the public (see Table 5). Overwhelmingly, sex offenders do not appear to believe that public disclosure of information is fair (Levenson & Cotter, 2005-2).*

The effects of the system were far reaching for the men and the restrictions and the process could have damaging effects in itself, as Levenson (2008) notes.

*Between one-quarter and one-half of sex offenders surveyed reported that availability of housing was diminished for various reasons because of residence restrictions (see Table 1). One participant reported: 'It is been about 3 months ... and I have given my probation officer at least over 100 addresses and still haven't found a place to live yet.' A majority agreed that they had difficulty finding housing, and a substantial minority reported that they had been*

*considered in violation of probation or had even been jailed as a result of residence violations (Levenson, 2008).*

The vicious circle of not being able to find appropriate housing then put the men in violation of their probation. This felt to the participants as if the system had set them up to fail.

The research from Griffin and Evans (2021) suggested that black participants felt that the system was more effective with regard to its intentions (of punishment, protection and rehabilitation) than their white counterparts, and they were also less likely to think it was unfair. This could suggest a correlation between perceived effectiveness and fairness; a parallel with procedural justice here.

*Black participants had higher perceived effectiveness of the sex offender registry and community notification laws. Overall, Black participants had significantly higher scores for the Perceived Effectiveness Index (Griffin & Evans, 2021).*

Being treated fairly by the system is something that was also seen in research around the way that, for example, staff in probation interacted with men in this situation. Steel et al. (2022) identified that the majority of the participants in their study did not feel that they were treated fairly by those investigating and prosecuting them. The inclusion of the media, as I discussed in the introduction, further exacerbated these feelings.

*44% (n = 34) of the respondents agreed that they were fairly treated, 19% (n = 15) agreed that the investigators [police and other umbrella police organisations such as the FBI] showed compassion, and 18% (n = 14) that investigators showed understanding (Steel et al., 2022)*

#### *2.4.4.2 Being treated as an individual*

There was a thread across much of the research identified in this scoping review around the importance of being treated as an individual within the wider CJS. This links back to the last point around justice and in particular procedural justice and fairness. Each individual had their own unique context and situation and therefore a different experience. Steel et al. (2022) identified that less than half of the participants felt that they were treated fairly, although what this meant to the participants is difficult to understand through quantitative research. The findings from Kothari et al.'s (2021) research, where there were five participants, revealed that two (40%) felt that their interaction was mechanical with investigators. It is not clear whether this felt fair but it did not appear to the participants that they were treated as an individual and their circumstances taken into account.

Being treated for who they were perceived to be, and not what they had done, was a consistent idea articulated in many ways across the papers. This was both in relation to other prisoners (for those in prison) and for those that were in other roles across the CJS (for example the

prison officers and probation staff). Taking this a step further, this was also the case for anyone that they met who became aware or was made aware of their offending.

*If prisoners did not know what their companions were convicted of, they would be unable to let this knowledge affect their behaviour or attitudes. They therefore sought to keep themselves in a deliberate state of ignorance concerning other people's offences (Tovey et al., 2022).*

*I just went wow . . . you're talking to me like I was just a normal person, not a prisoner . . . and that helps, made me feel a bit better. It were weird [sic] just being treated normal. (Blagden & Wilson, 2020)*

*The participants' responses highlighted the value placed in probation officers taking the time to get to know the individual, rather than making preconceived judgements about them as a person rather than labelled as just another child sex offender. It would be good to meet my probation officer so they can get to know who I am, what I'm about, how my offending happened, when I offended. Get to know me instead of judging me without seeing me. I don't even know if they read my file or what. (Russell et al., 2013)*

The importance of men convicted for sexual offences being treated as an individual is not a new concept, being articulated back in 2005 by Levenson and Cotter. However, times do not seem to have changed much looking at the more recent papers.

*A more individualized approach to sex offender management can enhance public safety while promoting successful reintegration for offenders (Levenson & Cotter, 2005 2).*

#### **2.4.4.3 A sense of autonomy and control**

A sense of a loss of control was one of the defining features of involvement in the CJS for the participants and something that the participants within these papers found unfair. This was characterised by a lack of knowledge and experience of the CJS and the restrictions placed upon the men as a result of their arrest and conviction.

*The effects of risk management on the participants were interpreted by them from various angles, placing differing levels of importance on them. Some of the participants showed a good level of understanding of how these restrictions impacted their lives, and some did not (Woodward, 2018).*

Being able to have autonomy and ownership of their lives provided the men with a greater opportunity to gain control and feel more positive about their lives. This ability to gain knowledge and understanding of the system was arbitrary and dependent not on the system itself or the processes involved but the men's own past experiences and the knowledge gained from others.

*Officers described almost all suspected offenders as having limited or no previous contact with law enforcement (Kothari et al., 2021).*

Those that had sympathetic CJS personnel and access to support tended to have more information and a greater sense of control. For some of the men their residence was

significantly impacted by their conviction. Knowledge and control was paramount not only in relation to the CJS, but also in relation to understanding themselves. The participants' ability to understand themselves and their offending was important to help them to not only manage their offending but also to put the pieces of themselves back together to enable them to reintegrate and start to rebuild.

*"So, I remember talking about why I was doing this and this is why I was able to realise that the depression side had been sitting there for so long and how it had affected my life. And because I've been able to acknowledge that, I think put me in a far better mind set than before." (Kothari et al., 2021)*

*Thus, some of the men demonstrated how they were in control of their own lives to a far greater level than expected. The participants were active agents in the reintegration process, rather than passive ones. It's true that the restrictive nature of some of the measures in place, meant the men had to change routines or be increasingly self-aware. However, being active meant they still had goals to achieve, points to prove and trust to rebuild (Woodward, 2018).*

The importance of knowledge and control in the process of desistance and self-risk management was also highlighted.

*Either way, it might be useful for practitioners to educate sex offenders about the factors that demonstrate empirical relationships with recidivism and to encourage self-evaluation using structured exercises and risk assessment tools. Knowledge of both static and dynamic factors that contribute to risk would help offenders to more realistically examine their likelihood of reoffense and develop individualized risk management strategies (Levenson & Cotter, 2005).*

Self-knowledge and a sense of control are not just relevant to the CJS but are also relevant in other stigmatised and monitored areas such as in forensic mental health, where power imbalances and a lack of control were key features to difficulties in recovery (Tansey et al., 2017).

#### 2.4.5 Tensions between the past and the future

The experiences recounted by the participants across the research included tensions between their offending past and the future they were trying to create. None of these aspects were black and white or straightforward, they were full of nuance and clouded with stigma and shame, as well as the difficulties inherent with navigating a punitive, risk focused system. The subthemes around managing risk, the tensions related to treatment and support and relationships, along with the concept of personal change, are all explored as part of this theme.

##### 2.4.5.1 Managing risk

Managing the perceived and actual risk that the men posed to themselves, friends/family and the wider public was a key subtheme and there were many tensions involved in this risk management process. Rather than being an individualised process considering the risk of reoffending for each man as an individual, risk management was something that was related

to politics and public perception, as well as the potential risk that the men posed to others, as discussed in the introductory chapter to this thesis. Indeed, some of the men (and researchers) discussed the potential and actual increase in reoffending as a result of the risk management system, as it directly hindered or exacerbated their reasons for offending. This was not necessarily something even inferred or identified through research but the men's understanding of themselves and their risk identified it as an issue.

*Others raised concerns about the stress caused by residence restrictions and their consequences, and the potential for such stress to contribute to reoffense risk (Levenson, 2008).*

However, the risk posed to the men by others and themselves was also a key tension and concern. As Kothari et al (2021) noted, the risk that they posed to themselves was heightened when the men were alone; yet the system perpetuated a lonely environment where it was hard to engage with others.

*All offenders reported experiencing suicidal ideation after becoming aware of the criminal investigation, with one attempting suicide. Risk appeared to be heightened when individuals were isolated and, "alone with your thoughts" (Kothari et al., 2021).*

Men that commit CSEM are a highly vulnerable group, for whom arrest seems to be a psychologically challenging and traumatic event. The overwhelming emotional impact of confronting their offending behaviour, and accepting that it was no longer a secret, resulted in the men experiencing shock and terror, similar to experiencing a traumatic event (Kothari et al., 2021). As well as treating people as individuals and managing their risk accordingly, input for each person to help manage their unique situations, such as lack of relationships and support, could make a real difference. For example:

*The crux ... is the experience of a prison that only caters for individuals with sexual convictions and how experiencing this environment was unlike any other prison. For some it was described as "a different world." Participants spoke of greater headspace and reduction in anxiety and fear (Blagden & Wilson, 2020).*

#### 2.4.5.2 Connections

The tension between the need for maintaining and developing connections, and the impact that the CJS and its restrictions had on these connections, was an important subtheme. Relationships for these men was a key idea that flowed through the papers; the men were hiding their offending from their family whilst still maintaining their relationships and the façade of the life that they had created.

*There is a sense of relief ... where participants experience less anxiety through not having to hide aspects of their offense and engage in normal social interaction without fear of reprisal, and through this process, it allows them to distance themselves from their crimes and the label "sex offender." (Blagden & Wilson, 2020).*

With the outing of their offending, their perception of themselves was reflected back from others and often this was overtly negative. Positive perceptions and connections with others from family and friends to the professionals within the CJS, however, had a large impact on how the men saw themselves and on their abilities to move forwards, rebuild and reconnect. This was a recurring finding across the papers as is evidenced in the extracts below:

*The looking-glass self postulates that how people define themselves is a reflection and reaction to how others perceive them and is highly relevant to the prison environment (Blagden & Wilson, 2020).*

*apparent ... that internal identifications are defined by both the person effected and the people whom they associate with, or from society as a whole. For example, Sean was able to accept his own stigma, the label that he attached to identify who he was. However, he had to adopt an alter-ego to blend back into society, in order to fit in (Woodward, 2018).*

#### 2.4.5.3 Treatment and support

‘Treatment’ (any interventions and other formal support centred on improving their wellbeing and/or stopping their offending behaviour, in particular) often formed part of the sentence for these men or was something that they also chose to engage with. However, the way that this was managed and the different concepts and aspects of treatment and support could be difficult to achieve within the backdrop of the CJS. The men often expected treatment and support to be beneficial but that was not always the case.

*“[meeting with mental health worker] Lasted 20 minutes and wrote out a prescription and there was no secondary appointment.” [O 1] “I was asked if I had any suicidal tendencies. So that was straight after [his arrest] and, to be honest, I hadn’t. But even if I had, I would have said no, because - this sounds bizarre - but it is hard to commit suicide in a police station and, if I’m going to do it, I need the freedom to be able to move.” (Kothari et al., 2021)*

Here, it is clear that the support and potential treatment offered at a police station around suicide in particular was deemed to be inappropriate and provided at the wrong time, which could potentially derail further help seeking behaviour. There was however value in the relationships formed between staff from prison/probation and the men themselves; being seen as an individual rather than just the offence that they had committed, had a significant positive impact and although this has been covered in a separate theme, also benefitted treatment and formal interventions here.

*The participants’ responses highlighted the value placed in probation officers taking the time to get to know the individual, rather than making preconceived judgements about them as a person rather than labelled as just another child sex offender. “It would be good to meet my probation officer so they can get to know who I am, what I’m about, how my offending happened, when I offended. Get to know me instead of judging me without seeing me. I don’t even know if they read my file or what”. (Russell et al., 2013).*

Many men identified the need for additional support around their offending and to manage the underlying reasons for their offending, and that these were not offered in traditional programmes, or tailored particularly for different types of offending, for example those that had viewed CSEM. This was important for the men but also a challenge to provide.

*An additional 9% (n = 7) indicated that [investigators] showing understanding of the issue being a mental illness and offering treatment would have been helpful: • “Focused more on treatment programs to help understand my desire to view pornography, to help me understand how children may be affected by my viewing, even though I had no actual contact. Help me to understand that I am no [sic] alone in my desires and that counselling and treatment helps. (Steel et al., 2022)*

Practical support to move on was also something that was difficult to gain and access for the men. As the below extract shows, this was not just in relation to housing but finance for example as well.

*Some also reported lost wages due to time taken from work in order to seek and secure housing or to relocate. Several reported having to stay in hotels for a nightly or weekly fee that far exceeded a typical rent payment (Levenson, 2008).*

#### 2.4.5.4 Personal change

In order to manage their altered life/lifestyle and to manage their potential to reoffend, the men needed to make personal changes. There were, however, many tensions within the change process and the way that change was approached and managed. The need to change was beset by issues around the mechanics of being able to change when cloistered within the restrictions the men faced and therefore this was difficult for longer term desistance from offending and the ability for these men to lead meaningful lives moving forwards.

*What was particularly important .., was how the participants gave a rare glimpse into their world with specific focus on the mechanics of setting and achieving goals. The ordinary life that so many of the men searched for, was beset on all sides by external factors linked to stigma, lack of trust, risk management procedures, fear and low expectations coupled with aspirational change (Woodward, 2018).*

It almost seemed for some of the men that they needed to go back to basics, that life became purely about surviving and that their ‘inner peace’ was attained through managing these basic functions.

*All participants received the highest rating for independence one month post-release, and most (n15) received the highest rating for inner peace. These goods were attained commonly through making basic daily decisions associated with living in the community (e.g. what to have for dinner) and applying skills learnt in prison, respectively. Examples of the latter included utilizing mood management and problem-solving skills (Willis & Ward, 2008).*



A stark depiction of this comes from the understanding of the men around how they were viewed by others and as a consequence it made their ability to change and move forward more difficult, as is depicted by Levenson and Cotter (2005) here:

*Some people want for me to die. That's what this law is about, to cause enough stress on the offender so he will take his own life I went back to school to get a degree. After 3 months of excellent work in a new career I was released because my employer found out about my record. It is absolutely devastating (Levenson & Cotter, 2005).*

*That's one of the reasons you think those dark thoughts, it is almost like you deserve it. (Kothari et al., 2021)*

However, the research also gave a glimpse of what is required in relation to the personal change necessary for these men to be able to move forward.

*The purpose of this place I would say is rehabilitation, it gave me that space to show it . . . here gives you that space to work on it. I was like full 100% denial and in that environment, I completely shut down and I think I've come here and in the space of roughly 10 months I went from being in denial to changing my perspective and saying yes to programs (Blagden & Wilson, 2020).*

## 2.5 Discussion

This scoping review was conducted to explore the research landscape and evidence base around what is known about the experience of the CJS for men that are under investigation or convicted of sexual offences related to children, the impact that it has on their lives and the way in which it has previously been researched.

In terms of the population, context and scope of prior research, this review confirmed that there is little research (only 13 studies) on the specific perspective and experiences of those who have committed sexual offences, specifically child sexual offences (including CSEM), on the breadth of their experience across the CJS and the impacts of these experiences. Much of the research did not distinguish between those that had committed offences against adults and those that had committed offences against children. This is important, given that the latter are more likely to face increased levels of shame, stigmatisation and difficulty reintegrating due to the additional restrictions that their offences attract; although, this is not entirely clear from the included studies and therefore further research in this area would be beneficial. Notably, only two studies (Kothari et al., 2021 and Steel et al., 2022) focused on those that had committed CSEM. Further, none of the studies were conducted with those under investigation; instead, all studies recruited men who had been convicted, and in the main, this research focused on those either in or released from prison. Consequently, the focus of the research was typically on one particular aspect of the CJS, such as prison or post-conviction registration and restrictions. This poses a significant gap in knowledge, particularly around the



experience of the CJS from the inception of their involvement, i.e., from arrest onwards. Investigations for these offences often take considerably longer than many other crimes (Rimer, 2021) particularly those involving CSEM offences, and those under investigation face restrictions and collateral consequences from their arrest onwards. Arrest, as well as being the catalyst for the start of the investigation for the men is also a risk point for suicide (Key et al., 2018). The included papers represented research with men from three countries only: the UK, USA and New Zealand, with over half of the papers from research conducted in the USA. Although the CJS is similar across these three countries, there are marked differences, particularly in relation to the restrictions and punitive measures for those in the USA.

Amongst the 13 studies, six used qualitative methods with only three studies (Blagden & Wilson, 2020; Russell et al., 2013 and Willis & Ward, 2011) that used a longitudinal approach to the research (by repeated interviews at specific time points). These were very specific in their focus, were conducted with participants that were initially in prison and conducted interviews pre- and post-prison release. Additional qualitative research that involves participants from an earlier stage in the CJS and provides a longitudinal view through the breadth of their journey would prove beneficial and would allow a real time understanding of the impact, risks and effects of the CJS from the perspective of the men themselves.

In relation to the CJS, the three overarching themes of this review depict that the men had lost and wanted to regain an 'ordinary life'; the participants perceived unfairness of some of the consequences of the CJS and that there were tensions between their offending past and their future. The themes and subthemes identify the changes in the men's lives after their initial arrest, some of the collateral consequences and the how these are difficult to manage and their struggle to move away from the 'offender' label and their offending towards a future and an 'ordinary' life. The importance of relationships to the men and the impact they had on them is important, as is their need to try and live a 'normal' life and these papers started to identify the difficulties that the men faced as a result and what this meant to them. There are a number of key concepts identified such as the sense of self and the impact that identifying and magnifying their offending behaviour through the lens of the CJS has on this. In line with the literature in the introductory chapter to this thesis, the research featured within this review included labelling and theories around stigma as well as the GLM.

When identifying, exploring and trying to understand the experience of the CJS and its impacts for these men, the use of experiential, qualitative methods would seem to be a logical approach, however, as mentioned, only six of the papers focused on qualitative methods, and among these, only one used an experiential approach (i.e. here one study used IPA). Further research that centres an experiential approach could expand the evidence base provided by

a deeper exploration and understanding of the impact on the men themselves, of how they come to understand and interpret their world (Crowther & Thomson, 2020) and can gain valuable insight into their perspectives and therefore what helps and hinders their experience.

Although, more broadly, there is a growing body of evidence from within the UK and a number of papers questioning the current process/system and the lack of input on this from those who have committed the offences (see for example Justice, 2019; Levenson & Cotter, 2005; Mann et al., 2021 and Mcartan et al., 2021), this review showed that most of the evidence is still focused on desistance from offending, without looking at the wider perspective. These papers did often incorporate some of the impact on the men themselves and their lives, including that of their family, however, this was not the main focus of the study, and they concentrated on single or small aspects of the CJS.

As is common for scoping reviews, this review did not formally assess the quality of the research. This is not necessary in a review to understand the existing research landscape, although the only evidence collated was from empirical studies that had undergone peer review in order to ensure an element of robustness to the evidence presented. I included PhD theses as although these had not per se undergone an element of peer review, PhD examination and publication requires review by experienced supervisors and a thorough examination by accomplished authorities in the specific area of research. The author-identified limitations were extracted from the papers, however, and these commonly included the self-report nature of the data, and sampling biases, such as only recruiting those in treatment/therapy. Whilst self-report was identified as a common limitation, it is important to recognise that there are arguably no methodological alternatives to understanding the impact of the CJS from the men's own perspectives.

Drawing together the evidence as a collective whole, using thematic analysis, allowed for a more holistic examination of the existing research landscape, which produced a deeper exploration of the men's experience of the CJS and its impacts from the papers reviewed. These themes will enable me to add additional depth to my own research, making comparisons and commonalities between the findings here and in my own study. This review has provided a more structured view of the literature base in this area however it is not without its limitations. I found that the scope of the review, focused on child sexual offences specifically, although for the reasons provided, excluded many papers. A further review that includes these but uses the prior literature to consider the differences between those that commit child sexual offences and sex offending more broadly could widen the understanding of the impact on those that commit these offences. The inclusion of additional aspects of the

CJS such as non-compulsory interventions could also help to broaden the understanding of this population of those that commit offences.

## **2.6 Conclusions**

This review has demonstrated that although there is a lack of research from the perspective of men that commit child sexual offences, and CSEM offences specifically, there is a growing acknowledgement of the importance of this and the potential relationship between procedural justice, the legitimacy of the CJS, the impact on the men and desistance from future offending. There are, however, gaps in the literature base and therefore areas where future studies could help to shine a light on the experience of these men, the impacts of the CJS, and their ability to refrain from further offending and to reintegrate successfully back into the community.

To understand the experience of these men across the breadth of the CJS, which is often a long-protracted process (Justice, 2019 and Steel et al., 2022) it would be beneficial to conduct a longitudinal study underpinned by a phenomenological approach. Gathering the lived experiences of these men is imperative in order to understand their experience of the CJS and its impacts - something that has been highlighted in other similar research, such as that in forensic mental health populations (Stuart et al., 2017).

The next chapter of my thesis examines the specific research methodology, philosophy and methods that underpin this research.

### 3 Research Methodology

***“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it.” (Lee, 1960)***

Leading on from the introduction and scoping review, in this chapter I will outline my research approach and the methods that I have used, both in collecting the data and in the analysis. I will outline the interpretive philosophy that is behind the hermeneutic phenomenological (HP) approach that I used to conduct my empirical study, followed by my data collection techniques. Lastly I will lay out the way that I have approached the data analysis in this study.

#### 3.1 Rationale for taking a qualitative, phenomenological approach

The aim of this research was to uncover the experiences of men who were within the CJS and under investigation for CSEM offences and the effect that formal and informal support, including the Inform Plus programme, can have on their experiences. The limited previous research that I identified through the scoping review in the previous chapter from the perspective of those under investigation themselves and the aim to explore their experiences, suggested the use of a qualitative research design. Qualitative research enables a much richer, deeper understanding of what the experience means for the participants and can ‘embrace the messiness’ that exploring meaning and experience can be (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p.24).

As this research centred the perspectives of the men under investigation/convicted of CSEM and the need to explore this within the relational and social context within which they live to understand their perspective more deeply, using a phenomenological approach seemed to be the most appropriate choice. This approach would enable me to understand the participants’ subjective lived experiences of the CJS; as a phenomenological approach ‘draws out everyday stories that people are not used to telling’ (Smythe et al., 2003 p.7). The participants in this research were not accustomed to talking about their experiences of the CJS and the effects of their offending and the CJS on their lives. This thesis sought to centre the experiences of these men, often overlooked or dismissed, as seen in the previous chapter’s scoping review and the introduction to this work.

There isn’t one predominant way in which to approach phenomenology in research and a number of approaches were considered. Phenomenology is often used in health research to understand the perspectives of patients and healthcare workers (Kloess et al., 2018 and Smith, 2011); however, the use of phenomenology is limited in sex offending research. Blagden et al. (2014) used Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA, Smith et al., 2009) to explore the use of denial in those that commit sexual offences and Kloess et al. (2018) used

IPA to understand the perspectives of men convicted of online sexual grooming offences on their offending.

For my research, where prior evidence around, for example, collateral consequences, desistance and the GLM emphasises the need to incorporate the participant's frame of reference, it was important to utilise an approach that would enable an exploration of their personal circumstances, of what was relevant and significant to each individual. Initially, I considered utilising IPA, as it involves phenomenology and the use of an interpretive method. IPA, contrary to its name, is a methodology rather than a tool for analysis (Smith et al., 2009) and is a highly structured and process driven research approach (Dibley et al., 2020). This research that I have undertaken was exploratory, unique and longitudinal with a need to understand the holistic experiences of the participants across their journeys and in relation to their experiences of the CJS and support. The IPA method did not appear to be flexible enough to be able to uncover the depth and breadth of the data and the complexity that I wanted to explore. Data collection and analysis is prescribed (Langdridge, 2007) and although this research approach does provide an experiential underpinning to the research, the rigidity of the method and the highly structured framework used for data collection and analysis makes the role of the researcher in the analysis and interpretation more opaque and the fragmentation of the stories of the participant through the analysis make it difficult to present the authentic, holistic experience which I am seeking to understand and unconceal (Dibley et al., 2020).

Alongside IPA, narrative analysis was an approach that I could have taken with this research. An approach that draws on the work of Gadamer and Ricoeur, narrative analysis has been utilised in psychological research (see Langdridge, 2007). Narrative analytical approaches aid the exploration of an experience through an analysis of narrative accounts provided by the participants. The aim of hermeneutic phenomenology is the fusion of horizons between the lifeworld as described, and the interpretation of the researcher. This is not a once-only process but a continuous merging of horizons denoted as the "hermeneutic circle" (Schleiermacher 1833/1977 as cited in Rapport, 2005, p. 130). The circle moves from interpretation to understanding to explication and back again and continues from reference to the whole of the description of experiences, to parts of the experience, and back to the whole. In contrast to narrative approaches, HP does not focus on the specific and different narratives across each participant's story, but centres the whole experience and I felt that this was key to my approach as noted in the paragraph above.

When thinking about my research and phenomenology it was clear to me therefore that it would be important to use a hermeneutic phenomenological (HP) approach. HP aims to

explore and understand (and therefore to both *describe* and *interpret*) social experience, while acknowledging that meaning is made only through the ongoing development of the understanding – there is not something “real” out there waiting to be discovered, or one “true” interpretation. Although HP has not been used in prior studies related to my specific area of focus for this research, it has been used as an approach in other related areas, such as work that aimed to describe the meaning of being a ‘sex offender’, contextualising their experiences within the social world and identifying for example ways to facilitate recovery and rehabilitation (Petreca et al., 2024).

As the focus of my project is the subjective experience of the participants as they navigate the CJS, the Inform Plus programme and other support within the current cultural and social context, HP seemed the appropriate choice. HP helped me to interpret what the experiences of the CJS, and its impact, meant for the participants, what the common threads were but also where there were some differences in their experiences. The following sections will examine hermeneutic phenomenology in more detail.

## 3.2 What is phenomenology?

Dibley et al. (2020) contend that phenomenology is a philosophical movement founded by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), developed through his belief that a natural science approach was an inappropriate method for studying human experience. The word ‘phenomenology’ itself comes from the Greek, meaning to come into view or appear and phenomenology aims to focus on people’s lived experiences; it is the study of individuals’ perceptions of the world and what that means to them (Langdridge, 2007). Husserl introduced the concept of the ‘lifeworld’, the world of lived experience, and believed that by unpacking the meaning of human experience we could access the essence of the phenomena (Dowling, 2007). Ashworth (2003) argued that, whereas the ‘lifeworld’ as a concept is universal to us as humans, and there can be seen to be common structures or fractions, nevertheless, ‘lifeworld’ in the context of phenomenology focuses on a specific individual and their perception of their world (Ashworth, 2003). I return to the concept of the lifeworld later in this chapter. As a researcher using this approach, I have a responsibility to tell the stories of the participants which is something that has only sporadically been seen in the research landscape previously in relation to those that have committed sex offences more widely and CSEM more specifically.

### 3.2.1 Heidegger and the development of Hermeneutic Phenomenology

**“We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are” Nin, 1961**

Heidegger (1889-1976), a student of Husserl, was interested in the meaning of 'being', specifically what it means to be a human as a 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger, 1962), essentially how, as people, do we come to understand our lifeworld and ourselves within it (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). Heidegger's thinking challenged some of Husserl's ideas and introduced hermeneutics into phenomenology. Hermeneutic comes from the Greek 'hermeneuein', meaning to interpret. This interpretive approach challenged the necessity, and even the very possibility, of objectivity in relation to research, as Heidegger argued that we cannot understand another's lifeworld without interpretation (Heidegger, 1962).

As humans, we do not live and experience the world in isolation. We understand and make meaning of our world through our interpretation of our experiences, influenced by our social, cultural and personal environment (Smythe, 2012). Each individual, therefore, has a unique frame of reference that they bring to their own experiences and those of other people. Heidegger argued that we cannot distance ourselves from the world at large (Heidegger, 1962). In this way, through the lens of interpretive phenomenology, it is impossible as a researcher to be objective about your presuppositions; instead there is an acceptance that both the lifeworld and the experiences of the participant and the researcher become part of the analysis. However, it is essential within hermeneutic phenomenology to acknowledge that the researcher will influence the interpretation of the phenomenon with a 'fusion of horizons' between the researcher and participant key to the evolution of meaning (Dibley et al., 2020). HP research inevitably means that the researcher and participant both bring their own 'horizon' (frame of reference and perspective), and the interpretation of the participants stories is influenced by these and the perspective of others with whom the research is discussed (for example supervisors, see Whitehead, 2004). At the conclusion of this section is a section on my reflexivity and my positioning with regard to this research.

As Smythe (2003) noted, the interpretations made by the researcher are there to open up possible understandings and conversations about the phenomena, rather than to provide clear cut answers. As each individual's experience is unique to them, each perspective adds to the interpretation, providing plurality as well as commonality, and so each reader's interpretation of the work will potentially add further dimensions, returning to the notion of the fusion of horizons. Engaging with the philosophical notions of hermeneutic phenomenology is important in order to make the 'interpretive leap' within the research (Crowther & Thomson, 2020 p.6), where the analysis moves from a description of the findings to a deeper interpretation. Some of the key philosophical tools for this approach that have informed my analysis are described below.

### 3.2.1.1 *Dasein*

This notion was described within Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1962) as being-in-the-world, a way of articulating Heidegger's belief that our 'being' can only be understood in the context of the world in which we interpret our lifeworld and our experiences. Heidegger also described that we live in particular circumstances within our world and he used the term *thrownness* for this. We can only understand ourselves and our experiences through the world that we are 'thrown' into and this can shape our existence. The 'Dasein' never exists in isolation, it is always in existence in relation to others, so as well as *Being-In* the world, Dasein is inextricably linked to *Being-With* (i.e., with others) within the world (Heidegger, 1962). Heidegger articulates the importance: *In Being with and towards Others, there is thus a relationship of Being* (Heidegger, 1962 p. 162).

The other important point to note here is temporality in relation to Dasein. Alongside being-in-the-world and being-with others we are influenced by our past, present and future. What has happened to us previously influences our current situation but also our hope and possibilities for the future impact on our being. Therefore, what it means to be human is wrapped up with time. In relation to this present study, the participants find themselves *thrown* into being in the CJS, which impacts on their current and future possibilities, their being-in-the-world and their being-with others. This was something that I kept in mind when dwelling with the stories of the participants.

### 3.2.1.2 *Being-towards-death*

As Dasein, we are in every-day life, living in a way that is preoccupied with being in our own routine life, living as we feel that we are expected to; being part of the crowd and seeing ourselves as others see us, rather than as our own authentic selves (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). We fit into the community, adapt to live with others, and the way we are seen by others impacts on our own sense of self. In order to be true to itself, Dasein needs a moment of disruption, for example, here I would postulate this to be the participants' involvement in the CJS, pointedly, at the point of arrest. This is a reminder of our own mortality and is required in order to better understand what it means to be in the world and the possibilities that that brings with it (Heidegger, 1962). This reminder should help to enable people to move towards their potential and their future. Living with these possibilities helps us to make meaning of our lives (Dabrowska, 2021) and our world in the circumstances within which we live. In this study, it was important to contemplate this disruption and their understanding of this as a route to change in relation to the participants' responses to the realisation of their offending and subsequent involvement with the CJS; another key concept that helped to shape my thinking.



### *3.2.1.3 Technology*

Heidegger warned of the dangers of technology across various aspects of his work. The concern is not around the technological devices in daily use, rather, it is about how we think, and what might restrict this thinking in relation to our openness to others, and where modern social processes and protocol may have taken over (Dreyfus & Spinoza, 2003). For example, modern technological thinking is driven to achieve efficiency; 'maximum yield at minimum expense' (Heidegger, 1977 p.14) and Heidegger seems to identify that instead of technology being a tool at our disposal that helps us to live, instead we are a slave to the devices and processes that come with this technological age. In relation to the CJS and the crimes for which the participants in my research are under investigation, this raised two issues for me. Firstly, there has been a huge increase in the use of technology (Dabrowska, 2021 and Justice, 2019) and the correlation that this has had with the increase in these types of crimes and the CJS. Secondly, the use of technology and efficiency in the modern world in terms of both the way that the CJS is managed and the impact that this has on the participants will be something that I will explore within this piece of research and considered as part of the analysis.

### *3.2.1.4 Ready to hand/present at hand*

As humans we live in the everyday routine, not taking much notice of what's around us or of many aspects of our lives. This 'ready-to-hand' way of living is exemplified by Heidegger (1962) using the example of a hammer. A builder will not notice the hammer, it is a ready-to-hand tool until it breaks or is no longer there and they realise the effect that the hammer then has on their ability to do their job. This example can then be extrapolated out into thinking about the wider aspects of life. To illustrate this point, we can look at mental health or any other kind of health issue whereby we do not necessarily notice how our body is or how it is working until there is a problem and this is then brought into sharp focus (see Dibley et al., 2020). Svenaeus (2011) discusses the concept of 'unhomelikeness' to elicit the feeling of disruption (that Heidegger describes as present-to-handedness) that illness can cause. The change brought about on the lives of the participants by their involvement with the CJS can be thought about in the same way here and 'unhomelikeness' is a concept that I will be returning to and explored within my thinking when I was conducting the analysis.

### *3.2.1.5 The Lifeworld*

As we have seen, Husserl (see Dowling, 2007) introduced the concept of the lifeworld and although in phenomenology we are concerned with an individual's experience of their own lifeworld and the phenomenon under investigation, the lifeworld as a concept has universal

common structures for people. Although these are not explicitly defined within the works of Heidegger and other phenomenological philosophical texts, they are alluded to. Ashworth (2016) articulated the lifeworld as overlapping 'fractions' that can be seen to differing degrees across phenomena. Ashworth identified eight fractions, these being:

*Selfhood (our thoughts, feelings and behaviour), Sociality (our relationship with others), Embodiment (bodily feelings), Temporality (our history and flow of time), Spatiality (our understanding of the space that we occupy), Project (our core activities of importance), Discourse (the importance of language to an understanding of ourselves and our world) and Moodedness (mood as atmosphere).*

These fractions were considered in the context of my research as a way to help structure the analytical process and my interpretation of the data. It is clear that these relate to some of the notions discussed as part of hermeneutic phenomenology and the use of this has been beneficial to my approach.

### **3.3 Choosing Hermeneutic Phenomenology as a research approach**

Hermeneutic Phenomenology (HP) was not conceived as a research approach but as a philosophical movement that is used within research to help to illuminate a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). As I have touched on, HP is a philosophical movement, with the work of Heidegger and other philosophers being conceptual in nature, which can then be used within research where subjective lived experience is being explored. Although there is no methodological framework, indeed as Finlay (2011) writes, '*virtually anything goes providing the research retains its phenomenological intent and sensibility*' (p.115), there are a number of aspects to highlight when undertaking a piece of research using HP as your approach. These will be addressed more specifically within the research design section of this chapter.

The aim of HP research is to gather stories of lived experience from participants who have had those experiences, and for this piece of research at least, are able to articulate them (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). These stories can be gathered in many different ways but most usually this is in the form of an interview (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). The methods need to be appropriate to the research aim and able to gather the data that will allow the researcher to explore the phenomenon under investigation. HP research requires an analytical process that moves from the descriptive into the interpretive and the 'hermeneutic circle', a continual, reflexive process that allows us to go back and forth within the data to bring forth the themes (Smythe, 2005).

### 3.4 Rigour in the HP research process

Rigour and the quality of qualitative research have often been questioned (see Seale, 2002). The criteria applied to rigorous and transparent quantitative work does not wholly translate to qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). There are ways, however, in which rigour in HP, as a qualitative research approach, can be considered. Firstly, the researcher should consider the congruence or compatibility between the methodology, methods, findings and conclusions (Braun & Clarke, 2013 and Crowther & Thomson, 2020) and whether these are underpinned by the appropriate philosophical concepts (De Witt & Ploeg, 2006). In this research, I needed to consider providing credible interpretations of the participants' experiences, drawn from the original data, providing an audit trail of the decision-making process in my analysis. This will help to ensure the confirmability of my interpretation through the use of the participants' voices and consider the extent to which my findings resonate with the wider context outside of my study (Crowther et al., 2017 and Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Considering the concepts of credibility, dependability and transferability (Dibley, 2014 and Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the aspects of rigour in this research are detailed in the sections below.

#### 3.4.1 Credibility, dependability and transferability

Credibility is provided through the research being conducted in a believable manner. In this research using prolonged engagement, repeated interviews and data gained from various methods as well as discussion about the findings with supervisors, PhD students and those at LFF enabled me to sense check and get feedback on my findings and to increase credibility.

The dependability of the research is determined through the rationale for design, a detailed description of the process, the findings and interpretations evidenced by verbatim quotes and discussion, using self-reflection and sample transcripts and interpretations made available within the body of my thesis and in the appendix.

Lastly, transferability can be observed through situating my findings into the current literature landscape.

#### 3.4.2 Reflexivity

As I have demonstrated earlier in this chapter, HP within research requires the fusion of horizons between the researcher and the participant, and does not hold with the idea of bracketing found in other schools of phenomenology, such as descriptive phenomenology (Dibley et al., 2020). Although, as Heidegger asserts, we cannot understand 'being' and lived experience outside of the world, we also need to be aware that as a researcher (and as a participant) our frame of reference and prior understandings influence our interpretation, which

in turn influences the research findings. In HP, therefore, reflexivity is a key tool to help to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the interpretation and findings offered. Reflexivity can be seen as a dynamic process of self-awareness that is practiced throughout the research from the very start (Crowther & Thomson, 2020 and Dibley et al., 2020). A researcher undertaking research in this way is herself the research instrument (Liebling, 2011). Consequently, researcher positionality always and inevitably affects interpersonal research encounters and deserves to be taken very seriously (Fine, 1994). As Sandelowski and Barroso (2002) pointed out:

*Reflexivity implies the ability to reflect inward toward oneself as an inquirer; outward to the cultural, historical, linguistic, political, and other forces that shape everything about inquiry; and, in between researcher and participant to the social interaction they share.*  
(p. 222)

The subjectivity of the researcher should be foregrounded in order to provide a more transparent and rigorous examination of the phenomenon (Finlay, 2011). To that end, I have kept a reflexive research journal throughout the project and reflected on my position as a researcher within this research (Finlay & Gough, 2003). To begin with, I found this process difficult; my initial reflexive thinking seemed awkward; however, I was able to identify my own background, viewpoint and thoughts on the topic and my research more widely. I returned to this as part of my reflexive journal and this became easier as I became accustomed to it, section 8.10.5 of this thesis discusses my subjective foregrounding (Dibley et al., 2020) in relation to this research.

Reflexivity, however, is not without its critics. It conveys a suggested danger of self-indulgence, of 'an infinite, narcissistic regress of self-conscious self-interrogations' (Phillips & Earle, 2010 p.372) and Skeggs (2004 p.129) argued that the 'knowledge and experience of others [can be] used to shore up the composite of the academic reflexive self'. Alongside an internal reflexive process using my reflexive journal, I have also used reflexivity through external feedback on my data, analysis and interpretations from my supervision team and the practitioners and facilitators within the LFF. All of this influences the hermeneutic circle described above, is part of the fusion of horizons that have generated the findings within this research and is a part of the rigour around the research findings presented within this thesis.

## 4 Research Design and Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

I addressed the second and third aims of this research through one empirical study. This study explored the experience and impacts of the CJS for men who were investigated for CSEM offences and included participants recruited in two ways; firstly, through engagement with formal CJS organisations, and secondly, through the LFF, and in particular, a cohort of men as they started the LFF's Inform Plus programme. Within both of these approaches, I recruited men who I then interviewed on multiple occasions across the data collection period and also invited them to complete researcher-directed diaries. For those recruited through LFF, my approach also included an ethnographic aspect, through which I observed the Inform Plus sessions that the men participated in, and the facilitator planning and debrief meetings, and I conducted a group discussion with the men after they had concluded the last of their Inform Plus sessions. For both of these cohorts I considered the effects of formal and informal support on the men's CJS experiences; however, for those that had undergone the Inform Plus sessions, this included a specific focus on the support offered by the programme.

The central aspects of this research involved the description and interpretation of the experiences of the participants from their own viewpoints, as identified as a gap in the research in both the introductory and scoping review sections of this thesis. Each experience is unique for each participant; shaped and moulded by their own context and their own interpretation of events. Although each participant's perspective is unique, they are also a part of our shared lifeworld and therefore some commonalities were evident. The use of a purely cross-sectional approach would have only provided a static snapshot of the moment of time within which the data was generated (Smith, 2003) and would not have enabled me to gain insight into their journey across the CJS. Therefore, in order to accommodate this aspect of the research, I employed a qualitative longitudinal (QL) research approach, which is discussed further in the following section.

### 4.2 Qualitative Longitudinal research

There does not appear to be one clear definition of QL research, however, what seems to delineate QL research is when time and change are deliberately designed into the research (Thomson et al., 2003). The use of a QL approach can provide access to the 'interior logic of lives,' and can illuminate how change is created, negotiated, lived and experienced and "the ability to gain insights into how and why social worlds unfold for individuals in particular settings" (Neale, 2020 p.9). Following participants' journeys over time, and any change that

occurs, is something which is central to this research. I have used both a prospective and retrospective design, as I have followed participants on their journeys through the CJS, but also asked them to reflect on their lives prior to my first interview with them, how they experienced their interactions with the CJS alongside their thoughts about the future. This has allowed participants to reflect on their prior experiences (particularly in relation to before they had contact with the CJS) in order to tease out their perceptions of how these prior experiences have impacted their current experiences of the CJS and how this changes as time progressed.

Neale (2020), when discussing QL research, argued that our 'truth' is our way of making sense of the situations in which we find ourselves and our 'truth' can be interpreted and reinterpreted based on subsequent experience. This was pertinent for my own research with regard to how the experiences of the participants and their perceptions of their experiences changed over time as they progressed through the various stages of the CJS and by exploring what might have influenced these. The use of a QL design also enabled me to develop a rapport with the participants, which was crucial in order to discuss this very sensitive topic and which also allowed richer data to be generated as a part of the process (Ellis et al., 2023 and McCoy, 2017). The use of a longitudinal approach also provided participants with time to reflect, enabling additional data to be gathered through a subsequent interview(s), group discussion and the use of diaries.

Although QL research is becoming increasingly more common in areas such as health research (for example, Seal et al., 2007 and Snelgrove et al., 2013), it is less often utilised in the study of crimes including sexual offences (Hirschtritt et al., 2019). Previously, longitudinal studies have been conducted with participants who have committed sexual crimes, some of which were seen in the scoping review findings (Blagden & Wilson 2020; Russell et al., 2013 and Wills & Ward, 2011), but this type of experiential research is scarce and has tended to be based on one aspect of the CJS, e.g., a comparison pre- and post-prison (see, for example, Blagden & Wilson, 2020). There is some QL research relating to the long-term impact of offending on victims (for example, Wijk et al., 2017) but there is a gap in QL research relating to those who have committed sexual offences, particularly from the participants' own perspectives. The use of a longitudinal design allows both an exploration of the experiences of the participants over the length of time and the different aspects and touchpoints with the CJS and to generate a rich and deep data set for analysis.

The sections that follow describe the study in detail, including the research design, participants and data generation methods.

### 4.3 Research design

A criminal investigation, as discussed in the introductory chapter, will involve several points where those being investigated and the CJS are in contact. The recent study conducted by Key et al. (2018) highlighted points within the CJS of potential crisis with regard to suicide risk for people who had committed CSEM offences. Although the study only recruited nine participants, each of whom had been under investigation for CSEM offences there was some degree of risk described by all participants at the point of arrest, charge and sentencing (Key et al., 2018). Research has also alluded to the long-term effects of contact with the CJS, for example through studies with those incarcerated in prison, or designated as registered sex offenders (see for example Bailey, 2018 and Tewksbury, 2012). There have, however, not been any studies that have followed the whole breadth of the CJS in a prospective/retrospective way in relation to CSEM offences, as we have seen from the scoping review and background to this thesis. As we know that the criminal investigation can span a lengthy time period, it would be beneficial therefore to utilise a QL approach across the breadth of the CJS with men that have been investigated for CSEM offending behaviour.

Due to the length of time that the CJS takes to reach a conclusion, it was unlikely that it would have been possible to follow all participants, as part of a PhD study, over the course of the whole CJS process from the beginning. The length of time from arrest to sentence differs, with each case being unique; however, it is not unusual for it to take 18 months to 2 years or longer (see for example Rimer, 2021) and indeed that was the case for a number of participants within this research. Therefore, to explore impact across the breadth of the CJS, and allow the participants to reflect on its different points and what this meant for their experiences, I chose to employ an 'accelerated' longitudinal approach (Holland et al., 2006 and Smith, 2003) where instead of following one single group for a long period of time, a number of participants were followed starting at different time points in the CJS to enable the breadth of the CJS to be included.

This study aimed initially to recruit cohorts of participants at the three different risk points within the CJS, highlighted by Key et al. (2018) – arrest, charge and sentencing – through engagement with CJS organisations as well as a cohort of the Inform Plus programme and follow them across a 12-month period. An accelerated longitudinal approach has been used, for example, by Smith (2003) who considered the transition of citizenship for young people. In this study, Smith utilised a design with three cohorts of young people recruited at ages 16, 19 and 22 and then followed them through a QL design. This enabled Smith to gain insight into the views of a larger age range within a shorter time frame; therefore, this approach provides the researcher with the ability to generate data from across a longer time span than the

research time allows, and the subsequent data that is generated can be informed by the previous wave and can be accumulated for analysis.

The use of an accelerated longitudinal approach seemed to fit the unique aspects of this study and enabled me to explore the short and longer-term impacts of the CJS from the viewpoints of the participants. A similar approach was used by Wenham (2016) when exploring the transition of young mothers into motherhood over time. Wenham was interested in exploring the journey of young mothers into motherhood and the changes that occurred as a result and recruited two separate cohorts of young mothers; one cohort were women in the later stage of pregnancy (prospective), and the other cohort were women that had got pregnant whilst under the age of 19 and had been mothers for some time (retrospective). This clearly allowed Wenham to explore prospectively and retrospectively, within a shorter time scale, to fully explore the longer-term experiences of pregnancy and motherhood.

Unfortunately, many aspects of the study were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic; these effects will be discussed across my thesis. Although I was still able to employ a longitudinal approach to this study, as a result of Covid-19 and the subsequent difficulties in recruiting (which will be discussed in a later section), I had to follow the participants over a six-month period, rather than for twelve months. This still meant, however, that I was able to gain additional data after the initial interview, enhancing the depth and richness of the data that I collected.

#### 4.3.1 Participants

Small sample sizes were proposed, using a purposive sample of men that were or had been under investigation for CSEM offences. It was initially envisaged that twelve participants would be recruited through the CJS organisations and one full cohort of the Inform Plus programme, considering the nature of the study and the study design (Morse, 2001), which would be in line with previous phenomenological research (for example see Gee, 2018; Howe et al., 2014; Kitson-Boyce et al., 2018 and Mackenzie et al., 2017). This sample size was proposed to scope for developing cross-case generalities, whilst at the same time permitting individuals within the sample to keep their own defined identity, rather than being subsumed anonymously as part of the larger sample (Robinson & Smith, 2010).

Attrition is a distinct problem particularly for longitudinal research and, in this case, with a highly sensitive research subject and participants that inevitably experienced life changes whilst negotiating the CJS, this could potentially have been magnified (see Farrall et al., 2016). On the other hand, although this is longitudinal work, the practical research was completed over the course of just over six months, and I found that, although initially there was a real



concern over a lack of continued participation, this was not actually the case. The initial rapport and continued engagement with participants was vital to this, and all participants remained engaged, however, the impact of the pandemic on access to participants meant that I was unable to follow my first participant recruited through the prison process and back out into the community, so, unlike the other participants, I was only able to collect data for this participant from one interview. My flexible approach to this research around data collection timings and practical access to participants through online and other technological routes meant that I was able to maintain contact and rapport to encourage sustained participation.

#### *4.3.1.1 Recruitment through the CJS organisations*

In order to explore the men's experiences across the breadth of the CJS, I hoped to recruit participants from across their main touchpoints with the system.

These key touchpoints were: 1) Post arrest (cohort one) 2) Post charge (cohort two) and 3) Post sentence (cohort three).

I initially aimed to recruit cohorts one and two through one police force and cohort three through one probation service and one prison to ensure that I could capture participants that had been imprisoned and those that had received community sentences. Staff from the police force were asked to identify potential participants and after obtaining consent from the potential participants to do so, the police were to provide the contact details of the individuals to me so that I could contact the potential participants and discuss participation in the study. For cohort three (post sentence), I aimed to identify participants through probation using the same process as the police and those in prison to be approached by a point of contact in the prison.

Due to the literature relating to hidden contact offending within CSEM populations (Eke et al., 2011), as part of the recruitment process, I sought to identify and exclude men that had previous contact offending behaviour, as the focus of this study was on CSEM offences exclusively. The police, prison and probation service agreed to ensure that no potential participant had prior contact offences recorded against them before providing the potential participant with the Participant Information Sheet (see appendix 4). The participant information sheet also reiterated that this research related to CSEM offending behaviour only and requested that potential participants who had been involved in prior contact offences did not participate. As we know that individuals investigated for CSEM offences are overwhelmingly male (Wolak et al., 2011), this project also focused on the recruitment of men only.

Participants in HP studies can be anyone who has had the experience that is being researched (and in this instance) are able to verbally and in writing articulate it (Crowther & Thomson,

2020) and so for this study the participants could be anyone that was under investigation or convicted of CSEM offences. Sample sizes should be reflective of the availability of the population and willingness of those participate (Dibley et al., 2020) and this may change depending on the circumstances of the research. In this case, the sample size for the study changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and access to the participant population. This is discussed further in the data generation and recruitment section below.

I approached a number of police forces, prisons and probation services and eventually after several failed attempts (the process and issues of which I reflect on at the end of this section), I was able to secure working with one particular police force, one prison and one probation service. The issues caused through the pandemic and recruitment challenges meant that my final participant numbers for this study was three, the details of the participants can be found in table 4 below. One participant was recruited post arrest and whilst under investigation (Simon H), one was recruited after just entering prison (James R) and one was recruited whilst on probation after serving a prison sentence (Ricky). The various difficulties in recruitment caused some discussion with my supervision team around the impact of this on my research, however, in consideration of the amount of data that I had generated across the study by this point, the literature around HP research (Dibley et al., 2020 and Smythe, 2012) and comparable PhD studies, I made the decision to halt further recruitment.

*Table 4 Participants and data generated through CJS organisation recruitment (created by the author)*

Pseudonym	Age *	Relationship status	Position in CJS*	Data generated and method
James R	74	Divorced	In prison	One interview in person
Simon H	39	Single	Under investigation by the police	First and second interview via online video communication platform
Ricky	50	Divorced	Supervised by probation post prison sentence	First and second interview via telephone

(\*Age, position in CJS and relationship status were at initial recruitment, relationship status did not change throughout the research)

#### *4.3.1.2 Recruitment through LFF and the Inform Plus programme*

It was envisaged that I would recruit one whole cohort of an Inform Plus programme (usually between six and ten men); this sample size range provided scope for keeping the data individual, rather than a large anonymous data set, whilst also allowing for me to consider cross-case commonalities.

Participants were recruited by the LFF staff providing one upcoming cohort of Inform Plus attendees with the Participant Information Sheet (see appendix 5) and then obtaining their

consent for me to contact them to discuss the study further. Again it was important to screen out participants with contact offending behaviour. The LFF staff notified the participants of this and the Participant Information Sheet also reiterated that this research was for those who had engaged in CSEM offending behaviour only.

Clearly, participation also depended upon the consent of those involved in the cohort. In a similar way to the method employed by Rimer (2019), I gained consent from one cohort of Inform Plus attendees to observe the sessions over the course of the ten-week programme. I recruited one full cohort, with all eight of the cohort providing consent for me to sit in on the programme sessions. I sought additional consent from the cohort members to collect further data with them, in the form of an individual interview prior to the programme starting and again after 12 months, a group discussion once the Inform Plus programme had ended, and researcher-directed diaries over the 12 months (see appendix 3). Six of the eight cohort members consented to these additional forms of data collection, although not all six members ended up providing data for all of these forms of data collection. The details of the men recruited can be found at table 5.

Although HP relates to the individual experience of each participant, as they had been experiencing the programme as a group for ten weeks and they had the opportunity to be involved in 1:1 interviews and produce diaries, I wanted to add an additional dimension of a group discussion. Group discussion within HP has been used previously (see Bradbury-Jones et al., 2008) and again, I felt that it worked well as a method for this particular research project and aims. Brief pen portraits can be found for each participant across both studies in appendix 16.

*Table 5 Participants and data generated through LFF recruitment (created by the author)*

Pseudonym	Age*	Relationship status*	Data generated	Initial Position in CJS	Position in CJS at the end of project
Steve	76	Single	Two interviews, observations through Inform Plus programme	Under investigation	Serving community sentence
TS	37	Single	Two interviews, group discussion, diaries and observation through the Inform Plus programme	Under Investigation	Served prison sentence and under probation supervision
James	45	Separated	Two interviews, group discussion, diaries and observations through Inform Plus programme	Under investigation	Serving community sentence
Hugh	32	Married	Two interviews, group discussion, diaries and	Under investigation	Serving community sentence

			observations through Inform Plus programme		
<b>Simon</b>	49	Divorced	Two interviews, group discussion, diaries and observations through Inform Plus programme	Under investigation	Serving community sentence
<b>Paul</b>	42	Married	One interview, group discussion, and observations through Inform Plus programme	Under investigation	In prison

(\*Age and relationship status as at first interview, relationship status did not change for any of the participants)

### 4.3.2 Data generation

This section details the methods used to generate the data as part of this study, which was conducted using semi-structured interviews as a phenomenological conversation alongside researcher directed diaries, a group discussion and an ethnographic approach all of which are described in detail within the following sections.

The Inform Plus programme was described in section 1.11.3. I recruited one cohort of the Inform Plus programme and experienced and observed the programme alongside the participants, attending each meeting and the subsequent debrief with the facilitators, and this was supplemented with an interview with the men at the start and end of the study, a group discussion at the end of the Inform Plus programme, and researcher-directed diaries. In order to both better understand the Inform Plus programme and the participants' engagement and involvement in the programme and therefore its effects, I felt that it would be beneficial to utilise an ethnographic approach for this study. It also provided me with a way to build a better rapport with the participants alongside gaining a deeper understanding of both the impact of the CJS and the way that support can affect this.

Ethnography has its origins in anthropology and has historically been used to describe particular aspects of culture and society (Hammersley, 1992). Although, there is no clear single definition, ethnography can be viewed as a way to study the daily lives of a group of people, and as a way to examine their subjectivity and meaning making (Case et al., 2014). In essence, ethnography provides the vehicle to describe an event or situation within a specific context and as these events or situations, in general, are unfamiliar to the researcher (Hammersley, 1992), it can be seen as the process by which we, as researchers, try and understand the experience of others (Moolman, 2015). Ethnographic research methods have proved useful in situations where little is known about the phenomena under investigation, where populations are difficult to access and amongst other aspects, where contexts and

phenomena are sensitive (Putt, 2013). It has been used to enhance researcher awareness, heighten the researcher's ability to understand the participant's experience and illuminate the taken for granted, everyday (Dixon, 2011). Any attempt to capture the reality of life in a subculture or marginalised cultural traditions entails spending time in a particular locale to see how cultural meanings influence everyday life (Putt, 2013). Ethnography has been used in phenomenological research previously (see for example Lehn & Hitzler, 2015) and it would be logical to do so as it provides access to the experiences of the participants (Finlay, 2011).

The use of an ethnographic approach with regard to research relating to treatment/risk reduction programmes for people who commit sexual offences is a little used method, over the years ethnographic approaches have diversified and are used in a variety of studies (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007). Indeed, qualitative evaluation of treatment programmes for this population is an underused approach (Dervley et al., 2017), with previous work typically using quantitative methods and concentrating on reducing the risk of recidivism. The recently published study completed by Rimer (2019 and 2021) utilised a longitudinal ethnographic approach to consider a CSEM risk reduction programme in the UK and so, although in terms of method, Rimer's study is similar to this study. Rimer concentrated on how men that have committed CSEM offences construct children and childhood and how they use discipline to desist from offending, rather than the impact of the CJS. Rimer himself noted that there had been no previous ethnographic studies relating solely to CSEM offences. Prior to Rimer (2019), Dervley et al. (2017) interviewed participants on one occasion, after they had undertaken the Inform Plus programme, and this was the first study to use a qualitative approach to evaluate a CSEM risk reduction programme. Derveley et al. aimed to explore the perspectives of those that had committed CSEM offences with regard to the effect of the programme on their future behaviour. Although Derveley et al. did not specifically aim to consider the experience of the CJS, some of the questions to the participants elicited some responses related to their quality of life.

Building on this previous work, this study used a longitudinal, prospective and retrospective, ethnographic approach that enabled me to recruit participants and build a good rapport with them, generating data from before, during and after their participation in the Inform Plus programme. This longitudinal method provided participants with the opportunity to reflect on and interpret their own experiences and enabled me to gain a perspective on both how the CJS had impacted on them and how their participation in the Inform Plus programme had affected that impact. This method also allowed the participants to interpret and reinterpret their experiences, and the effect of support, along the length of the study.

#### 4.3.2.1 *The phenomenological conversation*

The use of semi-structured interviews is the method of choice for many phenomenological studies (Langdridge, 2007; Smith, 2003 and Starks et al., 2007). Semi-structured interviews provide the time and space for the researcher to develop a rapport with participants and can be, at least in part, led by the participant, potentially producing more in-depth data, particularly in relation to sensitive topics (Smith, 2003). The aim for these interviews was to focus on the conversation with each participant, to ask very open questions, prompting when required (Smythe, 2012). I felt that it was important to allow the participants themselves the space in the conversations to illuminate what their experiences of the CJS were as a result of their offending and to allow meaning to develop between myself as the researcher and each participant (Smythe, 2012). Interviews are a common data generation method in ethnographic research (Hammersley, 1992) and as this was underpinned by HP it was important to gain data from each of the participants individually. All participants who agreed to additional forms of data collection from those recruited through LFF were interviewed prior to the Inform Plus programme starting, and where possible, around 12 months later. The process of the introduction and rapport building at the start of the interview, and the debrief, was key to accessing the data required for this project and will be discussed within the Ethics section. The participants were interviewed using an initial topic guide which incorporated both their perceptions of the impact of the CJS and for those recruited through LFF, their thoughts and feelings in relation to the Inform Plus programme. The topic areas included questions about their lives prior to investigation, the impact of the CJS, and their future (see the interview topics in Section 4.3.2.2). The interview schedule for those recruited through LFF also contained additional questions relating to the Inform Plus programme and other support more generally, for example:

*You have decided to take part in the Inform Plus programme. What was the reason that you decided to take part in the course? (how did you hear about the course, LFF, stop it now etc)*

The subsequent interview schedule followed the format of the first interview, but it was also additionally tailored relating to each specific individual and what they had shared with me in their first interview. This second interview allowed the participants to individually reflect upon their own experience of the CJS and the Inform Plus programme, rather than this being part of the group programme environment. An example of a questions from the subsequent interview:

*Thinking about Inform Plus, what aspects of the experience did you feel were beneficial in relation to how you had been affected by the investigation? Can you describe an instance in particular where that happened?*

This was advantageous as it encouraged independent and personal reflections that some of the participants may not have been comfortable sharing within a group environment. It also allowed me to individually return to the topics discussed and keep the individual identity of the data for the different participants, rather than just a collective data set.

In order to produce a degree of consistency, all participants were interviewed using an initial topic guide, however this was a guide only and the conversation was led by each participant.

#### *4.3.2.2 Interview Topics*

A copy of the initial interview plan and topic guide can be found in appendix 6 and appendix 7. The interview comprised seven topics and these are discussed in the subsections below.

##### *4.3.2.2.1 Life prior to investigation*

In essence, in order to understand the impact of the CJS and to help participants to reflect on how their lives may have been affected and to encourage the flow of the conversation, the start of the interview was planned to address their lives prior to the CSEM investigations. This aspect of the interview incorporated each participant's life trajectory, social world and relationships, as well as discussing their daily routine. I included the quality of life (Awad & Varuganti, 2021) domains, i.e. (i) work/education; (ii) leisure/ participation; (iii) religion; (iv) finances; (v) living situation; (vi) legal/safety; (vii) family relations; (viii) social relations; and (ix) health, as prompts if required.

This topic assisted in understanding the effect and impact of their contact with the CJS and helped in the interpretation and analysis phase by providing a reference point. Although I only covered this in the first interview I had with each participant, life prior to their arrest was often discussed by participants in later interviews when they reflected on changes in their lives.

##### *4.3.2.2.2 Impact of arrest/charge/sentence*

This was an open interview topic, generated from the viewpoint of each participant in relation to what they perceived as the impact of the CJS on them as an individual within their own social and cultural sphere. This was the crux of this research and generated a lot of data. I felt that it was important to keep this as an open topic to maximise the areas that were raised by the participants to ensure that they were able to discuss what was most pertinent to them.

I also included prompts such as the negative and positive aspects of the impact (e. g., on mental health, suicide, stigma, shame, guilt), how contact with the CJS had impacted on their everyday activities and daily lives and the changes as a result, interpersonal relationships and

their perceptions of themselves and those around them including family, partners, children, friends, work colleagues, and their local community.

#### 4.3.2.2.3 Identity

There are a number of facets to this topic area. Exploring the impact of being under investigation, including stigma and the impact of labelling related to 'sex offender' and CSEM was important for this piece of research, but so too was discussion relating to the impact on their sense of self and their own identity more broadly as a result of their offending behaviour and the subsequent CJS intervention.

#### 4.3.2.2.4 Coping, strain and resilience

The literature has highlighted the importance of coping strategies/mechanisms and the ability to manage strain and resilience as potentially key for being able to move forward and manage the impact of an investigation. These topics were also explored as part of this study. These could have been related to shame, stigma and guilt, for example, and it was important to explore with participants how they used and could influence adaptive/maladaptive coping mechanisms.

#### 4.3.2.2.5 Treatment and support

It was important to discuss what support individual participants had as they negotiated the CJS as this may have alleviated some of the impacts of contact with the CJS and so this was an area of specific discussion. This support could be formal or informal and entailed open questions around what support they had, what they thought had helped them and why, with subsequent prompts about what support they had been offered or accepted from others, including professionals working in the CJS.

#### 4.3.2.2.6 Turning points

Turning points, transitions and trajectories (Neale, 2020) are often explored as part of QL research due to the change that often occurs over time. With regard to this project, the contact with the CJS could constitute a turning point and was likely to alter the projected life trajectory for the participants. As this research was being completed as a QL study, turning points from the perspective of the participants, and the subsequent changes, if any, in the lives of the participants were explored.

#### 4.3.2.2.7 The future

As this was a QL study, it was of interest to discuss plans for the future and then to revisit this as the project unfolded. This also links back to turning points/trajectories, and a number of the



other topics. It was also the way in which I was able to draw to a close the discussions within the interviews.

#### *4.3.2.3 Implementing the interview*

An interview plan was produced and the interviews with each participant are recorded in tables 4 and 5. Each subsequent interview was unique to each participant and linked to the prior conversation and data generated, although all interviews were based on the generic topic plan noted above. Interviews were all audio recorded (with the consent of the participant) and conducted over an online communication platform that would allow online face to face interaction or, if the participant preferred, by telephone. Interviews varied in length but mostly lasted for around an hour for each one.

The original design was for all conversations with participants to be conducted in person, however, just as my data collection was about to start the global Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown and restrictions on in-person research meant that I needed to change my method of data collection relating to this aspect of my research. The use of telephones and online communication platforms has been used before in research for conducting conversations with participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Initially I was concerned about the impact of this being detrimental to the data that I would collect. However, Jenner and Myers (2019) suggested that rapport and intimacy were not negatively affected through the use of video communication to conduct an interview and may actually be enhanced. I certainly found that the use of an online communications platform did not seem to be detrimental to the rapport that I was able to generate and indeed the fact that the interviews was conducted through a screen seemed to make people more confident to share their experiences with me.

Interviews were each over an hour in length, with a total of 1307 minutes (almost 22 hours) of interview data produced across the length of the data generation period. This provided a rich and detailed dataset for analysis, which enabled me to dwell in the data and to explore commonalities across the dataset as part of my interpretative process. The analytical process is described in more depth in the following sections.

#### *4.3.2.4 Observation of the Inform Plus sessions*

I observed the 10 sessions and the participants within them throughout one entire ten-week Inform Plus programme. These sessions lasted for around two and a half hours each and I observed the facilitator planning and debrief sessions that occurred before and after each session. Although it would not be feasible to be able to follow the participants throughout their everyday lives, as is often the case in other ethnographic research (Gray, 2014), the use of participant observation with regard to the Inform Plus programme had two distinct advantages

for providing a greater depth of data for this study. Firstly, it allowed me a first-hand understanding of what the programme entailed. This was advantageous as I was then able to have a more meaningful conversation with the participants about the programme and it allowed them to be able to talk more openly about how they felt the programme affected their experiences. I had a copy of the manual that is used throughout the programme, so I could familiarise myself with the programme prior to it starting; however, that was very different from experiencing the programme as delivered and the interactions between the participants themselves and their interactions with the facilitators. Secondly, this approach enabled me to gain data from what the participants did and said within the sessions, which I recorded as my observations and used as part of the data and analysis for this study. This provided added dimensions to what was generated through the other techniques, such as interviews and diary entries.

In the same way as with other aspects of my research, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, the Inform Plus sessions were run on an online video communications platform. Previously, all Inform Plus sessions had been in-person, so this was the first time that the LFF had delivered the programme online. Although this had a number of disadvantages, for example, it was difficult to develop a group ethos in an online format and it was difficult for the facilitators to manage challenging emotional situations, it also allowed for a wider participation in the group as people who would otherwise have not been able to travel to the LFF centres and for the sessions to go ahead even during lockdown conditions. The sessions were held with all eight participants in the same online room, occasionally over the course of the programme the participants were split into break out rooms but this was minimal as it was more problematic for the facilitators to manage. The sessions followed the same format each week with a 'check in' and 'check out' for each participant so that they had the opportunity to vocalise how they were feeling at the start and end of the sessions.

My approach in the group was as an overt observer within the sessions and the participants felt more comfortable with me observing with my camera on, something which I asked them to make the decision on. This aspect of the research was conducted in a similar way to that of Rimer (2019), in that, I produced an observation guide to help direct my fieldnotes (see appendix 9). I did not record the sessions (by video or audio) however, I did record my own field notes and reflections in written note form as part of my observations during and after each session was held. I was not actively involved (participant observer, see Gray, 2014) in the content of the sessions, this would have been inappropriate as the sessions were an intervention for the men themselves.

#### *4.3.2.5 Researcher Directed Diaries*

Participants were requested to use researcher-directed diaries and were encouraged to complete them regularly. They were asked to make diary entries after any contact with any aspect of the CJS (for example, discussion with a solicitor, police officer, a police interview etc) and at least once per month. They were at liberty, obviously, to complete entries more frequently if they wished, as was pertinent to them. A researcher directed diary is 'an account produced specifically at the researcher's request, by participants and is 'written with the full knowledge that they are for external consumption' (Bell, 1998, p. 72). They can be seen as being co-created between the researcher and participant, as although what is written is by the participant, the parameters are set by the researcher who directs the content towards the topic under consideration (Mackrill, 2008). In this type of study, relating to sensitive research, diaries have been found to be particularly illuminating as participants have the opportunity to complete entries at a time that suits them and at their own pace (Meth, 2017). This can help participants' accounts of their experiences to be produced within a natural context as well as minimizing the time elapsing between the experience and the account of it (Bolger et al., 2003). The diary instructions can be found at appendix 21.

Another strength of diary research is its potential to elicit responses that are more emotional, embodied, and relationally complex than those gained from other methods (see Filep et al., 2015). The diaries allowed participants who engaged in this aspect of the study the ability to practise reflecting on the meaning of their own experiences, which ultimately provided a valuable tool for them to express their own feelings but also, in relation to the context of the study, to provide a deeper interpretation that could be brought into the interview process. This was a QL study that was both retrospective and prospective but was also in 'real time' as the CJS is an ongoing process.

Although there are potentially many positive aspects to the use of diaries in relation to this study, inevitably there will be some potential concerns. There is the potential that the information retrieved from the diary aspect of the study over the course of the data generation process could provide little additional data if completed in an ad hoc, sporadic way; however, I felt that as this was only one aspect of the study and not the sole data generation technique this was not of great concern. This was also not the case when the study was conducted, as although only a minority of participants utilised the diaries, and may not have provided the volume of additional data I might have anticipated, they aided the participants that did use them to interpret and reflect on their experience, allowing the data generation process to still benefit from this insight. The other potential issue that has been highlighted in other research is that the use of diaries can, in for example research relating to pain, cause participants to

focus on their pain which can, for some, be a negative experience (Clarke & Iphofen, 2006). In this instance, a similar issue could be suggested in relation to reflecting on the experience of the impact of the CJS; however, there has been conflicting research that has suggested writing down aspects of emotional experiences can have a beneficial impact, particularly in relation to mental health (Mackrill, 2008). It was important to ensure that, with regard to this, each participant had access to support services if required to manage the risk of any potential issues (this is discussed further in the Ethics section of this thesis).

The form that the diary took, for those that utilised diaries, was chosen by the participant, although this was discussed at their initial interview. Participants were able to choose whether to complete diary entries or not, and which of these, if any, that they shared with me. Three participants completed and submitted diaries as part of the 12-month data generation for this study (Hugh, James and Simon). One of the participants, Hugh, provided a few diary excerpts at times that he found it helpful to write and reflect, whereas, for example, Simon, shared many entries as he found the process cathartic and helpful. All diary entries were completed in an electronic format and shared with me through a password protected email.

#### *4.3.2.6 Group discussion*

The last data generation technique to be used as part of this study was a group discussion. Initially, the plan was to generate data through an additional individual interview with each cohort member after the Inform Plus programme had concluded. However, after discussion with my supervision team, I felt that it would be an interesting addition to the research to have a group discussion at the conclusion of the programme instead, where, as a group we could explore how the programme had impacted on the participants and gain their initial feelings after the course. This type of group discussion can provide an alternative to semi structured interviews (Willig, 2017) and as Inform Plus is a group programme, the participants had already spent 10 weeks as a small group discussing their offending behaviour, the impact of their behaviour and working together on the programme. I found that the insights of the participants as a group were very beneficial and the group discussion generated relevant discussion with very little facilitation required. This also had a practical advantage, as it meant arranging one fewer set of individual interviews. By conducting this group discussion immediately after the final Inform Plus session had ended, it encouraged reflection about the programme whilst it was fresh in the mind of the participants and reduced any potential attrition at this point.

In this group discussion, I facilitated the conversation with those of the group that consented to participate; there were five participants, with one further participant who was unable to join due to technical issues. As the facilitator, I worked hard to ensure equal participation for those

that wanted to be involved. There is a limitation with this technique, however, in that not everyone may feel comfortable discussing their own thoughts and feelings within the group context or discussing the way that the programme has affected them within that group context. However, this was limited through the use of the final individual interview, and the researcher-directed diaries. The topics under discussion mirrored those of the semi-structured interviews and included how Inform Plus and other support had affected their experience of the CJS. The group discussion plan and topic guide can be found at appendix 8.

The group discussion lasted for 1 hour and 44 minutes, providing a different dimension and additional rich and deep data for analysis and understanding of the men's experiences. This also enabled additional understanding and exploration of the commonalities and differences in the stories that the participants told.

#### 4.4 Data Analysis

In this section I will cover the analytical approach and process that I utilised once the data had been generated for this research. Unlike other qualitative or even phenomenology-based research approaches, HP does not have a prescriptive analytical method (see Crowther & Thomson, 2020; Dibley et al., 2020 and Smythe & Spence, 2020). This can be unnerving for research students and I certainly felt overwhelmed when faced with the volume of data across the two studies and thoughts of producing an analytical strategy. I used a number of sources through which to craft the analytical strategy that I used for the data from these studies, the process of which is detailed below. Decisions around analysis were made using my reflexive research diary and through the use of an analytical strategy document with feedback from my supervisors (the draft of the strategy can be found at appendix 12) which led to the detailed analytical process set out in this section. As I have noted previously at the start of this chapter, I made the decision to analyse all of the data from both studies together. All participants from across the studies discussed their experiences of the CJS and all had accessed support to one extent or another and therefore to maximise the insights that I could gain from the data I needed to analyse the data together to be able to describe and then interpret the commonalities and differences (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). This meant analysing a variety of different types of data together (i.e. interview transcripts, diary entries, group discussion and observational fieldnotes), something that is a common occurrence across both HP (see Dibley et al., 2020) and ethnographic research (see Gray, 2014) and ensured that I kept the stories of each participant together, not separating them from the whole (Dibley, 2014).

I utilised the work of Crowther and Thomson (2020), Smythe et al. (2008), Smythe and Spence (2020) and Diekelman (1992) to formulate an analytical process, which is detailed in table 6

below. I wanted the process to be a practical way to capture the hermeneutic circle (a continual, reflexive process that allows us to go back and forth within the data to bring forth the themes) and the fusion of horizons (bringing together different perspectives to aid interpretation) in a meaningful way that I could replicate with each participant.

*Table 6 Summary of the stages of the analytical process (table created by the author)*

Stage	Description
1	<b>Notes on the data generated:</b> I reflected and made notes on each interview, group discussion, field notes and diary entries as soon as practicable.
2	<b>Active Listening and summary note making:</b> I listened to each interview and made notes on A3 paper using diagrams for each participant and written notes to summarise each interview/participants data.
3	<b>Initial Analysis:</b> I used a 'whole and parts' approach to each piece of data providing initial analysis on each whole piece of data for each participant and then analysing each part of it, thinking about the data for the different aims of the project. This included analysing all data generated for each participant.
4	<b>Initial Interpretation:</b> I produced a pen portrait and interpretation document for each participant that encompassed all of their data and was in relation to both research aims where appropriate. Dwelling with the data alongside the philosophical notions of HP (Heidegger, 1962) and lifeworld fractions (Ashworth, 2016)
5	<b>Deeper understanding:</b> I obtained feedback from supervisors and LFF staff; consideration across the stories and interpretations across the participants; discussion with fellow PhD students: the 'interpretive leap (Crowther and Thomson, 2020).
6	<b>Final analysis and findings:</b> My production of a creative non-fiction piece, and a return to the philosophical notions and lifeworld fractions supported my refinement of my interpretations.

These stages were closely related to those of Crowther and Thomson (2020): Stages two and three of my process aligned with their level one; stage four aligned with their level two; and stages five and six aligned with their level three of the analytical process. The stages I engaged in are explained in detail below.

#### 4.4.1 Stage one

After each piece of data was generated (interview, diaries, group discussion, fieldnotes) I reflected on the interaction. I made notes about the interview/discussion process and its content; this was done immediately and afforded me the opportunity to consider the interview whilst I was still 'in the moment' and then return to it at a later point during the analysis. An example is shown below from my reflection on the interview with James.



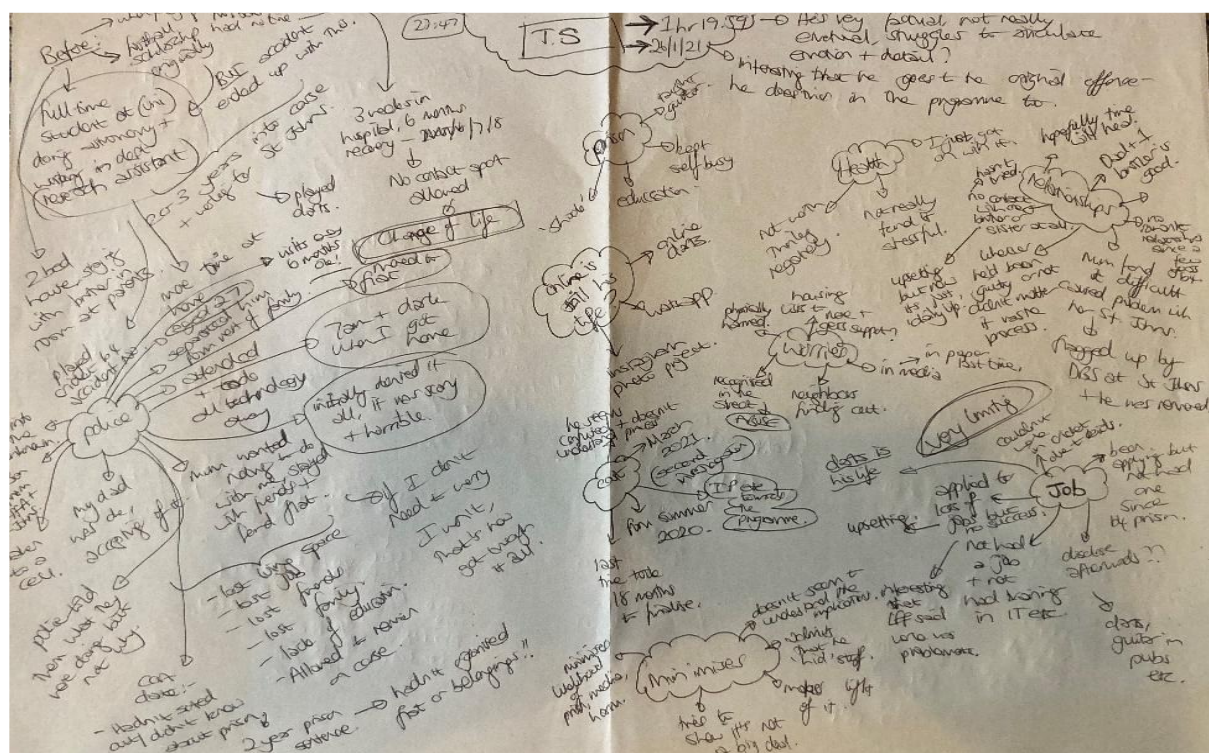
## Excerpt from reflection of interview with 'James'

The disruption he feels is really clear. He led a very full, busy, upstanding life but like Steve this is the face he is projecting to the world. As he moved through the interview and reflected, the cumulative effect of the process becomes more obvious. A real lack of control and loss as a result is also something that sprung to my mind whilst I was listening to him. It feels to me like he feels as if he doesn't exist anymore, perhaps that he doesn't deserve to exist anymore. I found that I could relate to some of his thoughts and comments even though I'm not in that situation there are definite parallels which also I found unnerving.

### 4.4.2 Stage two

I listened back to each interview, summarising each one in descriptive notes, mind maps and diagrams. See below for an example of this from my interview with TS.

Figure 4 Descriptive notes and mind maps from Interview with TS (picture taken by the author)



This active listening took me slightly away from the interview process itself and I started to be able to think more analytically about the experiences recounted through their stories (Smythe, 2012). The interviews and group discussion were all transcribed by me and I made notes during the transcription process. Diary entries were all provided to me electronically in written form for analysis and my observations and fieldnotes from the Inform Plus sessions were all typed (examples of each of these can be found in appendix 14). For each of these additional pieces of data I made notes in the same way as I did for the interviews.

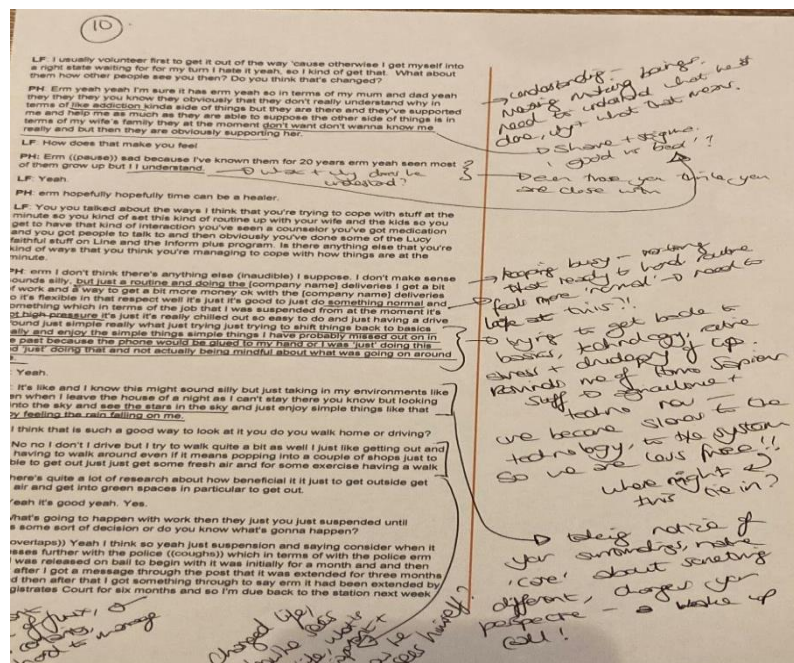
### 4.4.3 Stage three

Once all the data was typed, I conducted an initial analysis and annotated the transcripts and other data documents with my initial thoughts and ideas (see Crowther & Thomson, 2020). For example, in the image below (figure 5) I made notes relating to shame and stigma expressed by Paul, his need to feel normal, to keep busy and to live away from technology were active changes that he made to his life to help him to move forward and cope.

Initially, I stored the typed data on Nvivo which was used as a tool to manage data rather than for the purposes of analysis; however, I found that I struggled to 'dwell with the data' (see Spence, 2017) whilst reviewing it in a typed, online format. To further the analysis therefore, I printed all of the data and then annotated each document for each participant, storing these as a data file for each participant in separate physical folders. I found that this was much more conducive to the analysis, allowing me to more easily live in the data. This was particularly helpful with the later interpretation and the deeper understanding of the data across the stories and between participants.

An example of an annotated document can be seen for Paul below and a full example for James R can be found in appendix 20. I also completed a timeline that depicted where within their CJS journey each participant was when data collection took place (see appendix 23).

Figure 5 Annotated transcript from Interview with Paul (picture taken by the author)





#### 4.4.4 Stage four

At this stage, I pulled all of the data analysis for each participant together and produced a separate pen portrait for each of them that consisted of a paragraph summary of the basic background and story of each participant. Alongside the brief pen portrait, I highlighted some of the key aspects of the analysis and initial interpretation for each participant, as well as reflecting on the analytical process with that participant (an example of this initial interpretation can be found at appendix 22). Within this stage, I also began to think about the data alongside the philosophical notions of HP and the lifeworld fractions (Ashworth, 2016), as discussed in section 3.2.

As Crowther and Thomson (2020 p.6) wrote, my analysis became: *'An iterative process of reading, thinking and re-thinking, re-reading and cycles of writing and re-writing'*.

I had planned to include these pen portraits as part of the analysis within the body of my thesis here. However, pen portraits, although useful and present a glimpse of an understanding of the participants, they are also detached from the person and the meaning of their story. I did not feel that these were able to create a picture of the overall experience and therefore I concentrated instead on using the pen portraits as a support to help me with the analysis and they are presented in appendix 16 and included a creative non-fiction piece that captures the men's stories more effectively (see section 4.4.6 below and section 7.1).

#### 4.4.5 Stage five

Stage five and six were the most challenging aspects of the analysis. The documents that I prepared as part of my analysis (detailed in stage four above) were reviewed and commented upon by my supervisors and that fed back into further analysis and eventual interpretations. I also utilised a feedback session with another PhD student where we presented and discussed our initial findings and the facilitators from the LFF (including one of those that had facilitated the Inform Plus sessions I had observed) to provide additional focused perspectives for me to consider in the light of my own interpretations. This helped me to review and fuse the horizons of the participants and different professional perspectives to start to tease out my interpretation. Lastly, I presented the initial findings for discussion to the Research Committee at the LFF, the PowerPoint for the presentation can be found at appendix 17. The discussions held across this stage provided feedback (additional perspectives and horizons) in terms of notes that I made and that I incorporated into my last stage of analysis that led to the aspects of the findings from this research.

#### 4.4.6 Stage six

The final stage of the analysis involved pulling together all of the interpretations across the participants' stories (i.e., a cross-case analysis) and considering the data from a deeper point. When I started to read through the data across the participants in order to pull out the key aspects to aid my interpretation, I found myself writing a creative non-fiction story (see for example Orr et al., 2020) based on the data collected from the study. Writing this piece began as a way to help me to pull together the different facets of the experience and to gain a different perspective during the analysis. This study looks to understand the experiences of the CJS from the intimate and personal recollections of the participants who discussed their deeply felt and difficult experiences and I wanted to ensure that this was conveyed in this written piece where the essence of their collective experience could be depicted. In crafting this piece, I used the process and discussion of creative nonfiction construction within Orr et al. (2020) and that of crafting stories within HP, through the work of Crowther et al. (2017), as a guide. 'One of Them' is based in the data collected from across the participants' stories provided as part of this research and is a technique used in qualitative research (see for example Orr et al., 2020). Creative non-fiction is grounded within the stories told by the participants, it is a technique that allows the researcher to produce both a representation of the data and one that reflects the researcher's interpretation (Edge et al., 2020 and Orr et al., 2020). Crafted stories are used frequently in HP (see for example Crowther et al., 2017); however, these are usually based in the narrative of a single participant, using the transcript of the data verbatim, but moulding it to uncover the core of the experience. Stories are key in HP research, allowing the researcher and reader the opportunity to share and contextualise the experiences of those at the heart of the research (Crowther et al., 2017 and Van Manen, 2014). I wanted to provide an interpretation that drew on the direct information from the participants but that also demonstrated the phases of their CJS experiences and the key themes that I had pulled out of my analytic work (Smythe & Spence, 2020). It was a way to help me to complete the analysis, distilling the main threads that I got from the stories that I was being told (Orr et al., 2020). There are voices that are louder than others and not every characteristic of the findings feature in the story but there are aspects across all of the participants' perspectives within this crafted piece.

I felt that the use of a crafted piece of non-fiction would help the reader to see the holistic perspective of the breadth of their experiences from the participants' viewpoints, which can often get lost in the analysis (Richardson & Motl, 2021). This aims to help move the reader on beyond the stereotypes and negative perceptions about the individuals who were the participants within this research (Sass et al., 2021), something which is imperative to develop

an understanding about them and their experience. This type of presentation of analysis and data to help the reader understand the experiences offered as a whole, rather than as purely themes and patterns, has been used elsewhere in HP. As an example, Dibley (2014) used real-case vignettes as a way to demonstrate the holistic relationship between the stories from the participants and the themes within her study findings.

From the notes made across each piece of data and then across each participant's data as a whole I identified themes across each participant's whole data story. I then explored these themes across all of the participants to find commonalities and areas of difference, leading to the identification of shared meanings and aspects of the experience. An example of this was the shared language that the participants use, phrases such as 'down the rabbit hole' and 'the knock' helped me to pull together aspects of their experience that was shared. All of the men presented a front to others about themselves when they were offending and a clear understanding of this and other aspects of their lives led me to identify that there was a phase of their experience that they shared prior to their arrest (that I entitled 'down the rabbit hole') and also led me to start to craft their experience into distinct phases that the men all experienced and that will be discussed in the findings chapter (chapter 6). This all helped lead to the development of refinements towards the deep interpretations of the experiences of the men that I present within this thesis (presented in chapter 7).

#### 4.4.7 Member checking

As part of the analytical process, I deliberately chose not to return to the participants to check my interpretation with them; within HP, member checking is not required (Dibley et al., 2020). Interpretation is key in this research approach and the interpretation comes through the hermeneutic circle and the fusion of horizons between the researcher, participants and other perspectives, as I have already discussed (see Crowther & Thomson, 2020). Although I think that it is important to return some findings from the research to the participants as (see Dibley et al., 2020), HP acknowledges that with time our interpretation of events change and the interpretation of their experiences remains my interpretation. I provided the participants with a summary of the findings from this research as they all expressed an interest in understanding the findings and as a token of my appreciation for the time and effort they spent sharing their stories. Within longitudinal research, perceptions, thoughts and ideas inevitably change over time (Neale, 2020) and each participant, with the exception of James, had more than one opportunity to provide data for the research and to provide additional input. The use of rigorous aspects of the research, as discussed earlier in the chapter, and an open, iterative, documented process of analysis allows for the interpretations to be reviewed for credibility.

Throughout the analytic process, I asked questions of the data (examples of questions are in appendix 13) that helped me to dwell within the data and stay focused on what was being said about the experience. My findings come from the use of the process above but, as I noted previously, these are not the definitive 'truth' of these experiences but an invitation for others to engage with the conversation (Smythe, 2012). All of this in depth and detailed analytical process enabled me to keep the stories of the participants at the heart of the analysis, providing credible interpretations drawn from the original data and an audit trail for the analysis itself.

## **5 Ethical considerations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this final methodological chapter, I discuss the ethical considerations relevant to the two empirical research studies. As part of this research, I required ethical approval from Leeds Beckett University, the LFF and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, alongside a legal agreement with the police about the research (the police legal department reviewed the documentation prior to the start of the research) that I was undertaking (ethical approval application for HMPPS can be found in appendix 11). I had spent some considerable months designing the research, and achieving approval through these processes, only to find that the global Covid-19 pandemic hit and restrictions on movement and research meant that my research could no longer continue in the way it had originally been designed. This necessitated a change to the research design around communication and access to participants in the main and these have been covered at the appropriate points in the previous chapter, as well as in my reflections that can be found at the end of this thesis. This also presented some ethical issues to consider, which are discussed below.

### **5.2 Participant Safety**

There were several sensitive ethical issues regarding this research and managing these issues appropriately was of paramount importance in order to make sure I did not do any harm to the participants and to mitigate any risks to me as a researcher. This research required participants to explore and understand their thoughts and feelings, which was often a difficult process (see for example Klein et al., 2018). It necessitated flexibility and sensitivity within how I managed the data collection process. In line with the code of Human Research Ethics, from the British Psychological Society (Oates et al., 2021), this research was conducted whilst taking account of the main areas of:

- Respect for the autonomy, privacy and dignity of individuals and communities,
- Scientific integrity,
- Social responsibility,
- Maximising benefit and minimising harm.

As I was also, due to the changes required as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, collecting data through a video communications platform I have taken account of the BPS Ethics guidelines for Internet Mediated Research, too (Hewson & Buchanan, 2013).

I was mindful that some of the participants described ongoing current mental distress and therefore an ongoing support process was vital in order to reduce the potential for harm and maximise the ethical aspects of the research. Support information was supplied to each participant at the start of the project (as part of the Participant Information Sheet) and included organisations that could provide support such as LFF.

Once the question phase of an interview had been conducted, a debrief phase was completed (see debrief protocol at appendix 10); this was written taking into account prior research (see Butler et al., 2019 and Draucker et al., 2009). At the beginning of the debrief, each participant was signposted again to the support available to them if they wished to access it. Then lastly, I talked about topics other than those surrounding the interview and the CJS, such as their family, activities that they were undertaking etc, just prior to ending the interview, as a way to take the participants out of the difficult content of the interview.

Due to the relatively high proportion of men investigated for these offences that attempt suicide and/or have mental health issues, these topics were likely (and did actually feature) within the discussions with the participants. Prior research (Jeglic et al., 2013 and Key et al., 2018) would seem to suggest that post arrest and post charge may potentially be critical points for these men. It was anticipated that this research would provide more evidence related to this aspect. A recent meta-analysis around the discussion of suicide within research projects (Blades et al., 2018) suggested that discussing this within the research with participants did not increase suicide ideation and actually may lead to a decrease in suicidal feelings amongst participants. Concentrating specifically on qualitative research around this topic, there is some evidence to suggest that this can be beneficial with participants describing an increase in well-being and the cathartic experience of talking about their experiences (Biddle et al., 2012). The added dimension of the use of researcher directed diaries may also help to improve well-being, as has been discussed earlier in this chapter. Interestingly all of the participants talked about finding the interviews (and diaries for those that completed them), whilst not an easy or pleasant experience, actually helpful for them. Alongside providing the appropriate support processes for each participant, I also ensured that each participant was aware of the need for

me to breach confidentiality if they provided me with information about them being likely to do harm to themselves. This would mean for example that I would need to contact appropriate mental health or other organisations if they expressed the wish to immediately harm themselves.

### **5.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity**

This project sought to ensure confidentiality and anonymity for the participants; this was discussed with each participant, who were all provided with both information to take with them, and the ability to contact me to ask questions, if required (the participant information sheets and debrief sheets can be found at appendices 4, 5 and 10). Informed consent was discussed and agreed prior to any data collection and the participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research.

Consent was obtained through use of the Qualtrics system and each participant was emailed a link to the online consent form in Qualtrics and provided the opportunity to ask any questions (see appendix 3). Continuing consent was checked at each data collection session with each participant and recorded as part of the interview process. Consent in QL research should be considered to be an ongoing process (Neale, 2013). I built up a good rapport with the participants and discussed sensitive topics over the course of the 6-month or 12-month data collection period; inevitably, this meant that, for some, I became part of their support structure. I was aware that I needed to tread a fine line between building and sustaining the trust and reciprocity required for a productive relationship without building or developing a dependence, intrusion or neglect (see Neale, 2013). Building a relationship that contains clear, unambiguous boundaries was key here and worked effectively.

In order to ensure anonymity, I adopted a method of anonymisation utilising pseudonyms that allowed me to track individual participants whilst keeping their anonymity. Each participant chose their own pseudonym name and this is how they are referred to across this thesis. Confidentiality was maintained unless there was a need to breach this. Participants were informed of this and the circumstances under which this would happen, for example if they expressed a desire to harm themselves or someone else or if they discussed additional offending behaviour that was unreported, although this was not required over the course of this research. The participants were assured that their stories remained confidential and would not be disclosed to the facilitators within LFF although they were informed that my research was supported by LFF.

The safety and security measures within the online video conferencing platform were strictly adhered to, to ensure that confidentiality and anonymity could be preserved. The online

interviews were made private so that no one could access the interview whilst it was underway and they were audio and not video recorded. All data relating to this project was stored in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), 2018 (see Hoofnagle et al., 2019), and the Data Protection Act (DPA), 2018. GDPR relates to all organisations that control or process personal data and therefore the personal data relating to this research fell under the scope of these guidelines. All data and documents relating to the research were stored in an encrypted format. No raw data in the format of interview transcripts, diary entries or field notes were shared with my supervision team, only excerpts from the interviews. Audio recordings and diaries utilised the participants pseudonym, therefore securing their anonymity. The interviews were all audio recorded, and so a dictaphone/ audio recorder which facilitates this was used with each interview. The digital recordings were stored securely and encrypted and destroyed once transcription was complete. I transcribed each interview and diary entry personally and these were not viewed by third parties including my supervision team. The data was all anonymised when transcribed from the audio files, removing anything identifiable (e.g., names, places). The original diary entries sent by the participants were securely stored until transcribed and checked by me and then destroyed as each participant had sent a copy of their typed diary.

## **5.4 Researcher safety**

Lastly, it is important to consider the potential risks to the researcher in any research. There was a safety mechanism in place whereby I ensured that I contacted an agreed member of the university when I started and finished interviews. Although I was not asking direct questions relating to CSEM offending behaviour or child abuse, I was asking participants to discuss, describe and interpret the impact of their offending and the CJS on their lives and this was anticipated to be, and inevitably was, often highly emotive and distressing for them. I was able to access the student well-being services should this have been required and I was also able to access additional supervision support through LFF. At no point did I feel the need to access formal support services however I did discuss my feelings with my supervision team. As someone who has worked in this field for over twenty years, I am experienced at managing boundaries and have a number of frequently practiced techniques to manage my feelings.

The next section of this thesis provides an overview and introduction to my findings and the findings chapters themselves.

## 6 Findings

### 6.1 An overview

*“So basically, ‘the knock’ feels like it was like the epicentre of a big earthquake, and then had these knock on effects that we weren’t even anticipating” [Hugh]*

This chapter introduces, and provides an overview, of the main findings from this study including: the phases of the participants’ CJS experiences; the ‘interpretative leap’; the hermeneutic essence of earthquakes, aftershocks and rebuilding; and the creative nonfiction piece I crafted, entitled “One of them”. The phases of the experience are then described in detail and the interpretative leap is elaborated upon fully in chapter 7.

#### 6.1.1 Introduction

This empirical study aimed to explore the experiences of the participants through their journeys across the Criminal Justice System, to consider how these experiences manifested for them and how they might have been affected by any support that they accessed (including, for those that accessed it, the Inform Plus programme). This section presents the key findings and a brief discussion around them. Engaging with the philosophy of Heidegger (1962), the fractions of the lifeworld (Ashworth, 2003) and other research that has been grounded in hermeneutic phenomenology (such as Crowther & Thomson, 2020), led me iteratively to the analytical process described in Chapter 4. Research using hermeneutic phenomenology does not aim to unearth the ‘truth’ of the experience or phenomenon under investigation (Smythe et al., 2008). Instead, the aim is to provide an interpretation based within the research data from the participants themselves, co-constructed through engagement with the perspectives of others, as outlined in my methods section (Cowther & Thomson, 2020). The findings that I present in this thesis are an invitation for researchers and interested others to explore my interpretation and ‘unconceal’ their own ‘truth’. Smythe and Spence (2020) argued that a researcher can only offer his or her interpretation of another’s story for the purpose of raising questions and possible ways of understanding, so my interpretation can be understood as a spark to start a conversation around the experiences of these men through their journeys along the CJS.

Before giving an overview of the findings here I wanted to acknowledge the importance of writing in the interpretive process. I had not grasped that the way to ‘think’ was to write (Smythe et al., 2008) when I first started in the analysis of the data. I am not a writer, first and foremost I enjoy the research process; writing is not something that I find easy but I acknowledge it is a fundamental way to share one’s research. I took heart from the supervisor’s comment to ‘Brenda’, a PhD student within the work articulated by Smythe and Spence, (2020 p.7):



*You'd give us this as the raw draft and then you'd keep going back and working on it and working on it and polishing it up and moving things. You wrote layer by layer. You had the basics there, but you kept working with it. Which was great. You always got to the finished product which was excellent. But it was holding the confidence while this, the first thing that we got, was great, it would get greater.*

I gained confidence that writing is not only part of the analysis, of thinking, but also a concrete way to discuss findings and themes and that to keep writing deepens the analysis and interpretation. To think through the deeper meanings, I also found myself writing a crafted nonfiction piece (inspired by Orr et al., 2021) that brought together the different voices of the participants and helped me to mould the themes that are articulated within these findings (the method related to this can be found in section 4.4.6 and section 7.1).

### 6.1.2 Phases of the CJS experience

This thesis, as I have already articulated, is, as far as I am aware and from an extensive literature search and scoping review, the first time that a longitudinal piece of research has been conducted to look at the holistic experience of the CJS from the perspective of those that commit offences related to CSEM and that considers their experience from a more holistic viewpoint than the purely criminogenic. As such, an understanding of the structure and characteristics of that experience is important both from the view of those that want to understand the key trigger points that might impact on reoffending or suicidal ideation but also from the wider effects on their long-term ability to reintegrate and the impact on their families. In the Introduction chapter for this thesis, I unpicked and articulated the criminal justice system; the processes that the men in this study and others who are investigated for the same offences navigate.

I termed these 'phases' as they are distinct aspects of the CJS experience that can be identified through the stories articulated by the participants; however, the phases are not necessarily experienced in a linear, temporal way from one to the next. The phases are:

- 'Down the rabbit hole' – life when they were offending, life before arrest.
- 'The knock' - the key point of disruption to their lives from the CJS; their arrest.
- Unhomelikeness- drawing on Svenaeus (2011) notion of 'unhomelikeness' the understanding and experience of the changes to their lives and themselves as a result of the CJS; the 'otherness' that they experience post arrest.
- The potential for self- redemption- understanding ways to manage the effects of the CJS and rebuild their lives
- Envisioning a future life- hope for the future versus reality.

Participants' stories demonstrated that they moved between the phases, dependent on their particular experiences, with at least one participant circling back through all of the phases and back down the rabbit hole. The phases are described in detail in section eight.

### 6.1.3 Earthquakes, Aftershocks and Rebuilding

Earthquakes, aftershocks and rebuilding epitomises the ongoing fracture in the men's lives (the 'earthquake' that occurs at the point of arrest) and the subsequent and often unexpected 'aftershocks', coupled with the participants' efforts to rebuild themselves and their lives.

Engaging with the phenomenological notions of Heidegger (1962) and the lifeworld fractions of Ashworth (2016) helped me to move into a deeper understanding of what the experiences meant for the participants. This iterative process brought about the creation of the themes of **Connections with others**, **Unexpectedness** and **Being Seen**, and are woven through each narrative. Reflecting back to the section in my methodology chapter (section 3.3), this 'interpretive leap' (Crowther & Thomson, 2020) links the initial description and interpretations to the essence of the experience as understood through the fusion of horizons (Dibley et al., 2020). These layers (or levels, Crowther & Thomson, 2020) of interpretation inevitably need to display the link between the initial description and the creation of the deepest interpretation. This layered approach and the link and repeat of the description into the interpretation demonstrates the hermeneutic circle and the thinking, re-writing and re-reading process that embodies and defines the interpretive process (Crowther & Thomson, 2020).

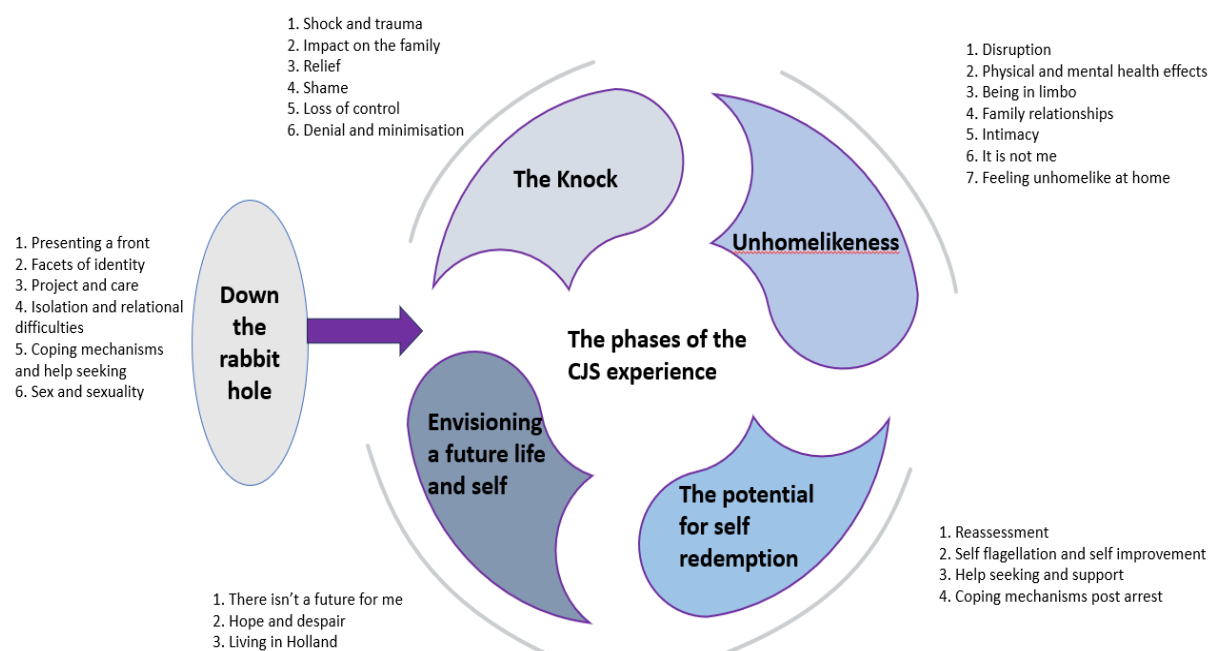
Although each of these themes filters across the stories, not every aspect of each theme is present for each participant. These themes are articulated and explored in Chapter 7. The last point to raise here is an intriguing part of the phenomenon that I evoked through analysis and interpretation; that a number of dichotomies can be clearly seen through the narratives told by the men and these are highlighted across this chapter.

## 6.2 The phases of the CJS experience

### 6.2.1 Introduction

The structure of the men's experience of the CJS and its impacts, as I have already alluded to in the previous summary chapter, is constructed of five phases. In this section I describe, in detail, the phases of the experience and the main characteristics from my interpretation of what underpins each phase, including the context of these interpretations and the literature and previous research within which these findings can be situated. Figure 6 below depicts the phases and their characteristics.

Figure 6 Phases of the CJS experience (created by the author)



## 6.2.2 Being 'Down the Rabbit Hole'

*"So if I'm feeling lonely or frightened or scared or whatever, then I'll go out for a walk or I'll go and do something, change of scenery, just something to stop me going down that rabbit hole" [Steve]*

### 6.2.2.1 Introduction

The name of this phase came from some of the participants themselves; interestingly it was used by a number of the men to describe life when they were offending and was one of a number of words and phrases that they used as collaborative language within the Inform Plus sessions. Although this research concentrated on the experiences of the criminal justice system, so, arguably after the point of their offending, in order to get an understanding of their CJS experience, it was important to gain a 'baseline' idea of what life was like for them before they were arrested, as I have articulated within my methodology. As such, it became clear that this was an important phase that shaped part of their CJS experience, not only at the beginning, but throughout, as something that they did not want to return to which can be seen from Steve's comment at the beginning of this section. As Heidegger (1962) asserted, we are 'thrown' into the world, and this influences the 'world' that we make for ourselves; what we consider to be important, is how we understand and live our lives:

*Each of us is what he pursues and cares for. In everyday terms, we understand ourselves and our existence by way of the activities we pursue and the things we take care of. (Heidegger, 1988, p.159)*

This links to the fraction of 'project' in Ashworth's lifeworld (2016), that is, the activities and aspects of a person's lifeworld that they consider, maybe not even overtly consciously, to be pivotal to them. The men's descriptions of life prior to their involvement with the CJS and their subsequent narratives gave glimpses of their 'project' - what they determined as important to them and the way that this is fundamentally affected through their involvement in the CJS. An understanding of life before arrest, discussed in wider terms than their offending behaviour, is little researched for men who commit these offences, and therefore, the ability to make sense of how their lives are subsequently affected is unique with this study. What follows are the key characteristics of this phase and the corresponding literature to set up the landscape around their offending behaviour and ongoing journey through the CJS.

#### *6.2.2.2 Presenting a front; it is a hall of mirrors*

Interestingly - although with hindsight, unsurprisingly - was the initial presentation to me from all of the participants that they had a 'good' life prior to their arrest. Here, both Ricky and Steve comment on life before they were arrested:

*"I was a [job title, high level role] and and my daughter lived with me, we had just moved house, well we were within 20 miles of virtually all of the family and we saw them all quite regularly and I had a pretty full and active social life" [Ricky]*

*"Personally, I was,, I was quite happy, I love my life, and I love my friends, or friend. I love where I live, which is an apartment paid for by all the previous ones so that's very good, there's, yeah, I was in a good place". [Steve]*

Each participant described their lives initially in terms such as "good" (James), "busy" (Paul), "happy" (Simon). This was less pronounced, although still present, with two of the participants, TS and Simon H. Both of these men were unmarried, had not had close intimate relationships (although they did have friends and family) and both openly admitted to their sexual interests in children.

Alongside this presentation of being busy and happy, participants also described their lives in terms such as "normal" (James), "regular" (Paul), that their lives were not unusual and when they talked about what their lives entailed, they sounded not unlike many people that I know:

*"So be a case of of juggling with the boys in terms of school runs and pickups and that kind of stuff, so yeah, just the just the regular kind of life erm really in that respect". [Paul]*

*"Well, I lived well quite a normal family life, wife and four kids, good job and you know holidays, joint time with the kids and my wife". [James]*

These were clearly, on the face of it, men that I could imagine knowing in my own life; this was both a slightly jarring sense around the background and lives of the people that commit these offences but also a clear link with prior research that these were people with a different background and understanding to many others that commit criminal offences (see for example Babchishin et al., 2018; Key et al., 2018 and Merdian et al., 2018). Other than TS, who had previously committed the same CSEM offence a number of years prior to this one, none of the others had had any experience with the CJS. In line with other studies (see for example Ly et al., 2017), they were in the main, well-educated and had careers (at least prior to their arrest), with most also having intimate relationships and a family.

However, once I delved further into the lives of the participants before their arrests, they began to reveal aspects of their lives that were difficult for them and to which often they related as their reasons for offending. For some of the men they were overtly aware of this prior to arrest, and for others, this became apparent with hindsight and/or therapeutic input. Although this may seem like a form of denial on the surface, this is not unusual. The face that we present to the outside world is often very different to the one experienced behind closed doors and we often have multiple identities that are used dependent on the different situations within which we find ourselves (Deci & Ryan, 2011).

### 6.2.3 Facets of identity

The participants wanted to present a picture of themselves as 'good' people living good lives and this was clear not only at this point in this phase but also later within other phases, particularly around their self-redemption. Simon's focus was on showing that he was a good dad, and that not only was this his view, but that this was the view of others too.

*"I was doing everything right, everything apart from that, I was doing everything. I was a super dad, everyone was telling me how good at that I was, it makes you know, saying I'm a bad parent and all that, and I know it is all come true, but at the time, I was doing everything right"*  
[Simon]

Simon saw himself in the extract above through the lens of how he perceived he was seen by others. As part of our understanding of ourselves, we take into account how we are seen by others, our sense of self is powerfully influenced by others (Ashworth, 2016) and our need to be understood and accepted. Simon is also suggesting that his behaviour and subsequent arrest turned him into a bad parent, conflating his parenting with his offending behaviour, whilst in reality his offending behaviour had nothing to do with his ability to parent at the time. However, once arrested, he was no longer able to parent in the same way as he did not have unsupervised contact with his children. This is a theme that was raised by a number of

participants at a number of points across their journeys and will be discussed further as this chapter unfolds.

At the time before his arrest, Paul, although he stated that he lived a normal life, also acknowledged that there were issues for him; he noted that between work, his children and his wife's employment (she worked shifts), he had little time for himself. It's clear from my interaction with Paul that he struggled to integrate these different identities whilst also hiding his offending.

*"Not much chance to be me" [Paul]*

*"Lots of stressful things, the pressure of work, relatives dying and issues with family. My porn addiction developed into something. Making time for myself late at night. I've been trying to take a step back and deal with how I felt, my depression etc but now I feel that talking to people really helps" [Paul]*

This is also articulated by Simon H who felt like he was living two lives, whilst he was offending.

*"It was kind of living two lives really as such, so I'd have my outside life so there were two separates, one that I couldn't, you know, tell anyone about, and it meant me, myself, 'cause I didn't want anyone else to sort of know I didn't want anybody else into what I was doing I I have many friends which of course then had the issues of, you know, feeling more lonely" [Simon H]*

This idea of living different lives, of which their offending behaviour constituted one, is a way in which they could distance themselves from their offending. Participants discussed presenting a front to the outside world, but also acknowledged that they, initially at least, did the same to me, when representing themselves through their stories about their lives.

Our identities are, as I have suggested, altered by the context within which we find ourselves and so our parental identity can be very different to, for example, the one we portray in an adult social context (Leary & Price-Tangney, 2011). Simon H described that having this secret side to his identity (something that was the same for all of the participants here) impacted on his loneliness and his isolation because he offended in secret and away from other people. This hidden identity links to the participants' self-concept once their offending is exposed, which will be covered further into this thesis.

#### 6.2.4 'Project' and 'Care'

*"And generally, like I said, my life, there was a lot of my life that I was always really happy about I had a really, I was really engaged with my job full time working in a computer based, it was, it was data reporting and data analytics. I was really, as far as that was going, great with my life. I I was pretty absorbed in my job and my career" [Hugh]*

Over the course of the interviews, each participant revealed their 'project' (Ashworth, 2016), that is, the important aspects of their life that they 'cared' about (Heidegger, 1962) and, as this was profoundly interrupted as a result of their interaction with the CJS, it is a vital characteristic within this phase. At the point of initial arrest, all of the participants were employed and they all talked about work being a key component of their lives. Even Steve, who was retired from his job, was working on renovating houses to both keep himself busy and earn money. Hugh, as quoted above, was very focused on his career. For James and Simon, work was an important part of their identity, as men, and as the provider for their family:

*"Yeah, probably spent too much time at work, worked long hours. I'd like to get there early, an' like to do a good job and that, probably stressed about it too much. It was hard you know. So with four kids at home, you know, it can be hard and stuff and you know, they have money, money could be tight and yeah but I expected to pay the bills and everything like that but happy, yeah" [James]*

For all of the participants their relationships with family and friends also featured heavily in their initial descriptions of their lives.

*"And two of my children got special needs, so that was quite challenging to do and then work through that, things like that so, yeah, I don't much, I guess not much free time really for me and my wife, you know, it is all family and then yeah, that was the centre of the universe I guess". [James]*

*"I think just erm obviously with the pressure of work I'd want to mention civil servants and get the job was quite intense at times and high pressure erm but also as I mentioned you know in the wife's family and things like that. She kind of got pulled off in the direction to sort things out when things were going awry with the bigger sisters and erm just in terms of her shifts they weren't obviously easiest to deal with and it was weekend working as well as well sometimes evenings and early starts and stuff like that, so I suppose just kind of felt like I didn't have much time to myself erm really" [Paul]*

Our understanding of ourselves and our world, our *being-in-the-world*, is necessarily relational. We cannot understand the world in isolation from the relationships that form a part of it and the ones that are most influential are those of close family and friends (Heidegger, 1962). Both James and Paul demonstrated here not only the importance of their families but the centrality of family in their lives; prior to their arrests, they did little outside of their family lives (other than work) and this rings true across all of the participants. Indeed, Ricky gave up his job and moved locations to be able to look after his daughter when he was left as the only parent after a tragic incident:

*"My son died in a tragic accident caused by the mother and I then had to leave the [job role] early to provide a home for my daughter, a full-time parent with very little kind of other kind of support from then on" [Ricky]*

The final aspect of this part of the phase that participants discussed as important was their perceived standing in the community. In a similar way to their relationships, their involvement

in the community was another aspect of their 'project'. Although this was only applicable to some of the participants, such as Steve and James, nevertheless it was important before they were arrested and then afterwards when they tried to reconcile themselves and their offending. This will be further discussed in the phase around self-redemption. James was a school governor and ran local church community groups and Steve helped out his more elderly neighbours, shopping for and supporting them.

*"Well, as as I say to you, that's not me. I'm like, I'm a kind person if you go and knock on any of the neighbours' doors, they will, I'm sure that they will say "oh yeah, he's a lovely man, he's very helpful" [Steve].*

All of the men had built successful, busy lives with aspects that they cared deeply about, that were important parts of their self-identities, their self-esteem and their family dynamics.

### 6.2.5 Isolation and relational difficulties

Although on the face of their lives the men all appeared to have a myriad of interpersonal relationships, once they began to open up in their interviews, each of the participants discussed relationship issues and isolation for various reasons and to various degrees.

*"Friends, right like my friends, sort of disappeared when we got married, you know, like they do, you drift away" [Simon]*

Prior to their arrest, none of the participants had a wide friendship base, they were mainly focused on work and close family, as I have demonstrated in the previous section. Simon mentioned above that over the course of his relationship with his ex-wife his friendships dwindled and he noted that he felt that this was just what happens normally, often when people have kids and are working, they can have less time for other aspects of their lives. Even James, who on the face of it seemed to have a wider social network through work and his community roles, in reality had a small number of those that were close to him and his relationships were, in the main, his immediate family and some friends from his church.

Hugh openly discussed his difficulty with relationships and in particular how he struggled with intimate relationships. Before meeting his wife, he was still living at home and concentrated on work, but he also noted that the relationship between himself, his wife and his parents was strained. He talked about his parents in a similar way that James did. There seemed to have been a breakdown in his relationship with his parents after he married his wife and moved out of the house. He stated that his parents felt that his wife took him away from his family, and the relationship between his wife and with his family, particularly his parents, was a preoccupation of Hugh, throughout all of our interactions.

*"I've always found it difficult to maintain close relationships and there has been a lot of tension between my wife and my parents and that's kind of almost like there's this undercurrent of*



*tension between them and where I am at the moment. I guess, the quickest way of summarizing [is] that my parents, in many ways, are not nice people” [Hugh]*

There were issues previously with Hugh’s relationship with his wife and he articulated this whilst discussing his life prior to his arrest. This resulted in him attending therapy with his wife and strengthening, on the face of it, their relationship.

*“Again, I couldn’t, I couldn’t communicate to her sufficiently what the problems were. So she, we, tried, there was more than one discussion, we tried a few ideas but none of them really worked in terms of establishing boundaries, so she said that she, she kind of insisted on was going to relationship therapy” [Hugh]*

Hugh very clearly identified that issues around his relationships related to communication, something that was echoed across the stories of all of the participants in this study and something that will be repeated at points throughout the findings here. In particular, Hugh struggled to talk about himself and how he felt with his wife but also with his family. Paul struggled to communicate with his wife about how he felt and discussed that he had a tendency to ‘bottle things up’, rather than open up about them. James had issues with his sexuality and his ability to have sex; yet did not feel comfortable talking about that. All of the participants had mental health issues and experienced stress; yet again, they struggled to articulate and discuss these, or seek help. This fits with prior research around masculinity and help seeking behaviour (see for example Gough & Novikova, 2020).

Participants also talked about the loneliness and isolation that they experienced before their arrest.

*“Yeah, probably, then I began to feel quite lonely. Well I did have a lot of friends and well friends and contacts but as I say we were only a certain age now and life takes its toll, erm, so I I ended up with, and I still have, my only friend now my only true friend that I would call a true friend and I met her at a gig in in [place name]”. [Steve]*

For Steve, although he did talk about other people and having other friends, it is clear that his one close friendship is with the person that he mentions in this excerpt from our interview, and that even with this, he felt lonely. This resonates with Simon’s description of his relationships from his extract at the beginning of this section.

#### 6.2.6 Coping mechanisms and help seeking

In a related aspect to their isolation and relationship issues, the men in this study also struggled with their coping mechanisms for stress and other issues. They struggled to communicate these issues and they struggled to seek help.

*“Yeah, man, in terms of mental health, I suppose, kind of, didn’t really talk about things and bottled things away then. I’ve always been quite quiet and and shy in terms of things but I*

*suppose my job [senior public sector leader] made me kind of confront things like that head on but it didn't really help in terms of anxiety" [Paul]*

Paul talked about his wife's struggles with her mental health but that he had not acknowledged his own issues; he was aware that he had anxiety but felt that he needed to be strong, relating his lack of help seeking with masculinity. He recognised the pressure and stresses looking back on this part of his life but not necessarily at the time that it was happening. Undiagnosed and unreported poor mental health is a feature of this population of those that commit offences (Key et al., 2018), this study would also support this. This also speaks to issues around masculinity that is a theme throughout the phases and over the course of the men's journeys across the CJS, and in particular, the men's reticence to seek help. Men are less likely than women to seek help for their mental health and other stigmatised health issues (Oliver et al., 2005), with traditional masculine identities, such as the men exhibit here, stigmatising mental health and reducing the likelihood of help seeking (Gough & Novikova, 2020). This is further illustrated by another extract from Paul:

*"I think it probably just felt it was kind of like a sign of weakness because you know, clearly it is not, but you want to try and be strong" [Paul]*

With the benefit of hindsight, all of the participants talked about their mental health and their coping mechanisms; they did this either overtly or without really understanding that they had mental health issues at the time of their offending, only coming to that realisation as they reflected on it later. Neither Paul, Hugh, James R or James identified that they had poor mental health prior to their arrest. James was able to comment that looking back, he was stressed out by work and had a very hectic family life that included four children, two of whom had special needs. However, he did not recognise any issues with his mental health until after his arrest. Similarly, James R articulated his lack of seeking help, as a man, about mental and sexual health, pointing out that this was related to him being a 'man' rather than for any other reason.

*"I certainly wouldn't have gone to a Doctor to talk about erectile dysfunction, I think they call it, that's well, you didn't do that, you know, it is not done" [James]*

Simon identified that he was struggling with his mental health when his marriage broke down and that he did access help; however he did not find anything that was helpful, either in terms of medication, or indeed as he continued his discussion, in talking therapy intervention either.

*"When my marriage finished I was on sertraline [an antidepressant] really and my family and everyone was saying that they make me a zombie, so only done a couple of weeks course of them or month course of them and then stop[ped]" [Simon]*

As part of their life down the rabbit hole, participants talked about their coping mechanisms, although they did not necessarily identify that these were what they were and many of them highlighted their use of the internet as part of this.

*“I should have retired to 68, which is a bit beyond where I should have retired, erm, and I I didn’t sleep very well, I was perhaps drinking too much er er and then I got involved with looking at things on the internet” [James R]*

James R struggled at work for a number of reasons including not wanting to let down his boss, his physicality compared to the younger, fitter, male employees and his lack of social skills. He struggled to sleep and as well as isolating himself, as can be seen above, he coped through using alcohol and the internet, common coping mechanisms linked to mental health and other issues (see for example Testa et al., 2024 and Uy et al., 2014). Likewise, Hugh also commented about his internet and pornography use being a coping mechanism and that this was a “habit” that he struggled to control. He noted that his pornography habit spiralled into the viewing of CSEM, as has been identified elsewhere (see Rimer & Holt, 2023).

*“Basically, it [viewing CSEM] was my coping mechanism and essentially, yeah, it was a habit” [Hugh]*

Steve also picked up on this idea of viewing CSEM as “a habit” that was “difficult to stop”, potentially suggesting that it was an addiction:

*“Well I was looking at images [CSEM] I knew it was wrong and, as I say, I’m fairly sure it just became a habit and one that I found difficult to stop” [Steve]*

The link between addiction and CSEM has been a growing area of research (Rimer & Holt, 2023) but it is not clear how much of this is addiction and how much is denial/minimisation and trying to cope with their offending behaviour.

Simon stated that he viewed pornography when his children had gone to their mothers, as a way of coping when his children were not around, and as with Simon H, when he was feeling alone.

*“The time that [I] could escape from a lot of it [his offending behaviour] was when I was busy doing something, so usually working, as soon as I got back home again. You’re on your own, and then there’s no one else around you, you get bored and lonely. And how do you then sort of get rid of that? Uhm, you access to that material. It releases chemicals in your brain and it makes you happy for a short period” [Simon H]*

Looking back, participants, typified by the extract above from Simon H, identified their loneliness and poor mental ill-health that they did not necessarily notice whilst they were offending. They did, however, know that they were offending and they framed their CSEM use as their coping mechanism with the often unspoken-about-at-the-time difficulties, as Simon H succinctly notes both above and below:

*“I felt there's a lot of sort of loneliness and depression there that that I would tend to be masking [with CSEM]” [Simon H]*

Simon also discussed the need to access support to manage his behaviour and acknowledged that this would be helpful when offending begins or whilst offending.

*“It is a shame that it can't be about intervention before the police” [Simon]*

This demonstrates the perceived lack of support to intervene to stop offending before the point that the police are involved, but also the lack of help seeking that is marked across all of the participants, and is common in men more generally (see for example Gough & Novikova, 2020). The stigma and shame of offending, fuelled by the media, serves to push this offending even more underground and out of sight (see for example Schultz, 2014 and Stelzmann et al., 2020).

### 6.2.7 Sex and sexuality

Sex life and sexuality are topics that the participants, in the main, did not discuss with others. The impact of their offending and the effects of the CJS on their sex life and their sexuality, and any sexual interest in children that they admitted to, can often only be glimpsed through the comments that the participants here made about other aspects of our discussions. This lack of discussion about sex and sexuality threads across their narratives and was something that I found interesting but also not particularly surprising as I did not openly ask them questions on this topic and sex and sexuality are not often openly discussed topics. Sex and sexuality are missing from the literature around CSEM, other than in discussion around paedophilia and other paraphilic disorders (Seto & Eke, 2024). Although I did not openly ask about their sex lives, or their sexuality, within my interactions with them, I did ask them within the demographic questions, which were completed as part of the end of the interview. Five of the participants had something to say – however brief - about sex or sexuality: Steve, Hugh, Simon H, TS and James R. Five of the participants had something to say – however brief - about sex or sexuality: Steve, Hugh, Simon H, TS and James R.

Steve (a single man in his 70s) openly talked about his sexuality in so much as he made it clear that he was interested in younger women (albeit he stated this was adults and not children) and that he had had relationships with women and wanted to meet and develop future relationships with adult women. He stated that he wanted a physical relationship and missed having one.

Hugh (a married man in his 30s) was the only participant who openly discussed what his sex life was like prior to, and after his, arrest.

*"Yeah but this is the thing that we genuinely, we've always been, I felt like we've always been good at talking about sex openly with each other [him and his wife] but also true that I have struggled, so I've struggled to reach orgasm. [wife's name] was the first. I've had a good number of sexual partners and yeah [wife's name] was the first woman that I managed to reach orgasm with, so I credit her for her kind of proactive approach and engaging approach and I always kind of, I feed off her energy in terms of how she tackles things. So [wife's name] has done more for me, sexually than anyone else" [Hugh]*

The discussion from Hugh covering his issues around his sex life, the difficulty that Steve had in finding a long-term meaningful relationship, and the silence of other participants on this topic, suggested that sex and sexuality were both important but difficult issues for the men to think about and articulate.

James R discussed that sex was something that had been on his mind and also something that he had struggled with in the past and in the lead up to his offending.

*"I don't think that I shall want to go off the straight and narrow erm I've now accepted that at 74 years old with a prostate er thing, I'm not going to be in any way sexually active again ((laughs)), not that I've been particularly sexually active before, so that's fine" [James R]*

*"No but I did try [a] homosexual relationship but it was quite embarrassing ((laughs)) because it didn't give me any sort of satisfaction (his voice gets quiet here), nor any desires at all but then again nothing did at that time to be honest. I've never been one that ((pause)) was looking at page 3 or anything right from the time, now, whether that affected my marriage, I don't know, but I still managed to sire two children, which was good because they are wonderful children and I'm quite pleased that I did but it wasn't something that went on, you know it was erm [difficult] ((long pause))" [James R]*

Hugh talked about his early understanding of sex and his sexuality from when he was a teenager. Sex was defined a certain way as a man and the stereotypes of masculinity and manhood were pervasive and impactful, as Hugh notes below. Hugh felt that to be accepted by his peers, family and the wider community, he had to prove himself sexually, as a man, he had to 'get' women and have sex. This was the currency of masculinity as a teen. This spilt into adulthood, for Hugh, those teenage hang ups continuing to affect his sexual attitudes and his sex life.

*"When I was a teenager, I wasn't good at making new friends and I wasn't good at getting into this new world of dating, dating girls and getting girlfriends and then it kind of like the perception was you know you've got this stereotype of a man, he is valued by how many women, you can get into bed and then I kind of a lot, I kind of latched on to that as a you know I've got to learn how to get women I've got to you know, have sex, sex is like a status symbol" [Hugh]*

TS and Simon H overtly talked about their sexual interest at least partially being related to children.

*"And I don't I don't I don't think so you know but the thing is, like since I've always known, I've been well my my attraction you know sexual attraction is always being very open to both*

*genders and age and as I say that I can find if you look at my reports, I mean anyone between the age of four and 60 attractive” [TS]*

Others, such as Paul and James, seemed to just avoid the subject, although sexuality and issues surrounding childhood were something that James discussed briefly but more so in his therapy. Whereas a sexual interest in children was staunchly denied by at least Simon and Steve within their interviews and during the Inform Plus programme sessions and links through to literature suggesting that although there is a link between a sexual interest in children and CSEM (for example see Seto & Eke, 2017) there are many other underlying and contributory reasons that men download and view CSEM (see for example Merdian et al., 2018).

Interestingly, a number of the men’s convictions were reported in the media and of the ones that were, the media reported that the men had admitted to some sexual interest in children that they had not discussed in our interactions (the media stories are not referenced here to preserve participant anonymity). This may go some way to suggesting that even in the anonymous environment of my research and having built up a relationship, sex and sexuality is still so stigmatised that it is difficult to discuss or there may be other aspects at play that are difficult to discern without returning to a discussion with the men.

## 6.2.8 Summary

This first phase was characterised by a dichotomy in their lives, where they were presenting themselves to family and friends, and even during their research interactions, in a positive way, as ‘good’ people, whilst also managing the secrecy of their offending behaviour. The lack of acknowledgement of their sexuality and issues around that and their lack of help seeking around this and their mental health, alongside their lack of helpful coping mechanisms underpinned their lives prior to their arrest. Support and prevention initiatives aimed at this early point is something that the participants noted that they would have found helpful.

## 6.3 ‘The Knock’

*“Over the years, you kind of worry about ‘the knock’, police knocking on your door and then, obviously, one day that happens” [Simon H]*

### 6.3.1 Introduction

Another phrase that came from the communal language of the participants, who all termed their arrest, without exception as ‘the knock’ (an unexpected knock on the door by the police). This phrase is widely used by others, including the families of those who have been arrested (for example, see @TheKnock, a twitter account managed by families of those who have committed these offences) and in the literature (for example Hoffer et al., 2010) to describe

the moment at which the police attend the homes of suspects and their offending behaviour is exposed.

In general, the literature has concentrated on the point of arrest as being a key trigger, for example, for suicidal ideation for men arrested for these offences (Key et al., 2018); however this study points to additional effects at other points where the police or other organisations within or related to the CJS have contact with them. This was most pronounced at sentencing where the participants expected to be able to move forward, only to find things were much more complex. 'The knock' produced visceral, embodied reactions for the participants as well as heightened emotional reactions. This phase includes how the participants experienced and understood their initial interactions with the CJS and subsequent key points across their journeys and is characterised within the different aspects of this section. Whilst 'the knock' is the point at which the 'earthquake' can be felt most strongly, what came across for the participants was also the difficulties experienced or exacerbated at the point of and after sentencing.

### 6.3.2 Shock and trauma

The shock and trauma experienced at arrest was described vividly, viscerally, and at times in an embodied way, by every participant. Steve made it clear how the arrest was imprinted on him here:

*"Oh God yes, bringing the hairs up on my arm thinking about that 6:30am on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018 they came and banged on the door ((Pause)) erm came in and then everything went rapidly downhill" [Steve].*

Recent research that has included police officers demonstrates the acknowledgement of the shock and trauma that they were aware was experienced by those who have committed these offences and by default, their families, particularly when they reside together at the point of arrest. Law enforcement officers, for example in Key et al.'s (2018) study talked of 'turning their [the men's] world upside down' and 'throwing the hand grenade in' (p.39). Arrests were usually conducted alongside a search warrant, early in the morning, as aptly described by Steve above. The shock of the police coming in, often when the family were home, exacerbated the trauma and shame.

This process was questioned by a number of participants. For example, Simon commented that, prior to arrest, he saw and cared for his children as part of a child custody court order with access rights detailed within it; therefore there were clear times and days when Simon did not have the children with him. He questioned the decision of the police to attend on a day that he had his children and the police stated that they were unable to find his court order.

*"So, I was upfront immediately with him and went into shock erm was worried about the children more than anything and so I panicked and I was picking the phone up and 'please please just let me just let me phone my mom to come get the children' and and the policeman afterwards he said that you were about 2 minutes away from being put on the floor" [Simon]*

As a parent myself, I think it is very understandable for a parent to panic at the entrance of a number of police officers into the home when the children are present. James R also questioned the way that the police managed his case. After his initial arrest and a lengthy wait over several years on bail, James R still did not have any update from the police about his court case, and so he set off to travel around the country after retirement.

*"Then they could have written me a letter. Even though I wasn't there at [names location] particularly very often and I would have seen the letter and got in touch before but they got in touch with my sister who rang me and then I rang the police and I couldn't get through and nobody answered the phone, so I rang my solicitors who got in touch with the police and the police asked me to meet up with them for a meeting er in [names location]. So I came all the way down from [names location, hundreds of miles from the location] and met up with them and then they promptly arrested me" [James R]*

After the shock of his initial arrest, to be arrested a second time when, from his perspective, he had been easily contactable, was another shock. James R questioned the need for the police to do this in this way. He stated that he had had no prior contact from the police from the initial arrest until this point many years later.

Other participants also expressed shock at their arrest. For example:

*"I kind of Yeah very much went into panic, like freeze mode. I would have frozen and essentially, there would have been purely attempts that denial or deflection. I was, I was kind of like, following their instructions still still, you know, in a very state of high panic. I would definitely class it as a traumatic experience because it was kind of like they're saying, I've got to go now and I can't even take my phone, or you know a wallet my keys nothing and I've literally just got out of bed and what's gonna happen now - am I going to prison?" [Hugh]*

Hugh described the shock of the arrest but also the uncertainty that exacerbated that shock, the lack of knowledge of what was going to happen. These were men that had no prior experience with the CJS and had little idea of what was going to happen (see Kothari et al., 2021), and in Hugh's words, he thought that this might mean that he was going to prison immediately.

The shock continued throughout their time at the police station and manifested itself further on release. Often, the men were unable to return home due to the fact that there were children in the house, which added to the shock and trauma. They were released once they had a place to go to, as a bail address was required, and at this point the shock often hit them, as James described:



*"To be honest, it is a bit surreal, you know, went by in about blur, 'cause there all day. I think, I got you know, they were there, they picked me up at it is about 9:00 o'clock in the morning. I left the police station about 6:00 [pm] and then I've drove to [place name] and to go to parents, so I couldn't go back to home. So if I'm honest, it was, it was a bit of a blur erm. It was more shock than anything, you know, everything will come crashing down, you know. Would it be easier to drive into the central reservation and and just that bit you know on that, yeah, just I guess being left to drive such a long journey well when you are in that state, I guess was oh you know, I don't remember much of the journey, if I'm honest" [James]*

He qualifies this further:

*"I was shell shocked when they released me, like like so they drove me so take me back to where my car was, Uh, and then I have to drive 150 miles erm to my parents". [James]*

James's use of the phrases "everything will come crashing down" and "shell shocked" resonate with Hugh's earlier description of it being "a traumatic experience".

Paul was also unable to return home, finding himself released from the police station with a bus ticket and the requirement to go to his parents.

*"And then I came out of the station, didn't really know where it was and kinda figure it out where I was when I got out 'cause I'm [names place location] born and bred and then I got the bus back and I got off probably about five stops before I needed to an 'cause I didn't know what would happen when I got there or what what to say or what they say. Just scared really [sounds nervous and emotional, his voice cracks again here] and I think at every step just seems to take longer and longer to get there erm but I did and I told them what had happened I was expecting me dad to hit me which he didn't didn't they just took me in and and looked after me". [Paul]*

The shock and trauma at the process is clear from Paul's description, and the shock and emotion of that time was still visible many months later when I interviewed him. On top of the shock of the arrest, he also had to go quickly to find an alternative location to live and he chose his parents. He did not have any conversation with them beforehand or any idea of how he was going to be treated by them, or what they thought about what he had done. He was expecting to be treated badly by his family; here we can see the shock of both the arrest itself but the beginning of an understanding of what that meant for these men, knowing that they were likely to be convicted and what the sentence might be. Perhaps more importantly, however, that their offending behaviour had been made visible and their secret could no longer be kept hidden.

Moving on to the point of sentencing, many of the men felt that this was the point at which they should have been able to start to rebuild; a line in the sand which the participants focused on as a point where they expected to be able to move forward. It was therefore something of a shock to find that this was not the case and they had to manage both this alteration of their expectation and the reality of the situation within which they found themselves.

*"To be honest, Lynsey, I feel like since sentencing things should have started to get better but they are worse. I feel like I'm on the floor, I'm not even on the first rung of the ladder" [Simon]*

This was particularly pertinent for both Ricky and TS, neither of whom expected to be sentenced to prison. Not only was the sentence a shock but the subsequent issues that they experienced (with TS losing his flat and possessions and Ricky having an empty house that was then burgled and damaged) compound this trauma and shock. For example, TS shared his experience of losing his flat:

*"I haven't even moved anything out of my flat. They haven't, you know, moved any possessions that [I] wanted, I can give, any of that or anything, and I tend to cause, an' charges was made, an' it was two years half in prison, half on probation, and literally I had no contact with any of the parents for about two weeks after that. I have no idea what happened to any of my possessions [in the flat], any nothing like that, and I have no idea what happened to bank accounts or anything like that, so I was like" [TS]*

Lastly, Paul was also sentenced to a prison sentence remarking:

*"In custody there were of course many lows. I was fortunate to spend some time in cat D but that too was fraught with moments of frustration". [Paul]*

The sentence itself was a shock and although here Paul noted that he was fortunate to be moved to an open prison with much less curtailment of his freedom prior to his release there were still many issues that he experienced as a result.

### 6.3.3 Impact on the family at 'The Knock'

The shock and trauma experienced by the participants was echoed by their immediate family, particularly if they were present at the time of arrest. Although I have not included anyone other than the men that have committed offences as part of this research, the participants were keenly aware of the impact on their family at 'the knock' and beyond and often commented and discussed this within their interactions with me throughout the research.

Out of the participants in this study, Steve, Simon H and Ricky were alone at home when the original arrest took place. This still caused considerable shock for these men but the additional impact on the other men as a result of the effects on their family was cumulative. For example:

*"My wife was asking what was going on and my son was scared erm and they they spoke to her didn't really say much to me and and then, after a while she she went out for a walk, and erm with the boys erm probably about an hour or so later she went to to the sisters and sisters living in the next town [town name] and and then it was basically a case of over the next couple of hours collecting all electronic devices and stuff in the House" [Paul]*

*"My main concern was making sure [wife's name] was okay, and that she wasn't going to panic. She suffers from anxiety and so she's feeling anxiety, panic attacks and depression mixed in" [Hugh]*

Although this research can only comment on the perception of the participants, the effects on the family were identified and understood by the participants and this compounded their shock. Paul identified above how scary this was for his young son, aged under 10, in particular, and Hugh identified the mental health concern that he had for his wife. Evidence from research with families is sparse, however, it is a growing area of interest. Families have also described the arrest as a shock and trauma, in similar terms to how it is described by the men here. Termed 'ontological assault' (Armitage et al., 2023), coined from prior research on life threatening illnesses, this speaks to the fundamental shock experienced at this point both in terms of the arrest itself but also the family's shock of discovery of the offending behaviour.

This was keenly felt by the men at 'the knock'. In the quote below, this is articulated by Simon from both his own perspective and that of his daughter. The shock, although it started at 'the knock', continued for the men that have committed these offences but also for their families.

*"And then the police walk through in June and my world got shattered it basically an and the children, the children, now, my little girl said 'this is like a horror film'" [Simon]*

For the men and their families, the knock represented a total disruption in their lives, as their offending behaviour was suddenly and violently made visible both to the men themselves, to their close family and out into other aspects of their lives.

#### 6.3.4 Relief

In tandem with the shock and trauma experienced at the initial knock, many of the participants also experienced relief, another dichotomy illuminated here. This relief was drawn from the fact that they felt that they had been unable to stop their offending alone and the hope was that the intervention of the police and wider CJS organisations would help them to desist and be able to rebuild their lives. This description of relief seems to be immediate and often experienced whilst sat alone in the police station, or at home whilst the search for their devices was ongoing, as Paul explained:

*"And I don't know what one thing that she [his wife] said since and one thing that I felt as well was just just a sense of relief, really erm so I was just there after they've [his wife and children] gone out, so I was just sitting in the living room with the police and they were going through all the house and the devices and just asking me about different things and erm Yeah, I was just, I don't know, I don't know how to describe it really, just kind of in a daze". [Paul]*

Above, we can see that Paul described being "kind of in a daze", but also, "just a sense of relief". This relief was perhaps surprising; research (for example Kothari et al., 2021) has concentrated on the identification of the shock observed and expressed at this point. This life changing event, like all events, has complex underpinnings and has complex responses, and involves both negative and positive thoughts and emotions. There is case study evidence that

corroborates these feelings of relief (Kloess et al., 2018), albeit a very small study with just two participants. Paul described the dichotomy of different emotions; that even as the police were searching his house, he felt dazed but also relieved. The arrest (at least temporarily) ended the cycle of offending. James R also articulated similar thoughts and emotions here.

*“Almost relieved, in a way you know, ‘ah you know, this is it’ ,you know, they’ll look at this and maybe sort me out as well you know’ erm but in the end I think I sorted myself out” [James R]*

The relief and ability to confront aspects of their life at this point, holding a mirror up to their behaviour, was not just attached to their offending behaviour but also, for example, to their mental health and other underlying issues that may have been influencing their offending. Hugh discussed this point when thinking about his time in the police station after arrest:

*“First time the interviewing officer asked me that exact same question [whether he had depression] and it was almost like it kind of pulled me back to that that moment back then I was like, oh right that would actually suddenly make sense and then suddenly it was like, yeah, I was, as I’m perceiving everything very differently and yeah, so I’m now on antidepressants and essentially yeah, so they’re not, I can, I can say, with quite a lot of confidence that the knock on the door by the police while it was incredibly traumatic and it is still going on, I wouldn’t have had this kind of revelation, this multi layered revelation of yes, I have an addiction to pornography and it is still a problem, and I’ve had depression” [Hugh]*

The police officer asked Hugh about his mental health and it was a revelation to him, a sudden understanding, a lightbulb moment that helped him to confront both his mental health and his interlinked offending behaviour. Men suffering from poor mental health may not recognise that this is the case or that there are issues that they need to seek help for (see for example Gough & Novikova, 2020 and Seiser et al., 2023).

### 6.3.5 Shame

Shame is an emotion that was expressed across the narratives of the participants in this study and was linked to the stigmatisation of people that have committed sexual offences, including CSEM. Alongside shock and relief, shame was a key emotion that was expressed by all of the participants as part of ‘the knock’ but also at sentencing and other key points across the CJS. For example:

*“I was on the phone [at home] in a meeting and I tried to disconnect the call and police obviously didn’t want me going on the computer or any electronic devices which I fully understand and but from my perspective I just didn’t want people in work to hear what was happening [during the arrest]” [Paul]*

Because of the way that the arrest was conducted, all of Paul’s family, including his children, were there and he was on a work call, so it was very public, increasing the shame, shock and stigma attached. Simon H discussed being in a difficult place after his arrest, and in the

aftermath of the arrest; this had focused the shame for him and increased his poor mental health.

*"You are still in the same situation, so it is it is very difficult, very sort of dark times to see what you know now in the aftermath. It is the shame you know" [Simon H]*

Similarly, whilst completing his work as part of the Inform Plus programme, James recalled in his diary entry about the shame related to his offending and his arrest:

*"Tackled the work set last Wed. was really unsure where to start so used their ([Inform Plus facilitators] example as a jumping off point - from there it seemed to flow. Guilt, shame and lack of feeling of love seems to be the main themes I have running through the work set". [James]*

The men explicitly mentioned shame themselves, as well as this being interpreted through their words. In the extract below, Steve recalled being at the police station post-arrest, and how he felt shame, as well as other emotions.

*"It is a strange situation. I was obviously ashamed. I felt when they took me to the Police Station and put me in a cell, I didn't know what I felt I just felt forlorn and desolate and they were passive aggressive if you know what I mean by that. I guess everybody's got their own views on what people do and why they do it and how they do it and I can't blame them for that because I I I have my own views on other things so but I don't know I I just felt very very bullied; nothing went on, nothing overt, but I just felt very very bullied" [Steve]*

This shame is partly Steve's response to how he felt he was viewed by the police, and although he could not describe any overt behaviour, he felt bullied and ashamed which may be more of a reflection on his feelings about himself however he didn't articulate a positive experience with the police.

The identification of shame, secrecy and stigma related to these offences can be important as it can be detrimental to seeking and accessing support and treatment (Levenson et al., 2017). Shame is also reported as a collateral consequence of committing sexual offences (Jeglic et al., 2013) and as such would be expected to be elicited from the participants here. Shame was a key emotion experienced and articulated by all of the men across this research, particularly around their arrest and their sentencing as James R articulates here:

*"I haven't bothered with images on the internet or even thought about it because I realised from what the police said when they did come round and er I was ashamed actually what I'd been looking at" [James R]*

This reinforces evidence from research around the impact and importance of shame which is compounded by the societal, public and political view of 'sex offenders' (see for example Brennan et al., 2018 and Levenson et al., 2017).

### 6.3.6 Loss of control

A key characteristic of this phase ('the knock') and one that cycled through the phase of 'unhomelikeness' too (see section 6.4) was the loss of control that participants felt across the gamut of their lives. This loss of control seemed to be pervasive, affecting their mental health and relationships, alongside other aspects of their lives.

The loss of control felt by Simon was detailed across his account of his arrest and initial contact with the police; his panic when the police arrived with his children being there and then finding it difficult to manage the process after that, needing to be interviewed over two different days.

*"Then I went back the next day for a second interview and that was just as bad as the first interview, to be honest. I should have explained to the police what was going on in my life, what may have caused this but instead I was just more concerned about I suppose press and the impact that this is gonna have you know. I I just wanted to sit down and and tell someone my life story" [Simon]*

Ricky also commented on what happened after he was arrested; he felt that he had lost control and that the CJS took over.

*"The grand mechanism took over and that was the end of that" [Ricky]*

The police took control of their lives and the participants felt like they were just a cog in the process. They were often told that they were "just a number" (Hugh), "a case on a shelf" (Simon), "not a priority" (James), and it may take a long time to get a decision about their case. Hugh elaborates further:

*"it is like they have to do a lot of this that I'll be, you know after the day is over, I'll be just another name in their case file, I'll be, you know, I very much got the impression that they have a huge number of cases to go through, and, you know they're under-resourced and I would be very much like a not a priority per se" [Hugh].*

This was difficult for the participants, to know that their life and future depended on these decisions but that it was not a priority within the CJS. This not only felt like a loss of control but was perhaps indicative of how they were viewed by the CJS and society more widely. The participants were all told at the point of release from the police station that these investigations are very lengthy, taking a year or more to come to conclusion, which resonates with other research and policy (Justice, 2019 and Rimer, 2021). As soon as they were arrested, their lives began to unravel and the lengthy system took over.

This loss of control started at the point of 'the knock' but continued for the length of the investigation, prosecution and beyond, which will be seen throughout this thesis. Ricky succinctly noted that for him once he was arrested the CJS (or grand mechanism as he called

it) took over his life and at the time of our interviews both of which were recorded after his release from prison, he was still without control.

### 6.3.7 Denial and minimisation

Denial and minimisation have often been concepts scrutinised in relation to those that commit criminal offences, in particular, sexual offences (see for example Merdian et al., 2018). These concepts can be readily understood across the stories of the participants in this study. Many of the men (Hugh, Simon H, Steve, Paul, Simon) all considered themselves as 'addicts' in relation to their offending behaviour; this was discussed briefly by some and at length by others. For example:

*"You're in that situation, it feels like you can't get out of it but it really does feel very much like the same, like a drug addict would" [Simon H]*

Looking for and understanding what led them to offend can be seen as denial or minimisation but was also a vital way for the men to explore their triggers for offending and manage any potential further offending.

Interestingly, despite knowing that their offending behaviour was illegal, most of the participants did not expect their arrest, or the police knocking on the door. For example, Hugh told me:

*"They asked to come in, my first, my first instinct was has [someone] been in an accident? You know? And then they kind of almost, they maybe, they can tell from my reaction that's what I was thinking, so they said, no, no one, no one's been hurt, don't worry, so my next instinct was, oh maybe there's a crime and they think [I] might be a witness, so they want my help" [Hugh]*

And

*"I'd always had an awareness of that [my CSEM use] is against the law. I wasn't ignorant to it but I guess I had this warped perception of reality there in my head" [Hugh]*

Hugh demonstrated here that even when the police initially come to the door, his own offending was not the first thing on his mind, rather, he thought there had been an accident, or that he was a witness to a crime. This can also be gleaned from Hugh's second extract above showing his awareness that his access of CSEM was illegal but that he was able to deny or explain in his own head his usage in order to be able to access it.

This was echoed by James R, who, when initially contacted by the police, immediately thought that there had been an accident:

*"They came, er they rang me up actually. I was at work and they said 'oo could you come home' and I thought, oh is there something wrong with my children? Have they had an accident? I rushed back home and they said 'oh we've found some evidence that you've been downloading pictures of children on the internet'" [James R]*

At the point of arrest, no-one other than TS denied the offences to the police but TS noted that he only did this with his first offence and did so out of panic, rather than a calculated decision:

*“Then I was taken away [by] the car to a custody suite and put in a cell for a couple of hours and then I say it was read everything and initially I denied it all and just because it was scary and horrible and I had no idea what was gonna happen” [TS]*

However, one or two of the participants provide a ‘no comment’ interview on the advice of a solicitor, in that they did not answer questions in their initial interview until the police had provided evidence for the offences. This lack of denial about their offences was commented on in an interesting way by Ricky, who felt that this acceptance of guilt and lack of experience of the CJS were detrimental to him and others in his situation. He identified that the lack of criminal experience for them was detrimental to their ability to navigate the CJS, that his admission and his honest discussion in the police station about his mental health and suicidal thoughts meant that he was remanded and imprisoned where as those that knew the system denied the offences and weren’t subject to mental health review were released.

*“Anyway,[when asked if he was suicidal after having admitted CSEM offending] I said to him, that’s a stupid question, ‘oh, do you think I feel’ the solution for admitting it was to remand me in custody for 14 months because like my solicitor told me they thought I was going to kill myself and if I would have said I wasn’t and that I hadn’t done anything wrong well you can’t prove it I would have been released, career criminals they don’t admit anything because they’re not stupid and I am”.[Ricky]*

Previous research related to CSEM is understandably much more abundant in relation to the offending behaviour, denial and minimisation of those who have committed offences, rather than their lifestyle, wellbeing and ongoing welfare (see for example Harris & Levenson, 2020), as understanding the reasons and motivations for offending is perhaps viewed as more helpful in managing offending behaviour (Babchishin et al., 2018). Those that commit offences have been seen to minimise their responsibility for their behaviour, downplay the seriousness of their offending and distance themselves from the victim, and although this is identified in research around those that commit CSEM and other child sexual offences (Price et al., 2015), it is also part of the human experience to minimise and distort our cognitions to be able to live with ourselves and explain our behaviour (Farmer et al., 2016) and therefore to be expected.

### 6.3.8 Summary

This phase was characterised by heightened emotion at both the point of ‘the knock’ but also at other points and most particularly at the point of sentencing. Although the shock and trauma was more obvious at arrest, the participants identified that sentencing was a point where they felt that life should start to improve, as they had been judged and received their punishment. Instead, this was a point where they felt the long-term implications of their offending behaviour



and the restrictions on them. The shock, trauma and relief experienced during in particular ‘the knock’ epitomised the disruption that the participants felt. This was exacerbated by the impact on their families and others close to them.

## 6.4 ‘Unhomelikeness’

*“The phrase ‘my life been turned upside down’ - you know that? [It] is like, it is a cliched phrase, but it is the best thing that I can say to describe it” [Hugh]*

### 6.4.1 Introduction

In contrast with the previous phases, this phase was not named as a result of comments made by the participants, but rather because of the overall presentation of the participants whilst the investigation was ongoing and beyond. Coined initially in relation to bodily illness, where an ‘otherness’ is experienced, making the body feel alien (Svenaeus, 2011), it aptly describes the way in which participants in this study felt in the context of their CJS experience. The changes in their physical lives (loss of homes, jobs and relationships etc) as well as the impact on their themselves, their identity and their emotional stability made for a challenging and jarring experience.

As humans, we are *thrown* into a world that we understand in terms of our position in the world, our relationships and the things that we care for (Heidegger, 1962). So when a fracture happens that significantly disrupts their world, the one that they are not only thrown into, but have carefully crafted, it is understandable that it has a fundamental impact on the participants. This phase depicts what characterises this “unhomelikeness” for the participants.

### 6.4.2 Disruption

The disruption caused by the CJS as a result of the participants’ offending behaviour is felt as a catastrophic earthquake across all aspects of their lives. After the initial shock of the arrest, participants began to understand the enormity and extent of the impact on them and their families. Their arrest, and the fallout from it, affected every part of their lives, from their work, relationships, social life, their health and their sense of self. Some of these aspects are discussed in further sections here, some across other aspects of this thesis.

The disruption that is felt at ‘the knock’ sinks into a more permanent reality; this is not something that is temporary, with participants and their families aware that there is a lengthy investigation before any decisions are made, and then as events unfold, the difficult impacts that this has on their lives became clear.

*“After the arrest she [his wife] told me how, you know, she feels like our whole world has been destroyed she felt like me, as a person, she felt like, she said how she, she’d been through such*

*kind of traumatic and bad things in life that she always thought of me as I was her reward and I was like the one good thing that she can now enjoy and keep precious - this is, feels is, the best person in the world - and that she felt like, it got shattered. It was [an] illusion" [Hugh]*

Hugh noted here how impactful the investigation was, where his wife felt that their "whole world has been destroyed" and that after many "bad things" had happened to her in her life, her hope that she had finally got herself into a good place, and with a man she trusted, this happened and her world, and view of her husband, is turned around. Although Hugh shared in his interview that 'the knock' provided initial relief and the ability to break from what he saw as his pornography (CSEM as well as legal pornography) addiction, he also acknowledged how much of a disruption and a change the CJS process was to try and negotiate through, as depicted within parts of his narrative, such as the excerpt above.

Hugh also struggled with his social life post arrest; he closed himself off from friends and family and struggled to see past the disruption into what life might be like for him.

*"It feels kind of like I'm still kind of struggling with what social life I'm going to have". [Hugh]*

This is something that happened across the board for all the participants. Simon H shut down some of his social life, he didn't tell friends who have children for fear of what would happen, feeling like he might be shut out of their lives, so he altered his life and his relationships to try and manage it. He stopped visiting friends with children and avoided anywhere where children might be, for example he stopped attending activities he had previously enjoyed as children had often been present, which had a profound impact on how he lived his life and he spent most of his time in the house. Ironically, as he noted in the extract below, he felt that the "outside world" had been taken away from him as a result of the impact of the CJS and his offending behaviour; he only had his computer left. This is a pertinent issue, as a computer is the vehicle for his offending behaviour; yet it also became his sanctuary.

*"There's part of your life that, if it is taken away, if the outside world gets taken away, you're stuck on your computer, there's nothing else. When you get bored of doing your games on computer, what else do you do, you know?" [Simon H]*

This is an issue for all of the men and they manage this in different ways; some like Simon H, TS, Simon and Hugh choose to use their devices as part of their access to the outside world, whilst others such as James, James R and Paul actively avoid using the online world and technology.

All of the participants at some point lost their jobs. This is for some, immediate, for example Hugh, who although he was a data analyst, worked for a health organisation and so the police informed his employer. For others, such as Simon, he lost his job at the point of sentencing when his employer found out that he was sentenced, as it was reported in the media. The loss

of work was detrimental for all participants to some degree, although some more so than others. For James, work was something that was fundamental to his feeling 'unhomelike' state:

*"I think, you know, work is important. I guess that if I can get a job it will give me some more structure to my day. It does open up those opportunities doesn't it? I guess where things might start to feel more normal maybe" [James]*

Work offered a sanctuary for James that others, as detailed above, found in their computer or in other places. It helped him to stay focused, to have a routine and some semblance of normality, which otherwise typifies the 'unhomelike' feeling of this phase.

Paul, although grateful to his parents for taking him in and treating him without the stigma that he was expecting, found being back in their home compounded his 'unhomelike' feeling. The situation in which he and other participants found themselves was very jarring. Paul was taken out of his home environment, back to where he was as a teenager, living with parents. He moved out into a flat as soon as he could. Difficulties accessing living accommodation and restrictions on residence and is something that is well documented (see for example Levenson, 2008) for those that commit sex offences as a result of additional restrictions on them. This lack of stability and change of circumstances compounds the feeling of 'otherness'.

*"It was just weird going back to like, they [are] still in the same house from when I was a kid, ok, but I purposely asked if I could stay in the small bedroom rather than my old bedroom 'cause it would just be too weird and I suppose suppose just as as I kind of gradually felt more stronger, just kind of grew out of being there again, making some space myself, and so I'm here in this flat". [Paul]*

Most of the participants also found their living circumstances disrupted either through prison or having to leave their home due to restrictions around being with their own children. The main issue for the feeling of unhomelikeness expressed across this phase for the men is the profound disruption across the landscape of their everyday lives. Support and help to manage some of this disruption is key to helping the men to feel less unhomelike and this will be explored throughout this thesis.

#### 6.4.3 Physical and mental health effects

Shock, trauma and the inevitable fallout from the arrest and subsequent investigation had an effect on the health of the participants. Although predominantly negative, for some participants, the disruption made them step back, reassess their lives and make health changes that were at least partially positive for them. This isn't something that everyone was able to attain, however. Paul consciously made positive changes to his life by exercising more, managing his mental health through medication and talking therapies and reducing his dependence on technology. He said:

*"I was doing a lot of the self-help modules erm at StopItNow! erm I was just trying to get out and go for big walks 'cause the the weather was quite nice back then so I was just out walking a lot and and like you mentioned before about physical and mental health, my physical health got a hell of a lot better, lost, I probably lost about a stone and a half erm, which in itself just helps as much as getting some kind of exercise" [Paul]*

Steve also discussed his change in diet that helped him physically:

*"That worked wonders I've gone from over 106 Kilo and yesterday I was 97.7. It is good yeah and and it is sustainable because [of] what I'm also doing". [Steve]*

However, even Paul and Steve struggled mentally to grapple with the disruption to their lives. Some of the participants struggled throughout with both their mental and physical health and this did not improve throughout the length of time that I interacted with them. Simon struggled to eat and sleep and didn't want to look at himself, both in terms of how he looked physically but also not being able to stand looking at himself in the mirror because of what he had done and the impact that this had had on others. Clearly this had a detrimental impact on him mentally.

*"Erm I can't look at myself in the mirror, my appetite is gone real real bad and that's why I'm sort [of] looking a bit gaunt, erm so yeah, I don't know, I don't like myself at the moment to be honest with you" [Simon]*

For James, he only did the minimum in his flat and in his wider life. His flat was sparsely furnished and not well-stocked and he struggled to look after himself. This was observed by the Offender Manager who came to assess him and who questions whether he is even actually living there due to the state that the flat is in.

*"I know well she did say 'can I have a look round?' and obviously you know it is very tidy and she checked the fridge and there was nothing in the fridge and then she checked my cupboards and there was nothing in them" [James]*

Simon and James were both quite severely affected mentally, with suicidal feelings at this point, which also impacted on their physical health as described. Suicidal ideation and poor mental health have been a focus of this population previously (see for example Kothari et al., 2021) but the more holistic and intertwined impact of the CJS is lacking in research. These health effects are an impact for their families as well as the men themselves. Mental health deterioration of significant family members, particularly for their current or former intimate partners, was a strong concern for the men, and was described in detail by the participants as well as starting to be recognised across the literature and from practical support (see Armitage et al., 2023). Although not suicidal himself, Hugh depicted the poor mental state of his wife who struggled with self-harm and suicidal ideation whilst the investigation was ongoing.

*"She kind of got herself into a really bad state of mind and then I discovered her and called 999, she went to the hospital, she's better now she's, she's basically no other words, she's*

*admitted that she still does have feelings of suicide and that she's got into a behaviour of self harm which I need to physically restrain her [from] sometimes in the evenings" [Hugh]*

Paul's wife who had previously managed to improve her mental health found the impact of 'the knock' and subsequent investigation heightened these issues again.

*"And I think probably I just didn't want to burden her really and because she had an issue with the mental health and she was on medication and stuff and just recently before everything happened, she managed to wean yourself [sic] off of medication which she's back on now" [Paul]*

The impact of the CJS on health, particularly mental health, has been a focus of recent research for those who have committed sex offences, with clear links between these offences and deteriorated mental health and suicidal ideation (for example Call, 2018 and Steel et al., 2021). These additional consequences for both the men themselves and their families can be debilitating, as demonstrated here.

Support provided at this point can prove extremely beneficial. All of the participants accessed support for their mental health post-arrest and during this 'unhomelike' disrupted state. This support can help to lessen the psychological distress at this point, which can help in the immediate and longer term with the impact that their offending behaviour and the CJS has on them. The diary entries written by Simon below depict, firstly, how he was feeling prior to starting the Inform Plus programme, and then, provide a glimpse at how support started to help him.

*"So, I've decided not to stay [in the world, decides to commit suicide] and feel I've no option other than having to go [to die], I'm sorry for what I've looked at, I just let myself be pushed into a bad place. I need my children to know (which they do) [that] I love them so very very much, I am proud of the dad I was and how happy we were together" [Simon, Diary entry]*

*"So just finished the first session of the Inform Plus course, after being anxious all day about it, I found it very helpful speaking to others in the same or similar position as myself, I'm actually looking forward to the next session" [Simon, Diary entry]*

#### 6.4.4 Being in limbo

Another phrase used as collaborative language amongst the participants - being 'in limbo' - relates not only to the length of time that participants were under investigation (typically at least a year and in some cases much longer), it also referred to the inability to move forward whilst under the black cloud of an investigation, with little idea of when that might change or what would happen next. All of the participants found being under investigation, and in particular, the length of the investigation difficult, frustrating and unsettling.

*"I guess I'm still surprised. I guess even though this has been going on for 18 months you still don't know what's around the corner or what's happening" [James]*

James aptly described above how it felt to be 'in limbo', not knowing "what's around the corner" and the length of time the investigation had been for him. Similarly, when asked to talk about life before the knock, Paul mused about the difficulty of this months down the line after everything had been so uncertain.

*"It is hard to think back about your your life I suppose beforehand ((laughs)) because everything's been up in the air for for so long now". [Paul]*

*"OK yeah so I'm six months about six months in at the moment. [The] policeman did say to me it can take six months to a year: 'you just go on a shelf and you're not the first you won't be the last'. Yeah, and no, I believe that it is not fair that the time people [him and his family] have to wait" [Simon]*

The length of time for the investigation can be longer than many other crimes (see Justice, 2019, Rimer 2021 and section 1.4.1 of the introductory chapter of this thesis) and, in the climate where most of the men are eventually 'released under investigation' rather than on bail, means that there is no real end point on the investigation. This can have profound impacts on them and their ability to 'redeem' themselves and see a future. During the group discussion after Inform Plus, James contributed this:

*"Absolutely, I think the waiting, if there were more indication of timescales, then I think it would be easier. There seems to be no rhyme nor reason to it and I appreciate setting bail and this is three months at a time, you know, and things like that, but I think it is the constant not knowing. So my last bail update was due up and it was cancelled, and this was the day before, as they have now referred it to CPS [the Crown Prosecution Service], and so they set it for 4 weeks, saying that I wouldn't need to be [on bail for] 4 weeks, and they would probably get me back in early, blah blah blah, well, that's due up tomorrow and I got an email yesterday to say they've not heard back from CPS; that it is still in the queue so they've set it for another 2 weeks" [James]*

Here we can see that it is not just the length of time waiting for an outcome that is difficult for the men but being 'in limbo' also means uncertainty. Further, living in constant uncertainty, particularly when so much of life has changed for these men, made it very challenging in their day to day lives and is a key characteristic of this phase. The length and timeliness of these investigations was a focus within a review of sexual offence investigations (Justice, 2019 and Steel et al., 2022) but research about the impact that this has on the life of the men, their families, their desistance and reintegration is lacking.

#### 6.4.5 Family Relationships

Often, close family were either present at the time of the police attendance (as this was often early morning before work or the start of school, as depicted within the 'down the rabbit hole' section), or they were made aware by the police or the men themselves as a necessity to enable them to manage their life, such as their living arrangements. This had the added impact of both removing control from the participant of their narrative around their arrest, for example

who is told, what they are told and when, but also increased the trauma experienced by the family, and as a result, by the participants themselves. The effects on their close relationships is one of the main impacts of their offending behaviour and subsequent involvement with the CJS for all the men, whatever their family circumstances.

The relationships that participants have with close family and friends were severely impacted by the unfolding circumstances of their situation, the uncertainty that they face and the potential long-term effects of their offending and the CJS on their lives.

*“Well I've lost my best friends, that's the children (sounds distressed, voice cracks). I've also noticed that my mum's not looking very well. Erm I I have, it is kind of sad, I have up and down days but then they're all, they're all down days really” [Simon]*

The effects on both the participant and their family are intertwined. Simon knows that his relationships with his family, including with his children and his mum, were completely altered as a result of his offending and CJS experience. The impact on his children and his mum, also impacted on him; he explained earlier in the interview that his children struggled to understand what has happened and why they cannot stay with him and his mum had to act as his supervisor so that he was able to see them. This, as we can see from his extract above, and across his stories more widely, was the key impact on him. Simon's observation that his mum's health had been impaired as a result of his actions also affected him, and her acting as his supervisor when he has contact with his children takes a toll on her physical health as an older woman and her mental health, trying to understand Simon's actions. The guilt and distress that Simon felt as a result served to exacerbate the deterioration in his health and his ability to cope. Although work has started around the impact on families, the need for support for families and the men themselves is clear.

*“They [the children] stay overnight with my mum and I stay with them until they go to erm to sleep and then I I will come back in the morning so it is like I've never left them but it is just not the same and my son my son [son's name] keeps he erm asking what he's done wrong and he just doesn't really understand” [Simon]*

Simon tried to keep things as normal as possible but both he and his children know that it was not how things were before and his children, as children, struggle to understand the reasons and the implications, feeling that they had done something to cause the situation. Trying to keep things 'normal' is the method that Paul and his wife also employ with their children. Although he was unable to see the children for the first five weeks after his arrest, he was fully supported by his wife and as a result, they managed the situation where she supervises his contact and he was at the family home and remained there from first thing in the morning until after they went to bed. Out of all of the men, as a result of his wife's support, Paul had the least disruption to his family life.

*"They know what happened and obviously not in any great detail about what happened but yeah they know. My eldest is fourteen he he knows what's happened; youngest is quite, he's quite emotional and he seems OK in himself. There's times where he's a bit clingy and erm (pause) just I suppose misses when I'm not there and stuff so now [I] try to make sure I'm there before he goes to bed and in the morning time for breakfast and things like that so yeah, they know what's happening" [Paul]*

For Paul there had been an impact on the family, and his wife in particular really struggled and had been put back on medication as her mental health declined. Paul here echoed the stories of James and of Simon and Ricky where their children lost the stability of their previous relationships with their father and were made aware at least to some degree of what their father had done. However, there were some positive outcomes around family relationships that came from this disruption and unhomelike state. As Hugh discussed here:

*"So the net result of 'the knock' for me and [wife's name] has been you know we've we've gone through this traumatic experience but right now we both agree that it is kind of strengthen[ed] our bond together and it is almost doing the opposite thing" [Hugh]*

Hugh identified that, moving on from their previous relationship issues, he and his wife actually found some positives, even though they had both struggled and both had serious mental health concerns. He described that they have grown closer, he felt more present in their relationship. So although it presented additional challenges from the point of view of his relationship, it has actually helped them, in some ways linking the ability to maintain healthy adult intimate relationships as a strength to move forward and desist (De Vries Robbe et al., 2015). As Heidegger (1962) described, Hugh, in particular at this point, allowed the disruption, the *being-towards-death*, to be a point at which he reassessed and reimagined his relationship with his wife and more widely with other family members, identifying and focusing on what's important for him. Hugh also discussed the complexity of family relationships, compounded by the impact of his offending behaviour.

*"Their response [his parents] was you know, they wanted me to know that they still 'love and support me through anything', that those are the words, and I visited them once or twice which was very distressing and upsetting as they threw a lot of questions at me, not all of which I knew the answer to and I had this, I kind of spent two or three hours when my mom went over lots of, both of them, lots of questions and some of the questions involved [wife's name] and [wife's family]. Basically, I had this extra lightbulb moments after coming home and crying in front of [wife's name], this, I had my eyes opened and I was like 'Oh my parents are doing a lot of unhealthy things'" [Hugh]*

Forced to reassess all of their familial relationships, Hugh, and also James, have parents who, on the face of it, appeared to be supportive but their actions did not seem to convey this to Hugh and James. It may be that their parents were struggling to manage the knowledge and impact of their sons' behaviour but it also links into the difficulties that the men were having with their parents prior to 'the knock'. What happens after 'the knock' is that the forced



reassessment of relationships by both the participants and their families inevitably leads to some issues that had either not been identified prior to arrest, or had been hidden and glossed over, finally being illuminated. History, as I have already discussed, is impactful and important with regard to their relationships during this stressful time (see Weaver & Mcneil, 2015 and Wyse et al., 2014).

This was a stark contrast to how, for example, Paul, described his parents, who were supportive.

*“My mum and dad tried to kill me with cups of tea and feed me up so and yeah, so I think just trying to look after myself and Mum and Dad looked after me; that’s what I needed at the time”. [Paul]*

Paul’s parents, as he described them, had been supportive prior to his arrest and he had had a good, loving relationship with them. It seems that good prior relationships are able to more easily survive the assault on them by the knowledge of the men’s CSEM offending behaviour. The familial relationships that already had cracks within them, however, are exposed. TS was supported by some of his family members but his relationship with his mum in particular was fraught and difficult for him to manage.

*“As soon as they let me out, and then my mum was like, ‘you’re out the house’, simple as” [TS]*

TS lost his relationship with two of his siblings and his relationship with his mum was strained. Initially his mum wanted nothing to do with him; not only did the police attend her home for the search, it also meant that once his offending became more widely known, he was removed from the voluntary organisation that both he and his mum worked with and, as a consequence, so was she. This shows that the impact on family can be wider than relationships and health and again indicative of the support needed for families as well as for the men themselves.

For some, such as Paul, Hugh and Simon, their relationship with their wife/partner was inevitably disrupted and altered, but remained intact. James’s wife, however, ended their relationship, although they did stay in contact for the sake of the children. As James explained:

*“Yeah, it is been erm not great. My wife and I have separated. I haven’t seen the kids since I spoke to them on the phone, you know, she’s good about that and then speak to my wife on the phone so regular conversation” [James]*

For men in this position, many of their intimate and family relationships break down as a result of their arrest, which is consistent with prior research (see Gillespie et al, 2018) although this is not often explicitly explored. The remaining participants (TS, Simon H, Ricky, Steve and James R) were not in intimate relationships when they were arrested and remained single afterwards. The impact of the arrest and subsequent investigation on partners and family members have recently been subject to research interest (Armitage et al., 2023) and some of

the evidence is borne out in the findings here. These will be discussed further in the next chapter.

#### 6.4.6 Intimacy

Wider than purely a discussion around sex and sexuality, intimacy and the development of intimate relationships, including sex, are essential aspects here that are more notable by their absence than presence. Although it is missing from much research in this area, it was included in some of the earliest research around CSEM (see for example Middleton et al., 2006). As discussed previously only Hugh openly discussed his sex life after ‘the knock’ and as the investigation was ongoing, and he further elaborated below:

*“Looking forward again, almost like, you know what I mean self pity is, I don’t want to feel any of these positive feelings again, that then led me down this path, I think I think that you know, physiologically, I think I had sexual sexual urges, but then mentally it was like, don’t don’t want to, don’t indulge in, anything, which means [I] didn’t want to masturbate or didn’t want to have sex with [wife’s name], and in my head I was probably thinking, I wouldn’t be surprised if she doesn’t want to be intimate with me for a long time” [Hugh]*

Although sex and sexual intimacy were commented on by some of the other participants, it was almost in passing. The impact of CSEM offending behaviour and the subsequent involvement in the CJS on sex and “sexual urges” has not been thoroughly considered previously in the literature and I think it is interesting here from the information that Hugh imparts, the guilt and shame he felt showed how difficult it is to separate and manage this aspect of his life, and the way that sex and sexuality is viewed more widely within society. Being arrested/convicted of offences related to sexual interest in children will understandably impact on the sex lives and sexuality of those investigated (Iffland et al., 2016). Hugh continued:

*“It was a it was a mixture of emotions because, you know, part of us [Hugh and his wife] were saying how you know there’s this feeling of guilt, is like we don’t want to be guilty, that’s such a traumatic experience, then led to this, something that we both acknowledged as good. [wife’s name] may have also felt, been feeling guilty, that both of us felt guilty that, you know, we’re allowed, we’re giving each other kind of sexual limits, we seek pleasure even when there’s something like [this] hanging over us” [Hugh]*

This is a really interesting point here that the ‘unhomelikeness’ of the situation, trying to navigate an intimate relationship in the midst of being investigated for CSEM offences, actually ended up having a positive effect on their relationship and sex life, bringing them closer and more intimate. The unhomelikeness of trying to enjoy sex, whilst under investigation was jarring for Hugh (and seemingly, his wife) and left me wondering what this was like for the other participants and how people in this position navigate their sex life moving forward.

Although research around the experiences of intimate partners is developing (see for example Conmy et al., 2023) there is little discussion on this aspect of their relationships.

Steve described his desire for dating, the want to have a physical or intimate relationship, but the complexity of navigating that, as he would need to tell any prospective person that he wanted to embark on a relationship with about his offending, and he was not sure that that was what he wanted to do. He would, however, like to have sex and intimacy so there was a real dilemma for him here.

*“Yeah, it is not really [a] relationship that I want, just someone to see, what’s what once a week, take them to bed and that’s it until next week” [Steve]*

Although unsurprising that this is a little discussed topic within my own research, here in the midst of all the other changes going on in their lives, it is an important aspect of intimate relationships and rebuilding to tackle sex and sexuality as a topic. Further, identifying if their sexuality and sexual interest is a part of their underlying reasons for offending could be key for some men, particularly as we know that a sexual interest in children is something that is seen in a proportion of men that commit these offences (see for example Houtepen et al., 2014) and was openly accepted by two of the participants here.

#### 6.4.7 ‘It is not me’: Creating distance from the ‘sex offender’ label

The unhomelikeness, the otherness, felt as a result of the participants’ journey through the CJS impacts on their sense of self. Being labelled a ‘sex offender’, stigmatised and shunned, is not just experienced as a shock but it shakes every aspect of their lives, including their understanding of who they are (see for example Harris et al., 2016 and Schultz, 2014). Our sense of self is not understood in isolation but by being positioned in relation to other people and to what matters to them, as humans, we are not meant to live and understand ourselves as isolated beings (Ashworth, 2016). The men in this research keenly felt the label of ‘sex offender’ and the overt and covert impact that comes with that label. They all wanted to resist the label and the identification out in wider society of that label, to at least some extent, doing so in different ways. Steve, talked about doing community service and being identified as an ‘offender’ and therefore people finding out about his crime notes:

*“Probably yeah yeah, I I I was I was scared about that ‘cause I don’t want anyone to to to know mainly apart from the guilt ‘cause it’s not me I I don’t know where that person came from for those few years” [Steve]*

For Steve here, he divorced himself from the person that committed the crime. Simon talked of being “a good person”:

*“Well what good person does what I’ve done? And although I am a good person, no, you know, there is a deep down, I am a good person, but I just can’t believe what I’ve done, and you know,*

*so self-harm. I haven't self-harmed but perhaps that was self-harm. I don't know. My offence was self-harming perhaps". [Simon]*

This difficulty, mentally wrestling with the need to be a good vs bad person, that is seen in Simon's account above, is something that can be seen across all of the participants. They struggled to see themselves in the label of 'sex offender' and the stereotype of what that means. Although this was more pronounced with some participants than others, it can be observed across the board. Further, positioning themselves as a 'victim' of circumstances of other issues, as Simon does here, can be one way to help to manage this issue, to reconcile themselves that they are not a bad person or a 'sex offender'. Simon continued:

*"You know I'm not placing any blame on anyone for any of this. It is like, for you know, I'm nearly 50 years old, I'm responsible for what, I just can't believe that all what was going for years has now come true and I know that everyone I know they know what I've been through previously, so in a way I think they understand, but it is the people that that don't know me you know, and you are just labelled as 'one of them' aren't you?". [Simon]*

This extract shows that although Simon is taking some responsibility, accepting his decisions in relation to his offending, he was also distancing himself from the 'sex offender' label. He was conflicted, as he did not believe that he was a 'bad person', that he was "one of them". For Simon, there had been many years of his ex-partner labelling him and portraying him as a 'bad man' and he felt that by offending, he had made this label "come true". There is a strong implicit association between being a 'sex offender' and being an inherently 'bad' person that Simon (and all of the participants) ascribed to some extent. In order to move forwards, the men need to reject the essentialised label of 'sex offender' and redefine themselves as someone who has made poor decisions. This is very difficult to achieve and they need help, support and time to be able to do so. Willis (2018) has shown that labelling men who have committed sexual offences is unhelpful, and without appropriate challenge, this type of labelling has the potential to impact on how these men define themselves in this way, and it does not help them to reintegrate themselves and redefine themselves and their behaviour.

Comments during the interview sessions that I had with the participants showed that they (and others that have committed sexual offences, see for example Blagden & Wilson, 2020) judge themselves and their behaviour against a hierarchy of sex offending, where CSEM is positioned at the lower end, and for example rape of a child is at the higher end, of perceived severity. As Hugh pointed out:

*"My legal advice was that I wasn't that bad I was small small fry which is kind of a term that the therapist said when we went over details, and I kind of, I didn't perceive myself to be if you like one of the suppose let's say the real nasty guys" [Hugh]*

This is likely a way to help the men to reorient themselves and their identities, to distance themselves from the "real nasty guys". The only participant who didn't seem to strongly

struggle with himself as a person in this respect is TS, who seemed to understand that his sexuality, his sexual interest in young children, was, as he describes it, part of who he is, rather than a problem, per se.

*“My attraction you know sexual attraction is always being very open to both genders and age, and as I say, that I can find, if you look at my reports, I mean anyone between the age of four and 60 attractive” [TS]*

TS however was aware that this aspect of himself was not palatable to wider society (Harris & Socia, 2016), even his own family. A stark example of this for TS was what happened in his home town after his initial conviction, which showed the local feeling around people that have committed these offences:

*“Like a couple of the parents from one of the local schools had organized like flyers with like the arrest and you know this man can’t be trusted and posted them round [place name] and [the] rest and now it had gone round quite a few schools in [place name]” [TS]*

Even in the Inform Plus programme, TS was careful with how he presented himself. At no point did he discuss his sexual interest in children openly as part of the group, although he did discuss the fact that he had reoffended (further use of CSEM), albeit not until much later into the programme and he was very careful with how he presented it. Even still, this seems to put other people in the group at odds with him, and other group members seemed uncomfortable that he had reoffended. As Simon notes:

*“you know in the group we were all sort of well there because we done the same thing but you know I didn’t always well agree with what others said but well it was good to be in the group you know some of them, like TS, were not like me” [Simon]*

It was not clear whether this was due to this being a reminder of their own offending behaviour and the potential to reoffend, or as, for example, part of this hierarchy that would seemingly place him higher than some of the others in terms of the severity of his offending.

An environment such as the Inform Plus programme, however, does offer the men a place, space and opportunity to explore their offending to a certain degree, and the men find confronting their offending, and the potential reasons behind it, as beneficial for being able to start to manage these issues about their self-image. In this excerpt from my field notes of an Inform Plus session, Steve started to explore his offending behaviour, something that up until that point he had stated he had put behind a psychological closed door and didn’t want to discuss.

*Offending behaviour, Steve: ‘I joined the RAF at 15, trained for three years, when I then had my first sexual experience. I was lonely when I offended- I downloaded feature films and one had a link which I followed and it was towards children and I was fascinated. Girls under 18, now so much about sex and me at that age I knew nothing. I was fascinated and aroused and*

*it became a habit. I would feel guilty but then I would go online and I would do it again. It was a habit'. [Field notes from Inform Plus session observations]*

This starts to demonstrate the importance of interventions such as Inform Plus in helping these men to understand and manage their offending behaviour which is important to help them to desist and reintegrate.

#### 6.4.8 Feeling 'unhomelike' at home.

The last characteristic of this section on unhomelikeness is the dichotomy that surfaces from being 'at home'. Their home is where the participants have committed most of their offending behaviour and where the police attend to arrest them, thoroughly searching through all of their property. This intrusion into their personal space had a strong effect on some of the participants and ultimately led to changes being made to their homes and their lifestyle. It was especially difficult for some, for example Simon H, as they closed their world off to the outside post-arrest, meaning their lives were mostly spent within their home. James R found his home so unsettling that for the night after his arrest, and for some time afterwards, he slept in his motor home, often not near his home address.

*"Well, they didn't search the house because well I handed everything over erm well yeah, I was in a state of shock and I at that time erm yeah I I wasn't very good then and then I wasn't very good for quite a while afterwards. I did sort of I remember going 'oh my god' and going and sleeping in the motorhome at night and things like that instead of erm, I didn't want to go home. I'd got a motor home and I used to go to work sometimes and park the motor home in the car park and finish work and go and sleep in the motor home. I didn't want to go home for a while" [James R]*

Hugh and his wife, although they remained in the home that they had, and where Hugh was arrested, they redecorated and repurposed the room in which all of his electronic devices had been set up in and where he did most of his offending. This helped them both to be able to use the room without constant reminders of his offending and the subsequent impact that it has had. They also relocated digital devices to a place in the house where Hugh was less likely to be alone and tempted to reoffend. By doing this, it enabled them to manage both any temptation for his offending behaviour and to lessen the reminders within the home of what had happened.

Paul and James were unable to return to their homes because their family and children lived there. They each eventually managed to locate their own flats, although they both lived with parents in the meantime. Losing their home, stability and contact with their children was difficult for both men.

*“Well and obviously, you, the state my wife was in at the time, she said ‘don't bring him back here’ and the conditions of my bail were then not to have contact with anyone under the age of 18” [Paul]*

*“It's just hard and it was just weird going back to like they [his parents, were] still in the same house from when I was a kid, ok, but I purposely asked if I could stay in the small bedroom rather than my old bedroom ‘cause it would just be too weird” [Paul]*

Ricky and TS were also unable to return home, due to being sent to prison. TS was in rented accommodation prior to his attendance at court. He was not prepared that he might end up in prison, and so at sentencing, when he was imprisoned, he lost his flat and much of his possessions. Ricky had a house with a mortgage; he too was imprisoned and the house was left vacant. This was repeatedly burgled and vandalised whilst he was in prison and was a source of ongoing issues and concern after his release. The inability to return to their home, the loss of their home and stability and the subsequent difficulty in finding further accommodation exacerbated the unhomelike feeling for Ricky and TS.

Thus, we can see that the issues around living accommodation were complex for these men; a stable home helped them to access employment, benefits and relationships that were vital to help them to reintegrate into the community, and manage any issues around potential offending, but it was not always easy to obtain however even a stable home has difficulties for men as articulated by James R and Hugh here.

#### 6.4.9 Summary

The phase of unhomelikeness is one of complete life change, and although there are similarities across the phase for these participants here, such as issues around being ‘at home’ and in their own home, there are obvious differences such as for those that have a stable home with family and those that do not. The participants, as a result of their different backgrounds, lifestyles and what they deem to be important in their lives understand, manage and rebuild in different ways and to different extents. There are, however, fundamental issues for all participants that increase their unhomelike feeling. The loss of employment, strains in their intimate and family relationships, and their questioning of their sense of self are vital aspects of the impact of the CJS that deeply affect their lives. The way that they are treated by the ‘system’ can profoundly affect them and what is possible in their lives at that time, and their relationships with their close families make a distinct difference to how they are affected and how they cope with this system. During this phase, it becomes clear to each participant that the disruption to their lives is pervasive, deep and long lasting. Lastly, I have touched on some of the ways in which support and help, both formal and informal, can start to help the men to better shape these changes, and ultimately, to feel less unhomelike.

## 6.5 The potential for self-redemption

*“What I I wanna get out of the course [Inform Plus course] is to show people that I'm making every effort I can to put these things right, to understand maybe, to understand why [I offended] and learn that there is hope, yeah, hope and understanding”. [Simon]*

### 6.5.1 Introduction

Participants have a long time between their offending behaviour, arrest, charge and then sentencing; with each of the participants this was at least a year and often longer. Each of them over the course of the time since their arrest expressed a desire to strive to redeem themselves, to rebuild or to at least manage the unhomelikeness within which they found themselves. In *being-towards-death*, Heidegger (1962) suggested that death and our awareness of death helps shape our experiences; the disruption of life such as happens to men arrested for CSEM offences feels like the ‘death’ of life as it is known to them. This disruption across their life and the unhomelikeness described as part of the previous phase means that not only do they need to navigate the CJS, they also need to manage the impacts and effects on them and their lives. To help them do this, each of the participants learned, developed and used strategies to support themselves.

Self-redemption is not easy or straightforward for these men, in a similar way to those striving for recovery from severe mental health (for example see Stuart et al., 2017). They need to desist from offending and start to rebuild their lives in a meaningful way for them. This requires them to secure support in one or many forms in order for this change to be robust and enduring.

### 6.5.2 Reassessment

The disruption and changes to their life that the men experience as a result of their arrest, documented in the previous phases, inevitably lead all participants to re-evaluate their lives and, at least to some extent, accept the situation in which they found themselves. This included having to reassess their relationships. For Simon, he had, for the sake of what he thought was the best interests of his children, initially and prior to his arrest, kept his new partner and children separate. However, allowing his children and partner to meet enabled a much more stable base for him as things progressed post-arrest.

*“I've always been protective of the children, and never introduced partners to my children, which I should have, that might, may have been another thing, you know, I was I was always keeping the children separate just in case [there were issues with his ex], and things like that, very protective of the children” [Simon]*

Hugh, James and Paul all also had to reassess their relationships with their wives. For Paul and Hugh, it meant finding ways forward to help them all to be able to cope together as a



family and to rebuild their relationships back up together. For James, it was trying to manage the breakdown of his marriage and his relationship with his children who he had not seen in person for around 18 months by the time of his conviction. With regard to their wider families, a reassessment of relationships occurs across the board with all of the participants. I have already touched on the relationship that Paul, James and Hugh had with their parents in Section 6.4.5 (Family relationships).

Another area of their lives that is important and is reassessed as a result of their journeys across the CJS is their ability and need to work. Not all of the participants felt the drive or need to work, although I have described how important this was for some of the participants in previous sections, such as James and Ricky. Both Hugh and Steve had the financial independence not to be overly reliant on the requirement for paid employment; this was not the same for other participants and employment made a big difference to them and their situation.

As Hugh identified in the extract below, in contrast to other participants (even Steve who wanted to work in a voluntary capacity as he didn't need the financial aspects of employment), he was happy to not be required to work. This may be in part as a way to remain at home and not have to interact with others and in part as he observed as a reaction to his parents.

*"I was so like happy when my GP signed me off with a note for depression, because then I could say to my dad, 'here, I'm literally like you're telling me to get a job and my GP is literally signing me off'" [Hugh]*

Hugh was happy when the doctor signed him off sick, so that he could justify not working to his parents. It is interesting that Hugh was happy with how practical and proactive his wife was, with his wife suggesting that he told his parents that he attended therapy and so on, but then he was very negative when his parents acted in a similarly proactive way. I think this is indicative of the relationship between Hugh and his parents and the way that this was positioned between them. Even Hugh, though the one happiest not to work and who was interested to explore other ways to reintegrate, sought employment and the need to get a career back, once he had been sentenced. This for me is a reminder again how important employment and in particular having a routine and purpose is for these men.

The last point that I wanted to discuss in relation to reassessment and acceptance is that many of the participants noted wanting their old life back, harping back to how things were, even though, in reality, we have already established that their old lives were difficult, clouded by mental health issues and their offending. Those participants who identified those previous issues, understood the need to make changes in their lives, and tried to positively and

proactively make changes for the better, seem to be able to cope and adjust in a more productive way.

The importance of support in the reassessment of their lives and an acceptance of their situation is something that the men bring out in a number of ways. Using the resources from the LFF (such as the online support resources and the helpline and commented upon as helpful by all of the participants that utilise them), personal counselling from other sources (such as that noted by James, Paul and Hugh) along with the Inform Plus programme allowed the men the help, time and space required for this. Little rebuilding can happen until they could understand and accept their situation, as my field notes about Paul in one of the Inform Plus sessions below depicted.

*At checkout Paul commented more than he has done the last couple of weeks, I'm not sure if this means that he feels more at ease in the group or that he had more to say about the work this week? He noted that he has found thinking about his fantasies and the reasons that he has offended as 'helpful'. He notes that these [offending] behaviours were from 'boredom, anxiety'. He was struggling a little with the relapse plan, he wants to get this done and this seems that it is causing him some anxiety [Field notes and observations for Paul in the Inform Plus session week 3].*

This reassessment for Paul using the Inform Plus session work allowed him to better understand himself and his offending triggers and to start to work towards ensuring that he can manage this for the future. Although evaluation of CSEM specific support is limited, this would seem to resonate with the landscape (see for example Bradshaw et al., 2023 and Dervley et al., 2017).

### 6.5.3 Self-Improvement and self-flagellation

All of the participants talked about self-improvement and restoration of their life or former life to some degree within this research. For some participants, their involvement in the community, contributing to society and their ability to try and 'atone', or give back, as a way to redeem themselves, was a key component of their ability to reintegrate and restore post-arrest. This includes seeking support from friends and family and their involvement in initiatives such as the Inform Plus programme to help them to understand their past and manage any future potential offending behaviour. For example:

*"What I I wanna get out of the [Inform Plus] course is to show people that I'm making every effort I can to to put these things right, to understand maybe, to understand why, right, understand why [I offended]". [Simon]*

*"We're we're [Hugh and his wife] sticking together and she she made it crystal clear to me that you know she's not giving me an easy ride she, she wants me to acknowledge that the first thing I said to her was I'm glad it ['the knock'] happened because I can get help and she wants*

*to make it very clear to me that I am she's only staying with me because I am kind of committing myself to this rehabilitation and recovery" [Hugh]*

Although all of the men stated that they do want to work on not committing any further offences, their involvement in the Inform Plus Programme was not always initially from a purely voluntary, self-improvement-based standpoint. Most of the participants talked about attending because it had been suggested to by their solicitor or because they knew that it might appear favourably for them at sentencing.

*"Mitigating circumstances that they you know are applicable, yeah you know we we talked a bit about all the kind of work that I've done like with Inform Plus and [wife's name] supported me through so that that made me look I suppose then it was very positive to show in court" [Hugh]*

It felt here that the narrative among the men around attendance at Inform Plus needs to change; the benefits of the programme for the participants and their family should outweigh suggestions from solicitors so that it looks better for them at court. This could be delivered through legal representatives and the police in a different way and at a different time to straight after arrest as it seems to be currently.

Some participants, as Hugh clearly articulated above, made decisions related to 'self-improvement' that were influenced by their friends and family instead. Hugh stated that his wife was not making it easy for him - "not giving me an easy ride" - and although on the face of it she was supporting him, the extract also suggested that this is another form of punishment and penance required in order for him to be able to function in the community and in his relationship ("she's only staying with me because I am kind of committing myself to this rehabilitation and recovery").

Hugh is not the only participant where this negotiation with friends and family around their relationship was a factor. Indeed, for all of the men there were additional hurdles to negotiate in order to reintegrate back into the lives of friends, family and the wider community. Every aspect of their lives were not just changed but there were consequences involved in being able to try and work towards getting any of them back.

*"I feel more relaxed I'm I'm not going to say happy yet, because obviously I've got to kind of work on building up the trust that they [mum, dad and brother] had again because I don't know, it's it's both better and worse next time around because I've done it again" [TS].*

Here TS identified that by his re-arrest the trust that he had started to build with his family had been dented again and he was going to have to work hard to build this back up.

The CJS process and the risk system involved in it means that the collateral impact is higher for those that commit sexual offences and lasts longer than for other offences for not only the individuals themselves but those around them as well (see for example Armitage et al., 2023;

Kothari et al., 2021 and Tewksbury, 2010). These impacts make trying to redeem themselves in both other people's eyes, and in their own eyes, very difficult and reinforces the societal view that they are 'bad' people, that they cannot be changed and that they are a 'risk' and don't deserve anything good to happen to them. As Hugh stated below, it is hard to not see yourself that way, even if you know that you are not a bad person, and it is something that you did rather than something that you are:

*"I've always, I don't know where, I've always held this, but [I] have grown to develop what I feel my belief is that no-one, no-one believes that they're a bad person. You can have, you can have, you know, the worst, horrible murder[er] in the world, and for all we know, they could go home, and like, you know, hug [their] kids good night" [Hugh]*

*"It [sexual offending] is such a dark thing in society that you know many people would say, you know, I don't deserve like any happiness in that regard at all" [Hugh]*

Being able to understand and accept this and to work to make amends was important to the men here but none of them found this easy to do. Doing activities or initiatives that gave back to the community was something that a number of the participants wanted to do but were unable to undertake as a result of the restrictions placed on them through the CJS.

For James, he noted how the knock-on effect of the CJS meant that his offence shows up on any employment check which made accessing employment very difficult.

*"Now I've been charged and it will show up on my DBS [check], well I have to say from that point of view, I have found it [gaining employment] difficult, but the doctors have signed me off so that I don't have to technically look for work, but I am trying to find something at the moment I guess to give me that chink of light as work used to take up a good chunk of my day" [James]*

Once he was charged, James was unable to continue with his paid employment and had also been 'signed off' (given a sick note to exempt him from work) as a result of his poor mental health leading to a spiral of decline around his self-esteem and his ability to restore himself both within the community and with his family as he was also unable to provide for them in the way that he had done before as he was not earning money.

However, in contrast to Hugh who was in a similar position, he did not feel that this was beneficial to his long-term mental health, or his ability to cope, and continued to look for work that he could undertake within the confines of his health and his circumstances. Work was a coping mechanism for him and made him feel useful as a person 'out in the world' but work was also a way that he could contribute to his family by way of earning money for them. In the meantime, benefits enabled him to live but they did not enable him to continue supporting his family financially, adding additional stress.

Other participants also talked of wanting to feel useful. Steve found voluntary employment was a huge positive for him both in terms of helping him not to offend but also to 'give back' to the community, working in both a local park as a groundsman and in a local food bank. Ricky wanted to gain employment but after many failed attempts (similar to TS), he accessed education and training and discussed with me the possibility of attending further education in order to have something to do, as he saw it a worthwhile occupation of his time.

Punishing themselves, feeling guilt and shame, and being undeserving of happiness are all aspects of the self-flagellation that was characteristic of this phase for the participants. An exchange during the group discussion after the Inform Plus programme illustrates this:

**Simon:** (overlaps) *we are sentencing ourselves aren't we? [To Paul]*

**Paul:** *yeah I don't think I can fully do that until everything has gone through court*

**Simon:** *it is so difficult, my family, they say 'look this could go on for a year, year and a half, you must get on with normal life until you gotta face it' but it is*

**Paul:** (overlaps) *it is like being stuck in limbo isn't it?*

**Hugh:** (overlaps) *yeah*

**James:** *yep*

**Paul:** *I mean I could have 2 years of this to go through and it is just crazy to think that things could take that long*

**Simon:** *but we've sentenced ourselves already you know?*

**Paul:** *you feel like you've been punished a lot already, don't you, before all the legal stuff is finalised.*

The restrictions on their lives, loss of work, family and the other aspects of their lives affected means that they felt that they had already been punished before they were sentenced. This does not mean that they didn't feel that they should be sentenced, they did, but was indicative of the impact and effect that the system has on them. Although the concept of collateral consequences and the impact on their lives has been covered in some prior literature (see Harris et al., 2019; Harris & Levenson, 2021) the concept of self-punishment and restrictions prior to sentencing seems lacking.

Simon articulated within his interview a point that resonated across many of the participants that as well as punishment through sentencing through the CJS, the restrictions they are placed under as part of the CJS they punish themselves for their behaviour and feel unworthy of happiness and for some (such as Simon and James) unworthy of life.

*"Yeah [I] keep punishing myself, everyone [is] saying 'you gotta get on and you've got you got to have a life, you're entitled to to a life'. Why am I entitled to [a life]? And like, why am I entitled to be happy? Why should I be happy?". [Simon]*

This self-punishment and difficulties in self-improvement and moving forwards hinders their ability to redeem themselves and to reintegrate back into society and start to build their lives.

#### 6.5.4 Help-seeking and support

All of the participants who accessed the Inform Plus programme had also sought help and support from other aspects of the LFF's services (such as the helpline and the online support resources), along with wider support services, such as mental health, GP and private counselling services. This was not always successful or helpful for them, as I go on to discuss. The three participants recruited through the CJS did not access the Inform Plus programme, but they had all sought help to some degree, although they had not received this support in the same way or to the same intensity as those on the Inform Plus programme. Simon H was unable to join an Inform Plus programme but did utilise the LFF helpline and online LFF resources as well as support through his GP, Ricky tried to access support in a number of ways eventually getting some support whilst in prison and through probation and lastly James R had support for his mental health and physical health through his GP but nothing specifically for his offending behaviour.

Hugh, with the encouragement of his wife, sought help from wherever he could access it from an early point after his arrest.

*"As soon as being arrested I with [wife's name] encouragement I started seeking out therapists and I've been having weekly therapy sessions with someone who specializes in not just addiction but sexual related things and offending and essentially, in I felt like the therapy very, very soon, almost opened my eyes to a few big kind of life changing things so with regards to the depression" [Hugh]*

Hugh accessed resources through the LFF, medication and support through his GP, and therapy through counselling and support around addiction, which he believed was the root cause of his issues with his offending, something seen with others in a similar situation to Hugh (Rimer, 2021). Resoundingly, those that accessed the LFF resources and the Inform Plus group sessions found these invaluable. This included Simon H; although he stated he was deemed not to be suitable for the Inform Plus programme (the reasons weren't entirely clear), as noted he still accessed the LFF online resources and the helpline.

*"I think the Lucy Faithful Foundation were probably the best one, you know someone to talk to and they were all great you know, sort of sympathize with you and understand kind of [the] situation whilst they don't have the experience themselves but [they] can feel what I've gone through" [Simon H]*

For the men, as Simon H articulated here, access to someone that they could talk to about what they had done and their experience within the CJS that was non-judgmental and sympathetic was something that helped them to cope and feel less isolated and alone. Many

of them used the LFF helpline repeatedly, as well as the online resources; this ability to access support when they needed to, again, was an important coping tool for many of the participants.

*“And [I] re-visited that [the online LFF resources] a few times. I don't understand all of it. I I'm sorry I don't understand all the relevance to me but but I've done it and I've I've gone back and there's one particular part on it called 'building a good life' and that's what I refer to quite a lot” [Steve]*

Steve, along with many of the others, used the online LFF resources and found having a range of resources where he could access aspects that were of benefit to him as an individual seemed to be a key part of his attempt at self-redemption. This story resonated across all of the participants. For example,

**Paul:** *“I wanted to get better and to show that I was doing something about it that I didn't want to fall back into it again and erm probably the second or third time that I phoned the helpline that they mentioned about the course and looking at some of the online modules I think for me it was just kind of building on that” [Group discussion]*

The length of the processes of the CJS, the unique circumstances and changes in the lives of each of the individual participants, meant that they needed help and support at different points, for different reasons and in different ways. Thus, having an array of ideas, resources and support options seems to be of benefit.

All of the men had successes as well as failures in accessing help and support. The failures in accessing support were detrimental to them and their attempts at self-redemption. This is of importance for channelling individuals to support that is helpful to them, and for the information and action of organisations, both within the CJS and beyond. Steve stopped using the LFF helpline after one encounter that he had with them, as he explained:

*“I don't know probably about the 5th or 6th time I rang Lucy Faithfull I was I remember it fairly well. I remember it 'cause I was feeling really really down and really really lonely so I rang and the lady that I spoke to in hindsight what she said was absolutely correct she said “Stop feeling sorry for yourself, accept your punishment and get on with it”. But in in hindsight yeah that's very good advice but that certainly isn't what I wanted to hear right then” [Steve]*

Although Steve noted here that it was ‘good advice’, this interaction stopped him from accessing the helpline again and was the final straw for him in personal help-seeking. Steve had been turned down by a number of support organisations prior to this point; one organisation would not help him after they contacted the police and were told not to help him because he had been given the details for LFF, for example.

All of the participants had, at one time or another, been prescribed and used medication for their mental health concerns; however, some had not always found this helpful, something seen in other research (Kothari et al., 2021). Simon had been prescribed medication for

depression on a number of occasions, both before his arrest and after, and eventually withdrew from these as he felt they were actually more detrimental to his health, than positive.

*"I work with Stanley knives. I've had suicidal thoughts; I've pictured the ambulance turning up or picture the customer coming in. Very dark psychological sort of stuff man but I'm a bit better now that I'm off all of them antidepressants" [Simon]*

James also struggled to find a balance with the medication he was on, finding difficulty sleeping and managing his emotions with different medication types. A reliance on medication as help for these men needs to be carefully managed and potentially a coherent and cohesive approach to support is key. James and Hugh, who both had long-term counselling support, found this support difficult as time wore on. Hugh eventually ended his sessions with his counsellor because he was struggling to find the relationship productive and James felt uncomfortable with the support that he was getting because of the additional actions his counsellor was taking. Again, this is not something prevalent within the literature around those that commit CSEM/CSO.

*"I need to pay bills get something to eat and stuff like that you know then I've got [counsellor] you know when we meet she said 'can I bring you a meal?' you know (laughs) and I've said 'I'm sorry but no you can't' because I feel bad enough that she's coming over to me and she's seeing me for free and I've said that it is just not fair, [it's] meant to be a professional relationship, bringing me a meal just doesn't feel very professional you know?" [James]*

Support from organisations is something that is key to the way that the men cope, manage their offending behaviour, and begin to self-redeem and rebuild. As with other aspects across the CJS journey for these men, the importance of the ability to access appropriate support in ways that are relevant and helpful to them at the times that they need it is of paramount importance. Offering options for accessing support (online, in person, by telephone) and support that the men can return to when they need it most has proved beneficial to the participants here. Unlike prior to their arrest, the men understand, identify and actively seek help at this point for their health, financial and legal needs where possible. Finding appropriate help is not always easy and so increasing the help available for this population and the ways in which support is presented will help men in this position. What is also of interest here is the difference between those that were able to access Inform Plus and those that weren't, something that I will return to later in this thesis.

### 6.5.5 Coping mechanisms post-arrest

For the participants, their offending was part of how they lived their lives and part of how they coped with their stresses, strains, addiction and other issues before their arrest. So, after their arrests, they had to develop alternative ways to manage their experiences and their lives, alongside the added stresses and strains that came with navigating the CJS. Making changes



to their coping mechanisms, finding ways to manage the effects of the CJS on them and their lives were one of the key ways that these men work towards rebuilding their lives and their self-redemption.

The men described developing these mechanisms in different ways and with differing degrees of success. Both Paul and Hugh discussed the importance of being outside and being in nature.

*"Spending a lot of time on an allotment at the moment that we recently got is a really good benefit for both of us [Hugh and his wife] so we kind of like like said, back to that seesaw, where we were supporting each other" [Hugh]*

Hugh and his wife spent time on their allotment, the combination of hard work in the fresh air and producing their own food helped them both with their ability to cope and their mental health. Similarly, Paul shared:

*"I try to walk quite a bit as well I just like getting out and then having to walk around even if it means popping into a couple of shops just to be able to get out just just get some fresh air and for some exercise having a walk" [Paul]*

Paul also talked about having a delivery job, mindless routine work, that kept him busy and occupied, and also helped him to cope with his circumstances.

*"I don't think there's anything else (inaudible) I suppose. I don't make sense, sounds silly, but just a routine and doing the [company name] deliveries. I get a bit of work and a way to get a bit more money ok with the [company name] deliveries so it is flexible in that respect. Well, it is just it is good to just do something normal, and something which in terms of the job that I was suspended from, at the moment, it is not high pressure, it is just it is really chilled out, so easy to do and just having a drive around, just simple really" [Paul]*

Paul found that the removal of technology, severing his reliance on technology and his phone, had been really beneficial to his ability to cope and his mental health.

*"Shift things back to basics really and enjoy the simple things simple things I have probably missed out on in the past because the phone would be glued to my hand or I was 'just' doing this and 'just' doing that and not actually being mindful about what was going on around me" [Paul]*

Work was a focal point for coping for a number of the participants and is a topic that I discussed in section 6.4. For James, being able to get out of the house to the familiarity of work and his one other colleague who was in the office helped to keep him grounded. The loss of his job after being charged and the need to rely on the small amount of money that he received from benefits was really distressing for him. Although not having a job, TS spent hours of his days working on job applications and again here for both TS and James it was not necessarily just about having a job, it was something to keep them busy and occupied. The loss of something to occupy their time and mind was difficult for many of the participants and the loss of coping

mechanisms was a big concern for the participants. Therefore, the collateral consequences of their offending behaviour and the effects of the CJS do not only restrict their lives, they also reduce the ways that are accessible to allow them to cope.

### 6.5.6 Summary

The arrest sparked a chain of events during which the lives of the participants were completely altered, mostly in a negative way. As a result, the participants made attempts to varying degrees of success to compensate and manage these changes. Identifying what matters to them and providing ways through which they can access formal support, were all avenues through which the men could start to understand themselves and their offending and rebuild.

## 6.6 Envisioning a future life and self

*“Getting back to the routine and a bit of normality, a bit of a normal life” [Hugh].*

### 6.6.1 Introduction

The way that we view the future is impacted by our past and present experiences and frame of reference (Heidegger, 1962 and Mackey, 2005). Events that we experience that significantly affect our present will inevitably affect our future. We have already seen that being investigated for CSEM offences has a prolonged impact on the participants' present, affecting their lives widely, including their identity, what they care about, and their future plans.

The length of time in limbo (the time awaiting the decision, charge, and sentencing at the culmination of the CJS), both in terms of time and lack of definitive decision on their case, affects their ability to understand and see a future for themselves. These changes also mean that many of the plans that they had for their future, whether consciously articulated or not, become redundant and irrelevant, meaning that they need to reassess what life means for them and how they will live in it going forwards.

### 6.6.2 'There isn't a future for me'

There were several ways in which participants state and demonstrate their thoughts about a lack of future for themselves. Suicidal ideation and suicide are a concern for this population (Steel et al., 2022). For the participants in this study, a number of them (Simon, James, James R, Simon H in particular) discussed suicide, were receiving support related to their thoughts of suicide, and both Simon and James had active thoughts of suicide over the period of time in which they participated in this study. In particular, this was an ongoing issue for Simon and James; however, almost all the participants had considered suicide at one point or another.

James felt that, once charged, he would have nothing to live for. The belongings from his flat remained packed into boxes, and he was paying off debts and working to leave his family in the best possible position for when he died. For James he had been reduced from feeling like a 'parent', something that had been central to his life and his sense of self, because of his lack of any contact with his children. He became simply the person that paid the bills, and once his ability to earn money ended, he felt that there was no point in him being alive, as he explained:

*"I have attempted suicide once over the last 6 months" [James]*

And

*"So it has been really tough for me, yeah, once charges are laid and things, I guess, become public knowledge to a certain extent, that'll be an impact on what work I'm able to do and what I can earn and things like that, and I'm not going to be in a position to support my family with money, at that point, and everybody keeps telling me money isn't everything, erm like that, but by not being here I can support my family. The flat's packed up, I haven't unpacked yet. I'm living out of [a] suitcase. I don't have any food in the flat, so all my affairs are in order and in folders and everything. They took away my suicide method [all implements within the flat that would enable him to kill himself], so I think it is safe to say it is pretty tough" [James]*

James described that his life was organised around ensuring the future of his family at which point he was planning to then kill himself. The plan was what was keeping him going and to have this removed he actually found really difficult which speaks to his ability to choose the time and manner of his death and the importance on providing for his family as the last aspects of control on his life.

In contrast, for Simon, the thoughts of his children and what would happen to his children if he took his own life were what kept him from making further suicide attempts. As he explained to James during the group discussion after the Inform Plus programme:

***Simon:** what helps me with the suicidal thoughts [addressing James here] is erm, yes, we've lost everything but we've our children, [we] have lost everything and if we go through with them, them thoughts, why should they also lose their dad, you know, when they've done nothing. So, we've got to repair what they've lost. At the moment, that's what keeps me going through, losing their dad would not be the answer. [Group Discussion]*

Interestingly for Simon, the loss of his children was both the impetus for his suicidal feelings and the reason that he chose not to end his life. It was difficult for both Simon and James to see what the future might look like.

The impact of the CJS on their mental health and suicidal thoughts extends further than the participants themselves and out into their families, as has been discussed in previous sections. Although this is not a focus of prior research it can be gleaned through prior literature (see for example Conmy et al., 2023). Hugh's wife, for example, had had suicidal ideation prior to his arrest and her mental health took a downward turn as a result of 'the knock'.

*“She’s kind of in a familiar territory. So [wife’s name] had a suicide attempt that was a genuine, it was a genuine suicide attempt and we’ve talked about it and essentially it stemmed from the fact that she felt like she had no future anymore” [Hugh]*

Clearly here, the issue around the far-reaching effects, on not only their current lives, but the impact on their future lives, took its toll and was difficult to manage. This perceived lack of a future impacts further on their mental health and suicidal ideation (see Armitage et al., 2023 and Conmy et al., 2023).

In addition, the future employment, housing and relationship prospects of the participants were limited. As we have already seen, TS spent years trying and failing to get a suitable job. Ricky left prison to find his house had been burgled and was uninhabitable because the local community were aware of why he had been in prison, and he also struggled to secure a job or anything else to occupy his time. Steve also talked about the impact on future potential relationships and the unlikelihood that he will be able to have a relationship because of the need to disclose his offences. Although each participant's experience is unique, there are clear overlaps between their lives; targeted support around managing the future would potentially benefit the mental and physical health of those under investigation or who have a conviction, and all their families.

### 6.6.3 Hope and despair

Being in limbo during the time they are negotiating the CJS, and the lengthy curtailment of their lives and activities whilst awaiting a CJS outcome, leads inevitably to bouts of despair, tinged with hope, in all of the participants, even those that were suicidal. Over the course of our interactions, I was able to identify times when they cycled through these difficult emotions, both positive and negative, these were mostly related to their futures.

When I first met James before the Inform Plus sessions started, he was adamant that he would commit suicide. He wanted to ‘tick the boxes’, going through the motions of seeking help, whilst he made all the necessary arrangements to help his family after his death.

*“And that’s, and I think you know, that’s why everybody is trying to, I guess, get me to see, you know, I think, you know, in my mind it is been wasted, you know, my wife considers our 17 years together has been wasted. I think the kids’ [time has] been wasted, yeah it completely destroyed them, destroyed her, uh everybody you know. See the opinions are, that’s how that’s how you define, that’s how I guess I define myself, yes, I don’t see anything going forward if I’m honest” [James]*

This extract demonstrated the importance of a lack of hope and how much despair had impacted on his ability to cope and his ability to see a future for himself. This extract came from my initial interview with James prior to him undertaking the Inform Plus programme. Support through James’s very small network and the Inform Plus sessions provided hope

where there was none initially, and towards the end of the Inform Plus sessions James bought himself a coffee maker. As my fieldnotes detailed:

*He talked during the break that he had bought himself a coffee machine, which is the first lot of money he had spent on himself since the 'knock' happened. He hadn't been drinking coffee but recently in the last few weeks he has been feeling better [Fieldnotes from Inform Plus session week 8]*

Coffee had become James' treat after his therapy sessions, a way to do something for himself that eventually culminated in this purchase. Buying a coffee machine symbolised being around for longer and a hope for a future where there had been none previously. The importance of being able to look to the future was a key theme identified within prior research around the Inform Plus programme (Dervley et al., 2017). Hugh also talked about hope and the difficulties surrounding his future with his wife.

*"She's had, you know, in essence [wife's name] being a planner, she had, she had all the next five years, 10 years 15 years she kept it mapped out, what she hoped for us to achieve. So, she not only had, I had my current present turned upside down, it was even worse for [wife's name] because not only did [she] have [the] present get turned upside down, all in the future, then she's the type person that needs a future to work towards, otherwise she feels like she doesn't have anything" [Hugh]*

Lastly, being reunited with their family and children was ever present for the men. Paul's comment below articulated how hope and worry were tied up together; he hoped to be able to return to his home and this was his sole focus; however, there were many issues surrounding that. In particular, the very real prospect of being a target of abuse and violence from the public added further complications to the already complex landscape for the men and their families.

*"I mean, the hope is that, erm, some temporary measures, until at some point I'm hopefully able to return home, and well, but what happens in terms of at home, who knows, erm suppose that [is] the big thing my wife worries about, is things getting in the media and the house getting targeted and things like that and [I] suppose there's just no kind of certainty but hope" [Paul]*

Simon also hoped to be reunited with his children as a 'proper' father, rather than only being able to see them when he is supervised by his mum. A future where he can spend time with his children, in the same way that he did previously without the restrictions, was his hope.

*"Came home the other day and he [Simon's son] said he was he was told that he may not be home until he's 18 and I just hope that, what if, the social worker when it comes to that time, that she can work with me, and save my relationship with the children" [Simon]*

The men's hopes for the future hinged on decisions made by others, their relationships with others and the lack of control that makes it difficult to see what might happen. The Inform Plus sessions, with the knowledge that they impart about the CJS processes and the introduction of a session run by someone who has been through the whole CJS process, was helpful for

the men to hope and to see what the future might look like. Arguably, hope is one of the most important ideas and feelings that can be fostered with this population to counteract the negativity around the impacts on them and their family and promote the positives and a way forward for them.

#### 6.6.4 “Welcome to Holland” or how to live a different life

The men in this study use, find and access a wide range of written, audio and other media resources to help them to understand themselves, their experiences, and to help them to cope and move forward. Some of them shared these resources with each other as part of the Inform Plus sessions and also with me as part of our discussions for this study. “Welcome to Holland” (Kingsley, 1987 see appendix 18) is a piece of writing that TS shared with me (written by someone other than him) to help him to explain how he felt about living through his offending behaviour and subsequent experience of the CJS. As TS shared in our interview:

*“That's the point of [it], if you sort of look, and Holland is actually quite a nice place. It is not Italy, but you know, it is quite nice and that's, that's how I'm kind of being in my life right now is, well, it is not actually, well not exactly what I wanted but I can make do for now until my license is clear and I can get on with stuff. So, for now I've just got to live in Holland for a little while, you know” [TS]*

So, for TS, this life that he was living was not what he wanted, intended, or planned, but he knew that he had no choice and the plan for him was to try and make the best of it. This was echoed by some of the others. James R, for instance, talked about the positive impact of being in prison for him:

*“I think I'm on, I'm on the upward slope and the fact that I've come to prison is not going to, I don't think at the minute, I don't think I'll leave prison in a worse frame of mind than when I came in. I think it will, with the people I can talk to, perhaps improve things a little bit you know” [James R]*

James R demonstrated the importance of having a way to make things more positive; for him, talking was something that he felt he would find helpful and he hoped that this was something that he could do whilst he was in prison. Unfortunately, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic I was unable to return to discuss this with James R. It also tells a story that James R felt that he had to go to prison to access someone who can help or support him.

Hugh and his wife were thinking about their changing plans, so although they couldn't “live in Italy” and were in “Holland”, there were possibilities for their lives that they had not considered and different ways to live.

*“From I don't know what [wife's name] and I are going to do in terms of what's our life gonna be like, in five years' time. We have, I think, we are optimistic and that we have this idea that*

*we might actually turn towards a self-sufficient lifestyle. We might kind of see if we can move to like farmland and be away from technology” [Hugh]*

James took inspiration and comfort from the poem composed by Amanda Gorman (2021) for President Biden’s inauguration in the US (for the full poem see appendix 19), excerpts of which have been used across this thesis. This was mentioned within the Inform Plus session and the hope that he could gauge from meanings within the poem.

This sharing of resources, ideas and ways to cope was a part of the group dynamic not previously articulated but that seemed to help the men to understand themselves and their situation better.

### 6.6.5 Summary

The future is an uncertain and ever-changing concept for the participants within this study, dependent on the position within which they found themselves. Some of them seemed to manage this better than others; however, for all of them, the ability to find hope, to access support, and ways to help them to make meaningful change and positivity, were key to their ability to view the future as something worth trying to attain. This future and their hope for it extended out from themselves to their family and intimate relationships.

Reflecting on the written word such as the poems and resources shared by the participants, on philosophy and other media as ways that we can learn and develop as people feels like an appropriate way to end this chapter of my findings.

## 6.7 Chapter summary

This chapter sought to reveal and document the initial descriptive aspects of my findings from the two empirical studies, including the phases of the experience that the men inhabit as they negotiate the CJS and the impact on their lives and those of their family and friends. Prior to moving into the deeper interpretation of the key themes that were created from the data generated as part of this research there are a few interesting aspects from this initial findings chapter to highlight here.

The shock and trauma experienced at ‘the knock’ and at other pertinent points across the CJS and in particular at sentencing were experienced by all participants albeit to differing degrees. The experience of relief was an interesting aspect of their experience although this soon faded once the men started to understand the scale of the effect on their lives and the lives of their families. Once ‘the knock’ gave way to unhomelike feelings the importance of help and support became paramount and with these participants, they had all found seeking help themselves

as individuals difficult before their arrest. This highlighted issues around the hidden, stigmatised nature of this offending and the issues around men seeking help more widely.

Lastly, help and support, both formal from organisations and resources such as LFF and from close family/friends were important in the men starting to accept and work at self-redemption and to learn to hope and look to the future.

## 7 Earthquakes, Aftershocks and Rebuilding

*So, while once we asked, how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe, now we assert, how could catastrophe possibly prevail over us? (Gorman, 2021)*

### 7.1 'One of Them'

This piece of creative non-fiction, initially discussed and explained in section 4.4.6 as part of the analysis section of my methodology chapter, supported my thinking in the analytical interpretation that is key to this Hermeneutic Phenomenological study and helps to evidence the overarching experience of the CJS for the men.

This piece depicts a narrative by the composite character 'Ian', drawn in both aspects and direct quotes from the participants themselves. The phases, themes and hermeneutic core theme can be seen in the story of 'Ian'.

#### **Part 1**

My name is Ian and I'm one of 'them'. Or at least that's what people say about me. I'd never say that out loud, I don't even want to hear it rattle around in my own head but the thought just won't go away. I'm not one of them. I'm a good person. I do my best, I work hard, I look after my family. I'm always doing something; my wife (well ex-wife now) always tells me to say no, 'Ian you can't do anymore for people than you already do', but I like to help. It is who I am, it is who I have always been. But not now. I can't be him anymore, I have to be this.

I digress. Bear with me. I don't get an opportunity to talk much anymore. You asked about that day. I remember it vividly, the day the police came. The day my life changed. The sun was beaming through the window, it was a beautiful spring morning. The dew was still on the grass, the world hadn't quite warmed up enough but it felt glorious. I remember standing in the bright shaft of light that blazed through the skylight and closing my eyes, just for a second, to feel the warmth. Just for a second, I forgot the mayhem swirling around me; it was almost time for the school run but it wasn't my turn that day so I let the sunbeam linger. Just for a second.



A sharp, prolonged knock at the door forced my eyes open. I could hear the noise downstairs, a commotion, voices.

'Ian'

More insistent this time. My wife. Shouting. 'Ian'.

A clatter of feet heading upstairs and as I look out into the hall I see people. 'Police', I hear them say. Confused and frightened I begin to walk forward but I'm halted. A rush of words but 'indecent images' are the ones that focus my mind. Over their shoulder I see my wife. Hurt, angry, scared. My youngest son crying, 'Daddy' he says. It feels like a lifetime but can only have been a few minutes. I'm told to get dressed but cannot go anywhere without a policeman following me. Without a word I follow them out to the car and the next thing I know I'm laid on my back in a cell. I'm too numb to think. To feel.

In the interview I tell them everything. 'We'll release you on bail' they said but I can't go home. 'You have to see a nurse first' and I'm ushered into a room where a kind faced woman ticks boxes on a form. A hurried call to my parents in a hushed tone and I'm back out on the street. Clutching the paper I've been given, walking, aimlessly. The last thing the policeman said ringing in my ears 'you're just another case file on a shelf, could be a year waiting'.

That walk to my parents' home felt like the longest walk of my life. Feeling like my life is spiralling and struggling to breathe, I concentrate on keeping one foot in front of the other. I get to their front door and I expect my dad to punch me, my mum to disown me. Instead, they pull me inside and hug me tight. The relief and the tears begin at once. Relief that all this is over. This secret shame that's been locked inside me, the endless cycle of looking at those pictures, deleting them but always returning. Relief that I'm not completely on my own. Being back in my teenage bedroom brings with it many memories and a sinking realisation that this is now my life.

Fast forward 48 hours. I've lost my job. My wife won't talk to me and I'm denied any contact with my kids. For the first time, I think back to that kind faced nurse; maybe everyone would be better off if I wasn't here. How can I face anyone? I feel like I've got 'Paedo' tattooed on my forehead and the idea of leaving the house makes me feel physically sick. I try to ring the policeman whose name is on the form. No answer and no returned call. I try and ring the solicitor. Same thing. I could get my affairs in order, make sure the kids are provided for. This earthquake, the aftershocks, are numerous and unexpected.

My mind races and my focus sharpens. Deep in thought, I don't hear my mum until she speaks. 'Ian' she says and as I look, she's holding out a crumpled piece of paper. 'This was

in your pocket, I think you ought to phone them'. '*The Lucy Faithfull Foundation*' the paper reads. '*Stopitnow*'; a helpline. I don't remember this leaflet but the police station was a blur. 'They might be able to help, you need to do something', she says. The despair bubbles up in my throat but her gentle squeeze of my shoulder gives me strength. I've hurt them enough; I need to try.

Trembling, hesitantly I call the number. The disembodied voice sounds young but warm and friendly. We talk. She's encouraging and I find that I open up to her, elated to find someone that will talk to me despite knowing what I've done. Maybe I'm not this monster, maybe I am me after all. I find myself ringing the helpline more than once and I sign up to this programme, Inform Plus. 'It is for people like you', they said, but I also know I'm not that person. I'm terrified of being in a room full of these monsters and I find myself dreading it but with no job, no friends, no kids, no life, what else am I supposed to do?

I wake up to my mother screaming. It is in the local paper and on the local Facebook group. 'Prominent local Doctor' it says. The comments make my blood run cold and for the first time since that day, I'm truly frightened. It doesn't seem to matter that I've not been charged or convicted. I close my eyes wishing I could return to that day, to that sunbeam, and make all this disappear.

I've not looked at the internet since my arrest but I had ordered a new phone after the police took everything. I needed to speak to the kids and do this programme. I find logging onto Zoom makes me anxious; my breath is almost uncontrollable and I feel sick again. When I'm finally allowed into the Inform Plus meeting there is this sea of faces. My mouth is like a desert and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. I find it hard to say my name when I'm asked to introduce myself.

Reflecting on that first session, I find that I am looking forward to the next one. They all seem 'normal', not the monsters in my head. That reflection. The facilitators are calm, engaging and make the difficult topic areas easier to work through. Being able to talk in a space where I don't feel judged, where I feel human, feels like a lifeline. I had thought that not being able to be 'me' was what mattered, but actually, it is the humanity that I miss. Laughing with the other football dads at the side of a freezing pitch, sharing a look with my wife when her best mate gets just that little too drunk, cuddles and bedtime stories with my boys. Even the banter with Smithy in the corner shop. That's a life; that was my life. Those connections.

For now, these sessions are a start. I realise that even before my arrest, before that glorious sunbeam that I can't stop thinking about, I had disconnected.

It is time to reconnect.

## **Part 2**

*'When we have the courage to walk into our story and own it, we get to write the ending'*  
(Brown, 2018)

Picking up my pen to write this feels like moving forward, a solitary positive act, an attempt to find an oasis in this desert. I scarcely know what to say or where to start. Pen and paper is a novelty, no smart phone, no tap tap tap on the laptop. I find it strangely comforting to write. Those weeks on the Inform Plus programme were a ray of hope for me. They became my lifeline. In those first few months I careered between hope and despair.

Unable to have any contact with my kids due to my bail conditions, a conversation with another guy in the programme and the support of the facilitators gave me the confidence to speak to my solicitor and challenge them. I'd given up hope, expecting that this was just how it was; once you are in the system, you are just a number, "a file on a shelf", as one policeman said to me. Seemingly forgotten, no-one is interested in how it affects me, or more importantly, my family. This is my fault, not theirs. Hearing that others had regular contact with their children dared me to be bold. I was terrified. I can't describe how it feels to have your life ripped away. I know it is my fault, but losing my home, my family, my job, and almost my sanity, has been worse than any punishment the system can mete out.

The only thing that kept me going day by day, sometimes hour by hour, was the possibility of seeing my children, those Inform Plus sessions, and knowing that one day I would be sentenced and I could go back to being me. I hoped. Unable to visualise a future, instead I focused on working to see my kids and keeping myself busy. I sat alone day after day in my flat, too frightened to leave, everything is magnified in my head.

I worked through the Inform Plus sessions. At first, I was sceptical, it was just something to do to keep my mind from falling into the abyss, something to make me look good at court. It was tough. The last thing I wanted to do was confront what I'd done. I wanted to stuff it in a corner of my mind and pretend that it never happened. I found, instead, that learning about my triggers, myself, and having practical ways to distract my buzzing, ashamed brain made the time bearable. Reading books that were suggested by the other guys, learning to be mindful and having a break from the relentless monotony of technology that had been my life prior to my arrest was surprisingly powerful. Knowledge is power. Taking some control of my life, even in tiny ways, made me feel more of a man again.

But then the sessions ended and I felt bereft. The only people I could bear to speak to were my parents and my wife. Knowing that I needed to talk, I reached out to two of my best mates. Both Doctors that I had known since my University rugby playing, beer drinking, carefree days; I was apprehensive to say the least. Tentatively, I messaged them both. My phone flashed

with replies. One made it clear what he thought of 'people like me'. The other, kind and supportive, suggested meeting for a coffee in town. Tears of relief flooded down my face. We meet every week now and to him, I've made a mistake, everyone should be able to redeem themselves, to atone and move on. He's more forgiving than I am.

I found a job delivering in my local area, although whenever I was out of the house, I had a beanie pulled down over my ears, hunched and uncommunicative. But just being outside and contributing made me feel alive. I litter picked. Did odd jobs for my landlord. Saw the kids and my wife twice a week. I started to feel that the seeds of my new life could sprout on the otherwise barren landscape caused by this earthquake.

Fast forward to last month, 12 months after the earthquake occurred. I was sentenced. I'd been both terrified and hopeful. Dressed in my suit with a new haircut, I was mistaken for a lawyer; unsurprising I guess when I took in my surroundings. Called into court, I was given a community order, a prevention order, and told to sign the Sex Offender Register. My solicitor said it was the best outcome, and off she went, moving onto the next case, and I was left to return home alone. My wife drove me to the police station to sign the register. The middle-aged white guy behind the counter, who in my previous life would have laughed and joked with me, made it clear how he felt; announcing loudly, unsympathetically and unhelpfully, so that anyone within earshot knew why I was there. I've never felt so visible, it felt like an eternity. Back in the sanctuary of the car, my situation slowly dawned on me, and my hopeful future disappeared before my eyes. Unable to speak, I returned home and just sat. My phone pinged but I couldn't bring myself to answer it and that familiar panic started to gnaw.

It was in the paper again: '*Medical monster*', '*Sick pervert*' and other descriptions of me that I just didn't recognise. I lost my job. Again. A knock on the door, I peek out of the window expecting a brick to fly through but instead found my landlord on the doorstep. He'd seen it in the paper. Dreading his next words, I was shocked to find a kind smile and an offer of a cup of tea. "Everyone deserves a second chance", he said. Trembling, I thank him and find myself opening up, grateful, incredulous; it reminds me of that first Inform Plus group and my surprise at being treated as a person, as a human.

Quietly locking the door after he leaves, I close my eyes one last time and I'm reminded of a line from a poem:

*'For there is always light if only we're brave enough to see it'*

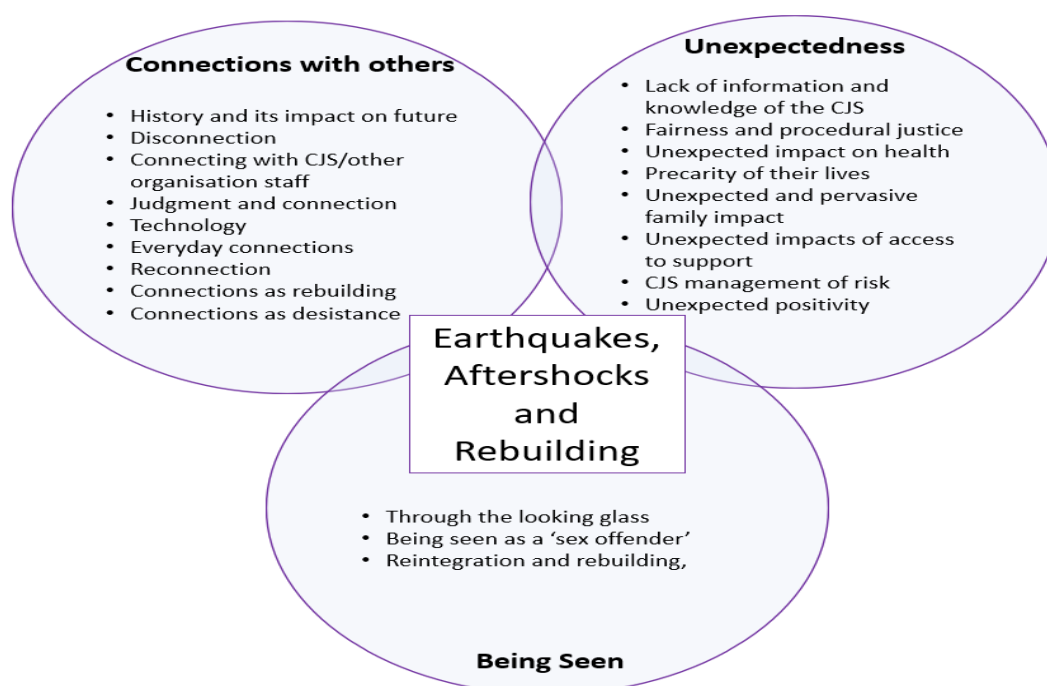
It is time to be brave.

## 7.2 Introduction

Our *being-in-the-world* (Heidegger, 1962) is both subjective and objective; every aspect of the experiences of the participants as they navigate the CJS were subjectively understood by them within the context of the world in which they lived. The longitudinal approach to this research and the multiple data collection methods provided a unique insight into the holistic experience of these men across the breadth of the CJS. Their path, as we have seen from the previous chapter, took many twists and turns, affecting the gamut of theirs and their families' lives.

Alongside the more descriptive phases of the experience already detailed in the previous chapter, this section aims to uncover the deeper meaning and patterns that cut across all the participants' stories, and that often cut across the phases of the experience, attempting to 'unconceal' insights into the essence of their experiences (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). As discussed in the overview of the findings (see section 6.1), there were three key overarching themes that were created through the interpretive process. These overarching interpretive themes incorporate the descriptive and initial meanings created as part of the active analytical process – as described in the previous chapter; however, they also go beyond the descriptive phases, to identify the main hermeneutic essence of the participants' experiences. The link through these layers of interpretation can be seen as the golden thread that highlights and cements the process of interpretation. The three themes of: Connections with others, Unexpectedness, and Being seen, will be explored in detail below.

Figure 7 Overarching interpretive themes (created by the author)



## 7.3 Connections with others

### 7.3.1 Introduction

Our interactions and relationships with others are paramount to our lifeworld. These relationships impact on our ability to dwell in, and understand, our lives and have a significant effect on our sense of self (Ashworth, 2016). Where previous research has highlighted that interpersonal relationships are key 'goods' for men that have been released from prison for offences relating to sexual offending, these are not always easy to attain (Harris et al., 2019). Men convicted of these offences attempt to reintegrate back into their communities (Woodard, 2018), or by choice or necessity, into new communities (Levenson, 2008), and are particularly in need of the community support networks that ironically, they are often unable to access (Mann et al., 2021). From an understanding of the phases of the CJS experience that come from this research, this need for connection with others is both required at a much earlier point than conviction, particularly where the investigation is lengthy, and can change as their circumstances alter over the course of the CJS journey. The importance of connections with others is a clear golden thread running through all the participants' stories.

### 7.3.2 History and its impact on the future

Temporality, the relationship between *being-in-the-world* and time, is important to people, their lives, and how they make sense of their lives (Cammell, 2014). Our understanding of ourselves

and our lives is tied up in our past, in our present, but also in our future plans (Heidegger, 1962). The importance of history, of the previous life that we have lived, and in particular, our lives with our family is entwined with our future hopes and plans. Past family relationships for the participants here and the impact that this has on their present and their future is overtly articulated by each of them and they pepper their stories with the influence that their history has had on them, their current situation and in turn on their future. It is important to think about this when looking at their experiences of the CJS and their reintegration.

History is clearly important; our history is both our link to the past and a link to our family relationships, helping to define who we are as people (Weaver & McNeil 2015). It is therefore understandable that there is an important connection highlighted through this research between history and the way that these men are impacted. Most of the men described difficult relationships with their family; all of them described difficult relationships with family, partners or in-laws. These difficulties were magnified by their offending behaviour and their current situation traversing the CJS but also inevitably influenced their future selves and their future lives as this thesis describes.

The complex relationships within Hugh's immediate family affected his connections across the breadth of his whole family (in which he discusses siblings, parents, wife and his wider family) and formed much of his discussion about the impact of, and his experience of, the CJS. In line with many other participants and other research around both sex offending and other stigmatised groups of people, the participants struggled with disclosing their offending to family and friends (for example Kemshall et al., 2012 and Kitson-Boyce et al., 2018). With support through the Inform Plus group and the programme itself, Hugh took the decision to disclose to several close family members, and although not all of this was completely positive (i.e. for him supportive and understanding), he still found it beneficial.

*"That was amazingly positive, the uncle as well, so someone from the same generation that my parents worried about what his reaction was, his was really positive as well and that's like, a very powerful thing I think" [Hugh]*

Hugh's parents were concerned around his disclosure, and although this may have been for entirely supportive reasons, Hugh found the decision to disclose beneficial and his parents' concerns seem to have been detrimental to his already fractious relationship with them. Hugh goes on to identify how impactful his relationship with his parents had been on his experience whilst he was under investigation and post-conviction and on his state of mind and gave an insight into how important these relationships can be.

*"At least it kind of feels like their influence has negatively affected me a lot more than anything that went on in the actual court itself" [Hugh]*

This extract highlights how strongly family relationships and history can impact on the men and started to spotlight the importance of connections on how these men navigate their journey through the CJS. For Hugh, the impact of the CJS and the support that he received brought to the fore deeply held and hidden issues with his relationship with his parents.

Family history can have a bearing on future family relationships in many ways. Simon H disclosed to me that his own father had sexually abused his sisters when they were children and therefore his own arrest and subsequent disclosure of this to his family caused a rift in the family relationships in a wider way than just his relationships with each of them.

*“Yeah, I think when it is my nephew my, my niece uh my those are my father my brother uh so just missing out really my my two sisters, who have distanced themselves. I will, once I've got my email account back, I will message my sister in [place name] up because I never got a chance to at least apologize [in] regards to what I've done, but I do still have one of her email addresses just just at least apologize for what I've done” [Simon H]*

The disclosure of his CSEM offending to his family was made by the CJS (the police) as his sisters had children and he had regular contact with them. This disclosure, and certain family members' decisions to support him, caused a rift between other family members. His sisters and their children had been a big part of his life; and his offending behaviour and how this was managed removed this from him. The removal of this kind of anchor was hugely detrimental not only to the family dynamic, but right at the time when such support was of paramount importance.

The idea that family history has a bearing on future family relationships was echoed in the way that James described his own background, his childhood and his relationship with his family.

*“yeah, I mean to a certain extent [I] got my childhood, there were like 3 stories of me growing up I recall and roll out. It is [the] only three things my wife knows about me erm from childhood which she says is a bit weird” [James]*

*and*

*“But I consider myself to be emotionally dead. I think my wife would agree and yeah, from the way I was brought up and stuff, and why my parents don't want to talk about anything, I tried while I was at theirs to open up a conversation about it and it just got shot down” [James]*

James had very little memory of his childhood and strongly struggled with his emotions - “I consider myself to be emotionally dead” - and how to interact on an emotional level in his relationships. He understood this to be related to “the way [he] was brought up” and had tried previously to discuss this with his parents to gain some insight and understanding but this was not well received by them. This impacted on both how James functioned as he developed relationships into adulthood but also how he was able to manage his relationships with others as he tried to negotiate his way through the CJS. James' interaction with the CJS also made



him start to unpick and confront some of these issues, however, and this he does through his use of support, including discussions within the Inform Plus programme but also with his counsellor. This reassessment of relationships, as a result of involvement of the CJS, has not received too much prior examination although it is touched on within the research of Mann et al. (2021).

The impact on future relationships was articulated clearly by many of the participants. This was particularly discussed by Steve and Ricky, both of whom wanted to develop future intimate relationships but felt that their past, offending and the restrictions on them made this difficult.

*"I said, right, I will, so let's say I bumped into someone in Tesco's, we fell madly in love, I said that [would] be wonderful said, however I'm going to tell you and then you're duty bound to jump out of the cupboard and tell my new partner in glorious Technicolor what my problem is, what my defect is and that's the end of this new relationship. So, all you've achieved there, you've got one more person in the world who then knows how awful you are" [Ricky]*

Ricky articulated here a number of points. The clear impact that his offending and subsequent conviction could have on his ability to develop meaningful intimate relationships moving forward, the lack of control that he feels about when and in what manner potential new partners will be informed of his offending behaviour and that this diminishes him as a person ("what my defect is", "knows how awful you are"). Ricky had struggled with intimate and family relationships previously (he was divorced and had little contact with any of his other family). Woodward (2018) identified that the participants in his study were detached significantly from their past lives and found it difficult to regain relationships due to their fear of disclosure and being outed. The way that Ricky described how he views what would happen if he was able to develop a new relationship resonates.

*"Both of us have family situations where it is kind of difficult to explain because it is not just about the arrest but the arrest kind of set off a kind of like weird domino effect that then triggered things that were hidden under the surface. Family secrets that have been kind of, you know, like all the skeletons out of the closet and this caused massive disruptions on both sides of our families" [Hugh]*

Thus, we can see that the men's offending behaviour and the subsequent CJS involvement brought into sharp focus how their family history and other pertinent history is tied up with their future connections. By accessing support (such as that through the LFF and counselling) this allowed the men to identify and unpick some of these issues and begin to rebuild or reconstruct these connections.

### 7.3.3 Disconnection

Disconnection from people, relationships, and wider society is a theme that runs across the breadth of all participant stories, across their whole experience and through every phase. Many of the participants, in line with previous research (for example see Henshaw et al., 2017 and Price et al., 2015) were disconnected from, or struggled with, relationships with others prior to their initial arrest. This was even though on the face of it some of the participants often seemed, or portrayed that they were, successful with work, family and friends. This disconnection prior to their arrest links to their history, their background and prior relationships, but can also seriously impact their ability and capacity to make connections after their arrest.

James R lived alone, eschewing family and friends even before his arrest. He had family but rarely saw them, even his grown-up children. His human interactions mostly were made through day-to-day contact with the general public, or with his work colleagues.

*“I didn’t have any close friends. In fact, ah (long pause), I can’t remember the last person that came round to the house actually (laughs)” [James R]*

Likewise, Paul also noted that his interactions were limited with anyone outside of his own close family.

*“Literally just kids and family and work. No time for much else really” [Paul]*

The disconnection from others and the wider world at large featured heavily in their discussions around their offending behaviour, the stigma that they felt, their identity and their issues and concerns around the CJS. Once their offending behaviour was exposed, the participants all experienced deliberately being cut off and isolated from others, from work, from family and friends to varying degrees, in keeping with recent research that has also touched on similar aspects with those convicted of these types of offences (Harris et al., 2019). As James succinctly explained:

*“yes, I erm, think, to a certain extent, everyone’s cut themselves off from me” [James]*

Following arrest, James was disconnected from his wife, unable to have any visual contact with his children (either via video link or in person) and most of his friends and some family members as a direct result of their choices or those made as a result of the CJS (although clearly this all stems from his own offending behaviour). Similarly, Ricky identified that his social, work and other opportunities for developing relationships had all been reduced.

*“Of that, because that’s not possible, so you feel kind of like you’ve been cut off from everything” [Ricky]*

TS's relationship with his family was fractured. He maintained a relationship with his father, and one brother, had a difficult relationship with his mother, but was mostly disconnected from everyone else. He had no contact at all with his other siblings.

*"Sure, it will, yeah yeah, right so so my brother and my dad are perfectly fine, they're talking to me, that they can't say they don't have a problem 'cause you know yeah but it is the best I could hope for considering the circumstances and whereas the relationship with my mum [is] still a little bit strained and she's speaking to me, she will come visit me in the flat. I kind of think an, but as I say this there isn't that connection that I had with her originally, you know, an' it is more like she's here for being here for the sake of my dad and brother" [TS]*

This disconnection from others is not unique to those who have committed sexual offences, or even committed wider aspects of criminality. Disconnection from others can be seen in other populations who have experienced significant negative life changes, such as those with serious medical conditions. For example, those who have had a stroke were found to have smaller social networks, losing most of their friends and finding this exceptionally difficult to cope with (Ford et al., 2022). Those with schizophrenia, recovering from severe psychological ill health and bowel disease also often found a profound disconnection from friends and family (Dibley., 2014; Shepherd et al., 2012 and Stuart et al., 2017).

Alongside the disconnection instigated by others, the participants actively, either consciously or subconsciously, disconnected themselves from their lives and their social circles. Steve discussed his need to feel useful, to both help feel more like himself as a person, but also as a way to try and give back and to contribute to the community, to feel like a good person again. To help with this, he utilised suggestions from resources such as the online materials from the LFF and he started volunteering after he was arrested and whilst under investigation; however, he withdrew from this once he had been charged.

*"I stopped volunteering at the food bank because [the] parents who didn't have any childcare or whatever did bring their children in, and I thought that would be very embarrassing for them, so so that's that that's when I gave them a notice there" [Steve]*

This idea that people would not want to socialise or be acquainted with the participants if they were aware of their offending was also commented upon by James R who went as far as to take himself off to a remote location, shutting himself away from friends, family and wider society.

*"I don't think I socialised but I think, certainly after 2014, I didn't want to socialise because I felt ashamed in a way inside. I thought 'oh dear', you know, I'm walking down the street and people are there, you know, thinking if they could see you, know what I am and [that] I've looked at these pictures on the television screen, they wouldn't want to be smiling, or saying hello to me" [James R]*

This extract identified that James R disconnected both from wider society, from the community and from himself. The shame that he felt and the way that he felt this was so visible over

shadowed everything else and although he was able to run away from other people, he was unable to run away from himself, dehumanising himself to “what I am” equating himself with the ‘monster’ that society identifies with the ‘sex offender’ label (Perrin et al., 2018 and Steel et al., 2021).

Hugh and his wife discussed keeping themselves busy but doing so in non-social ways. Below he noted that they took up a lot of household and DIY projects and he also noted that they worked in the allotment whilst he was under investigation. These sound like positive actions to distract and manage their situation, but they could also be viewed as ways to avoid people, society and family, particularly with regard to the existing family issues for both Hugh and his wife.

*“We do have a lot that we are kind of focused on at the moment, so doing a lot of home improvements, manual work, kind of manual projects where we can actually kind of see the results of what we are actually doing is really good for us. So us as a couple, we, we have been able to find these things that bring us joy and happiness.” [Hugh]*

The participants were aware that these relationships were important for their lives and their health, whilst acknowledging the difficulties that their situation presented in making and maintaining connections, as Ricky and Simon H explain:

*And yes, I would feel much better if I got a job, a circle of friends and a girlfriend - all that. I'd feel great but none of that is attainable, so that's where the problem lies [Ricky]*

*There's a number of times that I felt suicidal and that was around the things that I would then lose, or what I've essentially lost, you know, because I'm knowing full well once it comes out, I've lost my both my sisters, I've I've lost my Uh my my three nieces, my nephew, and they've gone and already lost contact with my mother, 'cause we had a bit of an argument thing, so you think, well, once that goes and I then got my friends and family, I I would lose all that and then you think, well, there's nothing else. I've got no-one else. [Simon H]*

This is consistent with the interpersonal theory of suicide, which suggests that thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness are causes of suicide ideation (Van Orden et al., 2010).

Lastly, the acknowledgement of how detrimental this disconnection is to the men, however, can lead to alternative ways to focus on and manage their important relationships. Thinking back to Heidegger (1962) and *being-towards-death*, the disruption caused by the CJS as a result of their offending behaviour can lead to clarity and improvement in their relationships, if they are able to gain that clarity and perspective. Paul was one of the only participants who seemed able to take positive steps to reorient himself and his life, as he discussed:

*“I'll talk about spirituality and sense of self. By spirituality I don't mean religion, I mean an awareness of me, of who I am and what I am doing. There was a lack of self-care and awareness of what I was doing, I was emotionally detached [before his arrest]. I had to reflect*

*on all areas of my life, as I couldn't see any of my family apart from my parents for the first five weeks after. I had to think about things. I took a step back and had a realisation of what is important. A step back from [the] digital. I want to live in the here and now. I enjoy nature, looking up and looking at the stars. I realised that there was an effect [negative] on my self-worth [from being always on devices]. I was always worrying about my wife and kids and never thought about myself at all" [Paul]*

Paul's relationship with his wife and children was better from the lack of technology in his life and the changes that he made because of an awareness of the effects of his offending and the subsequent CJS. This disconnection and isolation are important: social disconnection is detrimental to physical and mental health, so much so that it has been linked to early mortality (Green et al., 2020). Addressing social disconnection and isolation is seen as paramount for the improved health of those with stigmatised health conditions (Fortuna et al., 2019) including, I would argue, those with stigmatised identities such as those labelled 'sex offenders'.

#### 7.3.4 Connecting with staff from the CJS and associated organisations

The restrictions on these men from their arrest onwards, as has been discussed in previous sections, lasts for many years, both in terms of the investigation and then the subsequent often more restrictive conditions that they live under once convicted. Inevitably this involves making connections and forming ongoing relationships with individuals employed across the CJS and wider associated organisations such as social care, health and support organisations. The interactions that the men have with individuals from these organisations can have an important impact on their experiences of the CJS, particularly as the men can have significantly reduced social connections outside of these professional relationships and can impact on their ability to make relationships moving forward (Mann et al., 2021 and Pemberton et al., 2023).

The findings here suggested that continuity of personnel is important, particularly those that are either working with the men or working for their benefit, such as probation officers and solicitors. The impact of a change of personnel, which often cannot be avoided, can have a negative impact on the men. For example, James' solicitor was on holiday for James' court appearance and crucially had not told James.

*"But well, my solicitor was on holiday when I was in court which really stressed me out because she didn't tell me and I'd emailed her sort of like a week before and I had an out of office and then I started panicking you know. I was then wondering who was going to be there for me" [James]*

James's response demonstrated the difficulty and anxiety that disruption causes and suggests the importance of both continuity in staffing and being informed of what is happening. It also suggests the lack of support for the men in this position from their own solicitors and the lack

of importance the solicitors attributed to these clients. Further, none of the participants mention their solicitors by name and none of them seem to have a helpful and meaningful relationship with them. This might go some way to explain the lack of knowledge and understanding that participants display about the CJS across their interactions with me and the stories that they tell.

TS, Steve, Simon and Ricky all commented on the issue around changing CJS personnel in terms of offender management personnel and probation officers. This can be advantageous, however, if there is an issue with the original officer assigned to their case. For example, both Steve and Simon really struggled with their initial probation officer.

*"[probation officer's name] she's my probation person. She came to the house once and I've been into the office three or four times but she kept changing and cancelling appointments and she's not really explained anything. Well, she's really young, erm 22, and I don't know, well I know more about things going on in her life than in mine and now I have a different probation person and I'm going to meet them this afternoon." [Simon]*

*"I wasn't made to feel oh well, I I don't know what I was expecting, which is one of the reasons why I was terrified, so I met this woman who I didn't like the minute I saw her and I'm very quick to make those sort of judgments. I'm normally right but anyway, uhm, the meeting didn't go particularly well, for instance the insidious sort of guilt blame thing that she mentioned, she asked me where I lived and I said [road name] and she said, 'oh, I hadn't heard of that, where's that?' I said opposite [school name] and she said, 'oh that's unfortunate' and that's the way the whole conversation went." [Steve]*

*And*

*"No, I've I've I've seen a few different people because the lady that I normally see, she's called [probation staff name], but there are times when she has to do meetings and and and that sort of thing, so she can't be there, so I I have seen other people" [Steve]*

The experience of having different CJS personnel has been reported previously as being common and causing stress for those who have committed offences (Campbell, 2020) and that is borne out here too. Further, whilst Simon's and Steve's extracts above demonstrated some of the difficulties that these men face with changing or unsupportive CJS personnel, James R's and Simon H's extracts below show that being able to develop a rapport and a positive relationship, or at least positive interactions, with those working in the CJS has a positive impact on the CJS experience of the men:

*"Yeah, and I've met the people [probation officers] in [names location] had come out to see me and I got on quite well with them and they seemed quite quite nice, you know, and and quite supportive erm (pause), so yeah it was it was a bit of a er surprise" [James R]*

*"They weren't sort of judgmental at all, they they [the police] were really understanding and the situation because a lot of people who they they arrested they, I think they know they destroy lives by doing it, by coming in and you know" [Simon H]*

The men are not expecting positive interactions with CJS personnel and this is both a surprise and for them, something that they view as a positive. James R had had mainly negative interactions with the CJS prior to this, and he was therefore surprised by how he was treated and the support that he received from the probation officers that visited him.

Simon, a man expressing suicidal ideation, suffering from poor mental health and with worries about his welfare and safety after his case received media attention was not reassured by the police that attended after his conviction.

*“Yeah, it is erm people have recognised me, I don’t go out sometimes with my mum and with the children but I’m scared of what will happen, I’ve had the policeman round [to his home] that comes to see you and one of them [police officer] said ‘I wouldn’t want to be in your shoes’, although they have been ok to me” [Simon]*

The police officers that visited Simon seem to display a sinister overtone to the conversation, suggesting that something negative will happen to Simon, leaving him feeling more vulnerable.

Positive interactions with CJS personnel, particularly around reassurance about the future and support around mental health were found to have a positive impact on suicide ideation for those that were investigated for CSEM in prior studies (Steel et al., 2022). Being treated in a welfare-oriented way is also more likely to lead to a more positive experience of the CJS and a greater likelihood of successful community reintegration (Mann et al., 2021). Conversely, those that are interacted with through the lens of criminality, treated as a ‘sex offender’, rather than as a human and an individual, have been shown to be negatively impacted by this and less likely to reintegrate into the community (Levens & Crewe, 2015 and Lacombe, 2008). There is some evidence that this can damage their efforts to desist from offending (see Mann et al., 2021).

James, Steve and Ricky all felt that CJS staff were often going through the motions, or just ‘ticking the boxes’ of the process, rather than engaging meaningfully with them to help and support them to reintegrate into the community and desist from offending:

*“For example, you know that officer from the NCA [National Crime Agency] who just didn’t bother to put my phone number on the form, which meant that I had [uniformed police] officers then coming to knock on my door, you know, which caused me stress, you know, and it wasted their time. There’s just this massive feeling for me that it [the CJS] is broken but because it works, to some extent, no-one can be bothered to try and make it any better” [James]*

This apathy and lack of a joined-up way of working was identified across the stories told by the participants in this study. What’s interesting is that as James rightly identifies, in a system already under pressure as described in the introductory chapter of this thesis this apathy causes unnecessary additional work (highlighted by the fact that officers had to attend James’

address just to get his phone number) and considerable stress for James. There doesn't seem to be a holistic overview of the processes that make up the system or across the organisations involved and although this could be expected in a system of the size and scope of the CJS, change here could prove beneficial to the men and their families as well as the system itself and those employed within it.

*"I've hardly slept, I can only describe the probation officer as an ogre. She didn't engage with me, made me feel hopeless, and made it clear that she didn't believe me". [Steve]*

This lack of interest and apathy is again highlighted here by Steve who perceives that the probation officer is not interested or listening; this lack of engagement and the way that Steve describes her ("an ogre") demonstrates the importance of the relationship between staff within the CJS and these men (Mann et al., 2021 and McCartan et al., 2021).

James also experienced an issue where the police staff member who saw him when he attended the police station to sign the sex offenders register did not take all of the appropriate information and James had to make alterations with another police officer to ensure that it was correct. The initial police staff member gave James the impression that he did not want to deal with him, although this could have been James' perception; the encounter clearly made him uncomfortable.

*"I wouldn't have been able to do anything about it ((laughs)), you know. That police officer, she said, you know, she hates it when she gets a form from him [the other police officer] because she knows that it makes it more difficult for her, because the information isn't on there, or accurate. So, things like that, surely there has to be a process in order to make all that better for that. Surely, he has to have some accountability to be, you know, able to act like that without any sanctions or anything. It just seems that stuff doesn't work properly but nobody does anything about it" [James]*

James's recounting of the conversation with the police officer suggests that there is an issue with a particular member of staff, and that others are aware of it, but no one has done anything about it. There is a sense that the initial police officer was simply 'going through the motions'. The officer's lack of attention to his role could have caused significant difficulties for James if the information was recorded incorrectly, inappropriately, or with crucial missing sections, and potentially led to James being in breach of his order, in a similar way to residence restrictions in the US led to men being in breach of their conditions (Levenson, 2008). However, whilst a different officer is concerned about the missing information in the form, she is concerned because it makes her job "more difficult for her", rather than about the potential impact on James.

Ricky also found that his probation officer was focused on the process of 'ticking the boxes' or 'going through the motions', and not him as an individual, with this affecting not just his



relationship with that probation officer, but also as his story unfolded his experience of the CJS more widely.

*“Five-minute meetings which didn't happen in the first place which is why, like I pointed out, she [probation officer] wasn't able to see me the other week when I was desperate for some sort of guidance because you're too busy farting around on things you don't need to be doing when you see me twice in one week asking the same stupid questions”. [Ricky]*

Again here, the lack of interest from the probation officer and the concern around process over the support for the individual hampered the relationship between them and the engagement of Ricky in the process.

Conversely, positive, interactive and understanding support from CJS staff or other organisations could make a difference to the men themselves and their engagement with the CJS. The provision of a place and space for the men to talk to someone, and continuity in this kind of support lent a balance to the negativity. Here Steve reflected whilst in the Inform Plus session on how positive he had found the sessions and his new probation officer:

*“This is one of the positives of my week, I shall miss it. It is difficult to reflect towards the future. Saw new probation lady and she was really inspiring, like you guys (facilitators). Unfortunately, it is not possible to have the same probation officer each week, I asked. It is lovely being part of these sessions and hearing others' points of view. It is been really useful. And a good place to vent!” [Steve, from my observations of the Inform Plus session]*

Steve highlights here the importance of that relationship, both here with the facilitators and his new probation officer and the positivity that has as a result in contrast to how he felt from the previous extract. For the Inform Plus sessions, having a place where he can talk about the issues and frustrations that he feels is clearly a positive and important for him and his experience.

This section resonates with findings from the phases of the CJS experience, in the previous chapter, and previous research studies of how important the relationships between these men and those that they interact with across the CJS are (see Blagden & Wilson, 2020; Mann et al., 2021; McCartan et al., 2021 and Pemberton et al., 2023). It also suggests that there are issues not only within the relationships between CJS personnel and people who have committed CSEM offences, but also, that the attitudes and understandings of the personnel across the CJS are important in creating and maintaining these relationships.

### 7.3.5 Judgement and connection

The stigma and shame felt by the men was felt keenly and it has been documented elsewhere in men that have been investigated for, and convicted of, sexual offences (for example see Bailey et al., 2018 and Tewksbury, 2012). This will be explored further through the theme of 'Being seen' later in this chapter; however, the impact of judgement or non-judgement by

others is profound on the connections that the men make and retain, and this will be discussed here.

One of the key aspects that the men in this research found to help them with their relationships and with their ability to cope and reintegrate, was being dealt with by people, professionals, family and others alike, in a non-judgmental way. This included their interactions with me, with the police and probation, other official CJS staff, friends, family and staff from support organisations such as the LFF. In the Inform Plus programme, the relationships that the men build with the facilitators and other group members seem to be one of the main positives that the participants pull from the course (although there are many others). Being treated with compassion and without judgement by the facilitators and their peers, and having the courage to confront their initial fears about the course, are important for their sense of self-worth and to help them to move forwards.

This extended out to the men's initial access of the helpline at LFF. This first verbalisation of what they have done and what they are experiencing as they move through the CJS to the LFF staff is a daunting prospect for the men and the way that this is handled by the staff leaves a lasting impression, as this excerpt from the group discussion demonstrates:

**Hugh:** *erm I remember really early on calling [the] StopItNow! [helpline] and that was a very good initial thing to do. So, erm, the phone call itself, I seem to remember, even just kind of getting the words out, describing why it was that I was calling, just actually saying the words out loud, was a big thing. So just having someone on the end of the line to kind of listen to me say that without without (pause) erm you know kind of...*

**Simon:** *without passing judgement*

**Hugh:** *yeah exactly*

And this extract from Simon H here:

*"Now in the aftermath [of being under investigation, post arrest], there's still nothing available for you, you know. It is it is It is a shame, you know, uhmm, I even got to one point when I was speaking to the I think the the best ones out of I think the Lucy Faithful Foundation were probably the best one, you know, someone to talk to and they were all great you know, sort of sympathize with you and understand kind of the situation during, whilst they personally don't have the experience and feel what I've gone through, they've spoken to others [in the same situation]" [Simon H]*

Here both the men that have undertaken the Inform Plus programme (Hugh and Simon), and Simon H who was not able to do so, but accessed support from the LFF through contact with the helpline, explained how important empathetic, non-judgmental, informed listening was to facilitating these difficult first disclosures and discussions/ This can also be gleaned from other research with those that have committed CSEM (Key et al., 2018). Interestingly, the way that the Inform Plus sessions are framed and managed for the participants alongside the stigma

and the way that they feel about themselves and others in their position affected their engagement with the programme, as Simon described:

*“But then I was thinking that one of them [name of facilitator] said that well I shouldn’t use family stuff to blame for what I did, so I erm, you know, quickly I learned what to say, and erm what not to say, and also that we were all of us, erm you know, in the group, we were all sort of well there because we [had] done the same” [Simon]*

Simon is challenged by the facilitators in a supportive way to take responsibility for his actions rather than to excuse his actions and as Simon alluded to here, it made him think about how he articulated his comments within the session with an understanding that everyone was there for the same reason. This is a key aspect of the programme, facilitating the sessions in such a way that challenges the men whilst remaining supportive and non-judgemental would seem to help to maximise the impact of the programme on the men whilst retaining their engagement. This is a fine line, explaining this in a less welfare-oriented way could lead to disengagement in a similar way as described by other participants about going through the motions with other CJS personnel. Prior research has focused on the content of programmes aimed at those who have committed CSEM (see Dervley et al., 2017; Gillespie et al., 2018) although a recent evaluation of ‘Circles Reboot’ (Bradshaw et al., 2023) identified the importance of the positivity of the relationships between the Circles volunteers and the core member.

For James, although he was asked by the facilitators not to talk about his suicidal feelings in the Inform Plus group, he was given the reassurance that participating in a group would be beneficial for him.

*“When I spoke to them from the Inform Plus [programme], [they] said it may help, and to start, it may help talking to other people, uh I gotta promise not to talk about suicide, which is fair enough, but I wouldn’t do that to anybody. I was supposed to be on the one [group] before this uh, but I phoned them up, yeah [to] check that they were happy, I still did it bearing in mind where my head’s at” [James]*

Even though he was still feeling suicidal, the non-judgemental response to this, acknowledgement of his mental health status, the support, and other aspects of the programme such as the different work in the sessions and the input from other group members that James found beneficial were of importance to him in his ability to move forwards. These comments from the men here depict not only how important non-judgemental interactions are for their state of mind but also how well they remember how they are treated by people.

### 7.3.6 Technology

Technology can both facilitate and diminish connections with others. Modern technology was a later preoccupation of Heidegger’s in his philosophical endeavours (see Dreyfus & Spinoza,

2003). We should acknowledge that we have moved into an age where we are overrun with technology and that this has affected our social connectedness and our ability to engage in a face-to-face way (Elsobeihi & Abu Naser, 2017). The use of technology has its positives and negatives for the participants in this research, in their relationships and connections.

Paul was the most vocal around the issues of technology more generally, rather than purely around his offending behaviour. Paul acknowledged the way that technology, particularly smart phones and television, had impacted on his life but also his relationships. He could see his wife and children permanently on some kind of technology and reflected that that's how he was himself before his arrest but also how it is for wider society. For him, reducing his use of technology made him more present in his life.

*"Just trying to shift things back to basics really and enjoy the simple things, simple things. I have probably missed out on [things] in the past because the phone would be glued to my hand, or I was 'just' doing this and 'just' doing that and not actually being mindful about what was going on around me". [Paul]*

Paul also related this grip that technology had for him to the negative aspects of his life at the time. He suggested that his constant use of technology impacted on his mental health and his self-worth.

*"I took a step back and had a realisation of what is important. A step back from [the] digital. I want to live in the here and now. I enjoy nature, looking up and looking at the stars. I realised that there was an effect on my self-worth". [Paul]*

James also identified the impact that technology had on his connections and his ability to cope with life.

*"You don't understand the issues when you are in them, that it [technology] is a coping mechanism". [James]*

However, for James, contact through his phone was necessary to facilitate him having contact with his children, so he had to at least have some means of communication however the impact of technology was so profound for James that he did not want any devices again after they were all removed post-arrest. He did eventually get a new phone after a couple of months but noted that he was "stressed about getting a device". It was a necessity to manage things like his finances and to be able to get support, for example, to take part in the Inform Plus sessions, which were all online because of Covid, to access the LFF helpline and the LFF online resources as well as his contact with his children. This is an acknowledgement that modern life is so dependent on the digital world that it is almost impossible to live outside of it. This has an impact on both Paul and James and their connections with the world particularly in this sphere of crime.

The explosion of devices and online existence has exacerbated CSEM crimes (Quayle & Taylor, 2003) but also the way that those that commit them can then manage their desistance from offending and their lives. Even most support is online now, with psychological support and even access to a GP often done in an online or phone capacity (see Bennion et al., 2017 and Richards et al., 2018). This, particularly for this group of men, could be perceived as an inappropriate, or at least problematic, way to provide support. Paul described that he found the offer of online support unhelpful, as he noted in the excerpt from his interview below.

*"I've since been offered like an online counselling, an online CBT package, where you put your thoughts in and it is read by a counsellor and they feed back to you, and initially at the time, I wasn't in the mindset to do it, or go through with it. There was no motivation there to actually do anything about it and there was no follow up to check up on how I was, or things like that, kind of that mental health support was needed back then" [Paul]*

For Paul who had recognised his issues with technology and his need to move away from the online sphere and back into being present in the real world, online support in that way was not something that fit into his plans for change for his life. It is difficult to develop and maintain connections in that sense through online devices.

For those participants for whom technology was a way of life, such as TS and Hugh, the move away from technology proved very difficult. Their connections and technology were tied up with their offending, both TS and Hugh worked and socialised predominantly in an online world, particularly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and both found building connections outside of the technological world difficult.

### 7.3.7 Everyday connections

Connections with other humans helps the participants to feel seen and valued. This is something that is necessary for everyone, not just the participants here, but those that are stigmatised can find this more difficult, and also, conversely, more important (Dibley, 2014). Social disconnection is not good for our health, being linked to many poor health issues including early mortality (Green et al., 2020), so being able to maintain and/or build these connections is key.

For the participants in this study, who felt stigmatised and dehumanised as a result of their offending and the resulting CJS, making everyday connections (even those as simple as going to a local shop) felt jarring at times but was important to help them to be in touch with their own sense of being a part of humanity, part of a community. As an example of this, James R left behind his old life after retiring and isolated himself in a remote area and even though he stated that he was happy to be alone and on his own with little contact he still had and recounted these everyday interactions; it was still important to at least speak to people in some

capacity. His story in his interview after he left home was littered with anecdotes about the people he interacted with, highlighting how important connections are.

*"I go fishing, you say hello to the bus driver and you go in the post office and you say hello and erm there's the guy that owns the little caravan site, it is only a little thing with a few caravans on. He comes and collects his rent and I give him a cup of tea erm but that's it really and people when you go fishing, certainly salmon fishing" [James R]*

Hugh articulated how he felt at the lack of these mundane interactions.

*"Yeah, it is yeah quite hard 'cause even even with these you, you get human interactions, don't you, but you don't get that kind of, kind of, some decompressing chat over coffee or do you know what I mean? That, all that kind of stuff, or a bit of a, you know, there's a bit of a thing with the work and you chat with somebody else and kind of all of a sudden things go, you know what I mean, you don't have any of, all of that's completely gone. I find I do find, yeah, that's quite tricky. I wasn't particularly an expert [of] kind of like casual small talk, but you know, not having any of it is noticeable I think" [Hugh]*

Both James and Paul also identified the importance of these basic interactions to their sense of wellbeing. Although both of them talked about this in the context of their support network (James with his mental health worker and Paul about the Inform Plus group), it was the everyday interactions, such as going for a coffee, and the opportunity to connect with others that were important.

*"So, we [James and the mental health worker] end up having a coffee and a chat, which is nice, it gets me out, it gets me to speak to someone, because I don't speak to anyone. Gets me out once a week to speak to mental health once a week, that's pretty much my world" [James]*

*"I was quite down before the [Inform Plus] session, but I feel much better [now] so thanks everyone. I am going to keep motivated to do things". [Paul]*

Connections and relationships forged in a deeper way are also important to the men in this study; however, they acknowledge the importance of more superficial everyday connections too, in terms of how they are able to function and cope with their lives post-arrest.

### 7.3.8 Reconnection

Reconnecting relationships and developing and retaining connections with significant people in the community are key to helping the participants to rebuild their lives after their arrest and then their later sentencing. As both Ashworth (2016) and Heidegger (1962) described, we cannot survive in a vacuum without these connections. To be human means living alongside other people and in this research, those who have intact and cemented relationships, seem to be able to cope better and to be able to rebuild their lives in more significant ways. This is much more difficult for those where their relationships have broken down or are much more fragmented.

Questioning aspects of their lives, part of *being-towards-death*, means that the participants start to think about all of their relationships with others. Both Hugh and James began to question their relationships with their parents after their arrest. Both considered the idea of breaking off their relationship with their parents as a result of this reflection, although neither actually did so during the course of this research. Hugh, in particular, was preoccupied with these issues throughout our interactions.

*“So [I] went to, went to therapy. I felt like I was making really good, like, leaps and breakthroughs in therapy, much quicker than I was expecting. I had this revelation of, ‘oh, my parents are making me feel like shit’” [Hugh]*

*“Exactly, absolutely, it is like, you know, it [the relationship with his parents] is almost something that I just don’t need at the moment, you know, I don’t see (pauses), you know, the more I have talked about how the family dynamic has worked and stuff, the more I think they have been parents in name only” [James]*

Once Hugh had had the revelation about his parents, this became a priority for him and a choice about whether he reconnected or not, similarly James came to identify this difficulty in his relationship with his parents.

Once the people in their lives were aware of their offending, all of the participants had to find ways to reconnect with those people. The relationship that Paul had with his wife and his children was affected by the CJS, with Paul’s wife needing medication for her own mental health as a response.

*“With the medication she was back on it straight away, erm she was also on sleeping tablets to be in bed as well ‘cause she just couldn’t sleep again. Everything was going through her mind, erm, well you can see a big difference in her over the last few months, as well, so I think talking things through [has helped]” [Paul]*

As can be seen in the extract above, and in the one below, Paul prioritised his family relationships whilst under investigation and took the time to focus on and rebuild these.

*“[my] youngest is quite, he’s quite emotional and he seems OK in himself but there’s times where he’s a bit clingy and, erm (pause), just I suppose misses [me] when I’m not there and stuff. So now [I] try to make sure I’m there before he goes to bed and in the morning time for breakfast and things like that so (coughs) yeah, they know what’s happening”. [Paul]*

Paul was in a position where he was fully supported by both his wife and parents and this seemed to make it easier for him to navigate some of the other difficulties, issues and barriers he faced, particularly when compared with the experiences of some of the other participants. Paul acknowledged in the excerpt below the importance of the care and support that he has received from his parents and how he was surprised by how supported he was by his family and the positive impact that this had on him. Reconnecting with his parents after his arrest

helped to strengthen their relationship but also as he identified was an important anchor for him particularly in the really difficult early days of ‘unhomelikeness’.

*“Erm my mum and dad tried to kill me with cups of tea and feed me up so and yeah, so I think just trying to look after myself, and Mum and Dad looked after me, that’s what I needed at the time” [Paul]*

This idea of reconnecting their connections and relationships has been seen in previous research around men desisting from sexual offending behaviour (Harris et al., 2019), here the primary ‘good’ of relationships was most prevalent in the stories of the men in the study with reconnecting a key aspect of this.

As well as the impact on current family ties and relationships, the men’s arrests, subsequent investigations and convictions, affected their abilities to reconnect within their wider communities and to rebuild their lives. It seemed that their own sense of self at these points in their lives affected their relationships with others, even with people who were not aware of their offending.

*“But it would be nice to kind of just move somewhere else and kind of develop a new life and sort of social circle and that kind, following on from all of this is trying to just try and try out things that I’ve never done before and see you know if I join any other kind of circles and I’ve tried that with it so far, so I went to an improv group, yeah, uh, went uh, went to a salsa class”. [Hugh]*

Hugh wanted to avoid the community he lived in, and sink into the anonymity afforded by moving somewhere else. His attempts to reintegrate into his current community were not very successful; he tried a number of activities and ideas to reintegrate – such as the improv group and salsa class - without real success and I wonder how much of that is because of his own sense of who he is, rather than issues within the community more widely, as they do not appear to know about his offending behaviour. Although Hugh knew how important it was to try and reconnect this wasn’t something that he had ever found easy to do and the additional concern about potentially being identified for his crime amplified his anxiety.

Prior research has identified the impact on men’s existing relationships as a result of their licence conditions post-conviction, identifying the difficulties that the men face in rebuilding and reconnecting both in terms of close family relationships and those across the wider community (Mann et al., 2021). This is seen within this research but from a much earlier point than conviction and in a much broader way than just as a result of state-imposed conditions.

### 7.3.9 Connections as rebuilding

*Victory is achieved through relationships, through building bridges (Gorman, 2021)*



As Amanda Gorman so succinctly articulated, relationships, identifying and building the right connections can be instrumental in success and although she was not discussing criminality, this resonates for the lives of these men from the point of arrest onwards.

Paul's wife was shocked, and her world devastated after his arrest; however, they managed to work together to start to rebuild their lives as a family. He was aware that through talking, discussing and opening up to his wife their relationship began to heal, and he had a fresh and altered perspective – *being-towards-death*- on how he had previously been living his life. This was important to rebuild himself and his life and that of his family.

*"I can see she's got a point in that respect [his wife feels that he is neurodivergent and struggles to communicate well] and it is kind of just made me understand myself more erm not not bottle things up and box things away in my head to talk about things. My wife did a lot of talking, we talked a lot over the phone to begin with and gradually saw each other more and more and I suppose the stage [we are at] right now is we see each other every day and I see the boys every day. I'll go down there and for all intents and purposes things seem like a normal family life until I have to leave every night and come home and erm I suppose (pause) suppose obviously the difference is, you know if you want to pop out [to] the shop or something like that then I can't stay with them or can't pick the little fella up from school" [Paul]*

Rebuilding relationships with intimate partners (and in many cases, with children, too) was something that clearly was imperative for each of the participants in this research and can be seen in the wider literature (see for example Harris et al., 2019 and Tewksbury & Connor 2012). Alongside Paul's marriage and children, Hugh was also very affected by the impact on his wife and the impact that his relationship with his wife had on him. Hugh was very clear that without his wife he would have found it hard to extricate himself from his old coping habits, which in his words, were the root of his offending (Bartels & Merdian, 2016 and Merdian et al., 2017).

*"And then didn't really want to speak to anyone [after his arrest]. Oh yeah, so in the first week, maybe longer, I didn't want to speak to anyone. I was really, really down, like wanting to stay in bed. [wife's name] was was in a bad state as well, she actually is amazing in that she, she's kind of stayed by my side the whole time, which I've been told is rare and so if I was left to my own devices, I probably just want to wallow wallow in self-pity and self-despair, like, you know, curled up in a bed, or maybe maybe I would have gone straight back to my addiction, internet addiction habit". [Hugh]*

The importance of close connections in preventing further offending is echoed in prior research (see Harris, 2014 and Mann et al., 2021); these connections are key to helping at least some of these men to desist from further offending behaviour.

Alongside their relationships with significant others in their lives, developing other relationships and connections had many positive impacts on their lives. Those that adopted peer-support roles in prison, for example, can try and resist the impact of 'offender' labels by doing something positive and giving back whilst incarcerated and these skills can then be taken back

into the community to help them to integrate once they are released (Perrin et al., 2018). This was the same with the participants here, many of whom did, or at least tried to, take part in their community; however, this was on the whole not particularly successful due to the restrictions on them, or their own worries that stemmed from stigma and shame. For example:

*“Yeah, I didn't want to. I just, I still miss it [volunteering in the community]. What I missed most was all the people that volunteer are lovely kind people and very friendly and very nice and you know all that sort of thing and it just gave me a bit of a boost up. I love being useful, I love doing things. So I love it ((pause)), being with people, being open with people and I can't be that now because because I don't tell anybody that doesn't need to know what what I've done because I'm ashamed of it. So uh-huh, so yeah, it is just very difficult”. [Steve]*

The men that participated in my research for the most part wanted to feel like they were doing something positive for others, that some of these connections, as well as being beneficial for other people, were also key in other ways to help the participants to start to rebuild their lives. Hugh, amongst others, felt very keenly of the need to support others through a number of initiatives, including by participating in this study, linking with the findings around peer-support in prison as discussed previously (Perrin et al., 2018).

*“When I was contacted and erm asked about your research, Lynsey, and whether I would be ok with it, I have quite a strong feeling of actually wanting to you know, erm, basically help, give, contribute towards this path basically where, erm yeah, I fully agree that there needs to be more research, more awareness” [Hugh]*

*“There is a thing in wider society, you know, where you wouldn't dare to talk to anyone about this other than your most trusted friends and family. And yeah, there is this feeling in society which can't be good and I almost wish, you know, that erm, that if there was a bit more of an education in wider society, then maybe I would have actually like stopped for a second and thought, well you know what, maybe this is something that I need to get help for. Emm yeah, I basically want to find out what I can do to basically stop others being in my, getting into my situation” [Hugh]*

The connections that the participants built through their support, be it formal or informal support, are a beacon for their rebuilding of their lives and their reintegration into the community. One of the benefits of the Inform Plus programme was the connections that help them in this way, as James identified in the excerpt below.

*“Also, that social side, you know, seeing other people's journeys, you know, it helps you to go through your own, you know. And so, some of the stuff that I was going through to know that some of them were going through, or had gone through, that, you know, the niche bits there. So, if one person, well you know, you don't want people feeding off each other, having a space where you can talk normally, I guess you know, having somewhere that you can talk about the process, but then also having somewhere where you can also discuss and learn, you know, what the impact of that is, you know, on you as a person, you know, it was helpful. Not feeling that you are the only one going through that, you know, normal to be going through it in that way. I guess [it] doesn't really make it better but takes the edge off a little bit” [James]*

For James, the step out of his isolation through his involvement in the Inform Plus programme gave him the confidence to start to rebuild. Having the space to talk about his experiences but then also learn from the other men gave him hope. There is also an acknowledgment that these contacts are a lifeline for them, as Paul explains:

*“For me erm the [Inform Plus] course was something that quite early on I realised that it was something that I wanted to do. I immediately phoned the StopItNow! helpline the day after the arrest. I think erm it was obviously really difficult at the time but I think that at the time, that initial contact was just a way of erm [unintelligible]. When I was staying with my mum and dad, to begin with, for me, that was just a way of [unintelligible] that I wanted to improve, that I wanted to get better, and to show that I was doing something about it, that I didn’t want to fall back into it again, and erm, probably, the second or third time that I phoned the helpline, that they mentioned about the course and looking at some of the online modules, I think for me it was just kind of building on that” [Paul]*

Paul acknowledged that the programme was a way to show others that he wanted to change and to rebuild himself, once he had started engaging with LFF it became a practical and positive way for him to rebuild. Simon further commented about the impact that the Inform Plus programme had on his relationships:

*“But as I say yeah it definitely has helped, erm you know, material wise, you know, and the fact that, erm, I’ve been on the course as well has definitely helped family relationships” [Simon]*

Simon’s relationships were strengthened through the learning that he took from the programme sessions. The lack of this type of support more widely, the lack of an understanding that support such as Inform Plus is available, and the sparse specific support for CSEM offending is something that affected the men in this study. Five of the participants tried to reach out to a variety of support options, only to find these were either blocked off from them, or deemed inappropriate, as Simon explained:

*“I tried with [mental health organisation], they accepted me for a couple of weeks and then they contacted the StopItNow helpline! to find out about the course [Inform Plus] and I was told that I couldn’t do them both together erm, which again I found quite upsetting” [Simon]*

The connections that these men make through support, through the LFF, and develop and strengthen across their own friends and family are important in their journey to rebuild their lives as a result of their offending and the subsequent effects of the CJS.

### 7.3.10 Connections as desistance

As well as being important for helping them to cope and to rebuild, relationships are also central to desistance. Findings from a previous study, although not specific to this population, showed that while marriage was not significantly associated with reduced reoffending, stable family support was significantly linked (Walker et al., 2020). Although protective factors are

not opposites of risk factors, protective factors, such as stable relationships, clearly contribute to the reduction of risk (De Vries Robbe et al., 2015).

In this research study, although the men do not specifically talk much about their desistance from offending, it is clear that their relationships are paramount to offence desistance. For some, there are specific aspects of their relationships (outside of those built for support) that are linked to desistance, as Paul articulated here when talking to his wife about his offending and the reasons behind it, which he classed as a type of therapy.

*“I mean to be honest with me, it is you know, she's she's quite, she's like a, she's a support worker. So, she's quite knowledgeable and wise in that respect, anyway, so for me, most of the time, it is been more beneficial than any other counselling sessions that I've got” [Paul]*

There are key attributes to those that desist. They tend to demonstrate an enhanced sense of personal agency, have a stronger internal locus of control, are consistently more able to find positive outcomes from negative events, identify treatment as having provided them with a turning point, and, most strikingly, seem to find a place within a social group or network. In contrast, those that are either more at risk or still actively offending describe themselves as socially alienated or isolated from others (Farmer et al., 2012). It is difficult to assess desistance in isolation within the present study, but desistance is linked with these connective qualities. Both Hugh and Paul, who seem to be better equipped to cope and manage their situations, could be described as demonstrating these qualities. There is certainly a link between their connections, their situation and potentially their ability to desist from offending.

*“They put they put monitoring stuff on your devices or or you just got to tell them what you've got Uhm, just I've just got to tell them what I got and I think a big reason for that is that I was I've been using software that is monitored by [wife's name] and I've made the police aware of that and I think they know that [wife's name] is my kind of, uh, she's my ally so she gets that kind of state reports on a weekly basis so yeah I don't have any extra when it's in software” [Hugh]*

Hugh's relationship with his wife meant that she was helping him to desist from offending both in terms of her emotional support and in the connection that she had with him but also in a practical sense as Hugh described here.

A number of the participants, for example, Steve, Simon H and James R, struggle with developing or maintaining a social network and therefore group sessions, such as Inform Plus, could be argued to be important to help them to develop those skills and to have that social environment. In other research, men were most successful desisting when they had created their own social networks almost entirely independently of their formal treatment group. According to many men, the conversations that were most valuable to them were the ones they shared before and after their scheduled treatment sessions (McCartan et al., 2021). This

is echoed here through the discussions with the men around the Inform Plus programme but could also be an argument for the need for in-person groups and the 'coffee pot' or 'water cooler' chat that would accompany these.

*"The men's course obviously that's going to be different erm, but I suppose for me, it'll be a good chance to see erm, see from other people's perspective about what happened with them, and why and different. Kind of the strategies they've got to help themselves and I suppose I suppose it is the first time to think and it is not just me". [Paul]*

One of the key aspects of the Inform Plus programme that Paul was anticipating as a positive were the discussions with the other men in the group and how they had been successful in their ability to desist and cope with their situation. This type of support (Inform Plus and other similar support programmes) could be seen as increasingly important for people who have committed these types of offences. TS described the practical way in which for him (as someone who had been previously convicted of prior CSEM offences) that support provided through Inform Plus was vital to help him not to reoffend.

*"For me, I've kind of er, I've er kind of started to realise a way of realising when I'm starting slipping back into the same old patterns that I was in erm 10 years ago erm. But now I have so far, at least, developed a way [through Inform Plus] where I can kind of put a system in place where I can kind of, where I can kind of prevent any of that from happening again" [TS],*

As Harris et al. (2019) and Kras (2014) have argued, since those convicted of sexual offences are increasingly restricted from obtaining employment or relationships, strategies that support internal desistance are especially relevant to supporting the cessation of crime among this population and the input and activities around programmes such as Inform Plus can be vital. Weaver and McNeil (2014) argued that work to support desistance should extend far beyond the traditional punishment focus of the CJS and into a deeper engagement with the reconnection of the individual to social networks that allow people to fulfil their part within communities. Taking that further, as Paul and others raised across the Inform Plus programme and in my interactions with them, being able to access support at the point of or before offending could prove beneficial in terms of preventing offending and reoffending earlier. This support is required both in terms of the underlying issues, such as mental health or addiction, and the behaviour itself. It could be beneficial to the men who are at that point of offending or who are considering offending, their families and the wider CJS, which is currently struggling to manage the investigation and prosecution of sexual crimes, particularly with the added technical burden required with these offences (Justice, 2019 and Seto, 2017).

*"Now I've said many times over to my wife, you know, I wish that there was a way that I had found something like StopItNow before to be able to talk about things and realise where my head was at in terms of depression and anxiety and I think 'the knock' was kind of like, it felt kind of like a reset button was pressed" [Paul]*

Other research has highlighted that through the “check-ins” prisoners were able to offer support to each other; the supports and challenges that they could rely on most were those that they provided to each other, outside of the therapy room (McCartan et al., 2021). For those on Inform Plus, therefore, being able to check in with each other and the facilitators at the start and end of each session of the programme and to have more informal chats between themselves, as well as offering their input with each other as the course develops, were all vital mechanisms through which the men can learn to rebuild their connections. This blueprint to help them to rebuild their connections outside of the programme could be a key aspect of desistance.

### 7.3.11 Summary

Making connections, both in terms of building and rebuilding connections with family, friends and the community more widely, along with more everyday social connections, is a vital thread throughout this research that enables the men to gain traction in their desistance and their ways of coping with the effects of their offending and subsequent CJS involvement, and more longer-term, to rebuild their lives. This research lends support to the importance of interpersonal relationships for this population (Harris et al., 2019). Therefore, support that enables them to find ways to build and rebuild these relationships and gain confidence in engaging in everyday social connections seems to be fundamental to more positive outcomes.

## 7.4 Unexpectedness

### 7.4.1 Introduction

As detailed in the previous chapter, which outlined the phases of the CJS experience, participants reflect that, for the most part, the arrest (‘the knock’) is unexpected for them. They are caught completely off guard, with some even making an assumption that the police were attending for other reasons, rather than for their CSEM offending. This unexpectedness, however, extends across the whole of their CJS journey and it is a defining feature of their experience. This unexpectedness is also much wider than just the specific aspects of the CJS, such as arrest, charge and sentencing, it also encompasses their experience with other relevant organisations, such as social care and support organisations. This unexpectedness intersects with many aspects of their lives, such as their relationships and their identity. The unexpectedness makes life feel ‘off balance’ to the men and the participants find it difficult to readjust and to get ‘on an even keel’ with their lives. There are a number of aspects that underpin this unexpectedness and this section explores these.

#### 7.4.2 Lack of information and knowledge about the CJS

The CJS is, as we have seen from previous sections, a complex often unwieldy system that is difficult to understand and navigate. The participants and other men in a similar situation to them need both information and to engage with people from various organisations through the system to be able to reach a successful outcome or at least journey through to the end of the process.

The importance of information about the CJS, and the lack of this that they receive throughout the system, is something that features for every participant across their journeys in this research. This lack of information is not something that they expect, and contrary to other public services where knowledge and information are considered paramount, for example the NHS (see Colledge et al., 2008), this lack of information within the CJS is somewhat surprising. None of the men seem to know, or are told, what is going to happen along the course of the CJS process and this lack of knowledge was unexpected and had negative consequences for them. They also did not necessarily realise that they were lacking in knowledge and information until they were provided with some, often much later into their CJS experience than was helpful. James and Paul explain:

*“Having that information [about the CJS] does help and having that contact with others going through it and how their experiences have been and you know they are not too dissimilar to your own or at least the whole process” [James]*

*“I suppose little snippets of information about things come more from like speaking to someone on the Lucy Faithful helpline, on the stopitnow helpline, because they've, they come into contact with people who are going through this process all the time erm you [are] just kind of stuck and not knowing what you should do next, like in social services, when I mentioned they came out and spoke to me, erm they wrote up their report [risk assessment of him], sent a copy to my wife and I didn't get a copy, so at that point I still didn't know what was meant to happen, but but for the fact that, you know, by that stage, me and my wife were on speaking terms and trying to work well together [Paul]*

Those who have committed sex offences and are sent to prison often have very limited understandings of the legal restrictions when they are released (Tewksbury & Copes, 2013). In addition, accounts from those who were about to be released reveal that they generally hold positive expectations for their reintegration back into the community, although often this is not what they then experience on their return (Tewksbury & Copes, 2013). Those returning to the community from prison reflect the belief that they will be able to draw upon personal, familial, and social resources to avoid the consequences of stigmatization (Tewksbury, 2012). This existing research would seem to suggest that there is both a lack of information and a lack of preparation for those being released from prison but my research suggests that this rolls over into this population where the majority are not imprisoned and serve their sentence in the

community. Although this prior research is set in the USA, it would also certainly seem to be the case for the participants in this study, as TS discussed in this excerpt from his interview:

*“yes, as I say beforehand, I just didn’t never knew [LFF] even existed. Bearing in mind I’ve been in the [criminal justice] system for 10/11 years now and I was never referred to any of that [LFF support and information] the first time round. As I say I’ve been working with my support [offender] manager for, and he’s never mentioned any kind of support or anything. T’s kind of in a good way, it is in a roundabout way. It is a good thing that kind of this has happened because now I’ve got the support behind me now as well so yeah” [TS]*

The lack of knowledge and information about the CJS and support that they could access was compounded by the shock and trauma of what happened to them once their offending comes to the attention of the CJS. Consequently, they did not always register the information that they were provided for support, at the time they were given it. Other than being told it will take a long time for the offence to be processed, the information given to them by the police, probation, court, and even their own solicitor, was very scant:

*“What’s going to happen to me now? So the solicitor, and the investigating officers, they made mention to the concept of receiving only a caution and the really kind of distressing thing is where, since then, and you know, not to now, I feel like, there is a likelihood of me only being cautioned, but I find it very hard, I get conflicting feedback so, you know, the police officer might say one thing like oh you know, it is a very long process and in all likelihood cautions are only kind of given out. You, you’ve got to have like a very minimal number of of low-grade content, to even think about [a] caution, oh and what’s the word, [the] commissioner is like going hard on on on this” [Hugh]*

Here Hugh identified the lack of information and clear guidance for men in a similar position to him. He was given the possibility and the hope of receiving a caution (although he still does not seem to grasp or be informed of the implications of this even), although there was also the suggestion that, politically, cautions were not favoured and so it was potentially unlikely. The importance of receiving clear, helpful information about the CJS and what will happen to them is paramount for many reasons. An understanding allows some form of control over the situation that the men find themselves in and the ability to make informed decisions that affect them and their families. Although information seems to be scant, and often conflicting from CJS organisations, the men receive much more information from other services, such as the LFF:

*“Share you know how things were going, you know, because it was really useful, you know, the whole thing about explaining about court and that you go to magistrates and stuff, well for me, you know, that really helped, so you know when I went to the police station to fill out the register form you know and no one had told me other than on the [Inform Plus] course that I needed to do that and if they hadn’t well I just wouldn’t have turned up” [James]*

James described that he was not given the information that he needed (because he wasn’t given it or didn’t take it in at his sentencing) to sign onto the Sex Offenders Register and mused



that if he had not attended the Inform Plus programme, he would have not had any idea that he needed to go and register and would therefore have been in breach of the order.

This lack of information about the CJS processes is wider than just the official CJS organisations; very little information was given to the participants from, for example, healthcare or social care either. This extended to the information provided to their wider family, as well as themselves:

*“Yeah, it is not, it is social care [that] got involved so social workers got involved with my wife, they were OK with everything an’ just disappeared, left my wife to do it [manage his contact with the children and support the children], so you know, so to a certain extent, you know, she feels she has been totally abandoned” [James]*

None of the men involved with social care received updates from social care themselves without asking, they had to get information through their family or through their perseverance. This was particularly fraught for those with a fractured relationship with their partner/previous partner or family, such as Simon. A lack of information about support for them around their offending and the CJS, about support for their health and their mental health, through more formal channels, such as mental health services, was limited and very patchy. However, some of the participants accessed relevant information from the LFF:

*“There was always something each week to get out of the [Inform Plus] material but I suppose there was one thing that stood out for me [which] was the way the course was presented in terms of [unintelligible] all the way through it, the challenge and the difficulty in it, and some couple of subjects that I found useful really in terms of the mental health side of things and obviously the criminal justice [side], so really for me, those were the two areas” [Paul]*

One of the clear benefits and positives to the Inform Plus programme and the services provided by the LFF more widely was the information that they provided to the participants, from the helpline, online resources and through the programme itself:

*“[talking about Inform Plus] You know training your mind and why that was and things, erm it gives you that, erm you know, all the course content was brilliant, you know, really important and really useful, you know, having those, getting an understanding of things, you know, spotting triggers and stuff, I think is massive” [James]*

*“[talking about Inform Plus] I thought I was, that the course has sort of made me realise that you know nice people make mistakes, erm and there’s reasons for these mistakes. The good thing about the course for me was that although I did know what my triggers were, erm identifying triggers, the footsteps, putting things in place, [a] tool box, you know” [Simon]*

Information about the key components of the CJS, how the process works and what to expect at each point was seen by the men here and from wider research (see for example McCartan et al., 2021) as both currently lacking and much needed. One of the positives from support such as that provided by the LFF is the information provided about the CJS but also around the men’s wider, more holistic needs, such as their mental health (Dervley et al., 2017).

### 7.4.3 Fairness and procedural justice

The participants all found that their navigation of the CJS brought them into contact with not only CJS organisations but a wider array of organisations and other processes such as those across social care and mental health services. Procedural justice, where citizens are being treated and perceive themselves to be treated fairly, is a cornerstone of the legitimacy of the law (see for example Hollander-Blumhoff, 2008) but with their CJS involvement bringing about contact with other related and associated services and organisations, this need for perceived fairness and legitimacy would seem to widen out to include these other related organisations and this needs to be considered too, as it was discussed often by the participants. It was unexpected for them to not be treated fairly.

The participants often commented that they ‘deserved whatever they get’, at least initially, but as their experience of the CJS progressed, they experienced a number of issues that they perceived to be unexpected and unfair.

*“Just waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting like it seems as though until this is all over with and I’m punished whatever that might be which I deserve it’s just sort on hanging on by the thread really wondering what it’s all about” [Steve]*

As Steve articulated here, although he deserved the punishment that he will get through sentencing, the length of time that the process has taken felt unfair to him.

A number of participants noted that they ended up ‘playing the game’ or ‘box ticking’ through many of the processes and with many of the personnel from these organisations, something that I have mentioned previously in this thesis. As Ricky discussed in the following excerpt from his interview, probation and other services did not feel as if they were there to support the men. He felt they were there to tick the boxes, which hampered the open and honest relationship needed for him to feel supported:

*“So, you quickly learn, “I’m fine, thanks’, you don’t have like a kind of, open personal relationship with probation because you feel that if you are honest with them that could have consequences” [Ricky]*

Probation should be there to support the men, help them to rehabilitate and desist from offending so to be treated in this way felt unfair to Ricky (something echoed across the stories of the men) and had the added issue of not supporting the men here to engage in the process something that could be detrimental to their ability to desist (Mann et al., 2021). The participants in other research also felt that the CJS was bureaucratic and administrative, with the service providers within it being functional rather than proactive or innovative (also see McCartan et al., 2021). This could be seen to some extent in the scoping review (see for example Tovey et al., 2022 and Woodward, 2018). Participants in both the UK and the USA

expressed that the criminal justice systems were quite restrictive, isolationist, difficult to navigate, and overly punitive in nature (McCartan et al., 2021). This unexpected and frustrating navigation of the CJS is articulated by James below:

*"[when discussing going into the police station] You just can't rest almost because you keep psyching yourself up to go in, and that is you know a lot of pressure, and then it sort of, you know goes, and looks like the rug has been pulled from under you, and it is, so it [being rebailed] goes again for a later date, and sometimes it is a relief and sometimes it is just really frustrating" [James]*

The constant changes and the length of time that had occurred for James during the investigation was frustrating, difficult to cope with and very restrictive because he was focused on the date and mentally and emotionally prepared for that date only to find it changed, something that happened repeatedly and not just for him but this was an issue for all of the men here.

*"Well I think it is the issue that nobody [in the CJS] works together, it is just like, 'well does my section work?', so yes, someone has been charged, so yes, that has worked, tick that bit off, and you know, all these different agencies, you know, they should be working together but they don't, and it's all duplication, or it is just a complete black hole, you know, really seriously looking back, you know, now some of the things that I worried about no one else seems to really care about, you know, they've ticked the box there and nothing else really matters, it just, it seems crazy, you do feel completely, a little bit you know, not knowing what is going on, you are literally just sat there waiting for everything" [James]*

Again, James described how for him it was isolating and restrictive ("complete black hole") to have little idea of what is happening or when. Perceived fairness and legitimacy are difficult to achieve when people feel as if they are not treated as individuals and that the process and the system are more important than they are, as can be seen in James's extracts above. The seemingly superficial mental health assessment and more general risk aversion that characterises aspects of the CJS magnify these issues, as can be seen in Steve's extract:

*"Yeah, because there wasn't somebody in the in the police station who was qualified to sign to say that I wasn't gonna go away and kill myself. I was I was there until about five, five thirty and but but then that they decided that I had enough by then and brought me home" [Steve]*

None of the participants talk about this mental health assessment in the police station being a useful process and Paul in particular noted that there was no follow up after the arrest, and at the time of his arrest, he had not realised that it would have an impact on his mental health.

*"Not long before I was leaving the station I must have been there about three hours or so in terms of my interview. My legal representative told me to return no comment to all the questions that I was asked but one thing that does spring to mind is the local mental health actually came in to speak with me and ask how I was, ask[ed] if there was any kind of suicidal thoughts or thoughts of self harm and I suppose, at that time, although I was I kind of, realised that I was feeling really low, it hadn't hit me at that time" [Paul]*

Although it is acknowledged that there is an issue with poor mental health, suicidal ideation and actual suicide risk among this population, as discussed in the literature (Kothari et al., 2021 and Steel et al., 2021) and for example in the operational guidance provided to police officers (College of Policing, 2021), the risk is post-arrest, and therefore to successfully manage this risk in the most appropriate way, a change in the process would be required. It is understandable why the participants felt that this was part of the box ticking exercise; on their release there was little actual aftercare provided for them. Paul was released to find his way back to his parents' house, terrified of how he was going to be received, and identified the shock and trauma he felt, and James had to drive over 100 miles back to his parents' house and thought at this point about crashing his car into the central reservation. The description here suggests that the CJS provides a cursory attempt at ticking a box to support mental health without this being helpful, practical or supportive for the men here and both unexpected and unfair when reflected upon.

In part, these findings confirm previous studies on the perceptions of fairness of those that have committed sexual offences (Brannon et al., 2007). Those that hold positive views of fairness seem to be attributable partly to positive relationships with supervising officers, and linked to their confidence in the accuracy and fairness of professionals' risk assessments (Kemshall et al., 2012). Issues around procedural fairness were also raised, for example that registration and notification applies across a range of sexual offending, and the duration of registration itself (Mann et al., 2021; Rose, 2020 and Woodward, 2018). Most of the respondents felt they were not treated with fairness, understanding, and compassion by investigators, and that their primary psychological strains were going to jail and their families finding out (Brannon et al., 2007). Prior research highlights the need for more empathetic investigative approaches, as well as the need for more rapid assessment and treatment of proximal suicide risk in this population (Steel et al., 2022). Here, I would add that better aftercare post-arrest needs to be a priority. This was further illustrated by Paul:

*I mean that's the biggest thing, like I just felt like, just your world has been shaken up turned upside down and then erm it is like, "Bye, you're on bail, see you whenever".[Paul]*

The participants do not just identify the fairness and procedural justice from their own perspective, the CJS process and the way that they and their families are treated by the CJS and wider organisations has a detrimental impact on their close family. James has children with additional needs, and this seems to have been disregarded by all organisations across the CJS and his perceived unnecessarily punitive bail conditions (which were not to have any contact with his children other than by audio telephone calls) exacerbate the issues that his family experienced as well as himself. These conditions do not seem to be based around harm or risk but seem to be blanket conditions exercised differently through different organisations

(for example here the National Crime Agency and social care). James talked about the impact for his family:

*"It is extremely difficult, the poor kid is in that situation, when I get support, and partners, wives, children seem to be forgotten to a certain extent in the whole process" [James]*

Alongside the CJS process and system, fairness can be impacted by the way that the men are treated by individuals employed in the CJS, as we have already seen in the previous section. James had issues with both how he was treated by the CJS process and the individuals involved in his mental health pathway.

*"I was in touch with a suicide line who was supporting me but on Saturday erm because I haven't responded quick enough to a message they sent round, the police who didn't phone me, they came round and broke into the flat. So, I've got to replace my door, they try to have [me] sectioned but [the] mental health [team] fortunately found me competent. [James]*

The unexpected unfairness that he perceived as a result of his treatment affected his relationship with the crisis team/mental health staff and the police. Ricky found that the lack of perceived consistency and fairness and perhaps a lack of understanding and information around sentencing was a frustration for him.

*"That there was, you know, a broad spectrum of things that were not on the same level yeah, not judging it seems that's it, someone who has sex with two children over decades gets three years seven months. We look at stuff on a computer and get three years and a lifetime of a sexual harm prevention order which never expires" [Ricky]*

For Ricky, his viewing of CSEM is deemed on par and sentenced in a similar way to someone that has committed contact sexual offences with a child, something that he does not feel is fair or just.

In an ideal world, there would be a seamless relationship between delivering interventions that focus on risk factors causally associated with sexual reoffending, and the subsequent release of, and ongoing support for, those that commit sex offences into the community. However, emotionally fuelled and uninformed public responses to news of released 'sex offenders', and the legislation such responses have inspired, severely hinder this process (Willis et al., 2010). These reactions are not just exhibited by the wider public. Those involved in CJS and the wider organisations that affect these men also exhibit these reactions and opinions, and this impacts how they respond to people investigated or convicted for sexual offences (see Kothari et al., 2021). Both Ricky and James noted the opinion of the person in the police station when they attended to sign the Sex Offenders Register, they identified and felt stigmatised by the reaction. As Ricky articulated, the courtesy of using a private room would minimise the risk to men in his position.

*“I went down to register at the local police station and no one, as you can imagine, it is not a pleasant experience anyway, and how it should happen is this, you know, you know go in a nice side room, nice bit of privacy, filling your forms, get any questions out the way that anybody has and off you go but I went and there was this chap who was adamant he wasn't going to have any of that nonsense, and so I went in and said, ‘I'm here to update my address for your records’ as quiet as possible. ‘Right, I'll get the appropriate paperwork. I'll be out in a moment; we'll go and find a side office’. His actual answer was at the top of his voice, as loud as he could possibly manage, ‘what you're here to update your details for the sex offender register?’ and then everything I said, my address, for example, he then repeated back at full volume for everybody's benefit and so everybody was in no doubt exactly why I was there” [Ricky]*

Speaking to the men and their families would help to highlight what good treatment by CJS professionals looks like and where there are issues in the system to be improved. This has been done in other challenging areas already, such as in psychiatric care, (Stuart et al., 2017). In a study around patients in acute psychiatric care, they perceived compulsory treatment as good if they were given good care, if they were given the shelter they needed and if they were given help with understanding what was happening (Andreasson & Skarsater, 2012). Preparation of individual action plans for the future were suggested as a way to empower patients during compulsory treatment and improve their experience of care (Andreasson & Skarsater, 2012). Patients in acute psychiatric care represent another group of people who are subjected to processes beyond their control. The patients' involvement and understanding had a very positive impact on their perspective and perception of their care and treatment and these ideas could be extrapolated to the population within my own research.

Although not exactly the same sphere, James noted a very similar response around the importance of involvement and understanding:

*“So, you know there just doesn't seem to be any sort of, you know, it was a bit of a shock you know starting the [Inform Plus] course and you know learning that the others have that that you know have contact often that is you know Simon to have that contact and things like that and there seems to be some sort of hiccup with the way bail works. You know initially there was no contact then it went to phone calls and in the first bail extension that had to go through court I had to fill out loads of forms to try and get video contact and I was told it was turned down. Then it went back to court again and so I had to fill out all the same forms again and we were told that, and my solicitor was chasing the police because we had been told that they were being supportive and that they had last time but the police first told that ‘oh we are just rubbing stamping paperwork we can't make any changes to bail’ because that then felt quite harsh. They then approached the police custody sergeant who just changed it there and then to allow videos so you know there was an initial three months with no phone calls and then another three months where both of us you know my wife and I wanted video calls and it was just turned down and then they just point blank refused to facilitate any sort of face-to-face contact” [James]*

We can see in James's extract that being under close supervision by the police gave rise to multiple tensions. Thus, in a similar way to those with mental health conditions (Andreasson

& Skarsater, 2012), the perception of fairness, and consistency of treating these men as individuals, is key.

#### 7.4.4 Unexpected impact on health (mental and physical)

Inevitably, from a review of relevant prior research, but unexpectedly for the men, there is an impact on their mental and physical health (see for example Gillespie et al., 2018 and Kothari et al., 2021). In contrast to what could potentially be predicted this is not always wholly negative. In line with the theory espoused by Heidegger (1962), *being-towards-death* provides an awareness of their life situation and the need to make changes to rebuild and desist. Previous literature has attempted to explore the impact on mental health in this population, and those that commit sex offences more widely, either directly, or as an aspect of the study (see for example Gillespie et al., 2018 and Steel et al., 2022). I touched on mental health in the previous findings chapter, but here, the unexpectedness around their health is discussed. Suicidal thoughts and active attempts at suicide are commonly discussed in the literature around this population of people (see for example Key et al., 2021) and are expressed by a number of the participants here.

*“Yeah, yeah, I did contemplate that but I don’t know how serious I could have gone. I don’t think I could have done it, cos I’ve got two children and what would they think, you know, if I committed suicide. You know, if their father committed suicide” [James R]*

James R contemplated ending his life after his initial arrest; this was unexpected for him as it wasn’t something that he had ever considered previously and brought into sharp focus the impact of his offending and the CJS on him and the potential impact that both this offending and ending his life would have on his family. The stigma and impact of suicide is arguably more acutely detrimental than his offending for him here. Similarly, Simon also actively discussed his unexpected suicidal thoughts after his arrest and again for him the potential impact on his children is the key focus that prevents him from killing himself. Simon and James discussed this in the group discussion after the Inform Plus programme ended, because in contrast to the other two (James R and Simon), James felt that his family would be much better off if he was dead. The stigma of suicide for him was less impactful than the stigma of his offending and the impact that that had on his ability to provide for his family.

The negative impact of the CJS on the participants’ mental health was articulated by them when talking to me, but interestingly, their arrest forced them to take a step back, reassess their lives and think about their offending, which led a number of the participants identifying that their mental health was poor whilst they were offending, but they had not been consciously and overtly aware of this.

*“I suppose everything coming to a head had just kind of made me realize how I have been suffering with my mental health. Kind of and I suppose it is not the best way but it has kinda made me address things” [Paul]*

Paul explained here that he was able to access help and support after identifying his mental health issues as a result of his offending behaviour. Hugh also mentioned that the police officer in his interview flagged up the possibility of mental health issues, which he had not identified himself. He stated that when he was younger, a teacher had commented that he could have depression. This inability to identify, or seek help, for these issues does seem to be a feature of the men in this population but also is an issue around masculinity more widely (see for example Seidler et al., 2018).

Managing suicidal thoughts and negative mental states is important for this population with the restrictions on their lives and their families actively increasing the negative impact on their mental states (Jeglic et al., 2013). Destabilised men who are already struggling are further negatively impacted in this way and may find it more difficult to reintegrate back into the community, exacerbating this negative circle. Alongside this negative impact there are, however, and perhaps surprisingly, some positive health benefits seen within this research. The identification of these negative mental health issues, and the acknowledgement of this as a factor in their offending, does allow the men a way to seek help and support, and all of the men who took part in this project reached out somewhere for help and support at different times along their journeys. For example:

*“I was doing a lot of the self-help modules erm at stopitnow! erm I was just trying to get out and go for big walks 'cause the the weather was quite nice back then so I was just out walking a lot and and like you mentioned before about physical and mental health my physical health got a hell of a lot better lost, I probably lost about a stone and a half erm which in itself just helps as much as getting some kind of exercise” [Paul]*

As Paul noted here, not only did he have the impetus to seek help and manage his mental health but his change of lifestyle as a result of his response to his arrest leads to better physical health. This was echoed by Steve who also found that his physical health improved as he lost weight and ate more healthily as a way to help him to cope with his situation.

#### 7.4.5 Precarity of their lives

From the moment of their arrest, the men described in various ways how precarious their life became. They lived in fear and the length of time under investigation without knowing what was going to happen next made life feel precarious for the participants. The rapid and unexpected change in their circumstances after ‘the knock’ and the continuing aftershocks meant that everyday living and surviving was often a challenge, which resonated with stories



from other men in a similar circumstance (see Harris et al., 2019). Finding aspects of their lives that are not in flux, and that help them to reorient, was difficult.

*“I guess you know 80% of the time you know I am struggling but I am trying you know I know I’ve said to you I am trying to find things to cling onto you know almost open up you know if I can find one thing that feels ok then I cling onto that and make something of that” [James]*

The knock was unexpected for all of the participants, even though they knew that what they were doing was illegal. This was illustrated in, for example, the stories of both Hugh and James R, who thought that the police had attended for some completely different reason than their arrest for CSEM offences (covered in the previous findings chapter). The men never seem to know what was going to happen or when, across the CJS. This living in fear of the unknown future was encapsulated by their worry about being found out about their offending and this was exacerbated by the process of the CJS and the length of time that the process took.

Unexpected contact by police and other agencies as the investigation progressed was difficult for the participants, partly because it increased the likelihood of others finding out about their offending, but also because it was an unexpected ‘mental knock’ each time it occurred, taking them back to the shock that they experienced at their arrest. The ongoing nature of the investigation and being contacted ‘out of the blue’ was difficult, as Hugh explained:

*“So, there’s so much uncertainty [about the investigation] that my core mentality is that I’m trying to just see how I’m doing on a week or day by day basis” [Hugh]*

Hugh went on to describe that this was always exacerbated by contact from the police or other agency. The police in particular made unexpected contact through phone calls or visits in person and this was difficult for the participants to manage, living in a constant state of anxiety and flux as a result. James recounted a number of incidents where this happened to him. Officers in uniform attended his address to obtain his telephone number, something that he found both anxiety provoking and perplexing as he had the same phone that the police gave him after his arrest and was using the same phone number. The panic that rose when the police arrive unexpectedly was articulated by James:

*“Yeah, she sent two PCSOs in uniform to turn up at my front door to get my phone number. I asked why did she do that, I did give them my phone number and do you know when I saw them coming you know logically, I did think you know I know that I’ve not done anything wrong and to be fair if there was an issue I wouldn’t expect two PCSOs to turn up. But then your mind does well I guess you don’t want people to see either I mean uniformed officers coming to the door I mean you know if I look out, I can see everything you know. They ring the bell and you know someone else answers the door or comes out at the same time and then it is all the gossips going round you know so you know I did give them the number but I couldn’t understand why they hadn’t got it because it is the number and the phone the NCA gave me” [James]*

James also had an unexpected issue with the police when he was out for lunch with his parents. The police attended his home and then the restaurant as they had been alerted by another organisation as a result of a concern over his suicidal ideation. James was removed from the restaurant he was in with his parents and taken to hospital. This not only led to a very public incident that involved his parents who he already had a frayed relationship with, as well as the fact that the police broke his home front door down prior to finding him at the restaurant, and he then had all of that to sort out.

**James:** *The police broke in and I was out for lunch with my parents they didn't try to phone me and I was like I don't understand so they tracked me down I was surrounded by 5 policemen and it was a public place.*

**LF:** *While you're out for lunch?*

**James:** *((overlaps)) called an ambulance yeah yeah it is called an ambulance took me to hospital because my heart rate wouldn't go down yeah no yeah it was about an hour after it was still really high so that we need to take, you know take you in and things but once it went down in hospital, I just discharged myself I could hear one of that senior nurses on the phone they sat me in a cubicle next to the reception desk talking about me as there's a failed suicide just fob him off to out of hours so I discharged myself so there's no reason for me to be there for that yeah that I wasn't there as a failed suicidal I was there because my heart rate wouldn't go down.*

Clearly, incidents like this added to James feeling like he was living 'on the edge', exacerbated his anxiety and further deteriorated the relationships he had with the authorities and other organisations. As he also worried and acknowledged these experiences also increased the likelihood of others in the community being alerted about his offending.

For Steve, social care, and the school where his friend's child attended, were informed about his offending, and he later heard that there was also a comment made by the probation officer that suggested that Steve had groomed his friend when she was younger, as they had met when she was only eighteen.

*"When I was first convicted, the probation lady had a meeting at the school with police and with social services and with someone from the school about [my friend's son] I and I don't know if any names were mentioned or anything but my point is the the probation lady then afterwards ran through the meeting and said that it was obvious that he [his friend's son] really wasn't abused in any way. He's a happy child blah blah blah blah blah but they did wonder whether I've been grooming [friend's name] I hit the roof. I met her when she was 18 and that was what they were talking about" [Steve]*

Again, as well as the unexpectedness of these encounters for Steve and this aspect of the process, this also increased the likelihood of his offending being exposed into the community.

Lastly, the precarity that is most brought into focus when the participants start to feel that they are regaining some aspects of control in their lives, or life regains some semblance of balance, only for the next aftershock to hit and for the turmoil to continue. This happened for all of the

participants and on a number of occasions across their journeys. Although arguably this is a description of life for most people to some extent, for these men, it was very difficult to regain any kind of control, balance or normality whilst they journeyed through the CJS, and these events happened with much more regularity and they struggled to cope. Continuing on from James's public incident with the police, both a psychiatrist that he knew, and then later a number of others, attended his address. Later, James learned that there were issues with the referral process that had caused these additional visits and additional stress.

*"It took three hours to get them out it shouldn't and then a car pulled up outside and I thought oh that person really looks like my psychiatrist and it was so she turned up and she started chatting and lucky for me I guess I've been really honest with them and she said ok and then she left after about another half an hour and I thought you know well that's that wasn't expecting any of it but you know and then about 2 hours later three more turned up to assess me under the mental health act and I was like oh god you know and by then I was like well it had been a stressful enough day" [James]*

These issues in communication between services would be stressful, uncomfortable and difficult for anyone; however, James was already feeling suicidal and under investigation by the police for his CSEM offending. There was an inevitable impact on his mental health of these unexpected visits. These issues in communication between services would be stressful, uncomfortable and difficult for anyone; however, James was already feeling suicidal and was under investigation by the police for his CSEM offending. There was an inevitable impact on his mental health of these unexpected visits.

Aspects of the men's lives that they put into place to help them to make connections and rebuild also feed into this precarity. All of the participants across their CJS journeys took part in activities or made connections vital to their reintegration and rebuilding; however, these connections were jeopardised by the nature of the investigation and the nature of their offending behaviour. Steve began volunteering as a way to both try to make amends for his offending, to try and give back to the community, and to make himself feel like he was being useful. However, once he was charged for CSEM offences, he took the decision to stop volunteering because he felt that if anyone found out it would put them in a difficult position. This was a difficult decision for him as he had enjoyed volunteering, found it rewarding and it was an opportunity to get out of the house and fill up his day. The men discussed this precarity in their mental health and their day-to-day struggles in the group discussion:

**James:** *For me its erm still a very dark place erm you know I'm still erm taking things one day at a time you know erm some days you know I do feel better and a bit more positive and other days you come crashing*

**Simon:** *((interrupts)) crashing down yes*

Other researchers have described the unexpectedness and the negative consequences of CJS involvement and the traumatic stress of reintegration (Liem & Kunst, 2013 and Listwan et al., 2013).

#### 7.4.6 Unexpected and pervasive family impact

I have covered this in the previous findings chapter to some degree but the impact on family is part of the unexpected effects of the CJS for the men themselves and their families; the impact on their family has a cumulative impact on aspects of their own experience too, which bears deeper examination here. The men, such as James, Paul and Simon who had children, not only lost the contact that they had, but the mothers (wives/partners/ex) became effectively single parents unexpectedly and overnight, and had to cope with not only the unexpected and traumatic emotional experience of ‘the knock’ and its aftershocks themselves, but also the pragmatic and practical impact that this had on them and caring for the children. The sudden erasure of the participants, as partners and fathers, from the lives of their families and children appears to be understandably devastating. Hugh discussed this with regard to his wife:

*“So upset and distraught every evening, it was like the evening she would like break down and everything would kind of like crumble. She couldn't hold it together anymore and she kind of said this to me, I'd say the first month post knock she was not in a good place and the tool was talking about it definitely was good and it helped in that this thing we are on, we still are, we're on a bit of a seesaw where we are both acknowledging each other's mental health issues”*  
[Hugh]

Paul's wife and children found this difficult too, with his wife, as I have already noted returning to using medication to help manage her downturn in mental health. Paul and his wife worked hard to improve the situation, but it was still really difficult.

*“Yeah, everything's been good really I suppose and I know when everything first happened, they found it very hard to get their heads around and understand things and you know I tried to talk to them as much as I could about things but It is just hard”* [Paul]

Family members, in particular, those most impacted, such as a partner or former partner, can be impacted as much and in the same ways as the men themselves (Evans et al., 2023). The participants acknowledged the difficulties experienced by their families and, by extension, how that further negatively affected themselves. James, in particular, was very vocal in our interactions about the impact on families and the lack of support for families, particularly from social care.

*“I think sometimes to settle in my own mind you know the impact it could have on kids, the impact on [wife's name]. I mean it seems like the more people that get added into the mix makes that little bit harder, I'm almost reigning myself back to a certain extent to say but you know it is the impact on the kids”* [James]

This second excerpt from James focused on the pressure that his ex-wife was under from others around how to manage the situation:

*"She's hearing that [negative comments about him] from all her family and all our friends. So, I'm quite lucky that she does actually talk to me. I guess but I think getting that day in day out is proving difficult for her erm yeah so when she does move she's said she's just gonna cut everybody out of her life but because of all the negativity things like that" [James]*

In a similar way to how James had managed the situation, as well as others such as Hugh and Paul from this study, her solution was to isolate herself when she was able to. The lack of support here seems to have made it difficult for James's family to have options and ideas on how to manage the experience. Simon's mum became the person who supervised all of his time with his children, which took its toll on both her and their relationship. He noted that she has been trying to manage her own emotions about the situation, whilst trying to help and support Simon.

*"I think anger creeps in doesn't it, they [talking about his mum] wanna stand by you but it's hard" [Simon]*

And for TS, his offending becoming known at his work had a detrimental impact on his mum in relation to her own work, as I have already noted, but also a deterioration as a result in their relationship; something that many years later he was still trying to work on.

Trying to navigate the CJS and the impact on the family is extremely difficult. James was not able to have any contact with his children in any way other than by telephone for many months and had not spoken to his eldest child at all, as her difficulties meant that she was unable to communicate by telephone.

*"Yeah, it is been erm not great so my wife and I have separated. I haven't seen the kids since I spoke to them on the phone you know she's good about that. Speak to my wife on the phone, so regular conversation, trying to get bail changed to have videocalls cause it 'cause my eldest daughter she's a select mute and can't talk on the phone and so 'cause she's not seen me for six months I'm a stranger to her so she can't talk to me at all so we're hoping that video calls would help with that to help communicate" [James]*

When James did finally manage to see and speak to his daughter, there had been a deterioration in her difficulties, which was both hard for him to see and made rebuilding their relationship more challenging:

*"Yeah, it is quite scary how much they've changed, changed because obviously I mean, she's being more herself type thing but I mean well she's more profound in her ticks, it was really tough. I guess you know you've missed out on a lot and you know, it is, it is hard for [wife's name] to put over on a text, it's a struggle every day to, to get her to have a conversation you know to get her to go to school you know. If she won't get out of the car, they leave it so long do the rest of the school run and then go back to school with her. And she might be sat until 11 o'clock or then she goes home and I actually try to take her back at lunch. Uh, but you know, basically it is every day is tough its tough" [James, talking about his daughter]*

In contrast, this impact of the CJS on the men's families is tempered in the lives of other participants. For Paul, this was because of the proactivity of his wife and her knowledge as a result of the role that she had within her work (support worker). This was also true for Hugh, who acknowledged the legal education that his wife had undertaken as part of her university degree helped them to minimise the impact of the restrictions on them as a couple/family, although there was still a significant impact on them. In both these instances, where there was prior legal and support knowledge through their partner, the men had been better able to manage the issues and impacts of the CJS on themselves and their families. This was not the case for the other men, which highlights the impact that knowledge and support can have on these precarious and unexpected times.

Support resources and information are vital for the participants but also crucially for their families. The positive benefits for the men and their families of support resources and information are multiple and long lasting. The partners of Paul, James and Hugh all accessed the Inform programme through LFF. This programme provided information, practical support and the ability for the partners to discuss their situation with other families in a similar situation. Both Paul and Hugh reported that this was of benefit to their partners. For example:

*Paul: Yeah, she's saying she's actually two weeks ago she started the inform course*

*LF: Yeah.*

*Paul: And so, there's been a lot of It is been a lot of challenging conversations that we've had so you know we were just being upfront and honest about things and trying to talk things through.*

*LF: That been helping or?*

*Paul: Yeah, definitely definitely*

James's ex-wife found that the statutory services and CJS were not helpful, but her experience of the Inform programme was not entirely positive either:

*"Yeah yeah erm the support for families yeah the support for families is horrendous completely completely horrendous. She feels totally abandoned, the social worker phoned the church to support her so she had someone to talk to. She tried to sign up for the forum [at LFF] and I think that took a couple of weeks to come through to sign up so she got a bit disheartened by that. She has I know she's been on the forum but she's finding it really difficult erm just because of the situation because I think a lot of people seem to have more access to the kids now so I'm not sure where it has gone a bit wrong for me I guess, I think one of the people on the forum made her feel really bad, that it was her stopping me seeing the kids when it is not so that put her off a little. She's been in touch with one of the people [from the forum] and we paid privately to help with [name] my daughter and her special needs for assessments" [James]*

The forum (LFF, 2024), a space for family and friends of those investigated/convicted of CSEM/CSO to discuss their experiences is used by some of the family of the men that participated in this research. Although moderated it is a space where family and friends are

able to openly share and will inevitably mean that people with differing view-points can come together. James' ex-wife didn't have a fully positive experience however she did meet someone on the forum that could support her.

This section has highlighted both the lack of structured and helpful support for families of men in these situations and how the partners/families are required to manage the emotional, physical and practical void left by their family members' offending behaviour and the subsequent restrictions of the CJS. This impact and the lack of support is also something that exacerbates the effects on the men themselves.

#### 7.4.7 Unexpected impacts of access to support

Access to support, as we have seen across these two chapters, is very positive for the participants of this research when it goes well, and unexpectedly negative, when it does not. The lack of appropriate support, and the inability to access appropriate support, for both them and for their families, is unexpected for the men. They found it difficult to access and ask for support, but when they were able to, they then also found it difficult to access support that met their needs.

Both Hugh and James accessed a variety of support options across their CJS journey, including mental health/GP services, more specialised counselling/psychiatry, and services such as those provided by LFF, specifically for those who have committed these kinds of offences. Although there were some positives across these forms of support, they both experience and articulated problems and issues, too. Initially James was full of praise for his counsellor; however, over the course of time, he started to express some concern over her behaviour; these different aspects are articulated in the excerpts from his interviews below.

*"So, I have seen a counsellor for three months now, which I pay for doing that privately, through the foundation they got in touch with another organization who could find a counsellor and work with you in the local area so I really cannot fault her she's fantastic"*  
[James]

*"OK, I mean it is been it is been quite tough she's been good and very supportive she seen me a couple of times for free when she's been really worried not charged me extra when we've gone for 2 1/2 hours which is nice for treatment the last, I guess the last month, six weeks have been more focused around keeping me here uh yeah just being about the sounding board and things like that, we worked a little bit on trying to unpick emotion"* [James]

*"Feel bad enough that she's coming over to me and she's seeing me for free and I've said that it is just not fair it is meant to be a professional relationship bringing me a meal just doesn't feel very professional"* [James]

There are a number of points to draw out here. The length of time that these men are under investigation means that their support and health needs change over the time period but this

is difficult to take into account with the support that they are able to access. The rapport and then the boundaries of their relationship seem to get blurred, something that James started to find uncomfortable. This in turn meant that he lost a support anchor as a result.

The journeys for these men across the CJS are unexpectedly lengthy, encompassing many life changes along the way. Any support that they receive needs to be flexible enough to manage these changing landscapes of their lives. Hugh accessed a variety of support provisions post arrest with and through the support of his wife.

*“As soon as being arrested I with [wife’s name] encouragement I started seeking out therapists and I’ve been having weekly therapy sessions with someone who specializes in not just addiction but sexual sexual related things and offending and essentially, in I felt like the therapy very, very soon, almost opened my eyes to a few big kind of life changing things so for example with regards to the depression” [Hugh]*

Hugh realised that this support was necessary to help him to change, and he would not have seen it, or acknowledged that he needed help before. Initially he felt that he needed this push, he needed ‘the knock’ to push him into identifying that there were issues and seeking ways to manage his behaviour however, as time moves on, this therapeutic relationship starts to unravel.

*“Um so I as seeing a private therapist yeah and and decided to put a pause on that. Uhm, the main reason was that I was so initially probation interviews were like weekly and it was taking quite a lot of effort, so I thought I’d paused the therapy while things settled down well then, I kind of thought about it a bit more, and I essentially kind of felt like I’d lost I kind of lost the bond with the therapist that I was having the things kind of broke down a bit” [Hugh]*

Although Hugh was having some support and completing work through probation, he had not felt able to stay supported through his therapist as it felt like it was too much all together and probation engagement was compulsory for him. However, once his probation work finished, he found he was unable to return to his original therapist and so had to try and find someone else. Therapy and support are both vital but can be mentally challenging (Gillespie et al., 2018 and Steel et al., 2022). None of the mandated work, for example, through probation, seems to be seen as supportive by the men but equally was not managed in a way that allowed, or encouraged, this other vital supportive help alongside. Thus, coordination of support and an assessment of need, rather than just a risk assessment at this point, could be very beneficial.

Other participants also found access to appropriate support, and in particular, ongoing support, unexpectedly problematic. Simon H struggled to access any kind of support himself, although he did find some of the LFF resources helpful. He was only able to access mental health support through his GP. Ricky, too, wished to access support but found that he struggled to identify what support was out there, and then to access any that he did find. This was a source of frustration for him. Both Steve and Simon tried to access a number of support



options, only to find that once the organisations/staff were aware of the nature of their offending, the offers of support were withdrawn. In one case (Simon), the police were contacted and they advocated that he did not receive the support service.

Different individuals have different needs around their wellbeing and support and that of their families. This lack of support, lack of the coordination between support and other interventions, and almost a one size fits all approach (in that the support isn't individualised), not only does not help, but potentially hinders, the participants' ability to rebuild their lives and by extension, may increase or enhance their likelihood of reoffending (Perrin et al., 2018). Some recent research links receiving Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) with a reduced usage of CSEM and so this may help to highlight the importance of accessing support and help (Latth et al., 2022). Improved knowledge of the importance of support and potential support options for those that have committed CSEM offences and the coordination of this support as part of the package of reform and reintegration (from for example probation) could be highly beneficial to men who commit these offences and their families.

#### 7.4.8 The CJS's management of 'risk'

The management of risk is a core aspect of the CJS, as we have seen from the introductory chapter to this thesis. Risk management includes consideration of risk around offending, reoffending and the need to protect the public. Those convicted of these offences are subject to risk assessments and restrictions put in place to manage their perceived risk for many years. The risk-based model of offender management for those who have committed sex offences, as has been discussed, is a well utilised method within both the UK and beyond (McAlinden, 2016).

The perception and management of risk means that those subject to these conditions are assessed prior to their sentence and beyond. Circumstances will change in the lives of these men and these changes can impact positively and negatively on potential risk (Olver & Stockdale, 2020). However, there are fundamental concerns around balancing and managing risk alongside successful and productive community and family reintegration (McCartan & Richards, 2021 and Russell et al., 2013). The understanding and perception of risk in relation to the CJS was something that was often discussed but poorly understood by the participants. The reliance of the CJS on their potential 'risk', and how that was defined, was a difficult and unexpected aspect of the CJS experience for the participants.

*"Put these kind of of things on a scale, you know, and it's really low down but, you know, she's sort of in the grand scheme of things and the people she deals with it's very you know she used the word minimal but you are put on a par with someone that has had contact with a child you know it's really hard to hear" [James]*

James has articulated here the unexpected and unfair aspect that the men feel that they are assessed in the same way and “on a par” with those that have committed CSO.

Their risk of reoffending is intertwined around their risk of suicide and other poor mental health issues, their difficulties with their relationships, obtaining and maintaining employment, their ability to earn money and look after their families, amongst many other issues (Mann et al., 2021 and McAlinden et al., 2017) however the wider aspects of this risk doesn't seem to be taken into account here. The link between all of these aspects would be better explained to the men at an earlier point in the CJS process (for some, such as James R this was never explained at all).

The men often talked about a ‘one size fits all’ approach, in that their treatment by the CJS was not individualised to their unique circumstances; again, a thread that runs across the men’s stories about other associated organisations, such as social care, and the ‘tick box’ mentality that seems to prevail. This is not something that they were expecting. In the extract that follows, Ricky explained the impact of some of the restrictions that result from the state’s risk management:

*“Then if I want to go out for a coffee with somebody later on, I've then now got to ask my parents if you like for permission and then they're gonna go and turn up and tell my new BFF and you know my issues yeah, so you kind of you feel like you're a child again” [Ricky]*

Ricky articulated the feeling that he was under the paternalistic authority of the state - “got to ask my parents if you like for permission” - and that he cannot do anything without the state’s prior approval, identifying both the restrictions that he perceives as a result of the risk process and the lack of this being tailored to him as an individual and his own circumstances.

Simon discussed the issue of the assessment and levels of risk attached to him as part of the probation assessment:

*“Yeah, we are all different and why not be low risk I erm I don't understand it, I'm not a risk but I'm seen like that by well everyone so now I can't get a job and I might have to leave home because I don't have any money and I erm well it feels like nothing helps me” [Simon]*

Simon is deemed to be ‘medium risk’ by probation and when he questions this, he is told that no-one in his situation (i.e. that has committed CSEM offences) is ever classed as ‘low risk’. He feels that this is not appropriate and wholly unexpected; each person is an individual with their own circumstances: “we are all different”. He links this risk assessment and the perceived unfairness of it, to the other aspects of his life that he was struggling with and that impact on his ability to rebuild his life – employment, housing, and finances. Tregoweth et al. (2012) noted that this was a key tension facing staff working in forensic psychiatry and managing those with psychiatric illness. The challenge of reconciling rehabilitative and risk management

approaches is not easy, particularly when the people that you are working with are trying to reintegrate back into the community.

Simon became aware of the importance of risk assessment and its place in the CJS decision-making process, and he tried to gain a risk assessment that would enable him to move forwards with trying to get contact with his children:

*“So, I think there should be a lot more involvement with the with the offender to be honest to find out about them and if they you know if it is that's why I asked Lucy faithful Foundation if I could have an assessment a risk assessment and they said that it is too expensive and and if social want to go down that path they will do” [Simon]*

This is similar for James R who was aware that his addition to the Sex Offenders Register will impact his likelihood of being able to have contact with his grandchildren. Again, though, he felt that he would not be able to see them at all. This lack of knowledge and explanation around the risk assessment process, and the lack of recognition of individual cases, is particularly harmful for the families:

*But I have got two grandchildren and I know on this sex register thing that I er won't be able to see them [James R]*

The factors involved in managing risk, the CJS, the system for rehabilitative change, and the potential for tension between these, has been identified in other research (see Ward & Willis, 2016), and there is a likelihood that this will negatively impact on the change required for these men to succeed in living crime-free lives (Collins & Nee, 2010). The current situation is fuelled, however, by the media's portrayal of those that commit these types of offences and public and government perceptions of what works in stopping these offences and what people who commit these offences are believed to 'deserve' (Cochran, 2020). The public have been shown to view these offences as more severe than most other crimes, and consequently, they tend to overestimate the risks related to recidivism and have limited support for treatment over incarceration (Steel et al., 2021).

The unexpected nature of the risk management that happens with these men and the consequences that that has on their lives does not feel to be fair to the men in this research, as well as being commented on in the wider research landscape (for example Willis & Ward, 2016).

#### 7.4.9 Unexpected positivity

Although most of the 'unexpectedness' that the men experience brings with it negative connotations and negative issues, there are some unexpected positives throughout their CJS journeys. The positivity experienced by all the men at points along their CJS journey was

unexpected, but also, for some, helpful, as it developed their abilities to rebuild their lives and their relationships and to adjust their outlooks on both their lives and those of their families.

The knowledge gained about themselves and their offending, as well as around the CJS and its associated processes, was something that the men gain from their support, the LFF resources and the Inform Plus programme in particular. This lack of knowledge and the impact of the Inform Plus programme was evident in the way that this altered their CJS experience for those that undertook it. Their thinking and actions (such as James who used this new-found knowledge to challenge the system around access to his children, for example, as I have discussed in previous sections) were altered as a result and there was a real difference for those that do not.

**Hugh:** *"I'm still awaiting charges erm, having the session when we there was material that talked about what actually happens when you go to prison and it was outlining erm the overall process so erm 'ok this happens then if you get charged' 'this happens then that happens' that was kind of good" [Group discussion]*

As Hugh described within the group discussion and echoed by the other participants, hearing an explanation of the process and what could happen was extremely beneficial. Simon's understanding of the brain, addiction and related topics within the Inform Plus programme was an unexpected and positive turning point for him. Up until this point, Simon had really struggled to understand himself and his actions surrounding his offending behaviour. When talking about the Inform Plus sessions, he shared:

**Simon:** *I think that every session had its own value because the sessions were about different things you know the modules were all valuable in their own time but for me the amazing thing was how the brain physically changes you know I just couldn't when [additional facilitator] come on and was amazed by how it can actually change our brains [Group discussion]*

The Inform Plus programme, as I have alluded to previously, gives the men the only opportunity that they have to interact with men that are in a similar position to them within the CJS and have committed the same kinds of offences. To meet and interact in this way not only helps with their relationships, as previously discussed, but the unexpected positivity that this brings to their identity, self-esteem and ability to try to understand themselves is crucial to their wellbeing for many of the men.

*"Yeah, it was an eye opener you know an eye opener I was really nervous about signing up in the first place and that first time was a bit of a shock when I guess we were all normal ((laughs)) yes I think the course was a massive help for me I think I was in this bubble for so long that it is difficult to well I guess for other people to understand how things are for you" [James]*

James' realised that the other participants were all "normal" and not the monsters that he had been worried about meeting affected his view of himself.

Lastly, the capacity to hope, and to tackle a really difficult time in their lives, and make fundamental changes to allow them to hope and plan for a future, was also unexpected for the men that attended the Inform Plus programme. From feeling unworthy and undeserving of anything good happening within their lives as a consequence of their offending, this hope for the future was of significance to their abilities to move forward and rebuild their lives. As Paul discussed with the group at the end of the Inform Plus programme:

*Paul: it definitely was at first I think that at the moment I'm of the mind set where I'm just trying to take each day as it comes and if it is a good day then make the best of it and if it is a bad day then just (laughs) try and ride my way through it in some way shape or form erm I think that's all that I can do I think one thing that the course has given me is the impression that there is some light at the end of the tunnel I think I was finding it hard before and a lot of the subjects on the course made me realise that there was some kind of end point- Inform plus positivity [Group Discussion]*

In contrast, for the participants who did not access the Inform Plus programme, their lack of knowledge and insight into the CJS was clear and the subsequent way that this affected their journey and themselves. Although unable to join the Inform Plus programme, Simon H cited the resources at the LFF as a key form of support through his CJS journey, with little other support offered or provided for him. Ricky peppered his narrative with his frustration at his lack of knowledge of the system and how this was detrimental to his experience in particular.

#### 7.4.10 Summary

Unexpectedness, the jarring way that many aftershocks hit the men as they move through the CJS, although often negative, also had some surprising positives for the men that attended the Inform Plus programme. There are many ways in which aspects of support, both formal and informal, can help and hinder their experiences. Being able to identify and capitalise on the positives, whilst understanding that there will be negatives and surprises along the way, helped the men to cope with their experiences.

### 7.5 Being Seen

#### 7.5.1 Introduction

Originally envisaged as the concept of 'visibility', the idea of participants being, or not being, 'seen', seems to be wider than that, encapsulating aspects of the men's identities, how they are seen physically and metaphorically by others, and how they see themselves. It also, for example, incorporates the impact of stigma on the participants, as well as their physical visibility and physical space. 'Being seen' means, essentially, being out in the world, something that is difficult but necessary for the men in these circumstances. Within hermeneutic phenomenology, it is through the 'they' (society, community) that humans learn.

Our relationships and how we are seen by others impacts on how we see ourselves and much (Heidegger, 1962 and Ashworth, 2016). However, we have also seen the impact that committing CSEM and other sexual offences and then navigating the CJS has had on the participants here and within the wider literature (see for example Gillespie et al., 2018; Harris et al., 2019 and Steel et al., 2022). Their lives, during the CJS process, revolve around the basic aspects of living and surviving and building and maintaining fundamental relationships (Harris et al., 2017).

### 7.5.2 Through the looking glass

As part of our relationships, we see ourselves as we are reflected by others (Ashworth, 2016). This is evident in how all the men talk about themselves both before and after they have been arrested. 'The knock' itself is also a looking glass, a way for them to see themselves more clearly and the difficulties in their lives at the time of their offending and post arrest. For some, this is an image of themselves that unravelled as our discussions developed. Although for others, this image of themselves pre-arrest was genuinely what they thought that they believed at the time and that with hindsight they saw that there were some significant issues for them at the time of their offending that they had not been confronting or had not even identified.

Both TS and Simon H discussed their sexual interest in children. Both of them were aware of it, although only Simon H talked about actively trying to manage these feelings and manage his offending behaviour at the time that he was offending. They were however both aware how others would view their behaviour and by extension themselves.

*"So careful around any time the family came to make sure there was no sort of evidence or anything when they did come in, and so it was sort of just really difficult, but sort of manager times and just added to the pressure but then I think it, I think over the sort of time that you then you then sort of kind of get to grips with the fact that you just don't have anybody around you you kind of, you know you kind of learn how to deal with things with no one around you"*  
[Simon H]

For Simon H, his offending, and how he knew this would be viewed by others, as he describes here, led him to lead a much lonelier existence because he would deliberately avoid people. TS had his offending advertised in the local area after he was initially arrested for his first offence, and he had not been able to go back to the area after people posted flyers about him around where he had been living. For TS this was a stark demonstration of how he (and his offending) is viewed by the community within which he lived.

After the knock, both Hugh and Paul were able to identify and subsequently confront the issues that they had been dealing with at the time of their offending but had not been consciously aware of. Hugh, with hindsight realised how entrenched he was in his use of pornography and

how detrimental it was to his relationships and Paul recognised his mental health issues. The looking glass of their arrest made clear these issues and their need to confront them, seeing themselves and their actions with more clarity than they had before as I discussed in ‘the knock’ section of the previous findings chapter.

An understanding of their identities, and how they fit into the world once their offending has been exposed, and then how they negotiated and managed that, was important. This image management was something that some of the participants, particularly Hugh and Steve, continued with as our research interactions developed and across the Inform Plus sessions.

*“Well as as I say to you that’s not me, I’m like I’m a kind person if you go and knock on any of the neighbours’ doors, they will I’m sure that they will say “oh yeah, he’s a lovely man, he’s very helpful” blah blah blah Yeah ((pause)) as as I said really that that isn’t me that wasn’t me”*  
[Steve]

All through our interactions Steve was very careful with his language and with his presentation of himself and seemed preoccupied with crafting a persona of a good person to move away from his offending (“that wasn’t me”). This understanding of who they were whilst offending (the old ‘me’, or as Steve stated “that wasn’t me”) and who they are now (someone not offending, not that person) is important in their abilities to desist from offending and rebuild their lives (McAlinden et al., 2017). As we have already identified, however, coming to this distinction is not easy for those under investigation and convicted of sexual offences because of the constraints and restrictions placed on them through the CJS and the way that these offences are viewed by society.

The integration of their desisting identity takes context and time (Syed, 2016). In order to be able to successfully desist from offending and rebuild their lives, essentially, the men need to be able to see that their offending was not a reflection of who they are or their ‘true selves’, but rather, that it was a product of their behaviour and environment (Maruna, 2001 and Richards et al., 2020). Men that are successful in their desistance and reintegration are also those shown to make a change to have an optimistic control over their future and the ability to develop a higher purpose for themselves, which could be achieved through, for example, work and family, or being able to give back to society (Maruna, 2001), to see themselves either in a different way or to get back to the person that they really are without offending.

This positivity around their identity, was alluded to by many of the participants, and also features within the Inform Plus sessions and the LFF resources. Being able to see themselves and their identity reflected back positively to them as they move forward, but also reflected positively by others, was a significant step forward and was productive for the men, and by extension, potentially meant they were more likely to desist from offending and be better

equipped to reintegrate into the community. This is offered as an opportunity through the Inform Plus sessions, in particular, as Paul discussed here:

*“We have that on the course [Inform Plus], on the course being in the same place and that was just really supportive it was just showing that people have got into this for different reasons, but we are not bad people” [Paul]*

### 7.5.3 Being seen as a ‘sex offender’

Moving on from this reflection of how they see themselves, the men must manage the stigma and label associated with being under investigation and then later convicted of these types of offences. Although a central, well established and often researched phenomenon with those that are labelled as ‘criminals’ and more recently, those labelled as ‘sex offenders’ (see for example Willis, 2018), this labelling is important to consider here as it impacts on the men’s experience, how they manage that experience and how they are seen by others (Harris et al., 2016). This is particularly pertinent to this cohort of men under investigation and convicted for sex offences, as their sentences include punishment, such as prison or work in the community, but also an array of other interventions aimed at rehabilitation and risk management. It is difficult with these supervision activities to avoid the label of ‘sex offender’, which, as already discussed, restricts their abilities to develop and maintain important relationships and activities that will allow them to reintegrate into the community successfully (Adina, 2018).

The stigma and impact of being labelled a ‘sex offender’ impacted throughout their journeys through the CJS, both as we have seen from their own self stigmatisation, but stigmatisation in other ways, too. This labelling is identified by the men overtly but can also be seen across their stories in other ways and does not just impact on their immediate sense of self or their public persona. It often means that they feel this stigma for the long term and feel that there is not a way out (Harris, 2017). Anything that can reduce or alter this stigma and the long-term mindset that goes hand in hand with this labelling has the potential to enhance reintegration into society, and lessen the long-term impact of the CJS and the potential to reoffend (see for example Jahnke et al., 2014; McCartan et al., 2021 and Willis et al., 2018).

Hugh discussed labelling specifically in one of our conversations and he noted the pervasive impact it can have and his hope for the effect that his involvement in the Inform Plus programme will have on this:

*“People want to they want to put things in specific labels, like this person is a bad person and especially as a good person that is a very, it is a very confusing thing because even if you don’t believe that you’re still influenced by those opinions,*

*and that maybe by, you know going on these group sessions you know maybe just simply getting a bit more of a mixture is going to help me feel better about myself” [Hugh]*



Simon, although he does not necessarily articulate clearly the impact of labelling and stigma, stated that:

*"The last time I went to probation I got all dressed up smart like and when I got there you know to make a good impression and when I got there someone outside said 'I know you are CID scum' makes me really erm uncomfortable I'm scared going out of the house on my own especially as it is been in the paper" [Simon]*

Simon powerfully described here the lengths that he was going to in order to present himself as a 'good' person, a good citizen, but that he realised that this is a complicated issue and by dressing in this way to probation he actually makes himself more conspicuous and visible. Simon H also talked about the anticipatory stigma that was a constant source of concern and can be seen across all of the stories of the participants:

*"There's a number of times that you felt suicidal and that was around the things that I would then lose, or what I've essentially lost you know, because I'm knowing full well but once it comes out, I've lost my both my sisters I've I've lost my Uh my my three nieces, my nephew, and they've done and already lost contact with my mother 'cause we had a bit of an argument thing so you think, well, once that goes and I then got my friends and his family, I I would lose all that and then you think, well, there's nothing else I've got no one else" [Simon H]*

All of the participants anticipate and go out of their way to avoid being stigmatised in this way. This is a common type of stigma that can be seen not just in this population but across other stigmatised groups, including those who have a criminal history and those who have, for example, stigmatised illness or disorders (Dibley et al., 2014; Evans & Cubellis, 2015 and Moore & Tangney, 2017). James and Paul in particular often spoke about their surprise at how positively some people treated them, including the LFF facilitators, family and even me as a researcher.

*"And I'm always surprised when people are OK talking to me" [James]*

*"Yeah, yeah so you know my counsellor yeah trying yeah she cares whether I live or die (sounds upset and his voice cracks) surprises me" [James]*

*"And I think at every step just seems to take longer and longer to get there erm but I did and I told them what had happened I was expecting me dad to hit me which he didn't didn't they just took me in and and looked after me". [Paul]*

James expected this stigma from everyone, particularly those that know about his offending, and even with professionals, he was surprised that people were willing to interact with him. This viewpoint visibly and audibly lessened as time wore on and he had more input and contact with others, such as those from the LFF and caring staff from mental health services. Paul even expected rejection from his own parents, who from the way he described them, and the way that they cared for him after this, he had a very close relationship with. Such is the degree to which the anticipated stigma affected the participants here and from prior research in the

wider community of those convicted of these offences (see Evans & Cubellis, 2015 and Winnick & Bodkin, 2008).

The anticipated stigma is felt across all aspects of their lives and there are two other interesting aspects of stigma that the participants' stories highlighted. Firstly, there are aspects of stigma that were experienced by the participants' families (Armitage et al., 2023). A number of partners/ex partners had accessed the resources and support through the LFF and, as I have previously described, found this to be an important support and coping mechanism. However, it was not all experienced positively by all the families, as James articulated and was discussed previously:

*"Anyway, I think one of the people on the forum made her feel really bad, so it was her stopping me seeing the kids when it is not so that put her off a little" [James]*

Although James' ex-wife did experience some positives through her interactions with others through LFF, it wasn't wholly positive. Interesting that in another sphere she might expect people to be positive about the lack of contact between James and the children, in this environment (the LFF forum) where families are often supportive of each other, the lack of contact is seen as a negative and attributed to her. This stigma, almost a hierarchy of what is acceptable, can also be seen for the participants. Simon was very clear that he struggled with some of the participants on the Inform Plus course and views them as different to himself which I have covered in a previous section.

Secondly, the anticipated stigma can be seen in particular around the way that the media manages and portrays men who have committed these offences:

*"The big thing my wife worries about is things getting in the media and the house getting targeted and things like that and suppose there's just no kind of certainty around that is there so". [Paul]*

*"If it gets into the papers then I'm going to move away. I think the shame would be too much to bear everybody saying "oo we would never have thought of" [Steve]"*

The link between the media, stigma and shame was commented upon by Steve here and was something that many of the participants worried about. A few of the men had their case reported by the media, receiving additional stigma and consequences, such as Simon, who lost his job, and TS, who had to leave his home, and who became subject to a local campaign by community members:

*"After the article you know in the paper, I changed my name because my name is well it is not a common name but that's how I lost my job and haven't been able to erm get get another" [Simon]*

James identified the difference in the way that people who have committed sexual offences are treated from those who have committed other offences, through a conversation that he had with his landlord:

*“And all that and then somehow, we got on to talking about people with criminal records, and he was saying you know you should give people a second chance and how he has no issue with giving homes to people that have come out of prison and blah blah blah and then he says ‘apart from paedos I’d be happy to do them over with an iron bar’ ((laughs)) and I was like Emm oh” [James]*

Even when compared to murderers, ‘sex offenders’ evoke more severe reactions, such as hate, anger, and fear, from the public and from other types of offenders (Quinn et al., 2004), with a USA poll suggesting that there is a greater fear of sex offenders than terrorists (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Stigma, and in particular the anticipated stigma, that the men experience can be highly debilitating for their abilities to rebuild and to reintegrate. Sessions such as Inform Plus, where these thoughts can be challenged, and resources developed to manage this type of stigma, are crucial to their abilities to manage and rebuild.

James also commented on his bail conditions. He felt that he was viewed in negative terms by the others in the Inform Plus group, that he must have committed more serious offences than they did because he had more stringent bail conditions than them. In reality, this wasn’t the case, but it was both how he anticipated and perceived stigmatisation.

*“And you talk about the conditions that you’ve got and it’s like everyone’s mind goes oo you are the super worst of the worst because of them and everything like that” [James]*

This anticipated and also perceived stigma, the men’s perception of the situation that they are in, related to their context, affects how they then act as a result (Dibley et al., 2019 and Goffman, 1963). Their disconnection and negative reactions to them from other people, even those reactions that are not meant in a negative way, are often perceived as such. The way that they were spoken to by staff across the various CJS agencies that they have to have contact with, having a less than positive response from someone in a support agency, or feeling judged by the tone someone uses when they speak to them, all negatively impact on, not just their experience, but the way in which they manage their experience and its impact. Further, James acknowledged in the extract below that he judged himself and others in the same way, and equally expected that others were judging him, fixated in this bubble of stigma that was broken when he experienced the Inform Plus session.

*“Erm I was kicking myself I’ll be honest; I was judging everyone else that was going to be on that call erm because I was judging myself the same, I wasn’t looking forward to it at all” [James]*

Lastly in this section is the labelling and stigmatisation related to their future potential prospects. Both Steve and Ricky, for example, talked about potential future relationships and both conclude that it was not worth the risk of initiating a new relationship because any relationship will inevitably mean that that person will be told about their offending behaviour. This was a deterrent and block to developing relationships that could potentially, as we have seen, have a very positive impact on their reintegration and desistance.

#### 7.5.4 Reintegration and rebuilding

Beginning to reintegrate and rebuild their lives after experiencing their arrest is something that is paramount to the participants, and as we have seen through the other sections, something that is littered with many obstacles. They find themselves ‘unhomelike’ and in unfamiliar territory with a loss of many coping mechanisms. In the literature shared with me by the participants (stories, poetry, books etc), and across their stories, this feeling of being unfamiliar and the need to rebuild is clear. TS shared the story about ending up in Holland (see appendix 18), and James, the poem by Amanda Gorman (2021, see appendix 19) that references climbing a hill; both of which, identify the perspective change needed to reach the required destination. Heidegger’s (1962) *being-towards-death* identifies that the disruption faced by the men and their evaluation of their lives occurs, but this is experienced differently by the different participants. Unexpected life events, such as the intervention by the CJS, challenge their anticipated future trajectories, threaten their personal identities, challenge their imagined futures and lead to altered behaviour in the present. These unexpected events appear to have a long-term impact on the temporal awareness of the participants (Shirani et al., 2011).

The men, with more support, are more able to understand themselves and take proactive actions into making the necessary changes for them to be more able to cope. However, all of their reintegration is affected by the collateral consequences (Tewksbury, 2012), the aftershocks such as employment restrictions, stigmatization from those around them and the wider public, family ostracism, loss of housing, and financial losses, that often create barriers to reintegration as they navigate their way through the CJS and its complexities (Mann et al., 2021).

The participants all in some way talk about redemption; a way to see themselves, and be seen to be working towards, being someone better than an ‘offender’. For some, trying to do something that they felt was worthy, or worthwhile, was how they felt that they could start to move towards redemption, reintegration and rebuilding themselves. James and Steve both felt that they needed to do something useful.

***Steve:** He says that on changes that have helped him: ‘volunteering has helped, feeling part of a team. I’ve always been a loner, been in management and not needing to socialise’. He is looking forward to returning to volunteering and hoping that he can go back to the places that he volunteered at before [Author fieldnotes from Inform Plus session]*

Here, as part of the Inform Plus programme session, Steve talked about being able to volunteer; something that he had undertaken as a result of reading the resources produced by the LFF post his initial arrest, where he volunteered both at a food bank and as a handyman at a local park. Both of these, he quit, however, once he had been charged because of the anticipated stigma. After his eventual conviction, he spoke to his probation officer about a return to volunteering because of the positive affirmation and sense of self-esteem that he achieved from volunteering initially, only to find that the police refused to allow his return. He did, however, get a sense of satisfaction from his community service (making face masks for public services) but he was unable to carry this on, which he found frustrating. He struggled to understand the different points of view and lack of consistency across the CJS in respect to these issues.

James had been heavily involved in aspects of his community prior to his arrest, which he found, along with his work, were a huge part of his sense of self. However, like Steve, the anticipated, and then enacted stigma, further compounded the negativity James experienced and he struggled to even leave the house.

*“You know so some days its like not good and so its almost like just let that day go without trying to think about anything but other days I can try and be a bit more positive you know and some days I do try to get out I’ve tried you know to make a conscious effort to work myself up to well I did walk around the block the day before yesterday but that took me four days to actually build ((laughs)) build up to doing it” [James]*

Being able to access appropriate options to help them to gain a sense of repaying their ‘debt’ back into the community, outside of their sentence, could potentially help some men to start to rebuild their lives as well as finding a purpose, helping them to rebuild their ‘project’ (Ashworth, 2016). Work (paid or voluntary), as a factor in reintegration and rebuilding, is seen through every story shared with me. Work can have a positive impact on our sense of who we are, often we define ourselves by what we do, what we work as (Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2013). For this cohort of men who do not have a criminal history prior to their arrest the loss of their work had a big impact not only in terms of their definition of self but also as a means to fund themselves and their families. The importance of work has been identified through other literature around supporting offence desistance; however, it is much more of a complex relationship than that (Mann et al., 2021).

For TS, finding work was the biggest issue for him, a real barrier, and he found himself out of work in the IT field for so long that he didn’t feel qualified anymore.

*"Yeah yes I've been working towards trying to find work and to be honest that's not even the hardest barrier now the hardest found was finding work is the fact that I just haven't been trained in the things I need in the last 10 years an because I I work a little bit in computer graphics an just before before it was working for University and then as I said, I had a look at some modern coding and a couple years ago and I understood absolutely nothing changed that much it is literally a different language you know it is" [TS]*

TS had been initially arrested a number of years prior to the further offending that found him as a participant in this research. He had not been able to get a job since then, although applying for, and attempting to gain employment, were how he spent his days. As a single man without family or other responsibilities, his income from benefits was able to support him financially. He did have hobbies and interests; however, not having a job, and as he identified through the comment above, not having the appropriate skills in a cutting-edge industry to regain employment, meant that his sense of self was decreased. This lack of self-worth and abundance of time potentially impacted on his reoffending behaviour (McAlinden et al., 2017), as he was the one participant in this study that had committed further CSEM offences since his original arrest.

Ricky also tried hard to gain employment as he described:

*"I can't get a job even though I've got a glowing CV, well as soon as you fill in there, have you got any criminal convictions that are not spent that's it. I volunteered for the [names an organisation] I said look, I said I could do pat testing, I can repair electrical appliances, I can repair dishwashers I can yep restore furniture, I could drive a forklift truck, I could do warehouse accounting for you all for nothing come along: 'You're just the person we want, fill in this form, oh no we don't want you anymore" [Ricky]*

Ricky, like all of the other participants here, was frustrated by the CJS's requirement to disclose his offences as it hampered his ability to rebuild, particularly around work, which for him, and for others, was a key part of how they saw themselves. James struggled to access any kind of work and both James and Ricky note the lack of opportunities but also the lack of focused help and support. For example, they were offered support to write their CVs, but both have comprehensive and accomplished CVs, again identifying the lack of individual help for each of them, the 'one size fits all approach'. Appropriate employment support and opportunities seem to be lacking for men like these; it seems that the system (the CJS) is not geared to support people in their position.

With hindsight, some of the participants need to build their lives up from the CJS disruption in a way that they have never done before (for example, James and Paul, with their work and families), and others, need to be able to rebuild their lives in a different way (for example, TS, Steve and Ricky by accessing different activities etc). Being able to fill in time and keep themselves occupied is vital for their ability to find a purpose, work can help them to achieve that, and therefore, enable the men at least to work towards aspects of the GLM (Harris et al.,

2019). The GLM can help guide their reintegration and rebuilding process, and indeed, could be an important way to help deal with the *being-towards-death* experienced by the participants (Prescott & Willis, 2022 and Ward & Durrant, 2021). Practitioners, such as probation officers as the men themselves noted and offender managers, could work with those convicted of these types of offences to support them to overcome these issues around the restrictions on aspects such as work. Working with people as individuals, each with their own unique set of circumstances, could help to maximise each person's reintegration into the community, and potentially at the same time, minimise the likelihood of future offending.

Those convicted of these offences have tended to isolate themselves and disengage from social and community life as a strategy of self-preservation and personal security (Kemshall et al., 2012). Reintegration into communities has been shown to be an important factor in rehabilitation (Maruna et al., 2013). Consideration of reintegration and rebuilding means that men need to identify aspects of their lives to help them to rebuild, for example, what strengths they have that they can access to support them and what they want/would be most beneficial to work on. Although from this research, and other literature, there are clearly commonalities around these (Mann et al., 2021 and Merdian et al., 2017). Despite this, each individual is different and should be treated as such, composing their own unique action plan for the future.

Their abilities to identify and work towards a future is also a key part of successful reintegration. The idea of 'a future', particularly whilst they were in limbo and waiting the lengthy CJS investigation process, was something that was discussed by all the participants at various points. This was something that was difficult for them to visualise at times, as Paul mentions here:

*Paul: that there's a possibility of a better future that's better for me I thought I was going to be I dunno stuck up on the scrap heap (laughs) [Group discussion]*

Dervley et al. (2017) identified hopes for the future as one of the key aspects of the Inform Plus programme; that the participants are able to see and start to work towards a future, and that, as we have seen, is also something that comes out of this research. However, the men's abilities to visualise and work towards a future is particularly hampered by the CJS process, leading to feelings of hopelessness and exacerbating their lack of self-worth. As Ricky articulated:

*"So, it is a long, slow, roll downhill to the house that's then taken off me, can't afford the car so that's taken off me, can't afford the flat and then bankrupt all the rest of it and then I can't rent or anything else anymore. I'll be on the streets sniffing glue, drinking mess, all the rest of it that's where it is all heading in a long-term thing, and that's where everyone seems to be happy that he is heading you're trapped in down the spiral of doom and gloom because that's where that's where they wanted me" [Ricky]*

And

*"My outgoings exceed my income every month and I can't afford to eat. I pointed out a few times to me like you know I don't serve a function here and I would be of more benefit to everybody if I was dead, because obviously my estate would be carved up and everyone could go out for a dinner, however but at the moment everything is just getting soaked up bit by bit by you know?" [Ricky]*

James and Simon also highlighted that they may be more beneficial to their family and to the wider community if they were dead. Both men were the main financial providers for their families and their loss of a job and income have a real impact, in terms of for themselves and their self-image, but also financially, in a practical sense for themselves and their families.

Some of the men tried to rebuild their lives by creating and accessing other hobbies, activities and passions:

*"I lost my sense of self but in a short space of time since the knock I'm rediscovering talents and passions. I have massively rethought my screen time; it was always about tech stuff before. I am reading rather than using devices" [Hugh]*

The CJS and subsequent loss of the coping mechanism for them that their online world seemed to offer meant that they needed to find new ways to cope with their life and their circumstances. Both Hugh and Paul, in particular, identified using offline methods, such as reading, as Hugh mentioned above, mindfulness and going for walks, that Paul preferred. Hugh also tried other activities (such as dancing) but struggled to find something that he felt invested in. TS took up darts and photography as a means to provide him with something meaningful and a social life, as he shared his photography with others on social media. This also tied in with James and Steve wanting to find something to help them to give back to the community, as described earlier in this section.

Both Steve and Ricky discussed the effect that their CJS involvement may have on future relationships, a slightly different issue from the other men who either were not interested in a relationship (Simon H and TS), or who were already married/with a partner.

*"I'm finding this difficult as I would like a girlfriend but I'm so scared of disclosing. I'm almost thinking about being celibate because it is easier. I tend to wear my heart on my sleeve and I would have to tell them soon into the relationship. I couldn't carry on for my own sanity knowing I had to disclose it". [Steve]*

The necessity to disclose their offences, either through their own need, or because they would be forced to through the restrictions on them of their registration, made both Steve and Ricky wary of attempting a new romantic/sexual relationship.

The reintegration into the community for those who have left prison has demonstrated consistently across a number of previous studies the importance of access to local, well-



paying jobs and affordable housing, as well as the value of being able to develop social relationships with local friends and neighbours, are key to enabling their reintegration and to minimising further offending behaviour (Rose & Clear, 2003). The CJS process, registration and the restrictions on the men's lives do not enable them to feel part of the process; as the participants across this thesis have noted, they are not engaged in the process or the system, they do not feel part of it (McCartan et al., 2021). Their options are limited, and their lives reduced and many of the ways in which they could try and improve this are curtailed by the authorities and the restrictions within which they live. The participants felt that the system was something 'done to them' and they had to 'tick the boxes' to get through it, rather than feel that they could engage in a meaningful and supported change process. As Ricky succinctly noted:

*"So, the current system isn't really conducive to it is not conducive to know stopping people reoffending, let alone anything else, really" [Ricky]*

#### 7.5.5 Summary

This third and final theme that spans the stories of all the participants across their CJS experiences centres their physical and emotional visibility: 'being seen'. The men found that they reassessed themselves and their lives in terms of how they were viewed, both by themselves and by others, and the physical spaces that they were able to occupy. Stigma, both self-stigma and the stigma that they anticipate from others, played a central role in how they viewed themselves and the support that they received from others – whether formally, or from friends and family.

## 8 Conclusions

### 8.1 Introduction

*So, while once we asked, how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe? Now we assert, how could catastrophe possibly prevail over us? We will not march back to what was, but move to what shall be (Gorman, 2021)*

The purpose of this research was, firstly, to examine the research literature landscape about the experiences of men accused/convicted of child sexual abuse offences, secondly to explore the experiences of the CJS for men under investigation or convicted of CSEM offences and lastly, to explore the impact that formal and informal support, including the Inform Plus programme from the LFF, had on these experiences. In this research the participants' arrest for CSEM offences was seen by all of them as a point of 'catastrophe' (the 'earthquake') and the point at which their lives changed, almost to the point of unrecognizability. This 'earthquake' was by no means the end of the changes for them, with continual, and unpredictable, 'aftershocks'. Somehow through these upheavals, they needed to try and rebuild themselves and their lives.

It is important to reiterate that the findings that I have presented within this thesis are not the 'truth' of the experiences of the participants, but my interpretation, aimed at 'unconcealing' (Heidegger, 1962) what seems to be important to the men, whilst 'dwelling with the data' (Smythe, 2012). This concluding chapter aims to bring together the key findings for the men's experience of the CJS, and for the impact of support on these experiences, and to situate these findings in terms of the current literature landscape and current practices and processes across both the CJS and wider support services and organisations. I will also provide some suggestions for how the findings from this study can be taken into policy and practice across the CJS and beyond.

### 8.2 The men's experience of the CJS

This piece of qualitative, experiential research followed nine men in the UK across their journey of the CJS, gaining their perspectives on their experiences of the CJS itself, the people that work within it, the support that they accessed, and the impacts of all of these on their lives and the lives of those close to them. Although each participant had a unique and individual experience, there were many commonalities that have helped me to unpick their experiences and offer insights into the effect that the CJS had on them, their lives and the lives of those around them. No prior piece of research has explored these experiences from this vantage point; however, my scoping review identified other recent overlapping pieces of research where the findings here help to enrich the landscape around this area of work.

The 'earthquake' impact of the CJS, resulting from the men's offending, started from the point of arrest ('the knock') and continued throughout the time I had contact with them, and will no doubt continue throughout their lives. From the point of arrest, fundamental changes happened to their lives (the initial 'earthquake') followed by numerous 'aftershocks' through which their lives continued to be altered and affected. Being able to live, what they considered to be 'a normal life', was not possible anymore and the fabric of what they had considered 'routine life' for them, from their jobs, their families, relationships and day to day living, were disrupted. The men experienced common phases that defined their experiences: they described being 'down the rabbit hole' whilst offending; followed by the impact of 'the knock', and later, after sentencing. Once the CJS investigation and processes were unfolding, they experienced an 'unhomelikeness'; during this time, they made attempts to manage the changes to their lives and attempted to redeem themselves. Lastly, they felt a disparity between their hoped-for future prior to 'the knock', and what they experienced and hoped for in terms of their lives and themselves, as they moved through the CJS and beyond.

The disconnection from their former lives that they experienced at the point of 'the knock', and as they moved through the phases, was pervasive and long lasting. This research is underpinned by the work of Heidegger (1962) and that of Ashworth (2016), and I have highlighted the importance of relationships and the 'project' (the important things that the men most care about in their lives) of these men on their existence and their abilities to adapt, to rebuild their lives and in their attempts at self-redemption. Those that seemed more capable of making the necessary changes to their lives and themselves also seemed to be the ones that had greater internal resilience, alongside longstanding external support, notably from key family members and partners.

In addition to considering the phases of the men's CJS experiences, I also made 'the interpretative leap' (Crowther & Thomson, 2020), where I identified that, across their experiences, three key themes stood out: 'connections with others', where their connections with close relationships, with CJS staff and even transitory, everyday connections were important in their ability to rebuild themselves; 'unexpectedness' that encompassed much of their experience across the whole of the CJS and beyond, and 'being seen', where how they see themselves and perceive that they are seen by others is important in their experience and being able to move forward. Utilising HP as a research method although daunting to begin with I found critical in exploring the commonalities and differences of the experience for the men and gaining a deeper understanding of the meaning that they make from their journey through the CJS. In the sections that follow, I discuss what exacerbated the negative impacts of the men's CJS experience, and conversely, what helped their CJS experience.

## 8.3 What exacerbated the negative aspects of their experience?

There are, from this research, aspects of the participants' experiences that exacerbated the negative feelings and the impact of 'the earthquake' (their arrest) and the 'aftershocks' that they experienced along their CJS journeys.

### 8.3.1 Lack of knowledge and prior experience of the CJS

None of the participants in this research had had contact with the CJS prior to their initial CSEM arrest (although TS was subsequently arrested for further offending), something seen in prior research (Gillespie et al., 2018 and Rimer, 2021). This lack of knowledge and understanding of the CJS was detrimental to their experiences across the breadth of their contact with the CJS and also surrounding organisations such as social care and manifested itself in many ways. TS lost his flat and possessions due to a lack of knowledge about the system and likelihood of being sentenced to prison. Ricky had his house burgled, and possessions stolen for the same reason and James was not able to have contact with his children.

### 8.3.2 Length of the investigation/CJS processes

CSEM investigations are generally exceptionally lengthy, sometimes taking years before they are finalised and the men are charged, convicted and sentenced (Justice, 2019; Rimer, 2021 and Steel et al., 2022). The impact of this length of time living 'in limbo', living in the unknown, whilst still under the restrictions on their and their families lives negatively influenced their abilities to rebuild and reintegrate into their communities. Their ability to gain employment, to develop relationships, to manage their relationships with family but also their physical and mental health deteriorated as a result. Although prior research has considered these impacts, little consideration has been given around the link with the length of the investigations (Woodward, 2018).

### 8.3.3 Additional restrictions

Alongside the length of the police investigations, there were restrictions placed on the men during this investigation but also crucially post-conviction (CPS, 2023 and Sentencing Council, 2023). These restrictions include Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPO) and being placed on the Sex Offender Register, and often these post-conviction restrictions were more stringent and long-term. These restrictions were for the most part, not individualised, and permeated all aspects of the men's lives, restricting their family's lives, their jobs and their abilities to earn money, their relationships and other activities. The restrictions are in place for public protection and to manage and minimise the men's risk of further offending (McAlinden, 2016) however

conversely these restrictions also serve to foster an environment that is likely to increase offending behaviour by for example increasing isolation, severing close relationships and loss of employment (see for example Mann et al., 2021; McAlinden, 2016 and McAlinden et al., 2017).

#### 8.3.4 Stigma, Shame, Masculinity and the Media

I found that the stigma and shame around their CSEM offending were exacerbated by the negative aspects of masculinity in our society. The men here were affected by the societal view of what a 'man' should be, in terms of heterosexual sexuality, lack of help seeking and being able to provide for their families, in keeping with other research (see Gough & Novikova, 2020). The way that these offences and those that commit them are portrayed in the media also served to exacerbate the shame and stigma experienced by the men here as seen in other prior research (Navarro & Higgins 2023). The men's own opinions of themselves were influenced by social norms around masculinity and portrayals of CSEM in the media (see and Kras, 2014 and Stelzmann et al., 2020), but more so, were the opinions of the public and professionals that they interacted with, and that in turn also impacted on them which is also reflected in other recent work (Pemberton et al., 2023). Negative and perceived negative experiences with the police, probation and other CJS staff increased the stigma and shame that they felt. Although it is important for the men to feel accountable and a sense of guilt and accountability around their offending in order to help them to desist and move forward (Dervley et al., 2017 and Proeve & Howells, 2002) stigma and shame are negative emotions that situate their offending as part of them as people and can actually be detrimental to their ability to seek help and desist (Kothari et al., 2021 and McAlinden, 2016).

#### 8.3.5 Negative treatment by family and professionals

The way that these men were treated by their families and the professionals that they worked with had a significant positive and/or negative impact on their CJS experiences. If their partners and other family members disengaged from them, this had a strong impact on their experiences and their abilities to cope with, and re-orient, their lives (Harris et al., 2019 and McAlinden et al., 2017). In a similar way, negative treatment by professionals, be they from the police, probation, social care or support staff, caused the men to disengage (seen also in Pemberton et al., 2023). For example, James and Ricky both felt that they were treated negatively by the officer who completed their SOR sign on increasing their feelings of shame and disengagement from the CJS and Steve being treated in a negative and dismissive way by his probation officer. Consequently, they struggled to engage in the process and interact in

positive ways with other professionals, again this was identified in prior research (Harris & Levenson, 2020; and Mann et al., 2021 and McCartan et al., 2021).

### 8.3.6 Negative impact of the CJS processes on their family

The negative impact of their offending and the subsequent CJS involvement on their families and the people important to them, and the lack of help and support for these people, significantly exacerbated the negative impact on the men. This impact was on many levels, although obviously in this research I can only glean this from the perspective of the men themselves, other recent research would suggest that the impacts are significant (see for example Armitage et al., 2023 and Kavanagh et al., 2023). The effect of not being able to support their partners looking after their children, or provide financially for their families resulted in feelings of impotence for the men, and being unable to support and provide for their families exacerbated the negative effects on them. There was a significant mental and emotional health impact on the partners/ex partners of the men and their close family that they reported and this was identified as significant and for all of the participants (Conmy et al., 2023). Although this is an area of increased research interest currently (as can be seen through the papers referenced in this section) and there is currently in the UK limited support for families the men in this research felt that this needs to go further here.

### 8.3.7 Disjointed CJS and other services/organisations

The CJS includes the formal agencies, such as the police, courts and probation services; it also in relation to this type of offending arguably encompasses other organisations, such as social care, health care and organisations that provide support to those (and their families) under investigation, or who have been convicted. The men found the CJS to be confused and disjointed, information even between different police agencies (such as local police forces and the NCA) was not shared, the men were not informed about the processes involved and there was a lot of duplication identified all of which was a waste of time and resources for the organisations and additional stress for them men. The research also highlighted a perceived acceptance by those working within the CJS, such as the police and probation, that the system is flawed but that there is little appetite to make developments or improvements. The solicitor for James noted duplication and mismanagement within court cases as frequent issues, the lack of information taken at SOR registration necessitated this being re-completed and identified as an issue by the police officer involved. The prior review done by Justice (2019) and recent academic research (see Steel et al., 2022) has shown that there are concerns around the ability of the CJS to effectively and efficiently manage sexual offending however there still appears to be little work to progress this.

## 8.4 What helped them through their experience of the CJS?

*'In our darkest moments, we don't need solutions or advice. What we yearn for is simply human connection' (Hemingway, 1925)*

Despite the overwhelming negative impacts of the CJS, the men found things that helped, or at least mitigated, the negative effects for them. This section explores and summarises my findings.

### 8.4.1 Being treated fairly and as an individual

One of the most important things that helped the men through their CJS experiences was being treated fairly (or how they perceived to be treated fairly) and being treated as an individual; the concept of procedural justice (Murphy et al., 2014) mattered to these men. Each person's circumstances and issues were unique to them and the perceived 'one size fits all' (where those that committed CSEM were not treated as individuals for example around their bail conditions, risk management, support needs or family circumstances) approach to the management of their offending behaviour and risk was thought to be unhelpful. This approach meant that the men were unable to access individual and appropriate support, to support their families and further disengaged them from the CJS. The men felt that much of the work done with them from the police, probation, offender management and social care for example was a 'tick box' exercise and as a consequence they often disengaged from the process, in a similar way to prior research evidence (McCartan et al., 2021). This paradoxically may actually make their risk of offending higher, those that are more engaged are more likely to adhere to restrictions and develop successful working relationships with CJS personnel such as the probation/offender managers (Mann et al., 2021 and McCartan et al., 2021). The men also engaged in aspects and activities of self-risk management such as limiting time on digital devices, utilising LFF online resources and gaining voluntary employment. Recognition by others of the work that they were doing to help themselves as an individual was also seen to be beneficial by the men. By the time it got to sentence, most of them had taken great strides to make changes to themselves and their lives and the men felt that this should be seen in a more positive light.

### 8.4.2 Positive relationships with CJS staff

Positive and productive relationships with CJS staff and continuity of the people they worked with, particularly those they needed to build a relationship with, such as solicitors, probation officers and offender managers, were seen as important to the men here. Linking with the previous sections, the importance of procedural justice (Murphy et al., 2014) was a thread throughout the stories of the men but in addition suggest how these relationships could provide

a blueprint for how the participants could communicate and rebuild their relationships with others moving forwards. Although these relationships have gained attention with regard to the impact on desistance (see Mann et al., 2021; McCartan et al., 2021 and Pemberton et al., 2023), the importance of these relationships can be widened based on this research in how the men can manage the stigma and shame they feel and start to thrive.

#### 8.4.3 Positive and supportive family/friend relationships

The men with supportive partners, families and/or friends were more able to manage and negotiate the CJS and found it much less traumatic than those that did not have the same level of support. Although this and the mechanisms for how it can be supportive are a matter of debate (see Mann et al., 2021 and McAlinden et al., 2017), in this research the stable base made it easier for the men to engage more deeply with formal support and to make the changes required of them in terms of managing their offending behaviour and their reintegration into the community. Men with knowledgeable and supportive partners (such as Paul and Hugh) had both formal and informal support structures around them (Rimer, 2021). This was also beneficial with the length of time of the investigations and restrictions as a result of their sentencing and their changing formal support experiences.

#### 8.4.4 Treatment and formal support

Treatment and formal support from the beginning of their CJS journey, and continuity of specialist support that was flexible and individual to each of the participants, was a key way that the men found to respond to their offending, the impacts of the CJS and the need to begin to rebuild their lives, in line with prior research (Bradshaw et al., 2023; Jackson et al., 2022 and Kras, 2021). Their involvement with the CJS was lengthy, there were many ‘aftershocks’ and setbacks along the way, and so having a stable professional support base with knowledge, tools and resources that they could return to when an issue arose was important. In similar findings to that of McCartan et al. (2021), the men that accessed individual therapy (for example, Paul, James and Hugh) found some issues with this therapy. In this research participants reported that the therapeutic boundaries were overstepped, the therapy wasn’t compatible with other interventions such as the work required through the probation service and short length of time allowed. This was in contrast to McCartan et al., 2021 who found that their participants felt that their therapy was an extension of the other supervision within the CJS rather than supportive. This does, however, show that independent and individualised support is important for those that have committed CSEM - building on previous research both around interventions offered by LFF (Dervley et al., 2017) and beyond (Bradshaw et al., 2023 and Perkins et al., 2018). The men that accessed the LFF online resources, helpline and



Inform Plus programme found these to be highly valuable, not only at the time that they could access these initially, but also, that there was comprehensive support there that they could return to as and when required (which expands prior research around LFF, for example Horn et al., 2015 and Kothari et al., 2021, as well as other support such as Circles (Thomas et al., 2014) and circles reboot (Bradshaw et al., 2023). For some of the men, this was a lifeline for their support and survival.

#### 8.4.5 Practical assistance to rebuild their lives

Practical assistance from professionals and their family/friends as well as practical ways in which the participants here could help themselves, were vital to support them not to reoffend, to manage the CJS and their mental and other health concerns, and to rebuild their lives linking my findings with previous research around both circles and the Inform Plus programme (Bradshaw et al., 2023 and Dervley et al., 2017). In addition to mental/emotional support, having practical activities and ideas such as producing a written prevention plan to prevent further offending, support to access paid or voluntary work, support to challenge bail or SHPO conditions and support to access/contact their children were all of value to the men here. Further, having practical things to focus on, such as finding work, utilising resources that had helped them, and support in negotiating their lives post sentence were all suggested as helpful by the participants and could be gleaned from some other research (such as Woodward, 2018).

Practical planning and assistance was identified by Rimer (2021) as being important in the desistance from offending seen as part of the psychoeducational programme that he observed for his research. However, due to the challenges the men faced, although they identified this assistance was important there were limits to what they could achieve; so, for example support looking for work was important actually being able to gain employment as a result of their situation either under investigation or convicted of CSEM was not as successful in line with other evidence (see for example Fowler et al., 2024 and Frenzel et al., 2014).

#### 8.4.6 Regaining control over their lives

The loss of control over their lives was experienced by all of the men and was a jarring, difficult aspect of the impact of their offending and the resulting effects of the CJS. Supporting the men and providing appropriate and relevant ways with which they could take back some control of their lives started to make them feel less 'unhomelike', for example locating appropriate accommodation and gaining contact with their children and seen in other previous work (Harris & Levenson, 2020 and Woodward, 2018). Being able to identify aspects of perceived unfairness and act on these, such as those James experienced with the lack of

access to his children, and utilising practical support from LFF resources or the probation service to find work as both Hugh and Paul were able to do, all helped them to feel more in control of their lives and in turn more able to rebuild their lives. Harris, (2014) for example, identified that control over their behaviour and the ability to take some control can be empowering for the men.

#### 8.4.7 Being able to visualise a future

The lack of certainty during their CJS journey, the restrictions imposed on them, and the fundamental changes to their lives post-arrest made seeing a future difficult. Our futures are rooted in our past and our present (Smythe et al., 2008) and inevitably the 'earthquake' that occurred altered their plans for their futures in meaningful ways. This could be seen across all the participants in this research from Hugh who reassessed with his wife their prior discussions around having children, through to Ricky who wanted a long-term intimate relationship and Simon who wanted to be able to care for his children. However, being able to implement some of the above activities and actions that helped and supported them, helped them take back some control meaning that they could start to look to the future and start to reshape and rethink what their future might look like.

### 8.5 Summary

The ongoing 'aftershocks' and unexpectedness that the participants encountered throughout the CJS underpinned what exacerbated the negative aspects of their experiences. This was alongside negative/poor relationships and responses from those around them including professionals across the CJS and those that were there to provide support.

There were, however, positive aspects of their experiences, actions and activities that helped the men over the course of their CJS journeys, which were articulated through their stories. The key to these was the connections that they had already and the new positive ones they made through their journeys. These connections helped them in a myriad of ways, from being able to support them to take back some control across areas of their lives, to being able to access a solid and consistent base and support, and to look beyond their current situation towards a future. These connections were the cornerstone needed to support them to start to reshape and rebuild their lives.

### 8.6 How did support affect their CJS experiences?

All of the participants in this research received informal and formal support but in different ways and to differing degrees. Support from professionals was a key aspect of support identified by all participants, particularly those that had accessed the LFF's services, and other

professional support that was specific to their own situation (such as mental health support). In addition, support from family and friends, and having positive connections with others, was equally vital. Each participant had their own unique background, needs, challenges and strengths, and over the length of time that they were involved in the different aspects of the CJS, inevitably those needs and challenges fluctuated. This section consolidates my findings on how the support that they accessed may have influenced their experiences of the impact of their offending behaviour and the CJS.

### 8.6.1 Non-judgmental attitudes

Being supported, conversed with, and treated in a non-judgmental way by the helpline staff at StopItNow! (run by the LFF), by the Inform Plus facilitators and the other group members, as well as from other professionals such as counsellors, along with their family and friends, was universally appreciated by all of the participants. This links to prior research conducted in with those that have committed sexual offences felt equal and not judged by others who had committed similar offences (Tovey et al., 2022). On the occasions in this research where particular professionals and staff from the CJS treated them in this way, the men were often surprised but they were also grateful. This interestingly also extended to me and the way that I treated them. They were expecting to be treated as outcasts by everyone, and when they were not, this made a really positive difference to them, their mindset and their confidence. This aided their positive mindset and engagement within the CJS and lowered the stigma and shame that they felt about themselves and the offences that they had committed. Being treated in a non-judgemental way, and being treated 'normally' by staff in prison, was identified as beneficial by participants in the study by Blagden et al. (2020) and Mann et al. (2021).

### 8.6.2 Support with their 'project'

All of the participants had, for example, employment, voluntary work, family life and other aspects that gave their lives meaning (Heidegger, 1962 and Ashworth, 2016). These were all to at least some degree altered, reduced or removed as part of their experiences of the CJS. Support from family, from professionals and, in particular, from the LFF (for those that had accessed the LFF) allowed the men the opportunity to rebuild, and in some cases completely reshape, what gave them and their lives meaning. This was definitely a work in progress for the men during the lifetime of this research but that they had been able to start moving forwards with this was a really important step. Having a 'project', having meaning in their lives, started to make the participants feel less 'unhomelike' and more positive and was key to helping them to start to visualise a future. The difficulty here was that, although many had support to help them in this area, frustratingly, their efforts were often in vain due to the CJS

restrictions, processes and other issues, as has been seen in other research. In research relating to the GLM (Harris et al., 2019), goods most prevalent as being important for men related to relationships and friendships, living and surviving (just being able to get through life with the basics such as money, food and accommodation) and knowledge/attainment (most usually attained through 'sex offender programmes'. These goods link well with the findings across my research here where the men's connections and their ability to survive are important and a key aspect of their ability to move forward is through learning.

### 8.6.3 Team support from peers on Inform Plus

There has been prior research on the effectiveness and importance of group sessions in interventions for those that have committed sex offences, although less so for those that have committed CSEM (Dervley et al., 2017; Perkins et al., 2018 and Rimer, 2021). Many of the participants within the Inform Plus study, prior to the start of the programme, were apprehensive about being in a room with other people who had committed CSEM offences, often describing them in derogatory terms (at the same time as being aware that that was what they had done too!); however, this subsided once they entered the programme. All of the participants found the group sessions a lifeline for them. In particular, the Inform Plus sessions (other than in my interactions with them) was one of the only times the participants were able to talk about the impact of their offending and the CJS on themselves, be treated as individuals and felt 'seen' as people by the facilitators and the other group members. This was fundamental to their abilities to reintegrate into the community, to rebuild their lives and to desist from offending. The importance of group intervention work has been seen in other research relating to group programmes (for example, in relation to the Inform Plus programme, discussed in the work of Dervley et al., 2017), and is especially important with this type of offending, as the men were unable to form, or access support groups in other settings.

Lastly, one of the most enduring and interesting outcomes of the group dynamic was the ability of the men to talk about books, poetry, mental health resources and many other items of help and support that they had discovered on their different journeys and by sharing these with group members, they significantly helped each other. Having an opportunity to learn from each other in these different ways over the time they spent on the course was of meaningful value to them. This is not something that I have seen alluded to explicitly in other research.

### 8.6.4 Information through discussion

As I have discussed in previous sections, the lack of knowledge and information about the CJS was something that caused significant issues for the men, even though they did not necessarily understand this at the time that it occurred. Through shared experiences,

programme activities and discussion with facilitators, each participant on the Inform Plus programme grew in confidence and felt more positive about their CJS experience. For example, the explanation about how the brain changes when accessing indecent images of children, information about sentencing and the registration process, were all key turning points for the participants that helped them to manage their CJS experience in a more positive way. Having access to pertinent resources across their CJS journeys that they can utilise at the time that is right or required for them can have a highly positive effect, allowing them to feel more in control of what is happening to them and their families (also see Fowler et al., 2024). For those that were not part of the Inform Plus sessions, information particularly through discussion was really challenging as none of the three participants had anyone that they could discuss their issues and gain information from. Indeed, Ricky tried to work with his probation officer to gain information which was not forthcoming and none of them were able to learn from others.

#### 8.6.5 Support for relationships and disclosure of their offending

As I have demonstrated across the findings and conclusions for this thesis, relationships and the connections made both with professionals and in a personal capacity with family and friends were paramount to reducing the negative impact of the CJS on these men. All of the participants faced difficulties in their relationships, and many found themselves confronting aspects of close relationships that they would potentially not have managed without the CJS process happening, also seen in other research elsewhere (Dervley et al., 2017 and Rimer, 2021). Support to build or rebuild relationships, and to make disclosures about their CSEM offending, came from the formal support that the men received through the Inform Plus programme and/or from other support such as counselling in particular and linked to similar research around circles support (Bradshaw et al., 2023). Disclosing their offending behaviour was defined by the men as a daunting prospect, so much so that both Ricky and Steve had decided not to pursue possible relationships for fear of what would happen. The support provided through LFF and discussions around disclosure, a specific aspect of the Inform Plus sessions, did however encourage and enable some disclosures to occur, which were positive to those that did so such as Simon and Hugh, and attested to through other additional research studies (Adebahr et al., 2023; Bradshaw et al., 2023; Dervely et al., 2017 and Rimer, 2021;).

#### 8.6.6 Encourage and foster hope and a view of the future

One of the key ways that support affected the CJS experience of the men was to encourage and foster hope and to enable them to start to visualise and build towards a future. It is easy to underestimate the importance of hope and having a view of the future, but this was key to

the men believing that they could start to rebuild a life for themselves alongside responding to the impact of their CJS experiences. Hopelessness has been identified often in research work with those that have committed sexual offences (see for example Jeglic et al., 2012 and Tewksbury, 2012). Hope is an important concept, particularly where there are life challenges such as serious mental health issues (Hayes et al., 2017) and being sentenced to prison (Gibson, 2021). Work that helped them to have plans to manage their offending behaviour but that also that helped them to reintegrate into the community and build, manage and maintain their relationships were some of the most beneficial ways to foster hope and a view of the future. Universally, those that accessed the LFF found that the resources and Inform Plus programme were able to support them with this. Developing hope and thoughts of the future was more challenging for those that had not accessed the Inform Plus programme and struggling to articulate their hopes for the future, something seen to a degree in work around the Inform Plus programme (Dervely et al., 2017).

#### 8.6.7 Variety of support methods

Across the stories of the men in this research, there was a consistent comment around the way that the CJS failed to consider them as individuals, to take into account their individual circumstances and to treat them fairly as a result. The support that the men accessed, however, enabled them to manage their individual lives in a much more tailored way. Individual counsellors were able to support them as individuals, but even the Inform Plus programme and resources through the LFF, which provide a generic programme, were utilised in an individualised way, so that the men could get the maximum benefit. Having a variety of support methods through the LFF, such as online tools, the helpline and Inform Plus group programme, meant that each group member (and those that did not access Inform Plus) could access the tools that were of most benefit to them. Some men preferred to sit and talk things through in the group environment, whilst others found the most benefit through the online resources, this difference in need is an important consideration (see Bradshaw et al., 2023). This is of particular importance due to the fact that support specific to this population of men is not widely available. For those that did not have or didn't access LFF resources (Ricky and James R), their knowledge of specific support for themselves was poor. LFF is not the only support resources for those that commit CSEM offences, there is a small pool of support and resources available (Perkins et al., 2018) however the lack of knowledge of the support and its benefits seems to be lacking.

### 8.6.8 Support to Challenge perceived unfair or inappropriate treatment within the CJS

One of the most interesting ways that I feel that support benefitted the men in this research was by providing them with information, emotional support and the confidence to challenge what they considered to be unfair or inappropriate treatment through the CJS. This happened for a number of men (such as James, Steve, Hugh and Paul) around lack of access to their children and the associated restrictions on them, where they sought support through the LFF and other formal routes, but also support from partners who were knowledgeable and willing to challenge the status quo.

### 8.6.9 Summary

There were many ways in which support, both formal and informal, affected the experience of the CJS for these men and had a profound positive impact on the experience of the men in this research. Participants that had supportive family/partners and were able to access and benefit from positive and appropriate formal support coped better with the CJS than those that were not able to access these. Having access to a variety of resources and methods of support that they could access when and how it was most appropriate to them, information and confidence gained through discussion with group members and professionals and support to encourage and foster hope for themselves, their future and their families. Conversely, for the men that were not able to access Inform Plus or other similar support their experience and outcomes seem to be more negative suggesting that structured support both formal and informal can have a significant impact on the experience of the CJS.

## 8.7 Comparison between findings from my scoping review and participant study

The scoping review for this research identified that there is a small but growing research base around the inclusion of the perspectives of those that commit CSO (including CSEM) on their experiences of the CJS. Although most of the prior research lacks a holistic overview of the participants experiences across the breadth of the formal organisations of the CJS as well as supporting organisations such as social care and health care, the findings do echo the findings from my other studies as part of this thesis. This section will highlight the main similarities.

The three themes that were created from my scoping review analysis also feature within the findings from my participant study. The participants within this research are all striving for a 'normal' life as was seen through the studies in my scoping review, this was overtly identified by some of the participants and gleaned across the stories of all of them. Some participants



wanted their old life back (such as James and Simon), some such as Paul were more able to recognise the need for change, something that could be recognised through prior research (Woodward, 2018).

Loss of employment has been highlighted across many studies as a collateral consequence of CSO/CSEM offending conviction (see Tovey et al., 2022, amongst others). My findings in this study showed that employment is something that every single participant lost and struggled to regain, in fact only one (Hugh) managed to regain employment by the end of the research. This loss is at an earlier point than conviction and impacts on their financial ability (particularly for those with family to support), on their self-worth and self-image and on their ability to keep themselves busy (similarly found in Woodward, 2018). The participants in this study articulated how important having work as 'project' (Ashworth, 2003) for them was, even if this was voluntary work rather than paid employment.

The importance of relationships and networks was a key part of the scoping review findings (featuring within each theme and demonstrating their significance). However, in my participant studies, the holistic research across the CJS meant that I was able to consider relationships more widely and include the importance of intimate relationships and family, everyday connections and relationships with CJS personnel all of which are of paramount importance for rebuilding their lives and reintegrating back into the community. The relationships formed and the support gained through interventions, such as Inform Plus, the LFF helpline and other support was vital to the men here and expands findings from other research (such as Kothari et al., 2021).

Findings from my scoping review and from my participant studies also depicted the sense of unfairness about the system and the way that the men have been treated at times including the tensions between their past offending and their ability to rebuild a future. Again, my longitudinal and experiential design helped to uncover a deeper understanding of what this meant for the men.

## **8.8 Comparison between the participants recruited through LFF and through CJS organisations**

As my scoping review identified, participant perspective research around the experience of the CJS for those that have committed CSEM/CSO has only previously been completed with those convicted and often after their sentence had been served. To be able to include the voices and perspectives of those that commit these offences in real time but also those that undertook the Inform Plus programme alongside participants that hadn't was a unique aspect of this research. In this section I highlight some of those potential differences however as I



was only able to recruit a small number of those that had not undertaken Inform Plus and this is research underpinned by HP, to make clear comparisons this work would need to be extended.

Firstly, all of those that accessed Inform Plus identified key benefits that they gained from taking part; those that didn't through our discussions identified that they would have benefitted from the programme or similar intervention but either were not aware of it or weren't able to participate. Although Simon H accessed LFF resources, the group aspect of the programme was something that cannot be accessed by those that don't undertake Inform Plus (or a similar intervention) and was something that provided a number of important positives (see Dervley et al., 2017 and Rimer, 2021). Meeting with men that had committed similar offences (although not universally positive) provided the men with that ability to both see themselves in a different more positive light and to work on building and rebuilding relationships in a safe environment. This was a distinct difference and a real issue for those that hadn't attended Inform Plus (Simon H, James R and Ricky).

The practical advice, information and discussion gained through the Inform Plus programme made a real difference to the men and was lacking for those that did not undertake it. Ricky wasn't able to manage the issues around his house and work which he may have been supported with had he access to a group and facilitators as part of Inform Plus in contrast with for example James who as a result of the group was able to gain information and confidence to challenge his situation with contact with his children.

Lastly, Inform Plus helped the men that undertook it to gain hope and to look to the future, creating practical ways that they could both prevent further offending but also ways to rebuild their lives. The concept of hope is a powerful phenomenon that can have a positive impact on for example those that have been sentenced to prison (see Gibson, 2021) and can be seen through the stories of those that accessed Inform Plus here. James R, Ricky and Simon H struggled with being able to hope and look to their futures.

## **8.9 Implications of the findings**

One of the many aspects from this research that echoed through the findings, both in terms of the scoping review and the empirical findings, and through a number of other recent studies (for example Fowler et al., 2024 and McCartan et al., 2021) was the lack of perspectives and experiences of those that are subject to the CJS within feedback around how the CJS operates. I have summarised in the previous sections what can help and hinder the men's CJS experiences, and the impact that support can have on this, and these next sections will look at the practical ways that these findings could be embedded within the CJS and support

services to take account of these 'service user' perspectives and hopefully to manage their CJS experiences in a more productive way.

### 8.9.1 Implications for theory and future research

#### *8.9.1.1 Research on suicide and mental health*

This research reinforces and expands on research from other CSEM offending studies around the link between mental health and suicidal ideation among men who are investigated for or convicted of CSEM offences (for example see Steel et al., 2022; Key et al., 2021; Gillespie et al., 2018). In the stories of the men in this research, poor mental health pre- and post-arrest was disclosed, and often, this was not acknowledged by the men at the time of their offending. A number of participants also discussed their offending as being part of an addiction, something that has started to be acknowledged in other work (Rimer & Holt, 2023), and therefore, further research relating to this may help in both prevention and management of these offences. The men also discussed the issue of their mental health and thoughts of suicide being severely impacted immediately post arrest (but after release from the police station as seen in other research, Key et al., 2021 and Steel et al, 2022) but also then at other points where they were in contact with the police and following sentence. Further research on the most appropriate times and ways to manage mental health and suicide ideation in this population would be helpful. Poor help seeking behaviour was also evidenced with a number of the men, in line with prior research around men's ability to identify and seek help (see Gough & Novikova, 2020) and again, would benefit from further investigation.

#### *8.9.1.2 Desistance, risk management and interventions*

The participants acknowledged and understood the risk management involved in the CJS; however, the participants had also put into place, through their own means and through engagement with support, their own risk management strategies (such as prevention plans, removal of devices, use of LFF resources etc) and felt that these were not taken into account by the CJS or any of the other agencies. Further research around the impact of support and interventions on self-risk management is needed, as well as how that could be incorporated into risk management strategies through the CJS and beyond. This research here also suggests like other prior research (see for example Harris et al., 2019 and Willis et al., 2013) that 'goods' identified through the GLM such as relatedness, healthy living and functioning, knowledge and work, are important for this population. Moving on from the work of Harris et al. (2019), the restrictions through the current system placed on these men make much of these goods difficult or sometimes impossible to achieve. Supportive relationships with family/partners, greater knowledge of themselves, their offending and the CJS and more

formal support all helped the men in this research to both desist from offending and start to rebuild their lives and although some work has been done to explore this for those that commit sexual offences (McAlinden et al., 2017 and McCartan & Richards 2021) more widely, not specifically for those that commit CSEM who it is acknowledged are a slightly different population (Rimer 2021). Many of the men in this research here also highlighted the importance of prevention and early intervention in CSEM offending and therefore again this is an area that would benefit from additional research.

### *8.9.1.3 Concepts of justice*

The different concepts of justice described within the introductory chapter of this thesis were at the forefront of this study. Of particular importance to the participants here was procedural justice (Murphy et al., 2014, the concept of fairness in particular), which the participants often felt to be lacking and resulted in the men being less likely to remain engaged with the CJS process and had the potential detrimental impact on their ability to desist from offending and reintegrate into community life. The CJS at many points felt unfair to the men, and to be a perfunctory 'tick box' exercise, that left the men going through the motions of engagement with it. Further research around procedural justice and the impact of it on the engagement for men in this situation and desistance would again be beneficial, although there is some prior literature (Healy, 2012 and Mann et al., 2021). The scale of this type of offending, the concept of victim centred justice and that of procedural justice from the perspective of the men, alongside the difficulties for the CJS in prosecuting these offences (the volume, scale and complexity), would all suggest that research into novel ways to identify and manage CSEM offending would be beneficial.

## *8.9.2 Implications for the CJS*

This section highlights where the findings from the research indicate that there could be beneficial changes made to aspects of the CJS. These are provided as a list and organised as implications for CJS professionals, implications for improving support referrals and prevention, and implications for improving CJS processes.

### *8.9.2.1 CJS professionals*

- Well-informed and well-trained legal professionals (police and solicitors) should be aware of the need to improve the welfare and well-being of men under investigation for CSEM offences to minimise suicide and other serious health issues, but also to reduce the impact that poor wellbeing can have on reoffending. Training around the impact that welfare-oriented approaches can have on desistance and reintegration

would improve these relationships that can be key for some men under investigation, particularly at points where they are isolated.

- Considerate management of offence disclosure to family and friends will reduce the shock and trauma associated with disclosure for both the men and their families.
- Prior research and the stories of the men identify stigmatised language and interactions with a wide range of personnel from the CJS. These interactions can negatively impact on the men and their families but can also cause significant issues around identification of the men as 'sex offenders' in the wider public and the subsequent impact that that can have. Training and the use of welfare-oriented approaches and less stigmatised language could help to engage the men and improve desistance.
- Most of the men had no or very little previous experience of the CJS and were left bewildered by the processes. Support from solicitors around the CJS process and further information from the police at the initial point of arrest would lessen issues further down the line.

#### *8.9.2.2 Improving support referrals/signposting and prevention*

- Positive, interactive and understanding support can make a significant difference. The provision of a place and space to talk, and continuity of this kind of support, can lend a balance to the negative experiences. There are now a number of organisations capable of providing specific support to these men and their families and this should be robustly provided to the men at an appropriate point.
- Mental health support and trigger points need to be better understood and managed for these men. Although they mostly discussed assessment of suicide prior to release from the police station, this seemed to be a tick box exercise and implemented at a point that did not yield tangible benefit. Follow-up post release from the police station would be more beneficial potentially for this population and was suggested by the men here.
- A change in narrative around support is needed from CJS staff, including from solicitors and the police. All of the participants said they had been advised to attend Inform Plus as a benefit to them at sentencing, rather than because it will have other more immediate and longer-term benefits for them and their families.
- People with a sexual interest in children are considered at significant risk of accessing online child sexual abuse images (Beier et al., 2015); this argument underpins Prevention Project Dunkelfeld, an initiative in Germany to encourage individuals who have not been legally reprimanded, but who identify as having a sexual interest in children or adolescents, to access professional help (Beier et al., 2021). Similar

prevention work in the UK could be well-received by UK men with a sexual interest in children as many of the participants here identified and beneficial to the CJS in terms of reducing offending behaviour and preventing harm.

### *8.9.2.3 Improving the processes of the CJS*

- Alternative ways of managing CSEM offences within the CJS, such as Operation Turning Point (Neyroud & Slothower, 2013) and other initiatives suggested in the Justice report (2019), and research to identify and evaluate these.
- There is a need to explore ways to reduce the length of the police investigations as these are difficult for the CJS, for support organisations, for the victims, but also for those that commit these offences and their families.
- The CJS should make risk management more individualised, less cumbersome and take into account the strategies employed by the men themselves and the support that they have received.
- There is a lack of communication between different aspects of the CJS such as the police and probation, even within police agencies (for example between police forces and the NCA). A review of the way that the system works as a whole and the processes within it with a view to identifying challenges and inefficiencies would lessen the impact on men such as the participants here and their families, improve engagement between these men and CJS professionals and potentially improve processes to make them faster and more effective.
- The risk management system has a fundamental impact on the men's ability to get a job, fund their family, build self-esteem, and ultimately, on desistance. A review of the way the DBS process works to provide a way that manages risk whilst improving employment prospects would be beneficial to this population, their families and the system as a whole.

### *8.9.3 Implications for support and health services*

This section highlights the support and health service implications for those who have committed/are committing these offences and negotiating the CJS.

#### *8.9.3.1 Individualised and targeted support*

- Targeted support around managing the future would potentially benefit the mental and physical health of those under investigation/convicted of CSEM offences and their families.
- Positive, interactive and understanding support can make a significant difference. The provision of a place and space for men like these and their families to talk, alongside

continuity of this kind of support, can lend a balance to the negativity that the men feel about themselves.

- Support is vital but it is difficult to find and the men in this research struggled to access appropriate support. They accessed different kinds of formal support (such as counselling, mental health support and specialist support around their offending) but it was not coordinated and could be detrimental where it was not handled well. Improved access to services such as the LFF and Inform Plus (and other similar organisations) would make a significant difference to these men and their families.
- Talking more openly about difficult issues, such as their sex life and relationships post-conviction, as this was challenging for the men, and resources that highlight and work through some of these more sensitive topics, would be helpful.
- Support around the benefits of living differently to how they were managing and coping with their lives during their offending is important; for example, how to manage with less devices, being more present with themselves and family, the importance of fresh air, exercise and green spaces, and to manage lifestyle change rather than just offending change.
- Individualised support and a variety of ways in which support can be accessed, so that it is equitable for all those that commit these types of offending, should be provided.
- Input of support services into research and prevention initiatives will make a much more seamless and targeted impact on this population.

#### *8.9.3.2 Practical support*

- Practical ways to find their 'project' and to work out ways to minimise their likelihood of reoffending is needed.
- Strategies and methods to help them to reintegrate into their community, targeting the main issues for each individual within an umbrella of knowledge around what those are likely to be, is something that is really helpful and necessary for this population.
- Practical support that encompasses the men's families and innovative ways to work to build their family relationships are needed, as the current system actively works to push the relationships apart by forcing disclosures and splitting families up without the infrastructure behind it to support, in particular, partners and children.
- Access to benefits, housing and other practical support will help them to reintegrate into the community.

### 8.9.3.3 Empowerment

- Knowledge and information about the possible impact of the CJS on the men's mental health, and on that of their family, is needed, as well as support to manage these issues.
- Those that were most successful in their desistance and reintegration into the community were those capable of change and that had an optimistic outlook, a sense of control over their future and the ability to develop a higher purpose for themselves, which could be achieved through for example work and family, or being able to give back to society, linking in with other prior research (Maruna, 2011 and Merdian et al., 2017).

## 8.10 Reflections on the research process

### 8.10.1 Introduction

Using Hermeneutic Phenomenology meant that the perspectives and perceptions of the researcher should be acknowledged, as these contributed to the design of the research, the data collected and its analysis and interpretation (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). This reflexivity should also include clarity about issues encountered during the research process and any failures along the way. In this section, I discuss the challenges faced in recruiting participants, collating and analysing the data and using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, and the overarching issues with trying to conduct and manage research during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 8.10.2 Recruitment challenges

Many PhD researchers experience issues with aspects of their research (Rimando et al., 2015), and in particular, for those of us whose research includes recruiting from stigmatised and hard to reach groups via gatekeepers, this can have additional issues (see for example Blagden & Pemberton, 2010). In this section, I outline the recruitment challenges and how I overcame these challenges.

My original plan was to recruit participants through the LFF for those that were attending an Inform Plus programme group and recruit further participants across the police, prison, and probation services to widen the participant pool to those that had not necessarily accessed formal support and to broaden the breadth of the CJS that participants had experienced. Although access to participants through the LFF was relatively straightforward (although inevitably hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic), engaging with gatekeepers across the CJS



organisations and the subsequent recruitment proved to be much more of a challenge. I had initially anticipated, naively, that it would be easy to identify and build relationships with gatekeepers; unfortunately, however, this did not prove to be the case.

The biggest (and appropriately most important) challenge initially was the numerous applications to gain ethical approval that was required for my research (through HMPPS, the police, LFF and the University), and later, the requirement to make changes to the original ethics applications and resubmit these. The changes were necessary as a result of COVID-19 restrictions that effectively removed the ability to conduct any in-person research for a prolonged period of time, right at the point that my data collection began.

The second biggest challenge was identifying willing gatekeepers. Recruitment issues and access to participant populations through gatekeepers are not uncommon in research, particularly with those that are vulnerable and/or those who have committed offences (see for example Blagden & Pemberton, 2010 and Ilea, 2018). I experienced challenges in recruitment that resulted in a lower number of participants being recruited than in my initial research design; however, it is important to note that the number of participants and volume and depth of data produced in the final thesis are in line with comparable projects (see for example Garland, 2019).

In the next sections, I discuss the recruitment challenges relating to the police and HM Prison and Probation Service.

#### *8.10.2.1 Police*

I had always thought that recruiting through the police would be the most difficult recruitment dynamic. I thought this partly because, from personal experience, I have found police officers can be suspicious of research, and partly, because they were likely to be reluctant to provide access to participants who were still under investigation. My position as a semi-insider (Jewkes, 2011), having worked across the CJS in most previous job roles (where I have been employed as a police officer working with victims and those that have committed sexual offences as well in forensic science and as an independent sexual violence advocate), initially prompted me to feel more optimistic about recruitment, even after I had been party to many horror stories attached to recruiting through, in particular, the police from speaking to other PhD students. I identified several potential police forces and force contacts, through contacts that I already had and networking. However, months of work proved fruitless, and I contemplated the possibility of not being able to recruit through this route and potential contingency plans. I was eventually able to begin to recruit through LFF who had been working with specific police forces however again this did not run smoothly as I was only able to liaise



with the lead of the team that were completing the recruitment, further information on this can be found in the following sections.

#### 8.10.2.2 *Prison and Probation*

Recruitment through Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (as it was at the time) required a series of steps, most importantly and firstly, a comprehensive application process to gain ethical approval for the research. Although this is a prerequisite for any research, this provides central ethical approval, rather than access to the prisons or probation services that will allow access to potential participants (the application can be found at appendix 11). Once ethical approval was secured, the identification of one prison and one probation service willing to assist in the recruitment of participants proved to be the greater challenge, and led to further delays in recruitment, again exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Once a prison and probation service were secured, there was a convoluted process to gain access to the participants, which again led to further delays. To add to the difficulties, a storm in the week that I was due to interview my second prison participant caused a flood at the prison and the evacuation of the participant. COVID-19 restrictions were introduced before I was able to identify another participant and this effectively ended my ability to both recruit through the prison and to continue my research with my first prison participant (James R).

#### 8.10.3 Overcoming recruitment challenges

Challenges faced as part of any research, particularly during a PhD, can be considered a part of the learning. Managing these challenges provide the opportunity to develop resilience and a number of other pertinent skills. In this section I consider the ways in which I overcame the considerable challenges faced.

##### 8.10.3.1 *It is not what you know... it is who you know*

Eventual success in securing a police gatekeeper stemmed from the professional relationship that a contact from one of my supervisors had with some police forces. This led to a personal conversation between myself and a police force contact, and eventually, a conversation with the officer in charge of an appropriate department. This personal discussion and connection ensured that I was able to develop a working relationship to enable recruitment. In line with my research findings, personal connections and relationships made a significant difference here. Unfortunately, even this was not enough to ensure a satisfactory recruitment process.

For the prison and probation populations, again, success came from identifying contacts with prior working relationships from another PhD student to be able to access the appropriate populations and building my own relationships with key people. Alongside providing me with

the ability to further my research this also enabled me to network with researchers and practitioners working in the same field.

#### *8.10.3.2 Persistence and flexibility*

Although I developed the documents and the process for recruitment in conjunction with my police contacts, I was not in contact with the police staff that were directly completing the recruitment process with potential participants. After initially not receiving any participant details, the documents were tweaked to aid recruitment. After still not receiving any potential participant details and being unable to contact my contacts, I discovered that both of my police contacts had left their roles and the police officer had retired. I was eventually able to make contact with the unit sergeant and found that the officers were not adhering to the agreed process of providing me with the contact details of potential participants, even though a number of potential participants had been identified and they had provided consent for their details to be passed to me. The police did provide me with one participant's contact details and then I reverted to utilising probation to secure further participants, something that was still within the scope of the research.

#### *8.10.4 Challenges of the hermeneutic phenomenological approach*

As a novice, with HP philosophy and phenomenology more generally, their use in my research, and the lack of structure around HP, was a real challenge for me and rather intimidating. HP requires immersion in the philosophy to help shape the research design and the analysis of the data (Dibley et al., 2020); again, this was something that was out of my comfort zone. However, on reviewing my research questions, phenomenology and more specifically HP philosophy seemed to be the right fit for this project, as I discussed in the methodology chapter. My doctoral training programme encompassed training in theories, techniques and methods that are essential for a PhD student and ultimately allowed me to develop appropriate skills and confidence in the use of HP and the methods that generated the data. The use of HP therefore, was not only the right choice for my project, but also enhanced my learning experience. The more I understood and immersed myself in HP, the more it became clear that not only was this a highly appropriate methodological choice to underpin my research, but also a philosophy that made sense to me (Crowther & Thomson, 2020 and Smythe, 2012).

#### *8.10.5 Reflections on my role as a researcher*

In HP, how to manage personal understanding, knowledge, and the perspectives of the researcher remains a challenge (Suddick et al., 2020). Reflexivity, as I noted in the methodology chapter, is a way of managing this problem. The reflexive researcher constantly reflects and adjusts the influence of their frame of reference across the research process

(Dibley et al., 2020). Journaling was something that I found key to help me to understand and make notes on important points across the data and to help me to understand, think and write. When I first started my PhD my initial frame of reference was rooted in my previous experience where I have long been an advocate for survivors of sexual offences and had concerns about how sexual offences were managed across the CJS, something that I touch on in the introductory chapter. I am also an advocate of the need to include those that commit offences in the conversation, to have a voice so that we can understand more about their offending and be in a better position to prevent people from being victimised. I have met many men that have committed sexual offences previously, through my previous CJS roles but as a practitioner, not a researcher and only when I started this research did I understand the difference here. Being able to see the CJS through the eyes of the men themselves and to a certain extent their families, challenged my perspective.

Hermeneutic phenomenology, as a research approach, requires the interpretation of others' experiences (Dibley et al., 2020), but what I found is that, by seeking to understand and interpret the experiences of the participants, I have come to understand myself more at the same time, which in turn impacted on my interpretation of the data, as part of the hermeneutic circle. Reading back my reflexive journals, I began to understand how much my perspective changed over the course of this project, but even at the start of my project, I was able to reflect on my resonance with HP.

*I have long been an advocate of the need to give a little of yourself within the research when you are building a rapport with people; otherwise it feels false and contrived and you will ultimately not get the rich data that you seek. [comment from my reflective journal]*

I vividly remember being offered my PhD and then my feelings as I started in October 2018. I was excited, tinged with terror, about doing the research and immersing myself in it. I began a research journal around my research and my own reflexivity at the start of my PhD and I think one of the biggest surprises to me was just how hard I have found it all. Obviously, this has not been helped by the pandemic coming at the point that I had started to collect data, forcing me back into the design and ethical approval stages. In order to help me at times when I considered giving up, I found my reflections and reading about other people's experiences vital tools to keep me going. PhD research requires you to design and conduct your own novel research and to learn how to become an independent researcher. Although there are set processes in place around this, your experience of your PhD research and the journey that you take are unique to each individual research student. This journey is inevitably affected by the events that happen, your own identity and the relationships that you develop along the way.

Whilst I have been reading and thinking about my identity as a researcher, two academic papers resonated with me. The first is a piece by Carolyn Ellis (Heartful Autoethnography, 1999) in which she discusses being a vulnerable researcher. As a PhD student in any discipline, but particularly I think as a HP researcher in this topic area, you have to give a part of yourself as part of your PhD. Your PhD and your research almost become a part of you and you are almost consumed by it at points. There is also an important acknowledgement that you are an important part of the research. In HP my findings are my interpretation, formed through my interactions with the participants and the data, alongside discussions with many others (e.g., my supervisors, staff at the LFF); the 'horizons' of others' perspectives. This ability to be vulnerable is vital I think to both collect and analyse the data. Carolyn Ellis (1999) recalled a conversation with 'Sylvia' about collecting data from participants and that vulnerability encourages participants to share their stories:

*Carolyn: "What would you want someone in a similar situation to do for you if you were a research participant?"*

*Sylvia: "Well, I'd want them to care about me and try to understand where I was coming from, I'd want someone who listened, really listened"*

The other academic paper that resonated with me was that of Yvonne Jewkes (2011) discussing the emotional aspect of conducting criminological research with stigmatised 'others'. Although Jewkes' work relates specifically to ethnographic work in prison, it really resonated with me and my own experiences. Jewkes quotes Bosworth et al. (2005) saying:

*Criminologists tend to present their analysis of the prison in the form of inhuman data. As a result, prison studies have become cold, calculated, surgical.*

*These days, most criminologists make precision cuts—no blood—no humanity.*

*Why?*

*So no one will care. Keep it statistical, inhuman, no compassion. (p. 259)*

These papers and my own reflections have helped me to better understand qualitative research in the arena of criminology but also of the kind of researcher that I want to be. I realised through my reflexivity that I felt much more at home with the participants than anyone within academia. This initially shocked me: these were men under investigation and subsequently convicted of sex offending, and who are likely to or have had sexual thoughts about children. As someone who has worked with victims and survivors of sexual violence for the best part of 20 years, this realisation was a little disconcerting. I wondered why I felt this way and what this said about me as a person, as a researcher and what the consequences

would be for my research work. I also was struck by a comment from supervision, something about people who work with 'offenders' being seen by the public as 'lefty do gooders' - a thought that anyone who feels that society should help those that offend (even in the realms of child sex offences) desist from offending and reintegrate back into the community are somehow in the wrong.

I have learned that I am the sort of person who feels that we should not stigmatise and shun these men. As the men themselves experienced when they entered the Inform Plus group for the first time, they are 'surprisingly normal' people; but, of course, people who have also engaged in harm. I have always given a little bit of myself when working with others within the vital boundaries of the professional relationship that you have, as researcher and participant. The men were interested in me and why I would want to talk to them and to do this research, which goes back to the point about being a vulnerable researcher, researching with compassion, and why this research is important to do.

Alongside this, most of my research was conducted through a pandemic. At times I had most conversations in a week with participants as part of my research, whilst working within the vacuum that was the University whilst the pandemic was ongoing. The PhD student community and the support from the university diminished significantly during the pandemic, leaving students including me struggling mentally, physically and as learner researchers. At points the highlights of my week were my interactions with participants and the Inform Plus programme. Although not intentionally a form of support for me, I found on reflection that this was nevertheless a community that I was part of, during a global health emergency, and that helped to keep me mentally on track at points.

Power dynamics within academia are also relevant to my connections with the participants. As a PhD researcher, you are at the bottom of everyone's to-do list, treated very much as a student researcher. I have mostly felt like a fish out of water within my interactions within academia. It was much more enjoyable and much less stressful to hear about my participants' lives than it was for me to engage with supervisors, lecturers, do presentations and teach students remotely. I acknowledge that there was also a power dynamic there too; they [the participants] did not expect anything from me other than to listen and I was more in control of the interactions than at other points of my PhD.

The last point that I want to reflect upon around my role as a researcher is the struggle that I have had with writing. I mentioned within the earlier findings chapter how difficult I have found writing this thesis. Writing is obviously a key component of academia and presenting my findings to the wider academic community and wider still out to practitioners and the public domain requires dissemination through this written thesis, as well as papers and presentations. This is the aspect that I find most difficult, most uncomfortable both in terms of ordering my thoughts in a logical way but also because of the personal way writing opens you up to critique.

#### 8.10.6 Strengths and limitations of the research

As with all research, there are both strengths and limitations to the studies presented as part of this thesis.

##### *8.10.6.1 Strengths and novel aspects of the research*

There are unique aspects of my research that I want to highlight within this section. This is the first scoping review to look at the experience of men across the breadth of the CJS from their perspective. This review demonstrated that there is limited CSO and also CSEM specific research around the experiences of those under investigation in particular and across the breadth of the CJS. The findings revealed similar themes across the research although prior research has tended to concentrate on certain aspects of the CJS such as the impact of registration and has included only those convicted of offences when looking at the impacts on them.

This is the first time that a study underpinned by HP and featuring the experiences of the men themselves across the breadth of the CJS, recruiting men post arrest and following them through the system has been completed. This is also the first time that there has been participants recruited for a qualitative study that have accessed formal support (i.e the Inform Plus programme) and those that haven't and the ability to make some comparisons between the two. This means that I have been able to start to consider the importance of support as a result from a slightly different angle than prior research. This was also the first time that the experiences from the men themselves about their experiences and the support that they receive has received academic exploration; as I have been told through feedback from LFF these findings resonate with practitioners but aren't necessarily seen in the literature.

The holistic gathering of the stories through of these men through a HP approach and the presentation of a creative non-fiction collation of their stories has given an added depth and dimension to the literature in this area. I found that the story ('One of Them') helped me to articulate their experiences in a way that brought them to life rather than as aspects and

themes. I feel that this type of humanisation of the men and their experiences helps to provide a greater understanding of how their experiences affected them.

#### *8.10.6.2 Limitations and challenges*

The biggest challenges for this research were the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the difficulties in recruiting, particularly from the police and pre-sentence as I have discussed in my methodological chapter and detail further here. Due to the timescales of PhD research and the added time constraints caused through the pandemic I was unable to recruit and follow men through the whole of the CJS and although I managed this to an extent, through an accelerated longitudinal approach, it still meant that I was unable to understand the scale of the impacts and changes across the CJS. Only being able to recruit one participant through the police and immediately post-arrest also meant that it was impossible to consider their experiences in the real time way in which I had hoped to or to make more comparisons between those that had and hadn't accessed the Inform Plus programme. The findings here would suggest that further research recruiting through the police and with those that do and do not access Inform Plus (or other formal interventions) would be beneficial to understanding the importance and impact that they can have.

The small sample size, although comparable to previous research as detailed in the research design chapter, means that caution needs to be applied to the findings from this research. The rigour applied to this research mitigates some of the concern around the size. HP research, is not meant to provide a definitive explanation of human experiences (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). Although there are commonalities, each person's experience is unique to them (Heidegger, 1962). Hermeneutic phenomenological research aims to start a conversation about the topic and invite the reader to engage with the findings, pushing the interpretation on (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). Further discussion of the data through engagement with others, through the consideration of future research findings and through exploring the data through a different lens will help to deepen the findings from this research, as seen for example in Crowther et al. (2018).

The scoping review that I undertook deliberately excluded research around interventions such as Circles and Inform Plus due to not being part of the formal CJS and research that concentrated solely on desistance (unless any of the research met the inclusion criteria). This will have limited the papers included and therefore the landscape of research. A further review with a wider inclusion criteria that includes these papers but reports the findings separately from formal CJS should be completed. Most studies have been completed post-conviction and post-sentence and therefore it is difficult to separate out what is the impact of the system from the impact of other factors and the importance of support.

The participants within this project all volunteered to be in the research and were keen to share their experiences. They were engaged in trying to improve their situation, even those that were not undertaking the Inform Plus programme, and they expressed that they were involved in the research as a way to help others. This research, therefore, may not be representative of the experiences of those that are not as keen to change and develop. Future research that actively engages those that are under investigation and not inclined to access formal support will be of benefit.

## 8.11 Last thoughts

This last section will focus on the essence of this research. As I have already discussed the design of this research (using a longitudinal, HP approach and multiple methods) generated a strong rapport between me as a researcher and the participants and a rich data set from which to understand their experiences. The impact of their CSEM offending and their experiences of the CJS led to a negative effect on a myriad of aspects of their lives and the lives of their families and close friends. Previous research had always concentrated on certain aspects of the CJS and the men's desistance from offending, rather than this more holistic overview of the impacts. This thesis has also demonstrated the importance of support, in particular formal and dedicated support, for this population of men and their families. I hope that this thesis will enable further conversations around how these investigations are managed, highlight the need for dedicated and coordinated support, provide an impetus for further research, and ultimately, help prevent further offending and improve the reintegration prospects of men like those that took part in this research. Lastly, I hope that long term changes improve the lives of men and their families and reduce the burden on the CJS and surrounding services such as health.

On a personal level, my understanding of this area of work, and my understanding of myself as a person and a researcher, has developed exponentially along the many and varied twists and turns that this research and this subsequent thesis has taken. In my understanding that research is a never-ending horizon, I acknowledge that there is further research to be done, and that it is important to include and incorporate the perspectives of those involved from all aspects of the system along the way.



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## 10 Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### **Protocol for Scoping Review**

#### **What is known about the impact of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) on men investigated for sexual offences relating to children from the perspective of the men themselves? – A scoping Review**

#### **Why a scoping review?**

Reviews are an important way to aid researchers to provide a comprehensive, critical discussion of the evidence base related to the topic under investigation (Lockwood et al, 2019). In order to comprehensively map the current evidence available in relation to the impact of the CJS on men under investigation/convicted in a rigorous and transparent way and to situate the results of my own studies into the current research evidence, it will be useful to complete a scoping review (see Pham et al, 2014). The value of a scoping review, rather than any other type of review is the examination of a broad topic area to allow the identification of gaps in the research knowledge base, clarify key concepts, and report on the types of evidence that address and inform practice in the field; in other words to map the evidence on the specific topic under investigation (Peters et al, 2017). This review is not intended to provide a critical appraisal of the evidence in relation to a specific question but rather to provide an overview of the state of the evidence base that there is already. More in depth reviews, such as a systematic review, which aims to bring together and analyse evidence from a large research base around a specific question (Pollock and Berge, 2018), would not be appropriate here. I want to map the extent, range and nature of prior research that has been undertaken during investigation and post-conviction regarding the impact of the CJS and research that is from the perspective of the participants themselves.

## **Introduction**

The CJS is considered a way to control crime and protect the public, but it also acts to socially exclude those considered 'deviant' (McAlinden, 2016). In the UK, as well as the sentence received as a result of conviction for a sex related offence, those convicted are also subject to additional control measures such as the sex offender register, sex offender disclosure scheme and risk management processes (see for example McAlinden, 2017). However, alongside these formal processes, there are unintended collateral consequences that can be felt by those under investigation, their friends and families and these are often prior to any court case or conviction. The individuals (and also others in their lives) often experience harassment and social ostracism, higher than the general population levels of stress and mental health issues (Bailey & Klein, 2018), as well as other effects such as employment and relationship difficulties (Tewksbury, 2012). For those that are investigated within the CJS, there is a higher suicide rate than the general population (McKenzie, Cartwright and Borrill, 2017). For men that commit sexual offences against children, mental health issues and suicide ideation are particularly elevated (Katsman, 2018). Those involved in Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) offences specifically account for almost 30% of suicides for all offending types and almost 80% of suicides of those arrested for a sexual offence (Underwood et al, 2018). Inevitably therefore, contact with the CJS leads to an increased cost to both the individuals, their families and wider society.

There is a growing research base with regard to the motivations of those that commit sexual offences against children (for example see Steel et al, 2020 and Marshall, 2018), alongside research into offence desistance (see Mpofu et al, 2018). There is also evidence around the impact on professionals within the field but there seems to be a much smaller body of evidence related to the perceptions of those who have committed the offences themselves (see Brown et al, 2018). Across the CJS the majority of research with those who have committed offences appears to have been conducted with those who have already been convicted (see Tewksbury, 2012). This is unsurprising as access to populations that are under investigation is fraught with difficulties; however, some of the research evidence would seem to highlight the investigation stage as being a specific issue in relation to the impact, particularly with regard to suicide (see Underwood et al, 2018 and Hoffer et al, 2010).

## **What is the purpose/objective of the scoping review?**

The purpose of this review is to scope what current research evidence there is on the impact on men that are/have been under investigation for any type of sexual offences committed in relation to children from the perspective of the participant. This review will focus on men. My PhD research project running alongside this review intends to concentrate on CSEM offences only, however the research evidence for CSEM offending behaviour and men that commit these offences is still evolving. It is also likely that research considering the impact on men that have committed any sexual offence against children would be pertinent to my research. The decision was therefore taken to map the prior research evidence base in relation to research on men that have been under investigation and/or convicted of any sexual offences against children rather than limit this to purely online offending. To my knowledge there is no other review that has been conducted solely on this area of research evidence. This review therefore aims to provide an overview of the previously published literature and identify gaps in the knowledge base.

This review will:

- 1) Identify and examine research evidence from research involving men that are under investigation/convicted of child sex offences as participants where the impact of the CJS forms the majority of the research study. It may be that the research explores

desistance, for example, but the findings also provide evidence for the impact that the CJS has had on the participants.

- 2) Consider the stage of the CJS in which the research has been completed, is could be pre and/or post-conviction. The review will also consider the country within which the research was undertaken and the type of justice system employed and it will also consider the type of sexual offence committed as well.
- 3) Identify the research methods that have been used previously.
- 4) Identify the underlying theories/concepts that have previously been illustrated through prior research. This could for example include, the good lives model, stigma and strain etc.

This scoping review will use the scoping review guidance (see Peters et al, 2017) and PRISMA ScR extension checklist (Tricco et al, 2018).

The scoping review framework consists of six stages:

### **Stage 1: Identifying the research questions**

The overarching question for this review is:

What is known about the impact of the CJS on men under investigation/convicted for child sexual offences from the participants perspective?

The question could well be refined, altered, enhanced or increased as the review progresses; scoping reviews require reflexivity at each stage (Peters et al, 2017).

### **Stage 2: Identifying relevant studies**

To enable me to identify appropriate and relevant literature, there will be a search strategy that will be underpinned by the inclusion criteria. These will be shaped by the Participant-Context-Concept framework recommended for scoping reviews as inclusion/exclusion criteria (Peters et al, 2017). The review will include all research articles, including peer reviewed and other published works. The review will only include empirical research and will exclude book reviews, editorials and other literature types that will not include specific first hand research findings. There will be no date limitation.

**Participants:** Men under investigation or convicted of the specified offences at any point within the CJS. The participants will be required to be a mean age of 18 OR over and from any location. This review will exclude research that is conducted with men that have not been under investigation as this research is looking at the impact of the CJS specifically but will include studies that feature participants that both have and haven't been under investigation as long as the findings related to those under/have been investigated are reported separately. The review will also include findings from studies that include those who have committed offences as well as others such as family members as participants as long as the findings are reported separately in order to be able to identify those that relate specifically to those that commit offences. The review will limit the search to research with men as that fits with my own PhD project participant scope and most offences are committed by men

**Context:** The language will be restricted to research articles in English and the research needs to be with men that are under investigation or convicted for a sexual offences against a child/children including both contact and/or non-contact offences. Studies that have

participants that have committed offences against adults and participants that have committed offences against children will be included as long as the findings related to those who have committed offences against children have been reported separately or 80% or more of the participants had offended against children rather than adults. There will be no time limit placed on the research as although online offending is a relatively recent phenomena, sexual crimes against children have been designated offences for a considerable length of time.

**Concept:** The search will be limited to research that specifically utilises the perspective of the participants, either under investigation or convicted, on the impact of the CJS on them and their lives. The review will include any research method (i.e quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods). + CJS will include all formal aspects of the CJS such as arrest, police, court etc but will exclude voluntary initiatives such as CoSA unless also including specific themes/aspects related to impact of CJS in the findings/results

'Impact' refers to the way in which the lives of the participants have been affected by contact with the criminal justice process. This could be in many ways such as the effect on their work, relationships and housing etc. Research that is solely related to desistance of offending will also not be included here. Qualitative studies based around other topic areas will be included if one or more themes relate to the impact of the CJS. Research relating to the effectiveness of treatment programmes with regards to offending behaviour only will not be included in this review as the study is specifically to consider the impact on the quality of life of the CJS itself.

### **Search strategy**

Identifying studies relevant to this review will be achieved through the search of electronic databases and following the three-step approach (Peters et al, 2017). A search for prior systematic or scoping reviews matching this criteria has proved to be negative the first step of the search strategy will be to conduct an initial search utilising two online relevant databases. As this is a topic relating to criminology, psychology and health I chose to utilise PubMed and Scopus, as an initial review of these databases provided relevant literature). From a prior literature search potential relevant and appropriate key words were used. This search will both consider the scope of the relevant literature that might be available and as a way to collate and refine the search terms for the main scoping review search. The search strategy for stage 1 can be seen at appendix 1.

Once the first stage has been completed, the second stage of the search strategy will be to utilise the defined terms to search available databases for all relevant literature. As this topic overlaps between health, psychology, criminology and social justice the second stage will include the following databases and a search for grey literature.

Databases: PUBmed, Scopus, Psycinfo, Ethos, Open access theses, Hein online, Social care online, Sage journals online.

Lastly the third stage would require a review of the reference list of studies selected for the review for additional literature. The results from each stage would be charted through excel.

### **Stage 3: Study selection**

References will be imported to excel in order to complete the screening process. Duplicates will be removed prior to screening taking place. Screening will be completed using the inclusion and exclusion criteria for titles and abstracts before moving on to potentially relevant full text screening. If it is not clear from the title/abstract screen then the full text will be checked. Although Arksey and O'Malley (2005) do not advocate the use of an additional reviewer in order to reduce error and increase reliability it is recommended elsewhere that a

team approach should check at least a proportion of the search results (Peters et al, 2020 and Levac, 2010). The second reviewer will review the results from the title and abstract search once completed (see Abbot et al, 2018) and agreement will be evaluated. Any disagreements will be discussed. Once completed the author will then review all of the results before moving onto a full text search of those selected from the title and abstract stage.

#### **Stage 4: Charting the data**

The results will be charted into a data table using the following criteria (see Peters et al, 2017):

- Author
- Date
- Country of Origin of research population/research
- Purpose of the study
- Sample size and population- location, age range, sexuality, ethnicity etc (all participant characteristics)
- Type of child sexual offence (s) committed by participants identified within the study
- Stage of CJS for participant
- Methodology/Methods
- Outcomes
- Theories/concepts highlighted through research
- Key findings relevant to review
- Author identified limitations and suggestions for further identified research

#### **Stage 5: Collating, summarising and reporting results**

The reporting checklist for scoping reviews will be utilised when reporting the results (Tricco et al, 2018). It is likely that any research that is included within this review will vary in study design and methods and as this review aims to map the prior research across this area the results will be analysed in line with previous recommendations (see Levac et al, 2010 and Peters et al, 2017) and prior scoping reviews that have been completed around participants' perspectives and experiences (see Kaasboll and Paulsen, 2019 and Thomas and Harden, 2008). A descriptive, numerical study will be presented (see Levac et al, 2011) that will enable me to compare the different results related to the data charted at stage 4, such as the type of methodological approach etc. This review aims to map and identify gaps in the current evidence base and therefore a thematic analysis would seem to be a suitable approach to the analysis and in line with prior reviews (Kaasboll and Paulsen, 2019). This analysis will entail descriptive qualitative analysis (see Peters et al, 2020, Braun and Clarke, 2013 and Van der Aa, 2017), in that the analysis will be driven by the data produced through the review. It's a flexible technique that will allow me to encompass the potentially different types of research evidence that will be included (Van Der Aa, 2017). The data will be coded and then themes will be generated that will enable me to answer the scoping review question and to identify gaps as well as situate my own work into the landscape (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

#### **Stage 6: Consultation**

According to Arksey and O'Malley (2005) this stage is an optional stage for scoping reviews with Levac et al (2010) noting that in their review of the methodology only one of the three reviews had incorporated this stage. Although consulting with stakeholders can identify additional information, it is not clear from the literature how to analyse or incorporate this. Therefore in my approach I will conduct this aspect by collaborating with my supervision team at each stage of the review.

#### **Search strategy for PubMed**

Search 1 was run on PubMed:

((child AND sex AND offen\*) OR (online AND child AND sex) OR (child AND porn\*) OR "CSEM" OR (child AND abuse AND image\*) OR "CSAM" OR (child AND abuse AND sex) OR (indecent AND child) OR "child sexual exploitation material" OR (internet AND sex AND child) OR (Child AND sex AND Assault))

Search 2 was run on PubMed:

((("procedural justice" OR "spill over" OR registration OR police OR conviction OR desistance OR prison OR probation OR justice OR court OR policy OR investigation OR arrest OR detention OR caution OR prosecut\* OR charge OR jury OR legal OR sentenc\* OR custody OR incarcerat\* OR correction OR suspect))

Search 3 was run on PubMed:

((treatment OR "treatment evaluation" OR identity OR "good lives" OR "quality of life" OR stigma OR suicide OR "mental health" OR shame OR well-being OR labelling OR collateral OR coping OR "life change" OR transform\* OR rehabilit\* OR emotion OR experience OR support OR perception\* OR perspective\* OR view\* OR respons\* OR impact\* OR effect\* OR influen\* OR consequence\* OR repercussion OR ramificat\* OR (mental\* AND ill) OR stress\* OR distress\* OR trauma\* OR withdraw\* OR isolat\*, OR lonel\* OR re-integrat\*))

Search 4 was run:

(search 1) AND (search 2) AND (search 3).

((child AND sex AND offen\*) OR (online AND child AND sex) OR (child AND porn\*) OR "CSEM" OR (child AND abuse AND image\*) OR "CSAM" OR (child AND abuse AND sex) OR (indecent AND child) OR "child sexual exploitation material" OR (internet AND sex AND child) OR (Child AND sex AND Assault)) AND ((("procedural justice" OR "spill over" OR registration OR police OR conviction OR desistance OR prison OR probation OR justice OR court OR policy OR investigation OR arrest OR detention OR caution OR prosecut\* OR charge OR jury OR legal OR sentenc\* OR custody OR incarcerat\* OR correction OR suspect)) AND ((treatment OR "treatment evaluation" OR identity OR "good lives" OR "quality of life" OR stigma OR suicide OR "mental health" OR shame OR well-being OR labelling OR collateral OR coping OR "life change" OR transform\* OR rehabilit\* OR emotion OR experience OR support OR perception\* OR perspective\* OR view\* OR respons\* OR impact\* OR effect\* OR influen\* OR consequence\* OR repercussion OR ramificat\* OR (mental\* AND ill) OR stress\* OR distress\* OR trauma\* OR withdraw\* OR isolat\*, OR lonel\* OR re-integrat\*))

Additional search terms identified- child molester and the search terms were slightly amended in order to minimise inappropriate results.

## Appendix 2

### Scoping Review Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

#### What is known about the impact of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) on men investigated for sexual offences relating to children from the perspective of the men themselves? – A scoping Review

Although Arksey and O'Malley (2005) do not advocate the use of an additional reviewer in order to reduce error and increase reliability it is recommended elsewhere that a team approach should check at least a proportion of the search results (Peters et al, 2020 and

Levac, 2010). The second reviewer will review the results from the title and abstract search once completed (see Abbot et al, 2018) and agreement will be evaluated. Any disagreements will be discussed. Once completed the author will then review all of the results before moving onto a full text search of those selected from the title and abstract stage.

### **Inclusion/exclusion criteria**

- Men/male- all participants within the study must be male or the findings must be reported separately to any females
- All participants must be 18 or over or findings for those aged 18 or over is reported separately from those aged under 18
- All participants must have been under investigation (this can include convicted of offences) or the findings are reported separately to those not under investigation/convicted
- Participants are under investigation themselves; any research that incorporates family members, other professionals involved with them etc must have the findings reported separately from the men themselves
- Articles are in English
- The men must be under investigation/convicted of offences against under 18s or the findings for those with additional convictions/investigations are reported separately. If the findings are reported together then at least 80% of the men must have been investigated for child only sexual crimes.
- Any sex related crimes including both contact sexual offences and online sexual offences including child sexual material offences.
- The research must specifically include the participant/mens perspective on the impact of the criminal justice system on their lives
- Include any method of research (qual, quant, mixed) as long as it provides perspective on the impact of the CJS
- CJS is all formal aspects of the process- investigation, police, court, prison, probation, community sentences and any state sanctioned therapy work but not voluntary schemes such as circles of support etc unless mandated as part of the sentence and this is explicit within the research. So research looking at the effectiveness and value of voluntary schemes will be excluded.
- Impact includes any effects articulated by the men on their lives, which could include the day to day living such as housing, employment, benefits etc and could include their emotional and physical well being such as mental health, suicide ideation and their relationships.
- Research centered solely on desistance from offending will be excluded.
- For qualitative studies where the research is on a topic other than the impact of the CJS, studies will be included where one or more themes relate to the impact of the CJS and only those themes will form part of the thematic analysis within this scoping review.
- Prior systematic and scoping reviews will not be included however the papers included within them will be reviewed against the inclusion criteria.



## Appendix 3

### Participant Consent Form (Study One)



#### Consent Form

**Project Title:** *Exploring the impact of the Criminal Justice System on men investigated for Indecent Images of Children offences.*

**Researcher:** *Lynsey Fenwick*

**Project Supervisor:**

You will be asked to sign a consent form before each conversation. This consent form is for conversation number.....

Please indicate your agreement by circling the appropriate yes or no response after each of the statements and sign where indicated below:

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| 1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and understand what is expected of me.                                    | Yes/No |
| 2. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary.   | Yes/No |
| 3. I understand that I am free to stop the study and withdraw my data up to one month After my last conversation with the researcher.                            | Yes/No |
| 4. I give my consent to being audio-recorded during the conversation.  | Yes/No |
| 5. I give consent to the diary entries that I provide to researcher being used as part of the research.  | Yes/No |
| 6. I agree to the use of direct quotations providing that any quotations are anonymised.   | Yes/No |
| 7. I confirm that I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study, and if asked, the questions were answered to my full satisfaction.     | Yes/No |
| 8. I consent to providing the researcher with an alternative person to contact if required   | Yes/No |
| 9. I consent to the researcher being provided with my address by a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party should I move location and I am unable to contact the researcher myself | Yes/No |
| 10. I consent to the researcher contacting me after the end of the research Should there be further related research projects                                    | Yes/No |

#### Data Protection Act

I understand that data collected from me during this study will be stored on a password-protected computer and that any computer files containing information about me will be made anonymous. I also understand that this consent form will be stored separately from any data that I provide.

I agree to Leeds Beckett University recording and processing my data and that these data when anonymised will be used for a PhD project, and may be presented in other academic forums (e.g., academic journals, at conferences, or in teaching). I understand that my data will be used only for research and teaching purposes of the University and the Lucy Faithfull Foundation and my consent is conditional upon the University complying with its duties and obligations under GDPR and the Data Protection Act.

Your name (print) .....

Your signature .....

Date .....

Researcher's name (print) ...Lynsey Fenwick.....

Researcher's signature .....

Date .....

Thank you for this information. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

## Appendix 4

### Participant Information Sheet (Study One)

#### Information Sheet for Study Participants

**Project title:** *Exploring the impact of the Criminal Justice System on men investigated for offences relating to indecent images of children*

**Researcher:** Lynsey Fenwick

### **Project supervisors:**

I would like to invite men that have been, or are still, under investigation by the police for offences relating to indecent images of children to take part in this research. This research is specifically related to online offences only; please do not take part if you have previously had sexual contact with a child/children. Taking part is voluntary; it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. It is important for you to understand what the research is about and what it will involve. If anything is not clear to you or you would like any more information then please contact me. This sheet contains information that you may not wish other people to know so please keep it safe

### **What is the project about?**

In this project I want to talk to you to understand how your life has been affected by being under investigation for offences relating to indecent images of children, no matter what the outcome of the investigation was. I am interested in any and all effects that the investigation has had on you, whether negative and/or positive, and in relation to any aspect of your life. In order to fully explore the effects of an investigation it is vital that I speak to those that are or have been investigated themselves. I hope that the findings from this research will provide information that will help the police, court and support organisations to improve the outcomes for the lives of those that are under investigation and their families.

### **Who is conducting the research?**

I am a research student (PhD) at Leeds Beckett University. This research is jointly funded by the University and The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF). LFF is the only UK-wide charity dedicated solely to tackling child sexual abuse and provides help and support for those that have committed offences related to online sexual offending and their families. As a researcher, I am completely independent of any organisation involved in the Criminal Justice System.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

I will be talking to you about how the investigation has affected you and will not be asking you questions about the offences themselves. In order to complete this research, you will be asked to take part in three separate conversations with me over the course of a 12-month period. I will arrange the dates of these conversations with you but I would like to complete them at 6-month intervals. At the moment, as a result of the restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these conversations will be conducted through the use of a video communication platform. If you are unable to access this then the interview can be conducted over the telephone.

The conversation will be just between the two of us, conducted in private, and I will audio record each conversation to help ensure that I record your views accurately and to help me focus on our conversation rather than taking notes. I will check that you are happy to do this before I do so. If you are not then the conversation can be recorded in a different format which we can discuss. I anticipate that each conversation will be around an hour and a half in length. In the conversation I will ask you about how you feel that the investigation and any subsequent court process (if relevant) has affected you, your life and that of your family and friends. You will have the opportunity to discuss whichever aspects of how you have been affected are important and relevant to you. This may mean discussing topics that are difficult or sensitive for you. However, it is up to you to decide what you want to share with me, you do not have to answer all the questions if you don't want to and we can pause or take a break from the conversation at any time.

Alongside this, I will ask you to complete a diary. This is so that you can think about how you have been affected in your own time, when it suits you and you can do this at the time that something happens or at the time that you think or feel things over the course of the 12-month project. I will provide you with some guidance on how to complete the diary and with a blank

notebook. You do not have to provide the diary entries to me if you don't want to, or you can choose to provide me with some but not all of them. It is entirely up to you. I can also return the diary entries to you at a later date if you wish. You do not have to take part in all aspects of the research if you do not wish, it is entirely voluntary. Lastly, I will also ask you to complete some questions about yourself such as whether you have a job and whether you are currently in a relationship. It is entirely up to you which of these questions you answer. Please leave any blank that you do not wish to answer. At the end of this Information Sheet are ways in which you can access advice and support should you feel that this would be beneficial. The advice and support is free, confidential and local to you.

### **How will my information be used?**

The information collected during this study will be used as part of the assessment for my research degree (PhD thesis). The people who might read this are my project supervisors, other members of Leeds Beckett psychology and LFF staff, and external examiners. An anonymized summary of my findings will also be provided to organisations such as the police, LFF and the prison and probation service to help them develop their services. Additionally, the information may be published in academic magazines, presented at academic conferences, or used for teaching purposes. Although the information may be used for these purposes, you will not be identifiable in any way through these activities. Your name and any other identifying information will be changed.

The audio-recordings that I make of our conversations and the diary entries that you provide will be typed up word for word and labelled using the fake name that you choose (pseudonym). Your original diary entries will be returned to you if you wish or they will be destroyed if you do not want them. The audio-recordings will be kept securely during the course of the research and then these will be destroyed at the end of the research. I may use something that you have said word for word as part of my thesis but these will be anonymized no one will be able to identify that these comments have come from you.

### **Will my information be confidential?**

All the information that you provide will be treated in confidence. This means that your name will not be passed on to anyone else and your information will be used solely for the research or teaching purposes of Leeds Beckett University and LFF. All of your information will be stored securely and only I and my supervisors will have access to your individual information. The only time that my project supervisors or I would reveal anything to an appropriate authority would be if you divulge information that suggests that you or another person (for example a child) are at risk of harm or that you disclose offences that you have not been under investigation for. This decision would only be taken following full consultation with my supervision team and I would inform you if I had to do this and explain who I needed to talk to and why.

### **Can I change my mind?**

Yes, you can stop taking part in the study at any time and/or ask for part or all of your data to be destroyed. You do not need to provide a reason. If you would like to withdraw your data, please contact me either by telephone, email or in person no later than one month after our final conversation. If you wish to do so you will need to provide me with your pseudonym, this will be written on your debrief sheet.

### **Who can I contact for further information about the research?**

In the first instance, if you have any questions, concerns or want to discuss the research further then please contact me:

Lynsey Fenwick

### **Who can I contact for help or support?**

**Stop It Now!** Helpline - this is available for anyone seeking support or concerned about their online behaviour involving children. The helpline number is 0800 1000 900. There is someone available to talk 9.00am - 9.00pm Mondays to Thursdays and 9.00am - 5.00pm Fridays.

**Samaritans** – they support anyone in who feels that they are in need of help and can be reached 24/7 on 116 123.

**Mind** – for information on how to access support for your mental health, contact on 0300 123 3393.

### **What happens next?**

Please think carefully about whether or not you wish to take part in the study. If you are interested in taking part and have provided your contact details then I will contact you within the timescale agreed. If you would like to take part but have not provided your contact details or you wish to discuss the research further then please contact me on the telephone number or email above. I will then discuss the next steps with you and arrange to meet. We will then discuss the research in more detail, answer any questions that you may have and, if you would like to, gain your consent to take part in the research and arrange our first conversation.

Thank you for considering participating.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Participant Information Sheet (Study Two, cohort one)**

#### **Information Sheet for Study Participants**

**Project title:** *Exploring the impact of the criminal justice system on men investigated for offences relating to Indecent images of children and any effect of the Inform Plus programme and other sources of support.*

**Researcher:** Lynsey Fenwick

#### **Project supervisors**

I would like to invite men that have been, or are still, under investigation by the police for offences relating to indecent images of children to take part in this research. This research is specifically related to online offences only; please do not take part if you have previously had sexual contact with a child/children. Taking part is voluntary; it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. It is important for you to understand what the research is about and what it will involve. If anything is not clear to you or you would like any more information then please contact me.

#### **What is the project about?**

In this project I want to talk to you to understand how your life has been affected by being under investigation for offences relating to Indecent Images of children, no matter what the outcome was. I also want to talk to you to understand how these effects may or may not have been altered through your involvement in the Inform Plus programme. I am interested in any and all effects that the investigation has had on you, whether negative and/or positive, and in relation to any aspect of your life. In order to fully explore the effects of an investigation it is vital that I speak to those that are or have been investigated themselves. I hope that the findings from this research will provide information that will help the police, court and support organisations to improve the outcomes for the lives of those that are under investigation and their families.

### **Who is conducting the research?**

I am a PhD student at Leeds Beckett University, this research is jointly funded by the University and The Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF). LFF is the only UK-wide charity dedicated solely to tackling child sexual abuse and provides help and support for those that have committed offences related to online sexual offending and their families. As a researcher, I am completely independent of any organisation involved in the Criminal Justice System.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

I will be talking to you about how the investigation and your support has affected you and will not be asking you questions about the offences themselves. In order to complete this research, you will be asked to take part in two separate conversations with me over the course of a 12-month period as well as a group discussion. I will complete these either through video communication or at a location agreed by us, the conversation will be just between the two of us and I will audio record each conversation to help ensure that I record your views accurately and to help me to focus on our conversation rather than taking notes. I will check that you are happy to do this before I do so. If you are not, then these can be recorded in a different format which we can discuss. I anticipate that each conversation will last around an hour and a half.

The first conversation will take place prior to the start of the Inform Plus programme (or as soon as possible after you start the programme if it's not practical to complete this prior to the start) and the second at the end of the 12-month period. I would like to observe the Inform Plus sessions that you attend; this is so that I can get a good understanding of the programme itself which will make our conversations about this much more meaningful. After you have finished the Inform Plus programme, I will invite you and the others involved in the programme to be involved in a group discussion.

In these conversations I will ask you about how you feel that the investigation and any subsequent court process (if relevant) has affected you, your life and that of your family and friends. I will also be asking you whether you feel your involvement in the Inform Plus programme and any other support that you access, such as support from friends and family etc, has had any effect or not. It is important for this research that you are given the opportunity to discuss what aspects are important and relevant to you. This may mean discussing topics that are difficult or sensitive for you to talk about. However, it is up to you to decide what you want to share with me, you do not have to answer all the questions if you don't want to and we can pause or take a break from the conversation at any time.

Alongside this, I will ask you to complete a diary. This is so that you can think about how you have been affected in your own time, when it suits you and you can do this at the time that something happens or at the time that you think or feel things over the course of the 12-month project. I will provide you with some guidance on how to complete the diary. I can provide you with a blank notebook to record your entries or you can type your entries or use other means such as a diary app on your phone. You do not have to provide the diary entries to me if you don't want to, or you can choose to provide me with some but not all of them. It is entirely up to you. I can also return the diary entries to you at a later date if you wish. You do not have to take part in all aspects of the research if you do not want to, it is entirely voluntary. Lastly, I will also ask you to complete some questions about yourself such as whether you have a job and whether you are currently in a relationship. It is entirely up to you which of these questions you answer. At the end of this Information Sheet are ways in which you can access advice and support should you feel that this would be beneficial. The advice and support is free, confidential and local to you.

### **How will my information be used?**

The information collected during this study will be used as part of the assessment for my research degree (PhD thesis). The people who might read this are my project supervisors, other members of Leeds Beckett psychology and LFF staff, and external examiners. An

anonymized summary of my findings will also be provided to organisations such as the police, LFF and the prison and probation service to help them develop their services. Additionally, the information may be published in academic magazines, presented at academic conferences, or used for teaching purposes. Although the information may be used for these purposes, you will not be identifiable in any way through these activities. Your name and any other identifying information will be changed.

The audio-recordings that I make of our conversations and the diary entries that you provide will be typed up word for word and labelled using the fake name that you choose (pseudonym). Your original diary entries will be returned to you if you wish or they will be destroyed if you do not want them. The audio-recordings will be kept securely during the course of the research and then these will be destroyed at the end of the research. I may use something that you have said word for word as part of my write-up but these will be anonymized, so that no one will be able to identify that these comments have come from you.

### **Will my information be confidential?**

All the information that you provide will be treated in confidence. This means that your name will not be passed on to anyone else and your information will be used solely for the research or teaching purposes of Leeds Beckett University and LFF. All of your information will be stored securely and only I and my supervisors will have access to your individual information. The only time that my project supervisors or I would reveal anything to an appropriate authority would be if you divulge information that suggests that you or another person are at risk of harm or that you disclose offences that you have not been under investigation for. This decision would only be taken following full consultation with my supervision team and I would inform you if I had to do this and explain who I needed to talk to and why.

### **Can I change my mind?**

Yes, you can stop taking part in the study at any time and/or ask for part or all of your data to be destroyed. You do not need to provide a reason. If you would like to withdraw your data, please contact me either by telephone, email or in person no later than one month after our final conversation. If you wish to do so you will need to provide me with your pseudonym, this will be written on your debrief sheet.

### **Who can I contact for further information about the research?**

In the first instance, if you have any questions, concerns or want to discuss the research further then please contact me:

Lynsey Fenwick

### **Who can I contact for help or support?**

**Stop It Now!** Helpline - this is available for anyone seeking support or concerned about their online behaviour involving children. The helpline number is 0800 1000 900. There is someone available to talk 9.00am - 9.00pm Mondays to Thursdays and 9.00am - 5.00pm Fridays.

**Samaritans** – they support anyone in who feels that they are in need of help and can be reached 24/7 on 116 123.

**Mind** – for information on how to access support for your mental health, contact on 0300 123 3393.

### **What happens next?**

Please think carefully about whether or not you wish to take part in the study. If you are interested in taking part, please contact me on the telephone number or email above. I will then discuss the next steps with you and arrange to meet. We will then discuss the research in more detail, answer any questions that you may have and, if you would like to, gain your consent to take part in the research and arrange our first conversation.

## Appendix 6

### Interview Schedule (Study One, interview one)

#### Study 1 Interview Schedule

##### Introduction

- Introductions, general conversation to build rapport, offer light refreshments
- Check they received Participant Information Sheet and have read it
- Recap Key Information from Participant Information sheet including voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity.
- Check for any questions
- Ask participant to complete consent form

##### Questions

##### Life Prior to investigation

- 1) In order to explore what life has been like for you since you were arrested/charged/sentenced (whichever is appropriate to that participant) I'd like to first hear about what your life was like before that happened. It's important that this is in your own words and from your own perspective. Can you tell me as much as you can about what your life was like before the police contacted you?
- 2) How did you feel about yourself at that time?

*Topic Prompts: relationships (family, friends, community, romantic), work and relationships with work colleagues, finances, hobbies and activities, location/housing, plans for the future, mental and physical health, happiness and any worries/concerns*

##### Impact of criminal justice system

I am interested in exploring how your arrest and the investigation has affected you and your life, so I just wanted you initially to have a think about what this might mean for you.

- 3) What stands out for you when you think about this?
- 4) How else has it impacted on you and your life?

Prompts:

Thinking back to the time you were arrested/charged/sentenced, what was this experience like for you?

How did it feel to be arrested/charged/sentenced?

Has your life changed? If so, how and why? Think about relationships (family, friends, community, romantic), work and relationships with work colleagues, finances, hobbies and activities, location/housing, plans for the future, mental and physical health, happiness and any worries/concerns

##### Identity

- 5) Has your arrest/charge/sentence had an effect on your sense of who you are, your identity? If so, how?

Prompts:

Do you think that you have changed as a result of your arrest/charge/sentence? If so, how?

Has how you feel about yourself changed since you were arrested/charged/sentenced? If so, how?

- 6) Do you think others see you differently since you were arrested/charged/sentenced? If so, how and why? Has this affected how you see yourself?

### **Strain and Coping**

- 7) Do you feel that your arrest/charge/sentence has caused you to feel any stress or strain? If so, what do you think is making you feel this way?

Prompt:

What have been the most difficult things for you since your arrest/charge/sentence?

- 8) How do you feel that you are coping/have coped with being arrested/charged/sentenced/under investigation?  
9) What are you doing that helps you to cope? What keeps you going?  
10) What do you think stops you from being able to cope as well?

### **Treatment/Support**

- 11) Have you accessed any treatment or professional support since you were arrested to help you with how you have been affected? If so, what was it? Did you find this helpful? Why? If you haven't accessed any can you tell me why you haven't?  
12) Do you have anyone in your family/friends that support you/you can talk to? If so, tell me more about this.  
13) What else do you think could have helped you whilst you have been under investigation/convicted/sentenced?

Prompts:

Thinking about how you have been affected by your arrest/charge/sentence as we have talked about earlier, do you think (the support or treatment- name this here) has made a difference to you?

Prompt topics: emotions, worries, relationships, work, finances, hobbies and activities, location/housing, plans for the future, mental and physical health, identity, ability to cope

### **The future**

- 14) How do you feel about the future at the moment?  
15) What are your plans for the future? Has this changed as a result of your arrest/charge/sentence?  
16) Are you doing something to work towards these at the moment? If so, what are you doing and what helps or hinders you in doing this?

### **Useful prompts:**

- Can you tell me more about that....?
- Could you explain/describe what you mean.....?
- Can you give me an example of what you mean.....?



- What makes you say that.....?
- How did that make you feel.....?.
- Is there anything else.....
- What did that make you think.....?
- What did that mean to you.....?
- How do you think/feel about that now.....

End of interview:

- Any questions?
- Debrief – verbally go through the debrief sheet and the debrief protocol which is also handed to the participant and including the support services.
- Ask them to complete/go through the Demographic sheet
- Explain the next steps (e.g diary instructions and give them instructions and notebook to take away, send on secure email if not in person). Arrange date for next interview, explain process for reimbursement for travel costs and talk about something positive, unrelated and general conversation to close the interview.

## Appendix 7

### Interview Schedule (Study Two, interview one)

#### Study 2 Interview Schedule – Interview 1

##### Introduction

- Introductions, general conversation to build rapport, offer light refreshments
- Check they received Participant Information Sheet and have read it
- Recap Key Information from Participant Information sheet including voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity.
- Check for any questions
- Ask participant to complete consent form

##### Questions

##### Life Prior to investigation

- 17) In order to explore what life has been like for you since you were arrested/charged/sentenced (whichever is appropriate to that participant) I'd like to first hear about what your life was like before that happened. It's important that this is in your own words and from your own perspective. Can you tell me as much as you can about what your life was like before the police contacted you?
- 18) How did you feel about yourself at the time?

*Topic Prompts: relationships (family, friends, community, romantic), work and relationships with work colleagues, finances, hobbies and activities, location/housing, plans for the future, mental and physical health, happiness and any worries/concerns*

##### Impact of criminal justice system

I am interested in exploring how your arrest and the investigation has affected you and your life, so I just wanted you initially to have a think about what this might mean for you.

- 19) What stands out for you when you think about this?

- 20) How else has it impacted on you and your life?

Prompts:

Thinking back to the time you were arrested/charged/sentenced, what was this experience like for you?

How did it feel to be arrested/charged/sentenced?

Has your life changed? If so, how and why? Think about relationships (family, friends, community, romantic), work and relationships with work colleagues, finances, hobbies and activities, location/housing, plans for the future, mental and physical health, happiness and any worries/concerns

### **Identity**

- 21) Has your arrest/charge/sentence had an effect on your sense of who you are, your identity? How do you feel about yourself now? If so, how?

Prompts:

Do you think that you have changed as a result of your arrest/charge/sentence? If so, how?

Has how you feel about yourself changed since you were arrested/charged/sentenced? If so, how?

- 22) Do you think others see you differently since you were arrested/charged/sentenced? If so, how and why? Has this affected how you see yourself?

### **Strain and Coping**

- 23) Do you feel that your arrest/charge/sentence has caused you to feel any stress or strain? If so, what do you think is making you feel this way?

Prompt:

What have been the most difficult things for you since your arrest/charge/sentence?

- 24) How do you feel that you are coping/have coped with being arrested/charged/sentenced/under investigation?  
25) What are you doing that helps you to cope? What keeps you going?  
26) What do you think stops you from being able to cope as well?

### **Treatment/Support**

#### **Inform Plus Programme**

- 27) You have decided to take part in the Inform Plus programme. What influenced your decision to take part in this programme?  
28) What do you expect to get out of the experience?  
29) What are your hopes and fears about entering the programme (if any)?

#### **Other treatment/support**

- 30) Have you accessed any other treatment or professional support since you were arrested to help you with how you have been affected? If so, what was it? Did you find this helpful? Why? If you haven't accessed any can you tell me the reason for this?  
31) Do you have anyone in your family/friends that support you/you can talk to? If so, what has been your experience of the support that you have received from your family/friends so far?

Prompts:

Thinking about how you have been affected by your arrest/charge/sentence as we have talked about earlier, do you think (the support or treatment- name this here) has made a difference to you?

Prompt topics: emotions, worries, relationships, work, finances, hobbies and activities, location/housing, plans for the future, mental and physical health, identity, ability to cope

Prompts for support- stopit now, mental health, GP, friends and family, online advice, liason and diversion etc

### **The future**

32) How do you feel about the future at the moment?

33) What are your plans for the future? Has this changed as a result of your arrest/charge/sentence?

34) Are you doing something to work towards these plans at the moment? If so, what are you doing and what helps or hinders you in doing this?

Finally- is there anything else that you feel that my questions have missed or that you want to tell me about?

### **Useful prompts:**

- Can you tell me more about that....?
- Could you explain/describe what you mean.....?
- Can you give me an example of what you mean.....?
- What makes you say that.....?
- How did that make you feel.....?
- Is there anything else.....
- What did that make you think.....?
- What did that mean to you.....?
- How do you think/feel about that now.....?

End of interview:

- Any questions?
- Ask them to complete the Demographic sheet
- Debrief- verbally go through the debrief sheet, including support services.
- Explain the next steps (e.g diary instructions and give them instructions and notebook to take away). Arrange date for next interview, explain process for reimbursement for travel costs and talk about something positive, unrelated and general conversation to close the interview.

## **Appendix 8**

### **Interview Schedule (Group discussion)**

#### **Study 2- Interview Schedule (Group discussion)**

##### **Introduction**

- Recap Key Information from Participant Information sheet and consent including voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity.
- Ask participants to agree that they consent and run down the points on the consent form
- Check for any questions

- Rapport question- so the group finished last night how has everyone's week been?

### **Questions**

#### **Impact of criminal justice system**

As you know, I am interested in exploring how your involvement in the criminal justice has affected you and your life, so I just wanted you initially to have a think about what this might mean for you at the moment.

- 35) What stands out for you right now when you think about this? What's been the biggest impact for you? What did you find the most difficult aspect? Did anything surprise you about how you have been impacted?
- 36) Has this changed since your initial arrest? If so, in what way? Why do you think this has changed? If not, why do you think this is?
- 37) I know you all have support in different forms from therapists, family, friends etc. In what way? Do you think that this support has affected you?
- 38) How do you feel that you've been treated by people that you have met across the process?

Prompts:

How did it feel to be arrested/charged/sentenced and how do you feel about it now?

Has your life changed since our last research conversation? If so, how and why? Think about relationships (family, friends, community, romantic), work and relationships with work colleagues, finances, hobbies and activities, location/housing, plans for the future, mental and physical health, happiness and any worries/concerns.

### **Identity**

- 39) Do you think there has been an effect on your sense of who you are, your identity since the police first attended? If so, in what way? Why do you think this might be the case?

Prompts:

Do you think that you have changed over the course of the investigation? If so, how?

Has how you feel about yourself changed since we last spoke/over the course of the investigation. If so, how?

- 40) Do you think others see you differently? If so, how and why? Has this affected how you see yourself?
- 41) Do you think IP/other support has made a difference or not to how you see yourself? If so, in what way? If not, why do you think this is?

### **Strain and Coping**

- 42) Do you feel that the investigation has caused you to feel any stress or strain? If so, what do you think is making you feel this way? How do you feel that you are coping/have coped with being arrested/charged/sentenced/under investigation?
- 43) What are you doing that helps you to cope? What keeps you going?
- 44) What do you think stops you from being able to cope as well?

## **Treatment/Support**

### **Inform Plus Programme**

We've talked about how support has affected some aspects of your life. Now I'd like to talk a little about more specifically about the Inform Plus programme and other support.

- 45) What was the reason that you decided to take part in the course? (how did you hear about the course, LFF, stop it now etc)
- 46) Thinking about Inform Plus, what aspects of the experience did you feel were beneficial in relation to how you had been affected by the investigation? Can you describe an instance in particular where that happened?
- 47) Is there anything that could be improved to make the programme more beneficial to you?

Prompts:

Thinking about how you have been affected by your arrest/charge/sentence as we have talked about earlier, do you think (the support or treatment- name this here) has made a difference to you?

Prompt topics: emotions, worries, relationships, work, finances, hobbies and activities, location/housing, plans for the future, mental and physical health, identity, ability to cope

### **The future**

- 48) How do you feel about the future at the moment?
- 49) What are your current plans for the future? Has this changed as a result of your arrest/charge/sentence?
- 50) Do you think that your feeling about the future has been affected by IP/other support? If so, please tell me more about this? If not, why do you think this is?
- 51) Are you doing something to work towards these plans at the moment? If so, what are you doing and what helps or hinders you in doing this?

Finally- is there anything else that you feel that my questions have missed or that you want to tell me about?

### **Useful prompts:**

- Can you tell me more about that....?
- Could you explain/describe what you mean.....?
- Can you give me an example of what you mean.....?
- What makes you say that.....?
- How did that make you feel.....?
- Is there anything else.....
- What did that make you think.....?
- What did that mean to you.....?
- How do you think/feel about that now.....?

End of interview:

- Any questions?
- Debrief – verbally go through the debrief sheet which is also handed to the participant and including the support services.

- Explain the next steps (e.g diary instructions and give them instructions and notebook to take away). Explain process for reimbursement for travel costs and talk about something positive, unrelated and general conversation to close the interview.

## Appendix 9

### **Observation guide for observing Inform Plus sessions**

#### **Observation Guide**

##### Location

- Set up of the room for the participants- what does the room tell me about them as it is in their own environment- does it look like a home? Does it look like its rented, lived in etc. personal items or are these deliberately obscured.
- Where are the facilitators etc- how is it managed on screen?
- How does the room feel, atmosphere- to me
- Time of day and length of programme, breaks

##### Facilitators

- How do they manage the course- introductions, explanations, potential issues, etc
- Body language
- Language used
- Resources
- How do they interact
- Is the programme different with me there and in what way?- does it feel different, does it seem different? Does it feel like things are being changed as a result? (point re: pre discussion meeting and involvement in the meeting before etc)

##### Participants

- Who participates, when and in what way
- Body language, clothing, how do they present
- How would I describe the participants
- What language do they use
- Tone, emotion
- Who interacts with who- are their friendships, whats the conversation outside of the programme- break out rooms, no break chat? Does that matter here? Difficult to meet and chat and develop relationship online? How does online potentially impact on this aspect?
- How do the participants interact with the facilitators- what impacts on this
- Are there any changes over the course of the session and then the programme
- How do they relate to their life
- In what ways do they talk about the investigation
- What do the participants say about impact throughout the programme

##### Programme

- What is the work that they have to complete- what looks at impact
- How is it received by the participants, questions, discussions- within the programme
- How is this translated online

##### Researcher

- My observations, thoughts and feelings about being involved in the programme, being a researcher, do I feel that the programme is different with me in it

## Appendix 10

### Debrief Sheet (Study Two)

#### Participant Debrief Sheet

#### Exploring the impact of the Criminal Justice System on men investigated for offences relating to indecent images of children.

Fake name (Pseudonym):

Thankyou for taking the time to participate in this research so far. This project is concerned with exploring how all aspects of the Criminal Justice System (CJS), from initial arrest through the course of the investigation and any subsequent court proceedings or sentence can have an impact on your life and how participating in support programmes can also affect you. There has been little previous research conducted in relation to the impact of the CJS or the effect that support programmes can have on this as a whole, particularly in relation to indecent images of children offences. We really value your contribution to this project.

#### What happens now?

We have agreed that our next meeting (group discussion/conversation) is:

Date:

Time:

Location:

I will contact you a few days before our next meeting to confirm that you still wish to participate. My contact details are at the bottom of this debrief sheet and on your Participant Information Sheet. Please contact me if you need to rearrange our next meeting. I would like to remind you that you can withdraw your data at any point up until one month after our final conversation. If you decide that you do not wish to continue participating in the research, please contact me, providing me with your pseudonym and whether you are happy for me to keep the data that you have provided so far or not.

On your Participant Information Sheet I provided you with support organisations that you can contact if you wished to talk to someone about how you had been affected by your experiences. I want to take this opportunity to remind you of these organisations.

**Stop It Now!** Helpline - this is available for anyone seeking support or concerned about their online behavior involving children. The helpline number is 0800 1000 900. There is someone available to talk 9.00am - 9.00pm Mondays to Thursdays and 9.00am - 5.00pm Fridays.

**Samaritans** – they support anyone in who feels that they are in need of help and can be reached 24/7 on 116 123.

**Mind** – for information on how to access support for your mental health, contact on 0300 123 3393.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to complete this research and if you have any further queries or questions then please contact me. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Lynsey Fenwick

## Appendix 11

### **Ethical application for HMPPS**

#### **HMPPS Draft Research Ethics Application**

##### **1) Description of research- understood by a lay person (300 words- this is the only section with a word limit).**

In recent years with the increased accessibility, affordability and anonymity provided by the internet, Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) offences (images, audio, chatroom conversations that depict child sexual exploitation) have become more prevalent; arrests for these offences increased by 184% between 2010 and 2015 (Underwood et al, 2018). Although the previous research is very limited, particularly around sexual offences, there is some sparse evidence that the investigation produces unintended, collateral consequences. These can have serious and detrimental impacts on the lives of those under investigation as well as their friends and family; for example, through the loss of relationships and loss of employment, serious mental health issues and a high suicide rate. There is some recent evidence around suicide specifically that suggests that up to a third of all suicides for all offence types are those under investigation for CSEM offences (Underwood et al, 2018).

By engaging directly with the men that are or have been under investigation this research seeks to add to the current scant evidence base and to provide information for HMPPS and other agencies across the Criminal Justice System (CJS). This will enable these organisations to review and develop their policies and procedures with regard to men convicted of CSEM offences.

I aim to undertake research with men at different time points; from arrest through to prosecution, conviction and those serving sentences. This will allow me to explore the changing impacts over time that will highlight when suicide, self-harm and other impact risks are highest to enable appropriate prevention methods to be effectively targeted. I will gather data using semi-structured interviews and researcher-directed diaries over 12-months. This longitudinal approach will facilitate rapport building with the participants. Ultimately the aim of this research is to improve the outcomes for these men and reduce further offending.

##### **2) Aim of research**

This research aims to use a novel approach to explore the short and longer-term impact that contact with the Criminal Justice System (CJS) has on men investigated for CSEM offences.

In order to make sense of what has had an impact and how the lives of men who have been investigated for CSEM are actually affected, it will be important to explore how individuals perceive and interpret that impact. By using a phenomenological approach, I will focus on the participants' lived experiences, studying their perceptions of their experiences and what this means to each of them (see Langdridge, 2007). This will be explored through engagement with men investigated for CSEM offences with the aim to understand how contact with the CJS specifically affects them and their lives.

Although participants' experiences are individual to them, they will inevitably be influenced by their own personal history and the social and cultural worlds surrounding them. This is at the heart of this enquiry. By exploring how each participant understands and interprets his experience, I hope to illuminate participant related insights into the impact of the CJS.

The use of a novel qualitative longitudinal approach to engage men across the breadth of the CJS will allow me to both develop a rapport with the participants, to consider the potential critical points for different aspects of impact, any turning points and an in-depth data-set that spans across the full breadth of the CJS. I will also explore several key potential risk and protective factors, gleaned from prior research, that may play a role in affecting this impact.



This research aims to illuminate the points across the CJS where support is most needed for men under investigation, which aspects of them and their lives are most affected and what strategies and support could prove effective in minimising these effects in order to improve outcomes for them.

This is a unique approach, both in terms of the use of a qualitative longitudinal approach with men investigated for CSEM and across the breadth of the CJS.

### **3) Primary research questions**

As this is an exploratory qualitative longitudinal piece of research there is a broad aim rather than a set of prescriptive research questions.

This research aims to explore the impact that contact with the CJS has on men that are being or have been investigated for CSEM offences. I aim to research this impact both in the short and longer term.

### **4) What are the links to HMPPS policy/business? How could the findings be operationalised?**

There are a number of potential benefits of this research to HMPPS. This research focuses on the impact of the CJS, including the personnel, processes and procedures involved, from the perspective of those that are under investigation and those who have been convicted and sentenced. This will likely be the first time that they have had an opportunity to share this aspect of their experiences. By focussing on the impact, rather than their offending behaviour, this offers the opportunity to explore aspects of the CJS that have impacted on their lives and the lives of those around them, which in turn may affect their ability to manage their behaviour and their own health and welfare needs. There are a number of areas of policy and business that this research links to as well as practical ways in which the research findings could be operationalised. These are outlined below.

#### Security, Safety and Public Protection

##### Reducing self-harm and suicide

Those investigated for CSEM offences account for almost 30% of suicides for all offending types and almost 80% of suicides of those arrested for a sexual offence (Underwood et al, 2018). Although one previous research study has identified potentially critical points across the CJS for suicide in particular (Underwood et al, 2018), it is not clear what physical and mental health issues are experienced by those that are convicted of CSEM, the underlying aspects of these potentially critical points or how this can be mediated to reduce the risk. There has also been a very tentative link between negative affective states and offending behaviour with regard to CSEM (Quayle et al, 2018) however there is a gap in in-depth evidence relating to this. These negative affective states and suicide ideation could be linked to feelings such as shame and the stigma surrounding CSEM offences but could also be affected by an individuals' own coping mechanisms. This is not clear from the sparse research and literature surrounding CSEM.

This is an area that is important for not just understanding the underlying impact of the CJS but in how those impacts can be mediated in a positive way to improve outcomes for the men themselves and potentially reduce further offending behaviour. This piece of research hopes to explore and illuminate these factors. By uncovering themes that heighten or diminish feelings around self-harm and suicide as they are perceived by the participants themselves will allow person-centred care to be considered and a review of both training and procedures around these specific offences will decrease these risks. This research will therefore assist in

the development of policies, procedures and plans relating to harm reduction. It will also provide evidence that will inform HMPPS staff training.

### Reform and effective rehabilitation of offenders

This piece of research will look to explore factors that can make a difference to both the effective rehabilitation of offenders alongside what impacts on enabling offenders to turn their lives around. The crux of effective rehabilitation would not only be the ability for those convicted to manage their own behaviour thereby reducing the risk of continued offending but also their ability to thrive back in the community. There is a pervasive stigma and ingrained negative attitudes attached to the label 'sex offender' and there is some evidence that this may have a detrimental effect on men investigated for these types of offences (Dervley et al, 2017). Shame and stigma have been identified as potentially having a high prevalence in this population (see Underwood et al, 2018) and , although this has yet to be linked with regard to CSEM offending, this could impact on desistance from crime, rehabilitation and the ability to manage productive and effective lives. Prior research has not considered the separate impact of stigma, shame and guilt although there has been some evidence that this may affect individuals differently and impact on their ability to cope. Research is lacking around the potential ways in which these men cope and the aspects of the personnel, policies and procedures across the CJS that could provide a positive influence on them. There is also a gap in research that considers the efficacy of programmes in relation to CSEM offending (see Dervley et al, 2017) and although this research will not provide an evaluation of programmes conducted through HMPPS it seeks to explore the effect of these aspects with the men themselves which will lead to evidence that could be used to develop current policies and programmes.

The unintended, collateral consequences of CSEM investigations and subsequent prosecutions alongside the media interest that they can inevitably attract could potentially impact on all aspects of the lives of the men under investigation, from work through to their health and their relationships. It will be an important part of this research to identify not only these negative aspects but also what could have a positive effect on them. In exploring this, the research findings will provide evidence that can help develop the way in which men convicted of these offences can be supported and provide evidence to improve outcomes for them and reduce potential further offending behaviour.

The NSPCC (2016) estimates that around 500,000 individuals routinely access indecent images of children in the United Kingdom, clearly suggesting that this is a prevalent issue that will benefit from crime prevention and offender desistance. There is a growing research evidence base around desistance from crime, and although there has been some work around those who have committed sex offences in general, there is a scant research base relating to work around CSEM offences (Quayle et al, 2018). Prior research has identified that those who commit CSEM, although not a homogenous group, can also be seen as distinct from contact offenders (Merdian et al, 2018). Existing risk and rehabilitation programmes have been shown to lack specificity for CSEM offenders (see Dervley et al, 2017). This research therefore could assist in highlighting from the perspective of those who have been sentenced where programmes specific to CSEM offending could be utilised and developed in order to effectively reduce further offending.

This research would both add to this theoretical evidence base but would also provide information to enable practical developments to programmes to enable offenders to manage their behaviour. The CJS, although on the surface appears to be a continuous process, in reality is a series of discrete aspects managed through different organisations for example, the police, the courts and HMPPS. As such this research will gain an overview not just of what effect the HMPPS can have but the overlapping issues that the other components of the CJS can also have on the men whilst under investigation. This is advantageous as the effects of the earlier stages of the process will have an impact on the men after conviction and whilst

serving their sentence. By just researching discrete areas of the system such as the impact of prison and using a cross sectional design this would not identify the cumulative effects across the system as a whole, nor would it provide the depth of data required to unpack how and why these impacts occur. By engaging with men that are /have been under investigation, highlighting how they are impacted by the system and why and how they feel that they could be supported will hopefully lead to evidence around how to reduce these impacts and therefore reduce further offending behaviour.

## **5) Potential benefits to academic knowledge in the field**

There is currently a dearth of research in this area, particularly engaging directly with men that have been investigated themselves (Brown et al, 2018) but also research on a longitudinal level that spans the breadth of the CJS.

This research is a novel study into the wider impact of the CJS. I aim to provide findings to illuminate how contact with the CJS is thought to affect all aspects of the lives of the individuals' themselves including their desistance from offending. Although this has been a growing area of academic interest, this is a novel piece of research in that it considers the whole of the CJS rather than select facets, is a longitudinal piece of research rather than just providing data from static snap shots in time and is targeted specifically at CSEM offending.

There are a number of psychological and criminological concepts that could underlie the impact of the CJS and this research will illuminate this area of academic interest, exploring areas such as identity, stigma, shame, strain, coping and life course turning points. There is also an intuitive link between the Quality of Life (QoL) research (Lehman, 1988) and the impact of the CJS on men that have committed CSEM offences themselves and their lives and how this can affect their ability to manage their own offending behaviour. Quality of life research has been used to underpin aspects of treatment in relation to CSEM and sex offending more generally (see Bouman et al, 2008). This research will provide evidence relating to whether, for example, QoL indicators and other factors indeed underpin the impact of the CJS and the perceptions of the men themselves on how this could be mediated.

The use of a longitudinal approach will also identify in a retrospective and prospective way where critical points are for impact across the CJS giving participants the benefit of being able to reflect and revisit their experiences as things change over the course of the 12-month project. This will benefit academic knowledge as it will allow me to follow the life course of the participants over the time period of the project, producing more in-depth data that can be used to illuminate the above and link previous research to produce a broader view of the landscape surrounding CSEM offending.

## **6) Previous research in the area**

As noted in the previous section, there is only a limited amount of evidence currently that is specific to CSEM, particularly around qualitative impact-related research. Much of the research relating to sex offending behaviour is aimed at prevention and minimising risk of harm, with the emphasis on the impact of offending behaviour on survivors or the impact on those working with men that commit offences rather than the impact on the men themselves (Perkins, Merdian, Schumacher, & Bradshaw, 2018).

Research has tended to focus on the differences/similarities between contact sex offenders (CSO) and CSEM offenders (see Sheehan & Sullivan, 2010), cross over risk between CSO/CSEM offending (see Houtepen, Sijtsema, & Bogaerts, 2014), offender typologies (see for example Henshaw, Ogloff & Clough, 2017) and risk of re-offending (see Seto, 2017).

Previous research has also provided some evidence around the long-term effects of contact with the CJS, for example through studies with those incarcerated in prison or designated as

registered sex offenders (see for example Tewksbury, 2012). These studies have been cross-sectional, post-conviction only and have concentrated on particular aspects of impact. There have, however, not been any studies that have followed the participants through the CJS in a prospective/retrospective way in relation to CSEM. As we know that the investigation can span a lengthy time period, it would be beneficial therefore to utilise a qualitative longitudinal (QL) approach across the breadth of the CJS.

Labelling theory suggests stigmatization via a negative 'label' can have an impact by being both a cause and effect of criminal behaviour, with the nuance of the social context being important (see Robbers, 2009). This previous research linking the increase in offending behaviour however does not include those who commit sex offences more generally or CSEM offences specifically. Research has been conducted most often on those convicted of contact sex offences, rather than CSEM, and those who have been imprisoned (Tewksbury, 2012). Research related to impact also tends to be specifically related to only one aspect, for example stigma, and confined to one aspect of the CJS, for example, being subject to the Sex Offender register (for example, Bailey & Klein, 2018). Access to research these populations can be difficult and therefore it is not surprising that incarcerated and registered offenders have provided the majority of research participants.

Stigma, and the associated strain, of being able to cope with the 'Sex Offender' label has been shown to lead to an ongoing sense of stress and vulnerability (Tewksbury 2012). In the research conducted by Underwood et al (2018), they identified shame and stigma as a theme across participants, both the men under investigation themselves but also those that worked with them within the Lucy faithfull Foundation. This research as well as a limited number of other studies such as Hoffer and Shelton (2013) has highlighted the heightened suicide risk for those with contact with the CJS. In the study completed by Hoffer and Shelton (2013), utilising interviews of family alongside the suicide notes of those that had been investigated for child sex offences, noted a number of stressors. The stress of the investigation was cited in every case. Other factors such as physical and mental ill health, relationship issues and financial problems were common but not ubiquitous. Of those that had committed suicide, 26% did so within 48 hours of arrest, again suggesting a causal link between their suicide and the investigation. This study included both CSO and CSEM offenders but did not distinguish between the two, and also as this study related to those that had committed suicide, they were unable to speak to the individuals themselves. Upon interviewing those investigated for CSEM offences, Underwood et al (2018) identified that all of the participants noted suicidal ideation as a result of the investigation and they all noted feeling stigmatised, as well as shame and guilt. Again, this was a small study with only five participants and although none reported prior arrest, it is not clear if they were CSEM only offenders. Although this provides evidence that stigma and suicidal feelings are prevalent and problematic within this population, these studies are cross-sectional and not specific enough to CSEM to draw any firm conclusions. This study will have twice the sample size of that completed by Underwood et al and by utilising a longitudinal design alongside a number of data generation techniques should provide more in-depth data.

From all of the studies reviewed, shame and guilt, alongside stigma were prevalent. Brennan, Swartout, Cook & Parrott, (2018) analysed online posts from those that had committed sexual offences and found 'shame' to be the most pervasive emotion expressed. Shame is an inward facing emotion and suggests a 'flawed self' (Leith & Baumeister, 1998). There was also a suggestion within this research that feelings of shame led to minimization of offending behaviour and maladaptive coping mechanisms such as the use of alcohol (Brennan et al, 2018). Guilt also featured highly within this research however guilt tended to relate to the incident or behaviour as opposed to being directed at the self and was linked with self-growth. Prior research has highlighted that it is important to distinguish shame and guilt as shame is linked to negative issues where as guilt is a more positive emotion and these can affect outcomes for individuals (see Dearing, Stuewig and Tangney, 2005). The participants in the

study conducted by Underwood et al (2018) all expressed shame and guilt, however in that study the two emotions are not distinguished. Although the study links these emotions to other aspects of the impact on the participants such as low mood, suicide and hopelessness, by not distinguishing between them it is unclear which may affect the impact of the CJS. As these are clearly important emotions linked to impact, this research will take this into account. The use of a longitudinal approach, semi structured interviews and researcher-directed diaries in this study will provide me with the ability to explore in more depth the relationship between impact and these emotions and ways in which this could be mediated.

So far, I have highlighted areas that research has considered could be shown to be aspects of the impact of the CJS on individuals investigated for CSEM however it would be pertinent to understand what 'impact' might look like. 'Quality of life' (QoL) could be seen as a framework to understand what impact means. QoL is a broad ranging concept related to personal well-being. It can be linked to the ability to cope, as those with higher QoL tend to use more active forms of coping, those with lower QoL tend to be linked to more negative coping mechanisms (Evans & Cubellis, 2015). This would appear to resonate with the research elicited so far. There are a number of different domains and measures suggested relating to QoL, the following domains correspond with Lehman's 'Quality Of Life' scale (Lehman, 1988): 1) work/education; 2) leisure/ participation; 3) religion; 4) finances; 5) living situation; 6) legal/safety; 7) family relations; 8) social relations; 9) health. These domains will form part of the conversation with the participants within this study both in relation to identifying their pertinence in relation to the impact on the men themselves but also how these could positively affect them and their lives.

## **7) Limitations of the research**

This is a piece of qualitative research with small sample sizes, and as such, limits the extent to which we can generalise to the wider CSEM population. However, as I have already alluded to there is little prior research in this area and therefore this is an exploratory, inductive and in-depth research project with the data gathered over a 12-month period. The findings will build upon the sparse current research base around the impact of the CJS but will also inform the design of future research projects and the development of practical applications to improve outcomes for men investigated for CSEM offences.

In order to illuminate what underpins 'impact' it will be important for the term to be defined and discussed by the participants themselves. Inevitably this requires a qualitative methodology and the use of a QL approach enhances the ability of the research to provide an in-depth data-set. Although population generalities can't be inferred from this research, it is useful to be able to complete both case studies of the men individually and then to consider cross case themes as part of the analysis. This idiographic approach has the advantage of the depth of individual data generated but can also consider how this might look across a wider population. By utilising this design, I hope to be able to gain an understanding of how the impact of the CJS manifests itself for the participants but also how this changes over time and across the different facets of the CJS.

A second limitation of this research is the potential issue with the quality of self-report data. This is in relation to both the researcher directed diaries and evidence from previous research that participants will minimise and downplay the information that they provide (Quayle et al, 2019). However, there are a number of factors that should assist to minimise this limitation. Firstly, this research is ostensibly about impact and not their offending behaviour and therefore they would be less likely to downplay their experiences. I think it is likely that they will be candid and forthcoming as this will be an opportunity for them to discuss how their lives have been affected. Secondly, for this part of the project all of the participants have already been convicted/sentenced and therefore there is not still an ongoing investigation and potential court case that could otherwise mean that they are more guarded. Lastly, the use of a QL approach over the course of a 12 month period means that I will be revisiting their experiences and

therefore I will be able to identify as part of the data generation or analysis where there are differences in the information provided or participants reflect and their own perception of their experience has changed. By utilising a double hermeneutic approach to the analysis and my own reflections on the data provided by the participants I will hope to illuminate both their own interpretation of the impact but I will also actively interpret the meaning of the data that they provide (see Aresti et al, 2008). This will help me to identify the underlying meaning from the data provided, using the hermeneutic of empathy to illuminate the participants own perceptions but also the hermeneutic of suspicion to take a critical standpoint about the data provided.

The use of QL allows for a much more rigorous yet flexible approach and therefore more in-depth collection of data (Neale, 2019). QL enables the researcher to build a relationship with the participants, therefore providing a space for a much richer data to be generated. This data can be gathered in real time and over a number of encounters with the participants that produces a dynamic insight into how life changes over the course of the length of the research. Although this research will involve the use of semi structured interviews and I will be encouraging participants to reflect and provide their own interpretation of 'impact', in order to have a degree of consistency, the same topic guide and interview questions will be utilised for each interview.

In relation to the diary aspect of the study, an issue that has been highlighted in other previous research is that the use of diaries can, in for example research relating to pain, cause participants to focus on their pain which can, for some be a negative experience (Clarke & Iphofen, 2006). In this instance, a similar issue could be suggested in relation to reflecting on the experience of the impact on their lives. Additional research has, however, also suggested that writing down aspects of emotional experiences can have a beneficial impact, particularly in relation to mental health (Mackrill, 2008). It will be important to ensure that, with regard to this, each participant has access to support services if required to discuss any potential issues that arise.

## **8) Summarise your proposed design (including sampling, sample sizes, recruitment, testing/validation of tools)**

### Overview of design

This research focuses on the interpretation and meaning that participants ascribe to their experience of contact with the CJS. This project will therefore benefit from a qualitative, experiential approach to generate the rich and detailed data required. In order to explore, describe and interpret the lived experience of participants, I will be using a phenomenological approach.

Phenomenology is a philosophical movement founded by Edmund Husserl and later developed by Martin Heidegger and others (see Langdridge, 2007); it was a move away from the natural science approach to study phenomena. Phenomenology aims to focus on people's lived experience by the study of individuals' perception of the world and what this means to them (Langdridge, 2007). Although this is an oversimplified account of phenomenology, it is still clear that this would appropriately underpin the research aims of this project. Using a phenomenological approach will allow me to focus on how each participant understands and interprets their experience of the impact of the CJS.

The central aspects of this research will involve the description and interpretation of 'impact' in relation to this topic from the participants viewpoint. From my review of the surrounding literature, this will inevitably include aspects of time and change. 'Impact' will be an individual experience for each participant, shaped and moulded by their own context and their own interpretation of events. The use of a purely a cross-sectional approach would only provide a static snapshot of the moment of time within which the data was generated and would not

enable me to gain insight into the journey through the CJS or the changes experienced. In order to consider the impact both in the short and longer term as well, this project will need to be a qualitative longitudinal design.

The research design will encompass conducting three semi-structured interviews with the participants at approximately six-month intervals (i.e Month 1, Month 6 and Month 12) as well as requesting them to complete a researcher-directed diary over the course of a 12-month data generation phase. These methods will be combined to foster a climate within which the participants are able to reflect on their experiences and therefore produce the in-depth data that this project seeks to uncover. The diaries will also provide participants with both an opportunity to provide data when it suits them and to document things in real time rather than just trying to recall it in an interview at a later point. They can use the diaries as reference points for their interviews, as data or just as a way to reflect.

A criminal investigation will involve several points where those being investigated and the CJS are in contact; each of these points may affect the impact on each individual. The recent study conducted by Underwood et al (2018) highlighted points within the CJS of potential crisis with regard to suicide risk. Each participant, all of whom had been under investigation for CSEM offences and undergone a specific treatment programme, described that there was some degree of risk at the point of arrest, charge and sentencing (Underwood et al, 2018). Due to the length of time that the CJS takes to reach conclusion it is unlikely that it will be possible to follow all participants, as part of a PhD study, over the course of the whole process. The length of time from arrest to sentence differs, with each case being unique; however, it is usually lengthy due to technical evidence required and it's not unusual for it to take over 12 months (see Quayle et al, 2018).

Therefore, to explore impact across the breadth of the CJS and allow the participants to reflect on its different points and what this meant for their experience it will be necessary to employ an accelerated longitudinal approach. This study, therefore, will recruit cohorts of participants at the three different risk points within the CJS, highlighted by Underwood (2018) i.e arrest, charge and sentence, and follow them across a 12-month period.

#### Sampling, sample size and recruitment

There will be three cohorts of participants recruited:

- Cohort 1- four participants recruited through a police force one to two weeks after initial arrest.
- Cohort 2- four participants recruited through a police force one to two weeks after charge
- Cohort 3- four participants recruited through HMPPS one to two weeks after sentence.

This ethics application pertains to ethical approval to recruit and access participants for cohort 3 (after sentence) as well as access to participants from cohorts 1 and 2 who will be recruited through the police but who may subsequently be convicted and sentenced prior to the end of the 12-month data generation period.

The sample will comprise adult men that are being investigated for or have been convicted of CSEM offences and who have no prior history of contact sexual offending. The Participant Information Sheet will explain that this research relates to CSEM offending behaviour only and will request that potential participants that have been involved in prior contact offences do not participate. As we know that individuals investigated for CSEM offences are overwhelmingly male, this project will recruit men only.

Small sample sizes will be utilised as part of this phenomenological study. It is envisaged that twelve participants will be recruited all together for the three cohorts of this study. This sample size would be in line with previous phenomenological research (for example see Kitson-Boyce

et al, 2018; Howe, Tickle & Brown, 2014; Mackenzie, Cartwright & Borrill, 2017). This also provides scope for developing cross-case generalities, whilst at the same time permitting individuals within the sample to keep their own defined identity, rather than being subsumed anonymously as part of the larger sample (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2012). The use of these numbers will allow me to obtain a rich amount of data without being too unwieldy and will allow me to take account of the potential attrition rate of a few participants which is highly possible as part of a longer-term study of this nature. Attrition could be a distinct problem, particularly as this is longitudinal research and a highly sensitive research subject (see Farrall et al, 2016). On the other hand, although this is longitudinal work, the practical research will be completed over the course of 12 months; with contact with the participants on three occasions and roughly every six months. This will not only be a time of turmoil for the participants during the investigation itself but as a result may require their move away from their home, location and community. I will minimise this through a number of ways such as ensuring accurate and up-to-date contact details from each participant at each point, contact with them prior to arranged meetings and utilising allocated individuals such as a designated probation officer or police officer if contact details change. The initial rapport and continued engagement are vital for being able to maintain this relationship and maximise participation over the course of the research project. The space to talk about the impact, to share how they think and feel may prove a positive interaction and relationship for the participants particularly as I am not going to be asking them about their offending behaviour.

### Cohort 3 (recruited and accessed via HMPPS)

Although men convicted of CSEM offences can either receive a prison or community sentence, research would suggest that, in the main, they receive community sentences (Quayle et al, 2018). I intend to recruit two participants for cohort 3 from a prison situated within 50 miles of Leeds/Rotherham and two participants for cohort 3 who have received community sentences from the North East probation area and live in the West Yorkshire or South Yorkshire area (see the attached recruitment processes). These locations have been chosen as they are accessible from the researcher's home. This is an important consideration when three interviews will be conducted over a 12-month period with each participant alongside briefing HMPPS staff. Additionally, it is anticipated that more extensive travel will be required for cohorts 1 and 2. Further information is provided about this below.

A Point of Contact (POC) will be identified for the allocated Prison and Probation area to be involved in the research. This could be the head of Programmes/Intervention team within the Prison and the Head of the Probation team within the North East area. I will verbally brief the POCs and I will also provide them with a written briefing document (this has been attached to this application) as well as copies of the Participant information Sheet. I will ask that the POCs identify potential participants, i.e two adult men convicted of CSEM from the Prison and two who have received a community sentence and who meet the inclusion criteria, to approach and briefly explain the research to them. I will ask that they also provide the potential participants with the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) to take away to help them to consider their inclusion in the research. In the prison setting, the potential participants will be asked to inform the POC of their intention or not to be part of the research. The POC would then arrange a meeting within the prison between myself and each of the potential participants. The meetings and data generation sessions would take place within the prison for either the duration of the project or until the participant was released.

In the community setting, the POC would provide the PIS to potential participants who will contact me directly should they wish to be involved in the research (my contact details are contained within the PIS). The meetings and data generation sessions with the participants in the community would be held in an appropriate location that is both private but can assure participant and researcher safety. These will be discussed and agreed with the POC and participants but I would suggest that this will either be at probation premises or premises affiliated to LFF or one of their partner organisations.



The participants will be interviewed for the first-time post sentence at month 1 of the data generation phase. The second interview will take place after six months and the final interview at the end of the data generation phase. For further information on this see the attached data generation diagram. It is anticipated that each participant will be interviewed for the first time one to two weeks post sentence; the reason for this is in order to allow the participants space to process their experience and minimise the risk to their mental health that may occur immediately post sentence but also in order to be able to complete the practical identification and arrangement of the interviews. Further information on this can be found in the later sections on ethics and participant safety.

### Cohorts 1 and 2

The participants within this cohort will be initially recruited through one specific police force and will be recruited post arrest and post charge. It is possible that over the course of the 12-month data generation phase some of these participants may be convicted and sentenced for the offences. The later interviews may therefore need to take place whilst they are in prison or serving a community sentence.

### Data generation materials

The use of semi-structured interviews is the method of choice for many phenomenological studies (see Langdridge, 2007). Semi-structured interviews provide the time and space for the researcher to develop a rapport with participants and can be, at least in part, led by the participant, potentially producing more in-depth data, particularly in relation to sensitive topics (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2012). The aim for these interviews will be to ask very open questions, prompting when required. The aspects of 'impact' have not been well defined in relation to the scope of this work. I feel that it is important to allow the participants themselves to be involved in illuminating the effects that contact with the CJS as a result of their offending behaviour has on them, this allows meaning and interpretation to develop between the researcher and participant as part of the research (Langdridge, 2007).

In order to produce a degree of consistency, all participants will be interviewed using an initial interview guide. This has been included with this application. The selection of the appropriate questions that will allow people to talk openly about very difficult subjects is important. The process of the introduction and rapport building, interview and debrief is key to accessing the data required for this project and will be discussed within the ethics section below. An initial interview will be conducted with each participant at the start of the project and then at two further points across the study. This has been depicted in the data generation diagram attached. Subsequent interviews at timepoints two and three will revisit the topics in interview one, but as this is an exploratory study, will also focus on each individual, concentrating on the topics most pertinent to them and any additional topics that they raise as of particular importance. In order to test out the interview guide a pilot interview will be completed and any changes required to the questions or topic areas will be completed as a result of feedback from this process. Interviews will be audio-recorded with permission and confidentiality and anonymity will be paramount. This has been described in a later section of this application.

I will also aim to generate data through the use of researcher directed diaries. Participants will be requested to use these diaries and encouraged to complete them regularly. Participants will be asked to make diary entries at least once per week. They will be at liberty to complete entries more frequently if they wish, as is pertinent to them. This is a QL study that is both retrospective and prospective but it is also in 'real time' as the CJS is an ongoing process. The diary element will enable participants to capture their thoughts and feelings at either the time of something pertinent to them or in their own time. It will also allow them the time and space to reflect, considering their thoughts and feelings. This will aid the generation of data within the other phases as participants will have been reflecting on their thoughts and feelings along the course of the study and will have that to draw on. Although participants will

be able to complete the diary as they wish I will provide a blank notebook and diary instructions for each participant. A copy of these instructions is attached.

### **9) Describe proposed methods of analysis**

This research is underpinned by phenomenology and therefore the analysis will be from a qualitative phenomenological perspective. However, rather than being purely descriptive the approach will be interpretivist. This approach emphasises that meaning is unique and interpretation is vital in order to move beyond the data (Langdridge, 2007). I will be using a hermeneutic method (see Van Manen, 1990). This method should be utilised as a guide rather than a prescriptive set of rules to follow. The data will be analysed thematically in a similar way to other techniques however within hermeneutic analysis there is a recognition that the analyst has a role to play in co-constructing meaning (Langdridge, 2007). The data will be analysed in a case by case way with each interview and diary entry being analysed for each person rather than as a set. Once this has been analysed and themes have been identified through this method as a particular, then more general themes can be identified.

Reflexivity is going to be a key skill to develop and utilise as part of this research. By undertaking qualitative interviews and observation, I am clearly part of the research myself. Both myself and the participants will naturally undertake the research with our own subjective thoughts and feelings influenced by our individual experience and our own social and cultural environments. Gadamer (1996) recommends that researchers compose a study diary. This would be used to record emotional responses, thoughts and interpretations as the study progresses as well as the researchers own reflections on both the research and their subjective link with it. As part of the research I will be completing a reflexive diary. This is something that I have already embarked upon, in order to assist with identifying and managing my own perceptions and preconceptions but also in relation to the data generated from the participants and its analysis.

### **10) Resource implications for staff of HMPPS**

This research will require a POC from one prison to identify two participants and a POC from the probation service to identify two participants and provide them with the PIS. I will require four participants in total for cohort 3 of this research.

#### Research conducted in prison establishment

The resource implications for staff within HMPPS is limited. I will need to work with the allocated prison to identify a POC who I will meet and brief. I anticipate that this will take an hour of their time.

They will then need to identify and discuss the research with potential participants, which I anticipate will take another approximately 15-20 minutes per potential participant, although I do only require two individuals to participate. They may need to approach a number of potential participants however before identifying those that wish to be involved.

They will need to contact me once they have had two participants confirm that they would like to take part in the research and I will need to visit the participants to discuss and agree consent for the project and then undertake three interviews over the course of a 12-month period. This may therefore require either four visits per participant (i.e an initial visit of around half an hour and three interviews) or the first meeting also encompasses the first interview. Each interview will need to be completed in a private room within the prison, and although the interview is in private, I will need to be escorted during my time within the prison. Each interview will take approximately 1.5 hours to complete. In total I would estimate therefore that this will require

around 1.5 hours of the time of a POC and up to 20 hours of time for a prison officer to escort me within the prison establishment over the course of a 12-month period.

The other resource implication will be provision of additional support after each interview. The researcher will make contact with the POC who can either arrange for a support meeting for the participant, or can make a referral to an appropriate resource such as the Prison Psychology department. The researcher will also signpost the participant to the appropriate Listener's Service, where this, or similar support exists within that establishment. The researcher will ensure that information regarding available support services accessible to the resident are discussed with the POC before commencing interviews. This process will be finalised and agreed at the briefing meeting with the POC.

#### Research conducted in the community

I would also to recruit two participants for cohort 3 that have received a community sentence. I would like to recruit these from a probation area local to my research base and therefore in the West Yorkshire area. Similarly, to the section above, a POC would be identified who would then in turn be briefed by me about the research and the recruitment process. This would take around an hour. I would also discuss the potential for interviewing within probation premises and possible locations.

The POC would then identify and discuss the research with potential participants, providing them with the PIS. Once I had been contacted by participants' who wished to take part in the research, I would arrange three interviews for each participant over the 12-month period. Each interview would last around 1.5 hours in length. The location of the interviews would be agreed with the participant and conducted in the probation premise if appropriate. However, it may be more appropriate to identify another location and this may be through The Lucy Faithfull Foundation who are part-funding this research or one of their partner organisations.

I would not require escorting during these meetings and therefore the main resource implication would be for the POC identifying potential participants and discussing the research with them.

#### **Main methodological or operational risks and how will these be mitigated?**

##### Recruitment and Retention of participants

The main methodological risk with regard to this research is the recruitment and retention of the participants. This is a longitudinal in-depth research project that will require the participants to reflect and talk about potentially sensitive and difficult topics and may be difficult to get participants to consent to their participation. This risk is minimised in a number of ways. Firstly, only a very small number of participants is required for this aspect of the research from a relatively large population of men convicted of CSEM offences. This should mean that it is unlikely that I will not be able to recruit the required number of participants. The participants will be recruited from both prison and probation, increasing the number of potential participants. The identification and briefing of POCs will enable their in-depth understanding of the research which again will increase the likelihood of successful recruitment of participants.

In order to minimise attrition, the initial and ongoing rapport with the participants will be key. I have taken great care in devising the materials related to this research and ensuring that there will be appropriate support services that the participants can access if they wish to. I will also discuss and emphasise the ethical issues, particularly around confidentiality and anonymity. Although a longitudinal study, the research will only take place over the course of a 12month period, during which in all likelihood the participants will be either still be in prison or under the supervision of the probation service out in the community. Therefore, I am likely to be able to keep track of the participants. This has been discussed in an earlier section of this application.

### Subject Sensitivity

This study focuses on several sensitive topics. Firstly, this aspect of the study relates to individuals that have been convicted and sentenced for offences relating to Child Sexual Exploitation Material. These are stigmatised offences and often lead to feelings of shame and guilt within those convicted, as discussed in the previous sections. This piece of research revolves around exploring and seeking to understand the impact of contact with the CJS. It must be acknowledged that there are likely to be negative aspects to this impact. Taking both of these into account, therefore, inevitably, taking part in this research could potentially lead to emotional distress for the participants. There are a number of strategies that will be employed as part of the design of the research in order to mitigate this.

All participants will have a PIS which clearly outlines the nature of the research and they will also have opportunities to ask questions about the research. They will be provided with the contact details of the researcher and informed that they can contact the researcher to ask questions etc at any point during the project. This research will take place over a 12-month period with the researcher having three interviews with each participant. Time will be taken over the course of the process and it is envisaged that a good rapport will be built between researcher and participant. The information provided to each participant will be carefully and sensitively worded and informed consent will be discussed with each participant and will be re-visited at each meeting. Participants will need to consent to each aspect of the research and will have the opportunity to withdraw their consent/data throughout the course of the research project. Participants within the project can withdraw their data at any time.

Each participant will be provided with information relating to support that is local to them and how to access it. Participants will be reminded of this over the course of the research project. There will be a debrief process at the end of each meeting with each participant when they will again be reminded of the support avenues that are available for them to access.

### Participant Safety

Steps will be taken to ensure participant and researcher safety. As noted above participant support will be discussed and reiterated and each participant will be provided with information that will allow them to access appropriate local support for their needs at the earliest opportunity and throughout the life course of the project and beyond. The PIS will also provide the participant with information relating to support avenues. For participants within a prison setting, a process will be agreed with the POC relating to any additional required support dependent on the procedures within that specific prison establishment at the initial briefing meeting. This could be arranging a support meeting for the participant, or a referral to an appropriate resource such as the Prison Psychology department. The researcher will also signpost the participant to the appropriate Listener's Service, where this, or similar support exists within that establishment. For participants that are not in prison and under a community sentence, there are support options on the PIS and I will remind them of this at each meeting. I will also look to provide a card that contains all of the support contacts for them that they can carry with them should they feel that this is helpful. The LFF have also agreed to support the participants recruited through this research and a contact will be available alongside the LFF helpline that the participants can access should they wish to. The PIS will also detail that it is the participants decision to participate in the research should they feel that it is appropriate for them.

The interviews may produce feelings of distress for the participants or they may disclose issues around mental distress or suicide ideation as I am likely to build a rapport with them. There are two points to consider with this. Firstly, I will need to manage the distress or disclosure at the time that it is made. This will incorporate ensuring that the interview is paused or stopped completely and ensuring that there is adequate and appropriate support in place. I can offer a space where they can talk and reassurance. I will also make contact with one of my supervisors for advice under these circumstances and will ensure that one of my

supervisors is available throughout the course of each aspect of my fieldwork. For participants that are in prison, any disclosure (either verbally as part of the interview or within written diary extracts) of thoughts or actions of harm to either themselves or another will be reported to either that participant's keyworker or wing manager, whoever is the most appropriate within that particular establishment. The researcher will be responsible for ensuring that the appropriate person within the prison is made aware and that this is documented within the wing observation book or appropriate documentation for that establishment. This process will be agreed and documented with each POC for each establishment. For participants that are serving a community sentence, any disclosures of thoughts or actions of harm to either themselves or another will be reported to that participants' keyworker/probation officer whoever is the appropriate person and this process will be agreed and documented prior to data collection with the POC. This limit to confidentiality will be detailed within the PIS and will be explained to each participant prior to each interview.

Due to the relatively high proportion of men investigated for these offences that attempt suicide and/or have mental health issues, it is likely that this may feature within the discussions with the participants. Prior research (Underwood et al, 2018 and Jeglic et al, 2013) would seem to suggest that post-conviction potentially is not a high-risk point for suicide, it is anticipated that this research will provide more evidence related to this aspect. A recent meta-analysis around the discussion of suicide within research projects (Blades et al, 2018) suggested that this did not increase suicide ideation and actually may lead to a decrease in suicidal feelings amongst participants. Concentrating specifically on qualitative research around this topic, there is some evidence to suggest that this can be beneficial with participants describing an increase in well-being and the 'cathartic experience' of talking about their experiences (Biddle et al, 2012). Lastly, the added dimension of the use of researcher directed diaries may also help to improve well-being. Developing reflexivity is central to therapy and could allow the participants to explore these sensitive issues and could also be considered a form of intervention. Writing about sensitive issues has been shown to be associated with improved mental health (Mackrill, 2008). Clearly, although there is evidence to suggest this is not a high-risk population and the research methods may actually help to reduce participant mental distress it is still a possibility within this research and therefore, I will need to ensure that there is appropriate support and the risk is mitigated. Alongside providing the appropriate support processes mentioned above for each participant I will also ensure that each participant is aware of the need to breach confidentiality if they do provide me with information about harm to themselves (this is detailed later in the application). Should a participant become distressed within the meetings, I will ensure that the meeting is paused or stopped completely as appropriate and that the participant has space to talk if they want to and a support process is discussed with them before they leave the meeting. I will also make contact with the POC and my own supervisory team should I have concerns about a specific participant's distress.

### Researcher Safety

Each location where the research will take place will be agreed with the supervision team and will be risk assessed for any potential issues. Each location will allow the research to be conducted in private but with additional safety aspects. It is anticipated that the research will be carried out either in premises affiliated to The Lucy Faithfull foundation or the probation service for those out in the community and in a private room within the prison for those participants that are incarcerated. In order to ensure any safety issues are minimised, the researcher will contact an agreed member of the supervision team or other designated person (dependent on where the interview is taking place) prior to and at the end of the research meeting. If the interview takes place in prison, I will contact them prior to entering and then after leaving the prison establishment. For meetings conducted in the community, if there has been no contact the designated person will contact the researcher and, if no response, will request that a check is made on the researcher. For meetings within prison, I will be escorted by a member of prison staff. The researcher will ensure that they are conversant with the fire

regulations and fire escape route for each building where the research will take place. The researcher for this project has worked in many different locations, with people with mental disorders and those who have committed and been victim of sexual crimes for many years. I have a wealth of experience of managing risk situations and of building rapport and a good working relationship with people that I am interviewing.

Lastly, with regard to researcher safety. This research will inevitably mean that the researcher builds relationships with the participants who will share distressing and emotional information as part of the research. The researcher will have access to university provided health and well being support and a peer support group set up for post graduate students. The researcher will have regular research supervision and can access clinical supervision should this be required. I have four supervisors who between them have a wealth of knowledge and experience of supervising students and staff including those undertaking sensitive research within this area of work and with prison/probation populations.

**11) Explain how you will store the personal data to ensure security over the course of the study.**

Identifiable Personal data and contact details will be gathered only on the consent form. These will only be held in hard copy format and stored securely within Leeds Beckett University. Only the researcher and supervision team will be able to access the identifiable personal data. All data relating to this project will be stored in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), 2018 and the data Protection Act (DPA), 2018. GDPR relates to all organisations that control or process personal data and therefore the personal data relating to this research would fall under the scope of these guidelines.

Under GDPR, organisations are required to ensure that personal data is:

- processed lawfully, fairly and transparently
- only collected and used for particular lawful purposes
- adequate, relevant and not used excessively for that purpose
- accurate and up to date
- stored no longer than necessary
- kept secure, and its integrity and confidentiality are protected

The consent forms will be stored separately from any data and all data will be held under the pseudonym for each participant. This includes the demographic data which will be entered electronically onto a spreadsheet.

All data and associated project paperwork, other than the consent forms, will be archived for 5 years post completion of the research. The consent forms will be securely destroyed once I have completed the research. The data is kept for this length of time as a matter of university policy. The data will be automatically backed up through the use of online storage which will also have a password protection and will also be backed up through the use of an encrypted USB drive. In the unlikely event of potential loss of data, this will be brought to the attention of supervisors and the participant and the prison/probation service will be informed.

Each participant will be asked to choose a pseudonym for the purposes of the research and no identifiable personal data will be used at any other point during the research process. The pseudonym file relating to each participant will also be stored securely with only access by the researcher and supervision team.

With regard to the data, the audio recordings and diaries will utilise the participants pseudonym, therefore securing their anonymity. The interviews will be audio recorded, and so a dictaphone/ audio recorder which facilitates this will be used with each interview. Two

audio recorders may be used in each session so as to have a back-up should one fail to record properly. I am aware that prior agreement will be required to utilise equipment and this will be discussed with the POC and sought prior to the start of the data generation process.

I will transcribe each interview and diary entry and these will not be viewed by third parties other than my supervision team where necessary. I am the only person that will listen to the recordings. The data will be anonymised from the audio files as I transcribe them removing anything identifiable. The original audio files will be kept until they have been transcribed and the transcription checked and then they will be securely destroyed. The original diary entries will be securely stored until transcribed and checked by me. Only I will have access to the original diary entries. Once this has been completed, the participants will have the diary entries returned to them if they wish or I will securely destroy them. Participants serving sentences in the community will be able to keep and secure their own diaries as is appropriate to them whilst they are completing them and before they submit them to me. The two participants in prison will need to be given appropriate time to complete their diary entries and have secure storage of the entries. This will be discussed and agreed with the POC prior to the research being started.

Data will be securely transported as well as securely gathered and stored. Electronic files will be password protected prior to being transported, audio files will be encrypted and hard copy files (e.g consent forms and dairy entries) will be transported within a locked container to which only the researcher will have access.

I will be utilising a reflective journal as part of my data generation and analysis process. This will only refer to participants through their pseudonym. The journal will be securely stored within the University. My journal, as a whole, will not be viewed by any third parties although quotations and excerpts may be used as part of my research. I will ensure that anything is not identifiable to any individual. My reflective journal and electronic/paper files utilised for my analysis will be securely stored and retained as per the University guidelines.

## **12) How will you ensure that findings don't reveal info about individuals'?**

Confidentiality and anonymity are paramount within this research and I will be following the ethical guidelines from the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2014). Each participant will have a pseudonym that their data refers to and this will be stored securely as referred to in the last question. The data provided by each participant will be anonymised in relation to any information that they provide that could lead to their identification including for example the prison within which they have been incarcerated or their local community. Any quotes within any published work as a result of this research will be anonymised to ensure that they cannot identify any individual.

The reporting of the findings will only contain anonymised data which will relate to each pseudonym. This will be explained to each participant as part of the consent process.

## **13) How long will you keep it and how will you dispose of it?**

The personal data will only be kept for the duration of the research project. The data and other associated project documents will be archived and stored post completion of the research as per the Leeds Beckett University guidelines for the retention of research material.

Each audio recording of each interview will be stored securely in a password protected file and will only be labelled with the participants pseudonym. It will be transcribed and once the transcription has been checked the audio files will be securely destroyed.

The collated diaries will be appropriately transcribed and the transcriptions will be stored securely electronically. The original diary entries once transcribed can either be returned to

the participant or destroyed whichever they consent to. At the end of the research the transcriptions will be archived and stored with the other data.

#### **14) What are the ethical considerations and how have you addressed them?**

This research will also be required to be reviewed and gain full ethical approval through the Leeds Beckett University Psychology group Ethics Committee. All ethical issues have been considered with regard to:

- Leeds Beckett University Psychology group ethical guidelines
- British Psychological Societies Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018)
- British Psychological societies Code of Human Research ethics
- Guidance provided by the HMPPS ethics committee

Ethical issues have been considered for every stage of the proposed research.

There are several sensitive ethical issues regarding this research and managing these issues appropriately is of paramount importance in order to make sure I do not do any harm to the participants. This research will require participants to explore and understand their thoughts and feelings and is likely to be a difficult process (see for example Klein, Bailey & Sample 2018). It will necessitate flexibility and sensitivity within how I manage the data collection process. In line with the code of Human Research Ethics, from the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2014) this research will be conducted whilst taking account of the main areas of:

- Respect for the autonomy, privacy and dignity of individuals and communities,
- Scientific integrity,
- Social responsibility,
- Maximising benefit and minimising harm.

#### **Informed consent**

This research seeks to gain data through engaging with participants by way of interviews and researcher directed diaries over a 12-month period. It will be important to ensure that each participant understands informed consent, that this is voluntary and gained at each stage of the research process and for each aspect of the research independently. Participants will be provided with extensive information relating to the nature and purpose of the research project and will have opportunities across the course of the project to ask questions and discuss aspects with the researcher. They will be provided with a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) by the POC. A copy of the PIS is attached.

Each participant will be required to read and understand and consent to each aspect of the research that they wish to participate in. It will be explained clearly that they do not have to participate in every aspect in order to be involved. Consent will also be revisited at each meeting to ensure that they still agree to participate. A copy of the consent form relating to this study is attached. It will also be explained to them and will be explicit in their PIS that consent can be withdrawn at any point throughout the research up to the point that their last interview has been analysed and that this can be done without the need to provide any explanation and without any repercussions. They will also be informed that this research does not seek to discuss their offences or their offending behaviour and that there are no incentives aimed at encouraging their participation. For participants that are serving community sentences, if they wish to withdraw either their consent to continue with the study or if they wish to withdraw the data that they have provided up to that point, they will be requested to contact me in the first instance to be able to do so. If they do not wish to contact me for any reason, they can contact my supervisor or the POC and they will be provided with all of the contact details on the PIS and debrief sheets to enable them to do this. For participants within a prison establishment, they may not be able to make contact with me or my supervisor directly



whilst still in prison. Both the participants and POC will be provided with contact details for me and my supervisor and requested that should the participant wish to withdraw their consent to take part in the study any further and/or withdraw all data provided that either the participant or POC makes contact with me or my supervisor in order to do so. I will make contact with the POC prior to attending arranging further meetings with the participant to ensure that they are still within the establishment or to ascertain, if not, where they may have moved to. Realistically, participants that are initially within one prison or one residential area (for participants serving community sentences) at the start of the research may move to a different prison/area during the course of the 12-month project. It will be important to ensure that participants have the ability and information to enable them to withdraw from the project should they wish to if they move. I will obtain consent within the consent form and discuss with each participant a contingency plan which will include each participant having contact details, as a researcher contacting the POC to ensure that the participant hasn't moved and consent from each participant to be provided with their new location and contact details/POC if they do move. I will also discuss obtaining an additional appropriate person for each participant that I can contact if needed in order to ensure that I can follow up if they move. All of this will be obtained with consent and be contained within the consent form.

### Confidentiality and anonymity

In sensitive research such as this project confidentiality and anonymity are paramount and it is important that this is understood by the participants both in terms of what this means but also the points where confidentiality would need to be breached.

Confidentiality and privacy, when participating in this research, is vital in order for the researcher to build rapport with the participants and for them to feel comfortable and able to share their experiences of what is a sensitive topic area and may be distressing to reflect on and discuss. The location for each interview will be carefully arranged to ensure a balance between providing a private space where the participant feels able to share the appropriate level of information required for this project but still maintain participant and researcher safety. There will be no third parties present within any of the interviews. Each participant will be requested to choose their own pseudonym under which their data will be recorded and disseminated as part of the research. If they decline to choose one then one will be chosen for them. As discussed in the previous section, data protection legislation will be adhered to and all data will be anonymised for any information that could lead to the discovery of their identity. The participants will be reassured that the research is impartial in relation to the organisations within the CJS and is not being carried out on their behalf.

The participants will also be informed where confidentiality will require to be breached. Should there be as part of the discussions with participants any instance during which they:

- Disclose potential harm to a third party
- Disclose an intention to harm themselves or others
- Disclose unreported offences

They will be advised that I will be required to report these in order to safeguard themselves or others. They will also be informed however that they will be informed if confidentiality needs to be breached.

It is also my understanding that within a prison setting, I will need to inform the participants that I also need to divulge the following information:

- Any behaviour that is against prison rules
- Information that raises concerns about terrorist, radicalisation or security issues.

### Participant safety and support

This has already been covered in a previous question however I feel that it is important that this is reiterated within the ethics section of this application. I will have built up a good rapport and discussed sensitive topics over the course of a 12-month period, inevitably, this may mean that I have become part of their support structure. This means treading a fine line between building and sustaining the trust and reciprocity required for a productive relationship without building or developing a dependence, intrusion or neglect (see Neale, 2013). Building a relationship that contains clear, unambiguous boundaries will be key here. It will be vital to ensure that each participant is left with the ability to contact additional support services such as LFF or other local services and I will provide an appropriate way to feedback the results of the research to them. Obviously, this will be different in the prison setting and the community setting. In prison, I will ensure that I speak to the POC if there are any issues highlighted during my interview and report anything that requires breaching confidentiality as detailed above. There will be a process agreed at the POC briefing of how to manage any support requirements or any concerns in relation to the participants. Participants will be aware and it will be reiterated at each meeting, how they can access support and who to speak to. I will ensure that there is some support within the prison should this be required as detailed previously. In the community, I will have provided the participants with support information and will reiterate this and access to it at each meeting. As detailed previously I will provide them with a card that they can transport and contains helpful support contacts and I will ensure that they have access to LFF support should the wish.

**15) When will the research project and review form and summary be available for HMPPS?**

An anonymised summary report of the findings for this study and any associated recommendations will be made available to HMPPS within 6 months of the completion of my PhD.

**16) How else will the results be disseminated (article, book, thesis)**

The findings and recommendations relating to this research will be disseminated in a number of formats. Firstly, the researchers PhD thesis will provide a detailed account of the research, findings and outcomes and this will be stored within Leeds Beckett University and in an open access forum. The findings will also be disseminated to the interested parties, most notably the police forces that have collaborated as part of the project and The Lucy Faithfull Foundation who have part funded the research.

Lastly, the findings will also be disseminated through the publication of peer reviewed articles, conference presentations and other academic and non-academic publications as appropriate and relevant.

## **Appendix 12**

### **Draft analytical process for feedback**

#### **The draft analytical process**

My readings shape both the phenomenological aspect of the methods section here- the theory and the way it is transformed into the practicality of doing the research and the analysis but then also this analytical strategy.

The point of phenomenological research is to borrow other peoples' experiences and reflections in order to be able to understand their deeper meaning or significance as part of the wider human experience (Van Manen, 2014). My research should enable me to describe the meaning of a 'phenomenon' (which in this case is the impact of the CJS on the men themselves) and understand the contextual forces that shape it (Bynum and Varpio, 2017).

Essentially for me, it is a deeper analysis than purely describing the experience as it is relayed to me by the participants. In HP studies, researchers draw on Heidegger's notions to offer more than mere descriptions of their empirical data and to uncover essential insights as to what lived experiences mean.

This requires an interpretive process involving an interpretive leap. (Crowther and Thomson, 2020). This whole article is about interpreting the data. !! There is no finite and bounded understanding, more that engagement with the data and the text over time offers further points to consider (Thomson and Crowther). This is not entirely comfortable for me and something that I have found interesting to unpick. So when thinking about my own experience, I found letting this go a little difficult. Different perspectives give rise to a different interpretation or additional analysis- see Gadamer's point about horizons. Particularly as a novice HP researcher.... As I am new to Hermeneutic Phenomenological (HP) research and analysis I wanted to look at how to go about completing the analytical process and to put some sort of framework that will help me to provide a rigour that details and explains the analytical process and that keeps it consistent. To do this I considered a number of key Hermeneutic texts alongside reading around research that has utilised qualitative methods more widely and phenomenological methods more specifically. The reason that I have read more widely around qualitative methods is precisely because HP does not have a prescribed process (Van Manen, 2016) like other methods such as Thematic Analysis (TA) or Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and I felt that this might help me to consider the data more deeply and more widely. However, currently there is little guidance in how to apply philosophical notions to interpret LEDs in HP studies and this approach has faced critique in how meaning is attributed. In this paper, we offer clarity about what "we do" in HP studies. (from Crowther and Thomson, 2020).

HP analysis does involve the production of themes and so I went back to look at commonly used qualitative methods such as Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). In order for there to be some rigour to my process and therefore the ability to justify and validate my findings, I want to be systematic and thorough; this will also help me to think about the different perspectives within the data. It's also important to immerse myself in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2013), engaging with the data through a number of readings. I feel that the process of coding of the data will be more like commenting, in a similar way to how IPA process is described rather than the narrower coding described within the process of TA (Braun and Clarke, 2013). It's going to be important to consider both the descriptive comments from the data, a focus on the world of the participant from their own perspective/words, and the more abstract contextual based comments that are more from my own interpretation and engagement with the data (Bynum and Varpio, 2017). I will also need to include my own reflections as part of the analytical process. In HP these contexts are important (Finlay, 2011). Interpretation is needed to bring out the way that meanings occur in context related to the participant, the researcher and the research as a whole. Research findings are co-created in dialogue between the researcher and participant, a different researcher could 'hear' a different story (Finlay, 2011) so it's important that I document my readings of the data and my reflexivity in relation to conducting the data collection and the analysis.

It's important to understand the context that the phenomenon is in so for my study using the demographics and considering the data collected from the first question will help to provide the context as well as my own engagement with the data. The initial interview question will include a point of comparison, settling in for the participant, practice for them at reflection and provide context for the research. I will draw on my own understanding of the current social and environmental context and my own reflections through my reflective journal (Finlay, 2011).

In Longitudinal QR the sheer volume of data requires careful management (Neale, 2019). This is a concern for my own data thinking about the volume that I may produce as a consequence of this research. It may be useful to consider using either pen portraits or case profiles as the data collection progresses. I also think it will be important to analyse the data as it is produced,

partly in order to keep on top of the research process but also so that this can inform the next phase of the research data collection (Neale, 2019). Eventually there needs to be analysis across cases, themes and time but I need to start by looking at and analysing each data point separately and to keep on top of this by starting the analysis process soon after the data has been collected. There are a number of advantages of keeping up with the analysis; (Neale 2019) issues, topics and themes that come up in the first wave can be incorporated into subsequent waves, the data can be revisited after subsequent waves. This may mean that further meaning can be gleaned in the context of subsequent data that has been collected. I can keep up with the analysis and ensure that it can be done bit by bit but also across the cases which allows the data to be considered both vertically and horizontally (Neale, 2019). By doing this I can keep cases independent but also move between them to get an understanding of the phenomenon as a whole (Rapport, 2005).

I will be asking questions of the data and I have used questions suggested through my readings (see Finlay 2011, Braun and Clarke 2013, Van Manen, 2016 and Rapport, 2005).

Example questions to ask of the data:

'How do they make sense of their experience?'

'What does it mean to be this person?'

'What's not being said?'

'what's it like to be under investigation?'

'is this what it's like to be within the CJS as a suspect?'

'is this what the experience of being in the CJS is like?'

I have produced a question sheet to assist with my engagement with the data and my analysis.

Van Manen proposes that the analytic approach incorporates:

- 1) Searching for structures
- 2) Describing how the structures are thematic
- 3) Searching for incidental and essential themes
- 4) Explaining and interpreting essential and incidental themes

But also the aspects of the lifeworld that include spatiality, temporality, embodiment and intersubjectivity (Langdridge, 2007).

Include the levels that Thomson and Crowther look at in their 2020 piece and incorporate these into the below as well. Can I consider crafted stories as part of the data? Can this be like a pen portrait? Need to look at this. Could there be a crafted story from the collected data ? need to look at this I think and talk to paula maybe?? The below process might not be done in a very structured and linear way but I still need to be able to explain the process that I went through during the analysis and to be able to have a way to engage with the data that has some sort of framework- why? Explain this!

### **Analytical process**

So based on the above, for each piece of data collected:

- 1) Reflective notes made at the end of each interview, initial impressions and comments, body language, NVCs, emotion, comments not recorded.
- 2) Listen to the interview at least once and make initial comments and notes. Note whatever comes to mind. What seems to encapsulate each interview?
- 3) Transcription- listening to the interview, commenting anything that comes to mind and transcribing

- 4) Listen and check transcript, read and check other documents including diaries and fieldnotes
- 5) Whole analysis- notes and dwell on each piece of data, consider structure, texture, language. Return to the theory and the philosophy, think about the context.
- 6) Selective- development of major themes and sub themes (essential and incidental themes?), in a similar way to Schleiermacher compare ideas and themes against the rest of what the person says in one interview and across the data.
- 7) Developing the hermeneutic- the essence of the experience, consider the overview of analysis. Consider the parts and the whole of the data from that specific piece of data but also across the data from each participant as there should be more than one pieces of data.

Stages 5 onwards would incorporate Van Manen's analytical approach. Once this has been completed for the first wave of data then I could start to look at the themes that I have identified between cases as well as within them.

### Validation of analysis

I also feel that I need an internal validation process, this can be achieved by using a transparent and articulated analysis process and by using software that audit trails the analysis (see Neale, 2019). By being very clear in my notes and NVivo why and how I have come to my conclusions and that these are demonstrated through anecdotes, quotes and an appropriate audit trail. It may be useful to have someone else to conduct a small amount of analysis to both develop my ability to complete the analysis process and to provide additional rigour to my analysis. It will be helpful to have a supervisor to review my data and share analysis as this will assist with providing an additional perspective and help me to develop my analytical skills. Transcript and original reflective notes alongside notation guide provided to supervisor Paula Singleton for her to provide some info on analysis. Comparison between themes along the data set both within and between different parts of the data for each individual.

Trustworthiness- again see the notes in Crowther and Thomson, 2020 on this and incorporate this.

When themes/patterns identified then look at other explanations and other things that don't support that theme.

Sources of error (see whitehead 2004)- my presence as a researcher- my interpretation shaped by my own background but also by simply being part of the conversation I direct the data and the data is shaped by what the participant chooses to share with me.

## **Appendix 13**

### **Analytical question document**

#### **Analysis questions**

1. How do participants make sense of their experience?
2. What does it mean to be this person?
3. What's not being said?
4. What's it like to be under investigation?
5. Is this what it's like to be within the CJS as a suspect for this offence?
6. Is this what the experience of being in the CJS is like?
7. Who does he have relationships with and how does this influence his understanding and interpretation?
8. How do his feelings, thoughts, emotions, perceptions change over time?
9. How do things change on reflection?

10. How does where they are within the process affect their feelings and thoughts and impact of CJS?
11. Does this change over time and between the different aspects of the process?
12. What changes and what influences those changes?
13. Who are they and how do they interpret who they are?
14. What stories do they tell within the interview?
15. What is important to them?
16. How do they convey the stories, what words do they use, what information do they provide, what aspects of their lives do they story tell? What does it mean?
17. How do they use space? Where does their story take place? Where do they situate themselves? How do they describe the space that they inhabit?
18. How does he describe his relationships? What words does he use, what stories does he tell? How does he build and keep relationships? Include the one with me.
19. What context and climate does he situate himself and his story in? How does he talk about publicity, media, social media and other social contexts? What are these?
20. What might alter how they portray themselves as a result of this?
21. Do they minimise or not talk about certain aspects? If so why?
22. What is the 3D experience of being a suspect/convicted in CJS accused of CSEM/online offences?

## Appendix 14

### Example of field notes from observing Inform Plus sessions (TS)

#### Week 5 2/12/20 Observations

Prior to the session he meets early in order to do the catch up session for session 3. One of the facilitators does the work with him for session three and goes through his work whilst the other facilitator and I are in the room.

TS jokes that 'something is only an offence if you get caught doing it' when talking about fantasies. He isn't concentrating very well in this session and is moving about and fidgeting. I'm not sure if that is his way of expressing his discomfort or if he is just unorganised about the session. He doesn't verbalise anything. He says that his offending 'was a mix of boredom and stress and tended to happen on his days off', when asked about his current SHPO breach he notes 'it was accidental'. He also states that he got no sexual gratification from any of it. It was a way 'to pass the time, I wasn't masturbating to it'. 'It was a choice that I made that was wrong'. He says that he now has a court date 'I have a date to work towards at least'. He is advised to fill out his intervention plan- to try and help him to stop offending/breaches if there are any other temptations.

During the session he notes that the story was hard to write (empathy story from victim perspective) but that 'I managed it by writing a work of fiction in the first person'. He says 'it was good to get it over with but I felt that it was a worthwhile thing'. He also says that during his offending 'I had no empathy at all, I felt very disconnected although I wasn't interested in anything where the they were distressed'. He also talks about being 'desensitised'. He says that it's 'hard to empathise when you don't get the context'.

#### Week 5 2/12/2020 Reflections

I wonder if the fact that this was a difficult session was exacerbated by the addition of the session 3 work for TS as an individual. I was really uncomfortable watching this part of the session; TS seemed very uncomfortable too and was very reluctant to share his fantasies and discuss daydreams/fantasies that are sex related. I'm not sure if that's because there is an issue with his fantasies, whether that is because he has the three of us in the room or

other reasons. I'll be interested to see what is in his diary (I'm hoping that he sends it!). I write and don't really watch what is going on as it feels almost oppressive.

I found this meeting very interesting, although I felt uncomfortable and part of this was my feelings rather than the situation I think it also gave a lot of food for thought about how TS is coping. I'm not sure he really understands the situation that he is in. He seems to find it really difficult to talk about the reasons behind his offending and I can't imagine when he has discussed the fact that he is attracted to children that he doesn't fantasise and masturbate so I am worried that he isn't being honest in his sessions and therefore what will he really feel like he is getting from his sessions.

The story- he doesn't mention who the offender was in his story which makes me wonder whether this was something that he had witnessed or was part of his offending cycle?

## **Appendix 15**

### **Example diary extract (Simon)**

I'm not sleeping well at the moment I woke at 2am scared and worried and couldn't get back to sleep. My children had an inset day today so I've spent the day with them and their Nan visiting the scooter park etc, I picked up the course pack on Friday and looked through the 10 week program which I found very intense and in depth some will relate to me and some will not I've agreed to take part in the research which I have filled out and sent off.

Some tear filling moments again today with them saying they don't want to leave me all I could do was to say "I'll be seeing you again in the morning for school". I then returned home at 7pm to an empty house but in a more positive frame of mind.

I cared for my children 3.5 days a week before the police came.

## **Appendix 16**

### **Pen Portraits of all of the participants**

#### **James - Pen portrait**

James is a man in his mid 40s, who at the time of his initial arrest was a full time employed, married man with four children under the age of 16, two of whom have disabilities. James was a prominent and active man in his local community and in his local church but also talked about his feelings of isolation, stress and his lack of being able to show emotion. I initially interviewed James in October 2021, around 6 months after his initial arrest. At this point he was living alone in a small flat, on the brink of being divorced and with very little contact with his children. This contact was only verbally over the phone. His flat was sparse and his belongings were all in boxes. He had interventions from the mental health team and a counsellor as he had attempted suicide on more than one occasion. He had very little support from family and friends with most of his interactions with other people coming from his mental health support, other professionals or with his one work colleague. As the course of the pandemic continued James moved to working from home which meant that he rarely left his flat and, eventually, once charged he lost his job altogether. James talks about the effects of the criminal justice system on not only himself but also the effects on his family. After around 18 months of investigation James was charged and at court the bail conditions relating to his children were altered so that he was able to see them in person, supervised and at the discretion of his ex wife.

#### **Hugh- Pen portrait**

Hugh is a man in his early 30s when I first interviewed him. He had been married to his wife for three years although they had been together for five years and he describes himself as bisexual. At the time that he was offending Hugh spent a lot of time online and describes

himself as addicted to porn. He had a job that was tech related and both he and his wife had difficult relationships with their families and had been in therapy for their own relationship. Prior to his relationship with his wife Hugh was an insular man who lived with his parents and had had issues around sex, sexuality, pornography and his mental health since he was a teenager although much of this he hadn't recognised or at least consciously acknowledged before his arrest. All the way through our interactions it is clear that Hugh is struggling with his own relationship with his family, with relationships more widely and the seemingly difficult relationship that his wife has with his family. After a lengthy investigation lasting just over 12 months Hugh was charged and subsequently received an 18-month community sentence, 5 year's on the sex offender register and a SHPO.

### **James R- Pen portrait**

<b><u>nber</u></b>	<b><u>CJS Event</u></b>	<b><u>Life events</u></b>
	Prior to police attending (2013/2014)	Using CSEM form 14 months, working, has arranged retirement for end of December 2014, sees family 2 or 3 times a year, had a dog which was his companion but dog dies during this time, has sister and two daughters. Companion dog dies. Went to horse shows. Had a motor home but doesn't talk about using it. Diagnosed with COPD and gets bike to use for travel to work.
	November 2014 Police attend, house search and voluntary interview	
	Released whilst investigation is ongoing	Works until December and then retires
	Solicitor contacts police who say they will contact if they need to, probably not until at least July (don't know when this call happens)	Retires and works on his house and travels UK in his motorhome
	No contact from police in July, assumes they have completed investigation?	July 2015 Sells house to builders rather than getting building work completed, plans to buy a house elsewhere but travel in the meantime, gives money to daughters from sale of house
	Police searching for him (he is unaware)	Travels UK extensively and eventually buys static caravan and settles in one location, develops health problems, has Postal address at a friends house for bank, HMRC etc
	Police contact through sister, arranges to meet. December 2019.	Contacts the police and arranges to meet at a police station
	Attends police station for meeting and is arrested	Drives to police station (some considerable distance) to meet the police as requested intending to stay at his sister's address as it is close by, arrested and has to get his sister to provide medication to police station
	Charged and in custody overnight	
	Attends court and is granted bail pending further court appearance although prosecution apply for him to be remanded	Returns to his home over Christmas
	Attends court, pleads guilty, expects suspended sentence or community sentence. Told this by probation and solicitor, is actually given 22 month prison sentence	Drives from home to court and is immediately sent to prison after court case
	Sent to initial prison	
	Moved to current prison (January 2020)	

### **Paul- Pen portrait**

Paul is a man in his 40s who prior to his arrest lived with his family (wife and two teenage sons) and describes "*what I'd class as a regular kinda life*". He had a senior role in a public sector organisation and had a small group of friends and family that he spent most of his time with. He describes himself as an introvert and had a pressured job, his wife worked shifts and was a support worker. He says that he didn't talk about how he was feeling with anyone including his wife and '*bottled things up*', he saw talking about it "*kind of like a sign of weakness, clearly its not but want to be strong*". He says that with hindsight he has realised that his mental health was poor whilst he was offending. He also states that his wife had mental health issues and he also hadn't wanted to burden her with his as well. Paul was eventually sentenced after a 15 month investigation to 32 months in prison, life on the sex offender register and a life Sexual harm prevention order.

### **Ricky- Pen portrait**

Ricky was a man of 50 when I first interviewed him. He was the last participant that I recruited and I first interviewed him in December 2021 and then again around 5 months later. Due to



the issues that I had had with recruitment I recruited Ricky through the probation service as a participant that had already served a prison sentence and been released. Ricky had not accessed any additional support and had not had contact with LFF or completed Inform Plus or any other similar programmes. Ricky was very unhappy with the experience that he had had throughout his contact with the system. He had lost contact with friends and family and was very much alone. He did not feel comfortable completing our interviews using online video technology so I conducted telephone interviews with him.

Ricky had spent his working career in the armed forces but had had to leave to care for his daughter when his son had died, something that he attributes to his ex partner. His son's death had a real impact on the mental health of both himself and his daughter and then he struggled to manage which is when he began offending. He moved areas to be nearer family but this meant that he had to take his daughter to and from school which was quite some distance from his home and although this gave him additional family support it also made it more difficult for him to find work. He is very negative about all of the organisations that he encountered. He comments on the mental health support within the

### **Simon- Pen portrait**

Simon is a man in his late 40s when he was initially arrested. At the time of his arrest, he was in full time employment with two young children and in the midst of an acrimonious relationship breakdown with the mother of his children. This meant that he had joint custody of the children, describing them as '*my best friends*', but was also involved with social care and the family court as a result. He describes this time in his life as '*lots of anxiety when's the next court next court application from Mom gonna pop through the door so I was always full of anxiety*'. Simon lived alone (when his children weren't there) but was in a relationship with a woman and had a group of close family and friends. I interviewed Simon in October 2020, just prior to the commencement of the inform plus programme that Simon would be attending. At that time, he was on bail after being arrested 4 months earlier and although he was able to continue living in his own home, he had lost unsupervised contact with the children who were not allowed to stay over night with him. He was still seeing them regularly with his contact with them supervised by his mother. He had very a supportive partner who eventually moved in with him and supportive family although the investigation and child supervision support put a strain on his relationship with his mother. He was also able to keep his job during the investigation.

After a 15-month investigation Simon was convicted at court of offences relating to indecent images of children and his case was reported in the local paper. This resulted in his employer being alerted to his offending and the loss of his job.

### **Simon H- Pen portrait**

Simon (SH) was a man in his late 30's when he was initially interviewed. SH was single, working full time from home in an IT related role and living alone. I initially interviewed SH in September 2021 and then again six months later. This was a round () after his initial arrest. SH stated that he was in a dark place, lonely and depressed whilst he was offending. He has a very difficult relationship with his family, particularly since he had been arrested. He told me that his father had sexually abused his sisters and although he did not disclose that anything had happened to him he was acutely aware of any 'hereditary connection' as he called it. Eventually, he was sentenced to an 8 month sentence, suspended for two years. He was also put on the SOO for 7 years and had to attend a 30 day programme with probation.

### **Steve- Pen portrait**

Steve, at the time of his initial interview (October 2021) was a single, well-educated man aged 75 years. He lived alone in a flat, had retired from a successful career, first in the armed forces and later in a management role. Although he has always had friends, at the time of the first

interview he only has one real friend, a woman who he met when she was 18 years old and is over 30 years younger than him. She is now in her early forties and has a young son that prior to his arrest Steve would spend time with, babysit for etc and considered his own grandchild. Steve had been married previously and had had long term relationships. He has two adult children but is not close to either of them. He did have contact with his son who was aware of his arrest but did not have any contact with his daughter. The relationship had broken down at some point in the past well before he was arrested. Initially he portrayed his life prior to his arrest as being 'pretty good' and that his mental health was 'very very good' although his physical health less so. He liked to be active and had had a variety of interests including buying and renovating properties, an interest in cars and playing a guitar in a band.

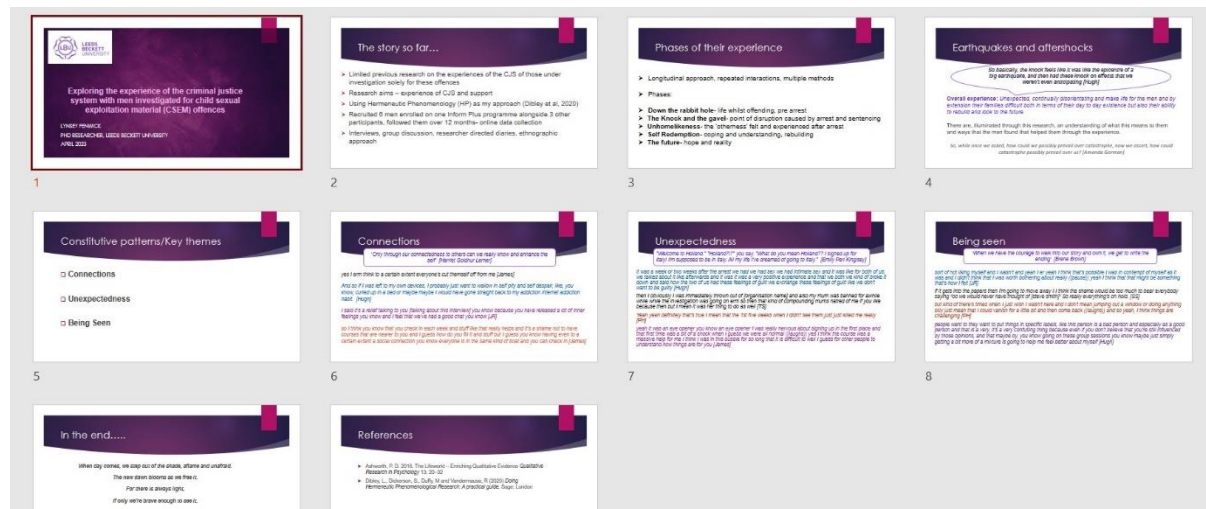
During the time he was participating in the Inform Plus programme Steve attended Crown Court and was sentenced to an 8 month suspended sentence, 80 hours community service and 30 hours working through a programme with probation (over the course of 12 months contact with probation). He was also given a sexual harm prevention order (SHPO) and required to provide all of his details to the police annually/if these change. He has regular visits from a police offender manager and he has monitoring software on all of his electronic devices.

### **TS- Pen portrait**

TS is a man in his late 30s when he initially takes part in the research. He lives alone in a flat with his cat. He is not in an intimate relationship, doesn't have a job and hasn't had either for many years. Although we meet over the course of the pandemic it is clear from the conversations that even before Covid-19 restrictions his life was fairly insular and he did not often leave the flat. Since the pandemic this has magnified and his social life he describes as consisting mostly of online interactions and online darts competitions. Although not clear initially, it eventually becomes apparent during the interview that TS is under investigation for a further offence and has been imprisoned before for CSEM offending. His original conviction was around 10 years previously, where he had been sentenced to 2.5 years in prison after an investigation lasting around 18 months. At that time he states that there was nothing in place around rehabilitation and support to desist from offending, he was under probation after he came out of prison, he was on the sex offenders register and he had a SHPO. The SHPO meant that he had regular visits from an offender manager and his internet enabled devices were checked. His recent offending behaviour came to light as a result of a routine check of his phone and when we initially spoke he was under investigation for those pictures on his phone. He told me that he had known from a young age that he was attracted to a wide range of people including different sexes and ages and although he did not explicitly say so it's clear he is sexually attracted to children.

## Appendix 17

### Powerpoint presentation presented for LFF feedback



## Appendix 18

### WELCOME TO HOLLAND- Story shared by participant TS

by

Emily Kingsley

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this.....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a

bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David.

The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go.

Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in

Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And

you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss.

But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland

## Appendix 19

### **The hill we climb- Poem by Amanda Gorman, shared by participant James**

*When day comes we ask ourselves,  
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?  
The loss we carry,  
a sea we must wade  
We've braved the belly of the beast  
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace  
And the norms and notions  
of what just is  
Isn't always just-ice  
And yet the dawn is ours  
before we knew it  
Somehow we do it  
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed  
a nation that isn't broken  
but simply unfinished  
We the successors of a country and a time  
Where a skinny Black girl  
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother  
can dream of becoming president  
only to find herself reciting for one  
And yes we are far from polished  
far from pristine  
but that doesn't mean we are  
striving to form a union that is perfect  
We are striving to forge a union with purpose  
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and  
conditions of man  
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us  
but what stands before us  
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,  
we must first put our differences aside*

*We lay down our arms  
so we can reach out our arms  
to one another  
We seek harm to none and harmony for all  
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:  
That even as we grieved, we grew  
That even as we hurt, we hoped  
That even as we tired, we tried  
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious  
Not because we will never again know defeat  
but because we will never again sow division  
Scripture tells us to envision  
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree  
And no one shall make them afraid  
If we're to live up to our own time  
Then victory won't lie in the blade  
But in all the bridges we've made  
That is the promised glade  
The hill we climb  
If only we dare  
It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit,  
it's the past we step into  
and how we repair it  
We've seen a force that would shatter our nation  
rather than share it  
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy  
And this effort very nearly succeeded  
But while democracy can be periodically delayed  
it can never be permanently defeated  
In this truth  
in this faith we trust  
For while we have our eyes on the future  
history has its eyes on us  
This is the era of just redemption  
We feared at its inception  
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs  
of such a terrifying hour  
but within it we found the power  
to author a new chapter  
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves  
So while once we asked,  
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?  
Now we assert  
How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?  
We will not march back to what was  
but move to what shall be  
A country that is bruised but whole,  
benevolent but bold,  
fierce and free  
We will not be turned around  
or interrupted by intimidation  
because we know our inaction and inertia  
will be the inheritance of the next generation  
Our blunders become their burdens*

*But one thing is certain:  
If we merge mercy with might,  
and might with right,  
then love becomes our legacy  
and change our children's birthright  
So let us leave behind a country  
better than the one we were left with  
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,  
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one  
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west,  
we will rise from the windswept northeast  
where our forefathers first realized revolution  
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states,  
we will rise from the sunbaked south  
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover  
and every known nook of our nation and  
every corner called our country,  
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,  
battered and beautiful  
When day comes we step out of the shade,  
afame and unafraid  
The new dawn blooms as we free it  
For there is always light,  
if only we're brave enough to see it  
If only we're brave enough to be it*

## **Appendix 20**

### **Annotated transcript of James R**

### Transcript Of Interview 1 with JR (Participant 1 cohort 3 study 1)

LF: So I know we have had a bit of a chat and I've tried to explain everything to you ((laughs))

JR: Yeah that's right that's very good yeah

LF: If you want another cup of tea let me know and I'll make it.

JR: ((overlaps)) yes I'm fine thank you

LF: So the first thing I wanted to ask was erm in order to kind of give me a bit of a baseline to think about what the impact might be can you tell me about what your life was like before the police came round

JR: I I have been a miller for 30 30 plus years in an animal feed mill making animal feed.

LF: alright cool

JR er because before that I was always involved with horses and animals so I had obviously got some experience in their feeding erm I ((pause)) I retired in the end of 2014. Now, I retired when I was about 68 erm I stayed on I think 2 or 3 years too long erm because the last 2 or 3 years at work were very stressful erm which is the time when I started to offend.

LF: what was the stress then at work?

JR: ((overlaps)) I I you see even today with modern equipment milling is still quite physical

LF: yeah I can imagine

JR: and I found that I was not able to keep up with younger people doing the job and I was working shifts so was working nights, afternoons and mornings and I found that it was getting me down

LF: so into your late 60s you were working shifts

JR: I was working through that period from 65 when really I should have retired to 68 which is a bit beyond where I should have retired erm and I I didn't sleep very well I was perhaps drinking too much er er and then I got involved with looking at things on the internet. Why I don't know ((pause)) erm I know my probation officer in [mentions town name] a chap called can I mention his name?

LF: Yes yes. you can talk about whatever you want I will take anything out that might identify

JR: [names probation officer] a very nice guy he was he ((pause)) embarrassingly enough I'm not very good at getting an erection or maintaining it and that has happened over a long period of time erm but whether that was anything to do with me looking on the internet at pictures I don't know I did look at pornographic pictures er I got onto a site that was er advertised and I er initially got onto that site because er it offered free films instead of paying for films er er and I got onto that site and these pictures started appearing that really ((pause)) I got quite sort of upset about in a way and wondered why they were still on because I wasn't

This is his view of himself- still sees himself as a miller although retired 5 years ago, identity is about what you do? also his self image. Ageing is a factor. Present tense. pride in work

Links stress at work with offending behaviour- not in his control?

Responsibility- working past when he should

Talks about animals before he mentions people- animals vs people

Times have changed but its still a very physical job, very physical person and that's part of his self image, working shifts in to your late 60s tough physically and mentally. Trapped in a job that had changed and was easier for younger people. Ageing isn't a positive, still trying to be in his younger glory days

Difficult time in his life before retirement, time at home- used things to help him feel better- alcohol and internet. Modern life- technology. Dealt with feeling down with maladaptive coping. Negative about life at this time.

Sex and lack of being able to get an erection is embarrassing but he talks about it. Frustrated about his sexual issues. Long term problem not sought any help, self medicating rather than asking for help. Pornography and alcohol as a way to manage his problems- unhappy physically and mentally. Unhappy life at the time of offending, negative about his life, not very emotional language though.

paying for any er special films or anything they were available you just put in things and they would down load loads of pictures but [names probation worker] thought that maybe I was trying to find something that would give me an er er an erection but I don't know I did think that maybe I was homosexual I did try I met somebody that was homosexual but that was a total disaster ((pause)) erm and then the police obviously looked on the internet because they can sort of trace things and that and then they came round to see me and I admitted everything straight away I said yes you know this is what I'm looking at.

LF: uh hum

JR: and they interviewed me

LF: just try and keep it to before so you were working you were still working

JR: yes

LF: were you still working when the police

JR: ((overlaps)) yes I was

LF: but you found work really stressful

LR: yes

LF: physically trying to keep

JR: ((overlaps)) and mentally as well

LF: and you weren't sleeping. But outside of work, what was life like outside of work?

JR: ((pause)) I didn't see anybody, I didn't do anything.

LF: did you live on your own?

JR: yes I was divorced in about 1990 or thereabouts so I was on my own and my children did come and see me but they lived with their mother and they were in their late teens and going off in their own careers

LF: yep

JR: and I don't think, I'm almost sure they never came to my house in that period at all

LF: so you were working long shifts and quite hard, you weren't in a relationship

JR: no but I did try homosexual relationship but it was quite embarrassing ((laughs)) because it didn't give me any sort of satisfaction (his voice gets quiet here) nor any desires at all but then again nothing did at that time to be honest. I've never been one that ((pause)) was looking at page 3 or anything right from the time now whether that affected my marriage I don't know but I still managed to sire two children which was good because they are wonderful children and I'm quite pleased that I did but it wasn't something that went on you know it was erm ((long pause))

LF: so what about you worked you weren't living with your kids but you saw them every so often what about anything else? Was there anything else that you did? Did you go out?

Change of life from married father, friends, family to isolated man on his own with limited relationships with anyone.

Frustrated sexually but couldn't find things that he was interested in- either men or women?

Traditional image of a mans man- page 3, 'sired' two children, wife but it's an illusion. always been different. page 3- seen as 'the norm' or what a man should be interested in? Even not being 'adequate' he still managed to have two children. Self image – how he sees himself different to what he portrays to others? and identity- who is he? children – not family, the right thing to do to have kids? traditional



<p>1 JR: ((overlaps)) I used to go out to horse shows and things because that's what I 2 did all the while but it got so I didn't you know I was knackered sorry for the 3 language but I was knackered its not a rude word</p> <p>4 LF: ((overlaps)) no gg it's fine</p> <p>5 JR: er I would come back shattered especially if I had worked late 2pm till 10pm at 6 night er gr, and then if I was working nights I didn't sleep much in the day erm 7 ((pause)) no I didn't do a great deal of much at all I didn't have any close friends 8 in fact ah ((long pause)) I can't remember the last person that came round to the 9 house actually ((laughs)). My sister lived in [names place] and I lived in [names 10 place], it's only about 12 miles away but I think the only car to the house once 11 erm not that I encouraged anybody I seemed to go into my own little den sort of 12 thing I'd come home at night and I had a little dog which was lovely but she died 13 which upset me as well at about this time.</p> <p>14 LF: <del>uh</del>00000</p> <p>15 JR: I wasn't very I was probably suffering from depression I would think cos people 16 talk about depression 'were you depressed?' well perhaps when you are 17 depressed you don't know that you're depressed</p> <p>18 LF: <del>yep</del> it's describing how you felt at the time</p> <p>19 JR: <del>yeah</del> I think now that I probably was quite depressed yeah (sounds thoughtful)</p> <p>20 LF: In what way? What makes you think that?</p> <p>21 JR: I didn't want to do anything I went to work I'd come home, perhaps had a 22 drink I looked at the television I looked on the internet as we know er that was it. 23 And I would work overtime at the weekends as well mainly to be out of the house 24 and my colleagues at work were really only the people I talked to thinking about 25 it. Yeah. Probably were. Unless I went shopping and spoke to somebody in the 26 shop erm and I would ring my children up usually at the weekends to see how 27 they were yeah ((pause)) erm that was it really.</p> <p>28 LF: <del>sg</del> what was your relationship with your colleagues from work like?</p> <p>29 JR: <del>yeah</del> to some yeah I was quite close to <del>them</del> but very rarely did we meet out 30 of work. Because you are always working different shifts so if I was off they'd be 31 working but yeah I had a good relationship with colleagues with work. It was only 32 a small mill there'd only be sort of 9 at maximum and probably only 3 or 4 of you 33 on a shift at the same time but I did have and since I've left work I have met up 34 with them to have a drink and a meal and to talk about when we were at work 35 you know erm I retired when I was 68 at the end of 2014 <del>gr</del> and at the end of my 36 looking on the internet since then I've <del>not</del> been interested ((pause)) I had a 37 motorhome.</p> <p>38 LF: hmhm</p> <p>39 JR: And <del>ggd</del> as soon as I retired I travelled around [names places] and I have er a 40 I like to call it a fishing lodge in [names location] but really it's just a static caravan 41 with a bit of wood up and er I spend well now it's my permanent address now 42 and for the last 5 years that's what I've done erm I haven't bothered with images 43 on the internet or even thought about it because I realised from what the police 44 said when they did come round and er I was ashamed actually what I'd been</p>	<p>Stopped doing what he enjoyed</p> <p>Being with animals – animals vs humans but even animals stopped</p> <p>Rude word- politeness, careful how he presents himself, what image he portrays and sees of himself. Doesn't want to 'swear' in front of a woman?</p> <p>Isolation and avoidance- <del>00006</del> visited and he didn't ask anyone to visit. No relationships, companion dog died.</p> <p>His house seems to be his safe space here- 'my own little den', reminiscent of hibernation. He needed to hide himself from the world?</p> <p>Mental health, not realising that you are depressed or needing help until afterwards and not seeking help or wanting to admit how he felt. Sounded as if this is a revelation to him!</p> <p>Cycle of depression. worked at the weekends to get out of the house- so the house was both his den and somewhere he wanted to get out of. Conflicted. Cut himself off. only spoke to his children or people he saw in the street- image and identity, a good father contacting his children when he was depressed and not speaking to anyone else. Wouldn't tell children- wouldn't have been appropriate</p> <p>Still keeps his image up at work then and since- reliving the 'good old days' at work but he wasn't enjoying it- image he portrays</p> <p>He classes these as friends but he didn't tell them how he was- wanted to: show he was ok and could keep up with the <del>ggd</del>.</p> <p>Fishing lodge- outward image of himself as being better than it is? Police made him realise that he had been doing something wrong- (responsibility for actions, shame about what <del>had</del> been doing</p>	<p>1 looking at and I got quite angry where you think that things were going on that 2 you could see that er ((pause)) it was almost <del>alpggg</del> like ((pause)) if you you see 3 starving people in Africa and it shows you them on television you think ah Christ 4 look at that you know how awful it is (his voice gets very slow and thoughtful at 5 this point) and er <del>gr</del> I was perhaps thinking the same of these children images in 6 a way because I was quite upset because at the time it's about 5 years ago mind</p> <p>7 LF: <del>uhuh</del></p> <p>8 JR: the television was saying you know I remember what they were doing they 9 were clamping down on these sites that gave people free films</p> <p>10 LF: yes</p> <p>11 JR: you could watch mainline films but you didn't pay for them and they actually 12 stopped it and should think well if they can stop that why aren't they stopping 13 this you know because well I didn't pay for any sites it was all freely available if 14 you searched for it on the internet erm and I just had it there and to be honest I 15 can't really remember what was on there to be honest</p> <p>16 LF: ok</p> <p>17 JR: I can remember that they weren't very nice I didn't like it at all and then when 18 the police came and they said you can't do this and they had a voluntary interview 19 and I said what I'd been doing and they said well you know you can't do that it's 20 illegal and <del>ygggg</del> that and the other (his voice becomes quieter at this point) I said 21 well I've just been led into it by myself and I don't know why and even today I 22 can't I can't explain it really ((laughs)).</p> <p>23 LF: so back then how was your physical and mental health? You talked about that 24 you think you were depressed.</p> <p>25 JR: <del>yep</del> I think I probably was yes that last phase of working I mean when I was in 26 court the police said that it was over a 14 month period which tied in with that 27 last year at work erm.</p> <p>28 LF: <del>sg</del> you retired before the police came?</p> <p>29 JR: no after the police came in November and I was due and I said I was retiring 30 at the end of the year</p> <p>31 LF: right 2014?</p> <p>32 JR: <del>yep</del> 2014 yep at the end of the year 2014 is when I retired erm and I can 33 honestly say that I haven't felt any interest to look at that at all and when I was 34 on bail from before Christmas erm the probation got in touch with me the 35 probation or well the equivalent of them [names location] I had two visits from a 36 probation worker [names location] who came and it was part of their job to check 37 on my laptop and mobile phone to see what and they couldn't find anything at all 38 which I knew I knew that they wouldn't erm and then they came again at the 39 beginning of the year this year and there was nothing on there and I knew there 40 wouldn't be because I hadn't been interested in it at all but why I got involved in 41 doing it I have no idea so that's not helped your research ((laughs))</p>	<p>Anger at the pictures, shows images on tv so equates it to something alien, not happening but something wrong. Done by someone else. 'perhaps'- distancing himself from the crime, minimising</p> <p>Blaming his access on other people, technology is such that this can be stopped but it <del>ggg</del> being. Pay vs free- hierarchy of offending, not as bad as he didn't pay for it! Trying to feel better about the crime.</p> <p>Image- trying to say he didn't like the images, lying to himself or just for the interview? Image of himself for himself or to make himself look better to me?</p> <p>Passive- someone needed to stop him rather than him being able to do it himself. CIS involvement prevented further offending</p> <p>Police as a they- authority, 'voluntary interview', is it really voluntary? passive. compliance.</p> <p>last year at work- doesn't match with his image of himself, links to his unhappiness at work.</p> <p>Doesn't want to accept timescale voluntarily?</p> <p>Received information in court- didn't know about this before court? links his feelings with his offending behaviour</p> <p>'look at that'- doesn't want to go into detail about offending behaviour and pictures.</p> <p>'they' for probation service, authority again.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>4</p>

<p>1 LF: no gg I'm not looking at why you got involved in it it's more how this whole 2 thing has impacted on so you we talked about your mental health what about 3 physically? Your physical health at that time</p> <p>4 JR: My physical health at that time was certainly a lot better than it is now but I 5 wasn't I was diagnosed briefly with COPD which is farmers lung erm and they gave 6 me some inhalers and I thought <del>ggd</del> that's not good cos once you start on them so 7 I bought a bike and so I started cycling to work</p> <p>8 LF: yep</p> <p>9 JR: and then I felt a lot better erm and since leaving the mill and spending more 10 time in [names location] in the fresh air that doesn't bother me at all you know if 11 I get a cold it goes straight to my chest that's the only time er but if I'm up in the 12 fresh air then that doesn't bother me and while I've been in [names location] one 13 of my hobbies is I've been walking, cycling I bought a cycle with an electric motor 14 that assists so that I can do 50 or 60 miles a day er quite happily and I fish which 15 is one of my hobbies in the rivers in [names location] erm and I until these last 16 few months had well since last may really erm I was fine you know erm but I 17 developed problems with my hips I don't walk too well now I had an x-ray but I 18 haven't had the results of that yet I'm hoping the people here the doctors will 19 have my records from the local doctor in [names location] so with being outdoors 20 and walking and in the fresh air and er not having the stress at work and er I feel 21 great you know really a lot better now than I was in 2014.</p> <p>22 LF: <del>sg</del> when the police came round in November 2014 which is quite a long time 23 ago</p> <p>24 JR: yes it is but they didn't write me a letter or anything as I'd already left a friend 25 of mine who had a house in [names location] and that was my postal address for 26 the bank, the pensions people and all that they knew my address but the police 27 didn't for some reason I thought that they would have looked at that straight 28 away but they said they couldn't find me for five years which didn't go down too 29 well with the judge cos they sort of said that I was deliberately trying to avoid 30 them but as soon as they got in touch with my sister in [names town] and said 31 that they were looking for me and as soon as that happened I rang them up and 32 said right yes I'll come in you know I'm not trying to hide erm but they did give 33 the impression that I was on bail since November 2014 but I wasn't on bail at all</p> <p>34 LF: <del>sg</del> what happened then? November 2014 but how were you aware that the 35 police</p> <p>36 JR: they came er they rang me up actually I was at work and they said <del>gg</del> could 37 you come home and I thought oh is there something wrong with my children have 38 they had an accident so I rushed back home and they said oh we've found some 39 evidence that you've been downloading pictures of children on the internet and 40 I said oh I've got the evidence here I can show you <del>ggg</del> know I said yeah that's 41 true and they took me for a voluntary interview in [names town] which is nearby 42 and they asked me all about it to which I said yeah I quite admit that you know 43 um and that was it and then I didn't hear from them for <del>gg</del> a long while and I 44 wrote</p> <p>45 LF: ((overlaps)) so how did you feel when the police said this is what we are here 46 to talk to you about?</p>	<p>Abile to deal with less embarrassing or stigmatised physical health- issues with his lungs, seeks help, gets medication and manages his lifestyle to manage this but doesn't seem able to do that for the erectile dysfunction, sexuality and alcohol, indecent images etc. Even with lungs- changes his lifestyle to get better. more likely to be able to deal with <del>non-stigmatised</del> issues himself.</p> <p>Links physical and mental health.</p> <p>Abile to do what he wants to do and <del>bes</del> much happier.</p> <p>Fresh air exercise and not working has helped him to stop offending</p> <p>No contact from the police- sceptical of police or police as incompetent but not overtly negative- compliance and doesn't want to challenge authority</p> <p>Police not being truthful, misleading which led to his sentence</p> <p>Sees himself as wanting to portray a good image to police and courts but this is tarnished by police etc actions. He attended as soon as he was asked but he hadn't been asked before that.</p> <p>Police misled him as he thought his children were in trouble/danger to go home, he admitted everything and then doesn't hear from them. tries to contact police. Less of an issue than his children being in danger and he admits his offending behaviour. Did not think this was why police coming and therefore wasn't expecting what happened. Link to he wasn't sure what he had done was wrong? Conflict in thoughts and behaviour</p>	<p>1 JR: ((sound of expelling air)) almost relieved in a way you know 'ah you know this 2 it is you know they'll look at this and maybe sort me out and maybe sort them 3 out as well you know' erm but in the end I think I sorted myself out because I 4 didn't hear from them again I rang my solicitors and they rang the policeman 5 involved and he sort of said we haven't done anything about it yet we'll let you 6 know I think he said something like we'll let you know by the end of July or 7 something like that</p> <p>8 LF: <del>uhuhuh</del></p> <p>9 JR: <del>sg</del> July came and I'd retired and I was just starting to do my house up and I got 10 some builders in and the builder said we are interested in buying the house would 11 you sell it before we do it up? Well I said well yeah ok I'd never advertised it and 12 they made me an offer which I thought was ok and then I sold it and I wasn't 13 worried about not having anywhere to live because I'd got the mobile home</p> <p>14 LF: yes</p> <p>15 JR: <del>sg</del> I wasn't going to be homeless and the mobile home was for me to look for 16 somewhere else to buy</p> <p>17 LF: did you have the place in [place name] at that time?</p> <p>18 JR: No it was one of the places I came across in [names location] the original plan 19 was to buy another house now but even though I'd sold the other one I gave some 20 money to my children for deposits on their houses and travelling the country is 21 quite expensive ((laughs)) and at the end of the day I haven't really got a lot left 22 so I ended up buying this static caravan and the plan then was to buy somewhere 23 [mentions location name] so that I could go between the two but I ended up I 24 sold the mobile home er because I was not as wealthy as I thought I was erm and 25 since then I'm feeling a lot better you know</p> <p>26 LF: good</p> <p>27 JR: and then last may I started having trouble with my hips and following on from 28 that they took some blood tests and one thing and another and then I had this 29 blockage and then it sort of went on and I got as diabetic I had a blood reading of 30 31 when they would expect it at 6 or 7.31 what I've no idea but they said oh dear 31 you know we need to do something about this and then there was some erm I'm 32 anaemic as well ((laughs)) and then er that's it really and then as I say I got in 33 touch with the police again because they asked me too and then they arrested 34 me er</p> <p>35 LF: ((overlaps)) so when was that?</p> <p>36 JR: the beginning of December this year no last year sorry</p> <p>37 LF: 2019?</p> <p>38 JR: 2019 yep.</p> <p>39 LF: <del>sg</del> from the end of 2014 to the end of well basically for 5 full years</p> <p>40 JR: yes</p> <p>41 LF: you didn't hear anything from the police and you were?</p> <p>42 JR: having a good time really</p>	<p>Relieved when police told him not his children, and someone else can help him to 'sort himself out'. something wrong with him as a person but he then had to sort himself out as he didn't hear anything from the police for 5 years. Solicitor contacted police, they would let him know. Loss of control- in hands of police, solicitor etc</p> <p>Out of control- not in control of himself and loss of control of situation when police involved.</p> <p>CIS people called 'they' etc- no names. Doesn't want to make them real people?</p> <p>Doesn't need his 'den' or wants to get rid of his den? Changing the house with builders. Change to his <del>ggg</del>.</p> <p>Important to him to provide monetary support for his children, over and above being able to support himself. Seeing himself as role of a father to support children.</p> <p>Plan to move away- move away from the issue which is where he had offended. Plans change.</p> <p>Moving away and he is feeling better- move and change but things don't go how you always want them to</p> <p>Just as he started to get on an even keel then his physical health deteriorated, and then he was arrested, can't really get better as <del>eventime</del> he tries something else happens?</p> <p>Running away- he was changing house with builders, then moving away when he had the opportunity</p> <p>Taking back control by going away?</p> <p>Loss of control- work, alcohol, internet and then the police and <del>investigation</del>. Not voluntary interview- still loss of control</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>6</p>



<p>1 LF: yeah so what did you think? Did you just think that they had left it?</p> <p>2 JR: well maybe I thought that they hadn't found much on there that they thought 3 that they were going to charge me with but evidently they did erm (pause) 4 (audible sighing sound) then it sort of went from there I went to court and then 5 they adjourned it (pause) (his speech gets quieter and much slower) and then I 6 went to court again just before Christmas and they adjourned it again or referred 7 it to the crown court and then we went to the crown court and the probation 8 worker in [names town] and I think also in [names another location] had 9 recommended that I served time in the community something or other they were 10 talking about my solicitor said that that's more what you'll get possibly and 11 possibly a suspended sentence but in fact I didn't I got a sentence of 22 months 12 erm (long pause) which is fine if that's what they think then I'm quite happy with 13 that well not happy with it but it's something that's done I had pictures on my 14 computer which I admitted to and if I've got to do 11 months hopefully half way 15 through erm yeah that's what I deserve but why I still don't know really it's just 16 er (pause) (sounds very thoughtful)</p> <p>17 LF: so how did you feel when the police got back in touch with you? Did they just 18 turn up and arrest you?</p> <p>19 JR: no what happened was they said that they had been tracking my phone calls 20 which possibly they had er and they said that I had been travelling all over the 21 country because they had seen my bank account that was withdrawn well if you 22 are in a motor home and travelling around the country then you would do that 23 anyway but I couldn't understand why if they could track my bank account why 24 they didn't look on the address on the bank account and then they could have 25 written me a letter even though I wasn't there at [names location] particularly 26 very often and I would have seen the letter and got in touch before but they got 27 in touch with my sister who rang me and then I rang the police and I couldn't get 28 through and nobody answered the phone so I rang my solicitors who got in touch 29 with the police and the police asked me to meet up with them for a meeting er in 30 [names location] so I came all the way down from [names location] and met up 31 with them and then they promptly arrested me before my solicitor had arrived so 32 that was a bit under hand I thought but that's what happened</p> <p>33 LF: what were you expecting to happen?</p> <p>34 JR: Well I don't know really cos he said he just wanted to talk about things that 35 they had found on my computer so I don't know quite what I was expecting to 36 really other than that they'd asked me to go I asked my solicitor to turn up as well 37 or they suggested that they turned up cos they didn't know what was going to 38 happen er and that was it really and then they arrested me kept me in overnight 39 in prison they wouldn't let me go home to my sisters cos I'd stayed at my sisters 40 erm which meant I'd got some tablets which I had to take and she bought them 41 out cos I'd got this prostate problem then er and then we went to court and the 42 police tried to get me on remand because they made out I was likely to disappear 43 again er and the judge says well you know he's volunteered to come in there's no 44 reason for that at all so I went back to [names location] came back for the next 45 hearing and then back for the next hearing after that and then when I was there 46 the last time they sent me to prison straight away so I'm here erm (long pause) 47 but there you are.</p>	<p>'maybe' so did he think this or not or was he just running away?</p> <p>He <del>badly</del> tried to find out and was hoping it would go away- hiding from the truth, running away from what he had done, but you can't run away from yourself. He must have known what was on there as he admitted it and handed it over.</p> <p>Probation thought of more positively- uses names and place names for them, they recommended suspended sentence or community, less authority related. Loss of control.</p> <p>Accepting of his sentence but it wasn't what he was expecting so is he really accepting? Misled all the way along the CIS by different agencies.</p> <p>Sceptical about police - tracking phone calls but can't find address?</p> <p>He contacted the police and didn't get a response so then contacted via solicitor, he came down (a long way) and was arrested. He feels that this was 'underhand' <del>suspicious</del> of police and ultimately part of the reason he is in prison.</p> <p>Not being treated how he would have treated someone- says what he would have done?</p> <p>Things not being as he expected.</p> <p>The police arresting him and contacting his sister force him into telling her what had happened. Ultimately this then was out of his control. Loss of control of life. Loss of control in his relationships. Leads to separation from <del>gaggy</del>.</p>	<p>1 LF: So how <del>gaggy</del> would you say it's affected you from you arranging you finding 2 out that the police want to talk to you and you arranging to go in and then being 3 arrested which you weren't expecting to now</p> <p>4 JR: ((overlaps)) well the initial shock obviously when I was arrested in [location 5 name] because I didn't expect that to happen and I was a bit upset that they were 6 making out that I would deliberately and they actually told the probation service 7 in [names location] that I'd absconded from bail which wasn't true at all I wasn't 8 put on bail in 2014 so I was quite taken aback you know (long pause) yeah it was 9 not too good that sort of knocked me back a bit you know erm (pause)</p> <p>10 LF: in what way?</p> <p>11 JR: cos I wasn't expecting to be arrested for some reason I don't know cos it's <u>five</u> 12 <u>years</u> since erm</p> <p>13 LF: yeah <del>yeah</del></p> <p>14 JR: I thought maybe they'd give me a talking to or say maybe you shouldn't have 15 done this I don't know so then I was arrested and then obviously having talked to 16 my solicitor we went through everything and the solicitor explained more about 17 what they thought would be happening erm there were some pictures that the 18 police had confiscated my computers er and one of the computers was a laptop 19 and I remember what they said that it was a black <del>gaggy</del> computer but I never 20 had one of them but er <del>gg</del>, the solicitor said you know he went to see their 21 evidence and said well you had best to carry on you had admitted having things 22 on you are better off doing that erm and if you admit to a sentence which I do 23 admit cos there were stuff on my computer then it would be better for you cos if 24 you if you argue the case it will reflect badly on you <u>you</u> know and it will also it 25 will create more publicity which I didn't want to affect my children at all erm</p> <p>26 LF: yeah</p> <p>27 JR: so I I was guilty because I've got pictures on my computer I didn't deny that 28 and that's why <del>gg</del> here I've quite accepted now that what is happening it's always 29 a bit strange because 've never been to prison before but erm and if I I serve my 30 sentence then that's what I'll do. Erm and I'll use the time here when I can 31 perhaps improve on things I don't know (speech is much slower and he sounds 32 thoughtful again) and reflect on what has happened erm (pause) but I think 33 since the original police investigation in 2014 my life has improved believe it or 34 not (laughs)</p> <p>35 LF: but that's more about you retiring? Getting out</p> <p>36 JR: ((overlaps)) yes getting out of that environment yeah getting away and finding 37 that my mind has been involved in other things and things have been much better 38 you know erm (pause)</p> <p>39 LF: yeah because you weren't on bail you'd just spoken to the police and then</p> <p>40 JR: and then I went off in me motorhome erm I couldn't erm what I initially tried 41 to do get a post PO address</p> <p>42 LF: yeah</p>	<p>Shock. Unexpected turn of events- so who didn't explain this to him why was it so unexpected? the CIS is complicated, unexpected and confusing. Difficult to negotiate.</p> <p>Upset - police misled CIS about what had happened with him. He wasn't sure what had happened, he hadn't been told what might happen. Additional shock as it was so unexpected. Not told by solicitor or police or probation. Navigating the system is difficult, lots of ups and down, no idea what to expect</p> <p>'knocked him back' - a reminder of his previous life before he had managed to turn things around- language as well as descriptive. Knocked him back into CIS, emotion etc, ups and downs, reminder of who he is 'bad person'</p> <p>Is contradicting CIS staff and what they found- misled by the CIS, he wasn't presented with the evidence and talked into admitting it- is this right? Loss of control, didn't feel that he could raise this as an issue. Not for the individuals, it's a process.</p> <p>CIS uses his fears- reinforces <del>hes</del>, a bad person- it could get out into the press etc. Fear, shame.</p> <p>Guilt- he feels guilty and he is guilty, slightly different connotations between the word and the reality of the CIS. What does it mean to plead guilty? Acceptance, denial- what has he accepted and what has he denied?</p> <p>Prison is strange- alien concept, out of his comfort zone. Life has improved over the course of the last 5 years</p> <p>Leaving, change of lifestyle and change of <del>environment</del>.</p> <p>Keeping busy- active mind and body, this has helped</p>
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<p>1 JR: but the banks and that wouldn't accept that and HRMC the tax people 2 wouldn't accept that so I arranged with an old colleague from work if I could use 3 his he'd got he lived in a house and his girlfriend lived next door so he sort of had 4 an empty house as it was and that was my postal address. I would ring him and 5 say have you got any letters for me and then I would call round and that and then 6 I had this place in [names location] which I spent most of my time in and I toured 7 round and I spent a lot of time going to different places on the train and that 8 spending money like water because I had sold my house (laughs) (pause)</p> <p>9 LF: erm it sounds like you were enjoying your retirement</p> <p>10 JR: yes I was I was enjoying my retirement and I felt a lot better for it you know 11 and I cycled on a bike which I'd only cycled to work before erm I went fishing and 12 er yeah and er yeah I didn't find any (pause) er any sort of need to go looking for 13 things on the internet you know other than train timetables and <del>youtube</del>, 14 sometimes</p> <p>15 LF: <del>gg</del> what about your relationships with your family then</p> <p>16 JR: well my relationship with family it was a good relationship but I I er it wasn't I 17 wasn't seeing them because we were far away they were in [names location] and 18 I was in [names location] and er I would perhaps see them two or three times a 19 year my elder daughter has now got two children that I've seen two or three times 20 a year and er and my younger daughter lives in [names location] which is set apart 21 I've seen her 2 or 3 times a year erm (long pause) but it's not like you live next 22 door to them and go round I mean they have that relationship with their mother 23 who lives sort of in between the 2 of them you know erm</p> <p>24 LF: has your relationship with the family changed because of what's happened?</p> <p>25 JR: yes I told both of my children certainly the older one I had more of a talk with 26 the older one erm that what I've done <u>I've done</u> and I didn't want it to reflect on 27 them so I've told them that whatever happens although at the time I didn't think 28 that I'd be going to prison that I would deal with it myself erm so that was it really 29 I said I don't want them making contact with me so and then when I feel free to 30 do so and it's not going to be a problem then I'll get back in touch if they want to 31 speak to me or not that will be up to them</p> <p>32 LF: <del>gg</del> when did you last have contact with them with your daughters?</p> <p>33 JR: before Christmas</p> <p>34 LF: <del>gg</del> it's since the arrest that you've said that</p> <p>35 JR: yes <u>yes</u>,</p> <p>36 LF: <del>gg</del> what about were they aware that you'd been interviewed in 2014?</p> <p>37 JR: No <del>gg</del> (speaks very quietly)</p> <p>38 LF: did you tell anybody back then?</p> <p>39 JR: No <del>gg</del> (pause) and I have a sister in [names location] and the same goes for 40 my sister although she's more involved because she's obviously my age and she 41 knew that I'd been arrested because she bought some of my tablets out for me</p> <p>42 LF: ((overlaps)) yes</p>	<p>Kept in contact with his old place though through the use of address- keeping a tie to where he felt safe but also wanted to get away from it? He could have used his sisters address or somewhere within family but he didn't. Distance from family?</p> <p>Enjoyment in life again. Being free from work, stress and the addiction of alcohol/internet causes him to enjoy himself. Internet 'neer'.</p> <p>Change- able to leave the house, spent time out of the house to feel better.</p> <p>He describes his relationship as good but that's not how its portrayed- there are a few issues with relationships and his idea of what is a good relationship - sees them 2 or 3 times a year and speaks on the phone. Distant relationship compared to with their mother. Identity as a father. His ability to manage relationships?</p> <p>Change- breaks off his relationship, decision made by him without their input, trying to take control of one aspect of his life when he's lost control of the rest?</p> <p>Reflection on his family- guilt, shame</p> <p>identity as a father- explained to them but it's not what a father should have to do with his children</p> <p>shame- didn't tell anyone previously, only when he has had to when he was charged and going to court.</p>	<p>1 JR: and I said before I went back to [names location] and was on bail I said you 2 know er it won't do if you don't want to be involved then because she was 3 involved in things as well it wouldn't have done any good so (voice gets very quiet 4 and speaks slowly) and that was before I was sentenced that was from the first 5 police hearing the first hearing and I said I think it's better that we were separate 6 you know erm because I've got an unusual name (speech becomes very quiet) cos 7 if it's in a paper mind you their names aren't the same because both my daughters 8 are married and my sister uses her married name as well so but I thought that I 9 didn't want anyone coming to prison</p> <p>10 LF: yes</p> <p>11 JR: because I'm not proud I'm quite ashamed of what I've done you know and er 12 I understand that a lot of people</p> <p>13 LF: ((overlaps)) so you didn't tell your sister either in 2014, no one at all?</p> <p>14 JR: No</p> <p>15 LF: <del>gg</del> it's only really because your sister because the police contacted her</p> <p>16 JR: and asked to speak to me although they didn't say why but she said o we have 17 had a policeman here can you get in touch with them and said yeah I'll try and 18 ring him erm so yes she wasn't aware of the <del>gaggy</del> first court hearing er (pause) 19 no probably the second court hearing yeah the one before Christmas I think she 20 was I told her that I had to go to court (speech gets very slow and quiet at this 21 point) so I said I don't want you coming to court or anything you know so (then 22 starts to speak more loudly again) you know you might say I say at the moment 23 I'm separated from my children</p> <p>24 LF: <del>gg</del> you've deliberately chosen to why have you decided to do that?</p> <p>25 JR: Because my children their careers are do not wouldn't be a good thing to be 26 involved with me if any of the news became common news er that's er why one 27 is a teacher and the other one is an accountant and my sister is involved with 28 [names location] council so to be involved with me wouldn't be a good thing so 29 (pause)</p> <p>30 LF: what are their thoughts, what have they said?</p> <p>31 JR: I don't know (pause) the elder daughter cried obviously erm but because of 32 these of these medical problems as well we did have at one stage with this um 33 anaemia this er blood count there was a possibility and still is a possibility that 34 that could be more involved and could develop into cos my mother died of er well 35 cancer and things like that so er (speaks more quietly) that's still perhaps on the 36 offering I don't know (pause) but I'm it was that was what I didn't want them 37 coming to prison or worrying about because I've always been a distant sort of 38 person, a loner as it were, as I say the children didn't come to mine, my sister's 39 only been once think when I lived in [names location] it wasn't like we were living 40 in each other's pocket all the time but I er I'm quite proud of my children and my 41 sister and I've helped them where I can but one way I can help them now is to 42 keep away from them</p> <p>43 LF: how do you think that's helpful?</p>	<p>Separation, running away from the shame he feels when he sees his family. Shame related to publicity. Fear of publicity.</p> <p>Shame</p> <p><del>gg</del> when he was at his lowest he had no support and did not tell any of his family. shame, not talking to people.</p> <p>Police contacting his sister forced his hand- he's had to tell his sister what it was about and therefore this has increased his shame and the separation with his family. Police methods- sceptical of how <del>gg</del> was done and why and the fall out from them not doing their job as they could have done has been big- family relationships, prison etc.</p> <p>Talks about his children's careers- work is 'identity' for him and part of his image etc, something that impacts on work cannot be considered so <del>hes</del> removed himself from the family</p> <p>He's made a unilateral decision without involving them. Identity as father- decision maker, what he deems is in their best interest but is it because it is in his best interest? Changes subject to talking about his physical health problems- running away from talking about difficult issues like the impact on his family.</p> <p>Deserving of his fate</p> <p>Bad things happen to bad people</p> <p>Avoids emotions question-running away</p> <p>Pride- wants to preserve this</p>
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<p>1 JR: (pause) because it's I'm allowing them to get on with their life in a way 2 without I've said look you know I'm ok I'm fine I don't even know for sure if elder 3 daughter and younger daughter know that I'm in prison they might think I'm on 4 the community I said don't worry about me leave it don't get involved so that's 5 erm what it is and I'm quite prepared to go along with that because I think that 6 will be better for them erm.</p> <p>7 LF: you said er a lot you feel a lot of shame and that's partly where this has come 8 from around your decision not to have that</p> <p>9 JR: yes</p> <p>10 LF: relationship while you are here what is it that makes you feel ashamed?</p> <p>11 JR: well that I er that I was involved with looking at pictures of abused children on 12 a television or on a computer because it's erm (pause) it's something that er 13 that people seem to er know that is wrong and I know it is wrong and I feel quite 14 upset about these children that were abused erm and I was quite prepared but 15 seeing it what can you do about it you know if you see an RSPCA advert for 16 starving dogs you see the poor dogs and you think I can do something about that 17 you can perhaps donate to the RSPCA or something ((long pause)) but if you see 18 pictures like that and you want to do something about it what can you do because 19 I did have silly things of thoughts I can take it and I can report it to the police 20 about these people that put and then I thought well if you do that then the police 21 are likely to arrest me anyway which in fact is what the did in the long term and I 22 thought well can I wipe them off and I did wipe some of the stuff off the screen 23 but it all seemed to come back when I was trying to look for different films er and 24 it got into a pattern where I was coming back from work specially on lates at ten 25 o'clock at night having a drink and then sort of looking on the internet for a film 26 and then getting onto this other stuff so well I don't know why I don't know 27 honestly I don't know why <u>guy</u> would I get involved with that I've no idea but I 28 did</p> <p>29 LF: I mean you talked about worrying about publicity was there any publicity 30 around your case?</p> <p>31 JR: Not that I know no certainly not in [names location].</p> <p>32 LF: was that where you were most of the time?</p> <p>33 JR: <u>yes</u> I just came back for court hearings</p> <p>34 LF: <u>so</u> what was your concern around publicity then? You've talked already about 35 shame</p> <p>36 JR: Shame <u>guy</u> that may reflect on my family, my sister and my children that 37 could be affected by any undue publicity if somebody got my name and tied it 38 up with their married names you can see what people that are there that get 39 involved I mean there's the case that's sort of ongoing at the minute with Prince 40 Andrew that he friended somebody that was found guilty of <u>g</u> some charge but 41 you think ((pause)) if <u>g</u> Prince Andrew had a good friend wouldn't that good friend 42 that actually committed suicide would not appreciate his friend supporting 43 him a bit you know instead of that and that's all reflected on Prince Andrew and 44 ((pause)) obviously this is after my <u>guy</u> case but you that is the type of thing that 45 is that looks bad and if you got children that are involved in education then I think</p>	<p>Avoidance- hasn't told family <u>bes</u> in prison</p> <p>Shame- hasn't told family <u>bes</u> in prison</p> <p>Identify- father, sees it as better for them</p> <p><u>bes</u> a hindrance- they can't get on with their lives involving him</p> <p>But he didn't tell them until he had to so that says more about him <u>g</u> wanting to confront what he's done and admit it to his family- shame, stigma, embarrassment than trying to spare them as it could have been in the papers etc</p> <p>Shame about what he's done</p> <p>hidden and away from publicity.</p> <p>Undue publicity- his negative thoughts on the press and how it would be reported</p> <p>Publicity- stigma and shame attached to him and his family.</p> <p>People should be supported but the press aren't kind about this type of offence</p>	<p>1 the last thing that they would want is anything like that happening and some 2 clever newspaper guy because my ex-wife was also involved with education 3 though she's now retired and I've er looked at paper articles because she <u>g</u> was 4 quite prominent [names location] of slugging her off and I thought well that's not 5 right you know <u>slugging</u> her off simply because of the job she was doing making 6 out she was different to what she actually was what saying she was a posh person 7 from a posh area in fact she went to school in the area where the reporter was 8 from so erm I thought if somebody gets hold of my story it's not going to do any 9 good at all so <u>g</u> I think I did the right thing I think I've done the right thing.</p> <p>10 LF: what about support for you though?</p> <p>11 JR: er I'm independent I'm quite happy now I'm strong enough to put up with 12 anything I'm strong enough to come here to prison and there's a lot of guys I'm 13 in prison with are complaining all the time going 'o we shouldn't be in ' and 've 14 shouldn't be doing this' and I think well you perhaps should <u>I should</u> I should be 15 in prison because this is what the law says and I'm making the best of it you know, 16 it's got a nice library you know I might be able to get I love to read and there's 17 bits of study that you can do and hopefully because of the meagre rations here I 18 can lose some weight and perhaps they will help me with the diabetes because 19 of these ongoing medical problems perhaps they can help me with my prostate 20 problem and perhaps they can help me with these other things erm so I shall 21 make the best of it I think er I've made er the people I've made contact with the 22 probation service they made contact with me [names location] and they are very 23 supportive and helpful which I appreciate and I think that when I go back to 24 [names location] they will be there to keep me on the straight and narrow erm 25 though I don't think that I shall want to go off the straight and narrow erm I've 26 now accepted that at 74 years old with a prostate er thing I'm not going to be in 27 any way sexually active again ((laughs)) not that I've been particularly sexually 28 active before so that's fine ((laughs)) so yeah it'll probably be ok yeah.</p> <p>29 LF: what about you as a person? Do you think that what you did and what has 30 happened since has changed you who you think you are?</p> <p>31 JR: yeah, yes I think so if <u>g</u>, we'd have had this interview 5 years ago you would 32 have been talking to a different person I would have been quite tearful and quite 33 sort of emotional and er ((pause)) but 5 years is quite sort of quite a long time 34 you know to sort of come out of that in a way and erm ((long pause)) I er yeah 35 think that this last 5 years has improved me back to where I might have been well 36 in my 30s and 40s in a way.</p> <p>37 LF: <u>so</u> you just talked about being tearful and stuff was that when the police came 38 to you originally?</p> <p>39 JR: <u>yeah</u> yes when the police came originally I know I was quite er almost in shock 40 when they took me to the police station to interview while people searched the 41 house</p> <p>42 LF: yeah</p> <p>43 JR: well they didn't search the house because well I handed everything over erm 44 well yeah I was in a state of shock and I er <u>g</u>, at that time erm yeah I wasn't 45 very good then and then I wasn't very good for quite a while afterwards (speaks</p>	<p>'clever' sceptical and derogatory and media</p> <p>Media lie and make things worse for the story</p> <p>Media make things worse</p> <p>Sacrifice for his family</p> <p>Father identity</p> <p>Independent, quite happy, strong enough- prison, again his 'macho' image and macho words to suggest he can cope, image and identity</p> <p>Prison is for punishment and he deserves punishing for his crime</p> <p>Trying to sound positive but <u>is</u> not described that way- meagre portions, medical issues.</p> <p>Positive about probation service- appreciates the support which contradicts his earlier statement about being strong enough and happy etc.</p> <p>Links offending with his sex life- offending issues around sexual identity and his identity as a person</p> <p>Change in his circumstance and change in him as a person.</p> <p>Over 5 years he has transformed back to his 'glory' years in his 30s/40s</p> <p>tearful and emotional as negative, <u>bes</u> not that person anymore. sees that as weakness?</p> <p>shock</p> <p>loss of control- took me to the station, others searched etc</p> <p>compliance- image as a good and obedient citizen against what he has done.</p> <p>negative impact then and in the longer term, affected his mental and emotional state</p>
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<p>1 very quietly and slowly) I I did sort of I remember going 'o my god' and going 2 and sleeping in the car at night and things like that instead of erm ((pause))</p> <p>3 LF: why?</p> <p>4 JR: I didn't want to go home (said very loudly)</p> <p>5 LF: right</p> <p>6 JR: I'd got a motor home and I used to go to work sometimes and park the motor 7 home in the car park and finish work and go and sleep in the motor home I didn't 8 want to go home for a while.</p> <p>9 LF: How come?</p> <p>10 JR: I don't know I was it was a bad place erm because of all this stuff I've been 11 looking at you know it was a bad place to go I er ((pause)) I did perhaps think 12 about perhaps I wanted to end it all briefly er ((long pause)) and then sort of didn't 13 and then I sort of carried on at work for another 2 or 3 months until I retired 14 ((pause)) because I'd planned to retire and then and I did get involved with doing 15 the house up and then like I say in July august time the builders they wanted to 16 buy the house</p> <p>17 LF: yeah</p> <p>18 JR: er and then I just toured round, I kept busy you know</p> <p>19 LF: <u>so</u> what you said you were in a bit of a state and you were tearful</p> <p>20 JR: <u>burrrrrrr</u> ((burps)) pardon me</p> <p>21 LF: and you didn't want to go home, it felt like a bad place</p> <p>22 JR: hmmm</p> <p>23 LF: and you did feel at some point like you wanted to end it all</p> <p>24 JR: yeah <u>yeah</u> I did contemplate that but I don't know how serious I could have 25 gone I don't think I could have done it cos I've got 2 children and what would they 26 think you know if I committed suicide you know if your father committed suicide</p> <p>27 LF: umm what was the kind of driver for making you feel like that?</p> <p>28 JR: it was because I'd been looking at stuff on the internet that was disgraceful 29 and er and I felt degraded myself I felt you know as if probably the same way 30 someone would feel that had perhaps committed a robbery or something I don't 31 know because I've never committed a robbery but I didn't feel worthy er I don't 32 know quite what to say really I didn't feel good as a human being if you can 33 understand that.</p> <p>34 LF: <u>yes</u> was that after the police had been?</p> <p>35 JR: <u>yes</u> the first time 5 years ago yes and yes that's of course then I carried on 36 working again for 2 or 3 months because I said to the boss that I would retire at 37 the end of the year I felt committed to doing that erm</p> <p>38 LF: <u>so</u> you were still in that cycle that you'd found quite difficult</p>	<p>Running away-</p> <p>Avoiding home</p> <p>Change from his den to the place he wants to avoid, stops being his sanctuary and is linked to the place he offended and where the police had been and searched etc.</p> <p>Suicide- 'end it all' stop feeling like he was</p> <p>kept away and kept himself <u>guy</u> so he wasn't thinking about t- ran away, avoiding confronting it</p> <p>didn't commit suicide--</p> <p>identity as a father, not the 'right thing to do</p> <p><u>self image</u>- how would it look, what would it make him look like</p> <p>disgraceful, degraded myself, not worthy, not a 'good' human being (what is good?)</p> <p>identity and image- changed him as a person, not a 'good' person, why is this important?</p> <p>Compares to any other crime- how you should feel if you commit any crime, makes you a bad person</p> <p><u>Compromised</u>.</p> <p>Identity- responsibility as an employee as he had given his word to the boss, letting people down</p> <p>Image- how do others see him?</p>	<p>1 JR: <u>yes</u> on top of that and I was er I was finding work difficult and I'd lost my little 2 dog er which was my companion dog erm</p> <p>3 LF: ah when did that happen?</p> <p>4 JR: Not long before about 2013 2014 time ((pause)) during that sort of period 5 (speaks slowly and quietly) because I used to enjoy going with the dog (speech 6 returns to normal) and it was a dog that I'd had 12 years or more you know erm</p> <p>7 LF: <u>so</u> at that time then when you were feeling like that did you talk to anyone 8 about it did you go and get any help from anywhere</p> <p>9 JR: No because in my day you <u>didn't</u> I've been to the doctors more times in the last 10 three months than I've ever been in my life ((laughs)). <u>guy</u> only ever spent one 11 night in hospital and that's when I had a tendon operation er but you didn't it 12 wasn't er I was very I certainly wouldn't have gone to a Doctor to talk about 13 erectile dysfunction I think they call it that's well you didn't do that you know it's 14 not done.</p> <p>15 LF: is that an age generation thing or a man thing or a bit of both?</p> <p>16 JR: I think it's a man thing because it happened quite a while ago it didn't happen 17 in 2014 it happened quite a lot before that because it was gradually becoming 18 something that I found was an issue you know when other guys were saying 19 'yeah look at that' you know I was going 'what?' you know it didn't felt perhaps 20 not so much a man as they did if you know what I mean then when I was at work 21 and couldn't lift as much as the younger guys and I couldn't keep up with them 22 running up the stairs then it became a bit of a pressure you know I was thinking 23 you know not <u>guy</u> I'm not you know ((laughs)) a fully functioning guy perhaps you 24 know</p> <p>25 LF: that's how you were feeling?</p> <p>26 JR: yes that's I did feel that but this is before 2014 this is ongoing you know and 27 it could easily have been something that might have been a problem in my 28 marriage I wasn't perhaps paying the attention to my wife erm ((pause)) I mean 29 we are on good terms now and that but she <u>g</u> went off with somebody else 30 which was fine and I er am quite happy with both of them now and we do see 31 each other not we don't go and see each other but sometimes er she'll ring me 32 up or I'll ring her about something that the children are doing or what does she 33 think about such and such about when the children were buying a house and stuff 34 erm but ((long pause)) yeah I think that yeah ((pause)) and I think as well that 35 people get lonely I have seen this on the television when they say that certainly 36 with older people when they get sort of left but whether I was lonely for er a long 37 <u>long</u> time erm</p> <p>38 LF: well you were certainly very isolated weren't you other than work you didn't 39 have many friends</p> <p>40 JR: well yeah I did I had friends but they were away you know (speaks loudly and 41 quickly) I didn't see them you know I got some good friends you know the guy 42 that was best man at my wedding who is or was my best friend. I know where he 43 lives and everything but he doesn't come and see me and I don't go and see him 44 ((laughs)) but he would be a friend you know well I didn't socialise <u>socialise</u> that's 45 a good word.</p>	<p>Animals vs humans</p> <p>Support through having a dog</p> <p>relationship</p> <p>got him out of the house- changed his perspective, responsibility</p> <p>times have changed but he hasn't</p> <p>'Image, not the 'done thing' or 'may' to go to the doctors</p> <p>He'll go for <u>non-stigmatised</u> physical stuff but not for mental health, emotional support, sexual related issues</p> <p>Image - physical prowess, competitive, openly lewd about women, male dominated workplace</p> <p>Identity- as a man, miller etc.</p> <p>Not as much of a man- there's a scale?</p> <p>Added to his pressure and feeling of not being worthy</p> <p>'might have been'- his wife left him for another man so in all likelihood it had something to do with it, but he doesn't want to acknowledge this as it is affecting his image again?</p> <p>Feeling like he's on his own- everyone's in relationships around him and he's on his own and feeling confused</p> <p>'get sort of left' - forgotten about, not worthy?</p> <p>Image- wants me to know he had friends but that's not how he describes them and contradicts earlier statements</p> <p>Mutual- neither makes the effort but friendship is still there. Doesn't really work on or prolong relationships</p>
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<p>1 LF: yep</p> <p>2 JR: I don't think I socialised but I think certainly after 2014 I didn't want to socialise because I felt ashamed in a way inside I thought 'o dear' you know I'm walking down the street and people are there you know thinking if they could see you know what I am and I've looked at these pictures on the television screen they wouldn't want to be smiling or saying hello to me erm</p> <p>6 LF: <i>sg</i> are you saying that the reason you were socialising less after 2014 was because you were worried that people might find out?</p> <p>9 JR: I think I was worried because I was ashamed not so much I think it was more (pause) people <i>people</i> didn't know what I was had done er (pause) (speaks quietly and slowly) and I thought I'm not really fit to be talking to you or mixing with you that's one of the reasons that I was happy in [names location] because I don't see anybody (laughs) (speech returns to normal) I go fishing, you say hello to the bus driver and you go in the post office and you say hello and erm there's the guy that owns the little caravan site, it's only a little thing with a few caravans on he comes and collects his rent and I give him a cup of tea erm but that's it really and people when you go fishing, certainly salmon fishing and that I don't mix with the others guys because you do that more or less on your own and that's that's o and I go cycling and then there's also a guy that lived nearby well when I say nearby well he had a dog and he worked away and I liked his dog and his dog was a nice dog and when he went to work it got so that I could take it out at lunchtime just so that it could save him from coming back from work which I enjoyed doing but now he's moved somewhere else anyway so erm (pause) that's it really I'm erm I'm pretty much by myself and er yeah that's fine that's fine I think as well that runs in the family because my Aunt that lived in [names location] was and she got older we wanted her to come back and live near us but she wouldn't she was very much a loner er <i>sg</i>, and some other relatives have died alone as it were but we don't seem to be social I mean the worst thing I would do I wouldn't go er I mean they have suggested that the old people's club up the road that we go and play bingo, that's the last thing I want to do (laughs) you know go and play bingo</p> <p>32 LF: (laughs)</p> <p>33 JR: and I know in the past where I have been <i>sg</i> er I don't hear very well as well</p> <p>34 LF: <i>yes</i> you said</p> <p>35 JR: erm if I was in if I'm in a pub where it's noisy</p> <p>36 LF: (overlaps) yep</p> <p>37 JR: and there's people that I know and their talking I can't hear what they are saying and I'm nodding 'yeah yeah yeah', 'o no <i>sg</i> <i>sg</i>', 'yeah yeah yeah' sometimes you nod or shake your head at the wrong time you know (laughs) 'I think that was a good film', 'o yeah it was', 'I didn't like the other one', 'yeah yeah' it was and then you know you are doing the wrong thing I can't hear clearly so erm I've never been a big pub man (pause) so (pause) yeah I'm I think alright by myself. Erm</p> <p>44 LF: just term to go and get just a bit more of a sense of how it's been, it's been quite quick <i>regly</i> I guess, from the police coming back in touch with you</p>	<p>Isn't sociable but this diminished after his arrest.</p> <p>Shame 'what I am' ~ not just what he's done but related to him as a bad person</p> <p><i>sg</i> a fake- not showing his true self when <i>sg</i> out</p> <p>fear</p> <p>people shouldn't want to talk to people like him-identity</p> <p>running away to avoid his identity and himself and other people and how they might see him</p> <p>can cope if he is not thinking about what he has done or who he is and seeing other people brings this home? like a mirror reflecting his own thoughts about himself back, he <i>sg</i> worthy to be in <i>ssociety</i>, and needs to be away?</p> <p>routine and a life</p> <p>no relationships- cant let anyone down if he doesn't let them?</p> <p><i>sg</i> in <i>ss</i> vs humans</p> <p>being a loner is part of who he is, it's inherited, he <i>sg</i> do anything about it, it's something else fault- not in his control, made worse by <i>sg</i> <i>sg</i> happened with the investigation</p> <p>runs away when things are difficult rather than finding ways to improve the situation? his hearing stops him going to the pub etc</p> <p>better by himself- don't have to negotiate the issues that there are with other people and in relationships</p>	<p>1 JR: yeah beginning of December to now you know</p> <p>2 LF: <i>sg</i> you said you were really tearful and in a bit of a state originally in 2014 and mentally that had quite affected you in a number of ways and you kind of talked about that a little bit</p> <p>5 JR: yeah</p> <p>6 LF: <i>sg</i> what about this time then, when the police got back in touch</p> <p>7 JR: well obviously when they arrested <i>sg</i> they kept me in overnight that was a bit of a shock</p> <p>9 LF: Hmm</p> <p>10 JR: Um I was I was a bit sort of stressed as you would be er this is not very nice to be kept in a cell overnight that you didn't expect to be doing erm so I was I was a bit stressed out then and then I thought ok you know I've done this, I shouldn't have done this, I feel quite sorry that I've done this, I feel guilty that I've done this I am guilty that I've done this and so well if this is what's happening then this is what's happening but I think my solicitor and the probation in [names 2 locations] thought that I would get community served with community care or community whatever they call it</p> <p>18 LF: a community sentence</p> <p>19 JR: A community sentence or with a suspended sentence but I think it took them back a bit and it took me back a bit when I got</p> <p>21 LF: I was going to say how did it if you were expecting a community or suspended sentence and to then be told that you were coming to prison</p> <p>22 JR: yeah and I've made the people in [names location] had come out to see me and I got on quite well with them and they seemed quite <i>sg</i>, nice you know and <i>sg</i> quite supportive erm (pause) so yeah it was it was a bit of a surprise erm but you know that's how it goes so I was a bit well I've accepted it now but <i>but</i>, it was a bit of a shock to start with well you know and I was taken straight to [names location] prison which isn't very nice at all initially it was difficult, it was quite frightening in a way but since then I've accepted the situation erm I've been moved today again which is a step down hill because I've got a smaller cell I'm sharing it with someone else which makes it more difficult with my medical problems so erm you just have to put up with it erm (long pause). Yeah.</p> <p>33 LF: <i>sg</i> what about your thoughts for the future then?</p> <p>34 JR: my thoughts for the future are that I hope to only be in here until December and then I will go back to my caravan which I own</p> <p>36 LF: the one in [names location]</p> <p>37 JR: the one in [names location] and I think as part of the sentence you go on and you are referred to probation for so long you've got to sign the sex offenders register and you've got to report back to them and they will come and see me obviously it will be the same people I presume that I met before you there and I will then go [names location] and work with them doing whatever they want me to do and carry on if I can physically fishing and doing you know and keeping</p>	<p>Shock- unexpected</p> <p>Stressed</p> <p>Unpleasant experience, arrest, prison <i>sg</i>, <i>sg</i>, stress</p> <p>Remorse, guilt. His emotions are very inward looking</p> <p>Reconciles and explains this as his just deserts because he should be punished for what he has done</p> <p>Unexpected sentence- advised he would get community/suspended- misled by CJIS, police misled court</p> <p>Change- rapport with probation, positive relationship, forward looking</p> <p>Shock, frightening, not nice- negative words and negative experience, not taken his medical condition into account and that makes it more difficult.</p> <p>Compliance- have to put up with it, deserving of his punishment</p> <p>Wants to escape back to where he feels happy on his own in his place</p> <p>Plan of how it will look which he can cope with as long as he can go back to doing what he was that was making him happy</p>
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<p>1 myself to myself (laughs) cos you can there I'm far away from anyone there you're not likely to see many people (laughs) erm yeah</p> <p>3 LF: what about family?</p> <p>4 JR: well that is something that I shall have to I shall have to play it by ear I think that what I will probably do when I'm in prison is probably write to my 2 children and write to my sister and say that I'm ok you know and tell them because they will be interested in how I'm getting on with the catheter and stuff because they are aware of that and anything else that might happen er (pause) and wish them well and then when I come out I shall write to them again and if they want to see me then then that's fine and if they don't then that's my fault you know it's something that I wouldn't I should (speaks very quietly) regret very much you know erm (pause) so but I have got 2 grandchildren and I know on this sex register thing that I er won't be able to see them (speaks normal volume again) unless I get permission from somebody but I've never ever felt like harming or doing anything physically to children, that's not something that I've ever thought about erm so <i>sg</i> if my daughter's ok with that and my other daughter that hasn't got any children then I'm sure we'll meet up again which I hope happens but if it doesn't happen then I can understand that you know but it won't stop me supporting them erm (pause) if they need some support you know er (pause) they always say that children cost you a fortune when you are young but when they get older they cost you more (laughs) so I can support them that way you know er and I will always be there for them but if they choose to keep me at <i>sg</i>, <i>length</i> quite understand that and erm I can remember the good times we've had when they were younger you know (pause) erm but that's how I feel at the moment and I don't think because I had gone 5 years (pause) repairing the damage I had done to myself and being conscious that this may have harmed children that I've looked at whether there are but I didn't pay for any of them so people that put those pictures on wouldn't have earned any money from doing it so why they've put it on why they've been allowed to put them sort of stuff on I've no idea er but whether you know I feel that maybe I ought to try and do something to perhaps stop that sort of thing happening but I would have thought that the people that run these sites could stop that sort of stuff if they wanted to I mean there was something on television the other day about the government might fine these internet companies for putting stuff on that they shouldn't put on but I thought well why haven't they done it years ago erm but you see what frightens me is that what I did on the internet someone cleverer on the internet than I am cos I'm not really clever er youngsters could access the same stuff that I'm seeing you know yeah but it's not difficult if I can do it you know then I'm sure that now there is children accessing all that sort of stuff and you often here about children being affected by what they see and there was one girl that some years ago had actually committed suicide because of stuff she was looking at on the internet (pause) you know ah the internet's amazing for information and stuff but that sort of stuff should never be allowed on it and why we put up with it I don't know I don't know (long pause) what the answer is like I say if you can stop people watching free films because the people that put the films on want their commission from people subsidy or whatever you call it revenue (pause) and same with pop stars they complain that people are putting their records on these sites for free and not paying these royalties that's the word I'm looking for not paying and then it stops if they can do that why can't they stop the other</p>	<p>Plans to remain isolated when he has served his sentence and been released. This is how he's managed to cope</p> <p>Distorted view of family relationships- glossing over prison, wants to tell family about his physical stuff not prison etc. Running away from it again, avoiding it.</p> <p>Punishment that he deserves if family don't want to see him</p> <p>Control/loss of control-</p> <p>Identity as a father- there to provide money support whatever happens</p> <p>Happy family relationships cant be erased but can change depending on circumstance</p> <p>Harm- 5 years repairing the damage that he had done to himself- harm caused by his actions to himself, family, children in the images</p> <p>Making amends as well as taking the punishment- trying to be a good person again?</p> <p>Negativity of the internet and technology</p> <p>Control- it should be controlled by the state so that people don't do it.</p>	<p>1 LF: yeah well let me just see if there's anything that I can think of that I've missed (long pause)</p> <p>3 JR: I think it would have been better if you could have interviewed me in 2014 you could have might have been a bit more</p> <p>5 LF: <i>sg</i>, it's been a really interesting interview thankyou</p> <p>6 JR: my memory is not as good as it was my short term memory is now beginning to fade I could remember what I was doing when I was 4 quite easily but some of the I can't remember what I watched on television last night for instance but <i>but</i>, the memory of those feelings I do know yeah I know I was not feeling very good at all I felt really bad and I was depressed and I think I was depressed (long pause) and erm you know and it's <i>sg</i> and why was I doing it I can't understand that still I don't I can honestly say people say well you must have done but no I don't understand why I was involved with that sort of stuff (pause)</p> <p>13 LF: what erm obviously like you said it's quite a long time what is it over the course of this last 5 years and then since the police got back involved before <i>christmas</i>, what is it do you think that's helped you cope?</p> <p>17 JR: I think what helped me cope was a) I'm not under the stress at work I'm not under any stress where I am because I'd still got some money left I get a pension a bit of a private pension and so I'm financially ok and also I'm not looking at images on the internet erm I think that's (pause) made me and not needing to look at images or look at any pornographic or look at anything really and I've quite accepted that my condition I've now got this catheter in and I don't get sexually aroused by anything erm and now I'm 74 I'm thinking you know ok you're 74 try and you've worked all your life try and make the best of what you've got and if you've done things wrong in the past which I have, you take the punishment on the chin and you make sure that you don't go down that path again erm which is what I've done for 5 years and if anybody wants to come and look at my laptop or anything then they are quite welcome cos there's no search thing that's on there about or anything (pause) and I'm quite I quite <i>hate</i> people (speaks quite venomously sounding in this sentence) that do that sort of thing you know (pause) there's somebody was telling me one of the inmates I don't know whether it's true or not that you have when you go to the OMI (offender management unit) meetings there's a whole crowd of you in a room and people are describing their offences and I'm thinking I'm not going to be able to do that cos if somebody describes something that they've done physically to a child (long pause) I don't think I could you know I don't think I could do I don't think I could be nice to them afterwards I will get very and then like say the same to me well you are looking at it on television erm but I think people that do that are er below contempt so I would think maybe that perhaps in 2014 I was thinking of myself in the same way I think probably I was perhaps I was (long pause) sort of not liking myself and I wasn't and yeah I er yeah I think that's possible I was in contempt of myself as it was and I didn't think that I was worth bothering about really (pause) yeah I think that that might be something that's (pause)</p> <p>44 LF: How do you think that's affected you then?</p> <p>45 JR: certainly at the time quite a lot ah er well it meant that that I would try and improve and do but (pause) I still think actually that I er don't like myself at the</p>	<p>Mental health affects back in 2014 but not after he has repaired himself now</p> <p>Life change has meant that he is much more able to cope than he was in 2014. No financial worries, no work stress and no internet stress</p> <p>Links what he was looking at to his sexuality but he's now not able to physically have sex and not interested. Sexuality is still confused or he's not ready to talk about it or it's linked to his offending?</p> <p>Taking his punishment- acceptance</p> <p>Being led astray from the right path, physical need to be kept on the right path</p> <p>'people'- doesn't include himself, image, conflicted, hates them and himself, can't talk to them afterwards, not worthy, bad people and then includes himself confused and conflicted about his own identity</p> <p>Doesn't like himself, he and people like him are not worthy, not human?</p> <p>Apprehensive about interventions, negative about CJIS input, not clear about what is going to happen, confused.</p> <p>Needs to improve- not a good person still, wants to change. Identity and image.</p>
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1 minute because of that but I'm feeling better about myself but I still don't like  
 2 myself because of that  
 3 LF: because of what you did?  
 4 JR: yes because of what I've done and that's why it's possibly why that I think my  
 5 children are probably better off at ~~arms length~~ from me because I don't like  
 6 myself and I don't think that they ought to like me I wouldn't want them liking  
 7 somebody that had done the stuff that I've done yeah er I think that's ((pause))  
 8 possible  
 9 LF: so do you think that what you did has changed you as a person? Do you think  
 10 you are not worthwhile as a person?  
 11 JR: yeah probably yeah ~~yeah~~ yes (sounds quite definite in this word) I think that  
 12 once I've done my sentence here and possibly spent more time with probation  
 13 talking like we've talked cos you can't go and talk to anybody you know there's  
 14 people in prison that they say will listen to you but they aren't trained listeners  
 15 people that work in probation are and they understand and you can be quite  
 16 frank with them so you know once I've done my sentence and hopefully that will  
 17 be in touch so I will have people that I can talk to when I have a need to perhaps  
 18 that will make me feel a bit better about myself erm but I do know that physically  
 19 I feel better in [names location] with the fresh air and the things and when I  
 20 couldn't walk about and I could cycle then that's what I did I think in the back of  
 21 my mind ((pause)) (sounds very thoughtful again) this sort of erm disgust at me  
 22 you know simply because after all those years for one period of about 12 months  
 23 it just ((long pause)) went to pieces you know I've worked all my life, I've done all  
 24 sorts of things I've never ~~gaged~~ I think oh I got a speeding ticket once ((laughs))  
 25 that's about the only thing I've done and then suddenly in that one period I should  
 26 have perhaps gone to the doctors or something you know perhaps should have  
 27 sought help but the type of work at the mill where I worked and the management  
 28 and that weren't really people ~~people~~ all they wanted was more production and  
 29 that, you couldn't have spoke to the boss or anything you know about 'o I'm  
 30 feeling the pressures' 'well off off then you shouldn't be here' perhaps if I'd have  
 31 ~~spoke~~ to somebody ((long pause)) but it's done now  
 32 LF: you said you felt a lot better knowing you kind of going around the country in  
 33 the mobile home and you were saying then about when you leave here and you  
 34 go back to [names location] and you'll feel a lot better what is it about, I know  
 35 you said about fresh air but it ((pause)) kind of sounds like it's also a conscious  
 36 effort to get away from like an escape  
 37 JR: yeah ~~yeah~~ it's ((long pause)) there you have to you have to think of something  
 38 else because it's cold in places and you have to make sure you've got your  
 39 shopping because it's 6 miles to the nearest shop and it's quite you've got to be  
 40 on the ball you know you can't sit and brood for hours on end because all the  
 41 pipes will freeze or something erm ((pause))  
 42 LF: and you had lots to do there  
 43 JR: ((overlaps)) I was walking and I was fishing and I bought a big telescope and I  
 44 was looking at astronomy and I was fishing and walking and keeping pretty active  
 45 you know erm and I felt better for it but I think I think as well that there was still  
 46 that loathing of myself and people like me that do interfere or look at pictures of

19

Doesn't like who he is- identity.  
 can't run away from it in the ~~CIS~~,  
 had to confront it. Doesn't like  
 himself because of what he did or  
 because that's who he is or  
 because the two are linked?

People including his own family  
 shouldn't like him- bad person  
 because of a bad deed. Doing a  
 bad thing makes you a bad person

In order to change and become a  
 more worthwhile person needs  
 support and to talk.

Needs to serve his sentence, take  
 his punishment

Need to be trained- to know what  
 you are doing needs professional  
 help in order to become better

Physically better in the fresh air  
 etc but this hasn't changed how  
 he feels about himself as a person.  
 Difference between feeling better  
 and being better.

One mistake has ruined his life-  
 has been a good person the rest of  
 the time.

Image- you couldn't have told  
 people, be seen as less of a man,  
 less of a person, employee if you  
 admit weakness

Mental and physical differences-  
 physically fit but mentally- need  
 to keep yourself busy and not sit  
 about in order to be able to cope  
 but hasn't dealt with the issue,  
 just pushed it to the back of the  
 head. so has he really repaired  
 himself or just hidden away so he  
 hasn't had to deal with it?

Even with all that he did he still  
 had that loathing of himself and  
 'people like him' - again links the  
 person with the deed, can't heal

1 children and er which I think is ~~is~~ something I'm somebody that my children  
 2 wouldn't want to know if there was somebody lived next door to them now I  
 3 would have said to them don't have anything to do with him and that person is  
 4 me you know er yeah that is always at the back of my mind erm that is always at  
 5 the back of my mind  
 6 LF: well we've pretty much finished unless there is anything that you want to say  
 7 so when you leave here that is going to be the place that you are going to go back  
 8 to somewhere where you feel better?  
 9 JR: yes and I'm hoping that time in here as well I think there's people that will talk  
 10 to me and talk through like you're talking that I can talk to and maybe ~~maybe~~ that  
 11 in the back of my mind might just clear up a little bit and then talking to probation  
 12 in [names location] or [names location] I would expect to be talking through with  
 13 them er then that sort of disgust in the back of my mind might disappear  
 14 altogether I don't think it will disappear altogether because it will always be there  
 15 but ((pause))  
 16 LF: maybe you can work out a way to manage it?  
 17 JR: yeah I think I'm managing it fine at the moment er I mean the first few months  
 18 was difficult and I could only going on the road in the motor home and driving  
 19 from one place to the other you've got to have your mind on the road you know  
 20 and I didn't stop driving till it got dark ((laughs)) I didn't just go somewhere and  
 21 stay for a week I was here I was in [names location] next the weather was fine  
 22 [gives location] and I'd drive to [names location], then to [names location] and  
 23 then off to [names location] again I was doing thousands and thousands of miles  
 24 LF: was that a conscious decision?  
 25 JR: No ~~no~~ I think it was something I did because I could you know if you've got a  
 26 motor home and you are in [names location] and the weather forecast says that  
 27 its rainy in the west but fine in the east then you and I used to sleep in lay ~~lays~~ not  
 28 very often in caravan sites and then you go to where the weather was nice or you  
 29 could come back down and go to [names location] or somewhere or go 'oh I  
 30 haven't been to' [names location] I'll go there just because I could. It was the first  
 31 time I think as well it was the first time that I'd got money that I could do that you  
 32 know  
 33 LF: and the opportunity?  
 34 JR: yes and the opportunity because I was retired I did [names locations] where he  
 35 has travelled to] and I did find the caravan in [names location] stumbled on it  
 36 almost by accident but I never did find one [names another location] although I  
 37 don't think I've got enough money now to buy one but I have a pension and I've  
 38 got a private pension as well which should keep me ok you know yeah so I think  
 39 I'm on I'm on the upward slope and the fact that I've come to prison is not going  
 40 to I don't think at the minute I don't think I'll leave prison in a worse frame of  
 41 mind than when I came in I think it will with the people I can talk to perhaps  
 42 improve things a little bit you know because it is quite nice to sit down like with  
 43 yourself which you can't do with your mates in the cell you know cos they are like  
 44 er it's not you know I think with the probation service as well that's quite nice  
 45 talking to them ((laughs)) I said to [names probation officer and location] I said

20

~~has~~ a bad person that you  
 wouldn't want your family to be  
 associated with - exacerbated by  
 the CIS as he has had to think  
 about it again

Prison may have given him time to  
 think and start to heal, come to  
 terms with himself, so maybe CIS  
 will eventually help him to  
 understand what happened and  
 heal? Sceptical that he can ever  
 truly be 'better'

Difference between being able to  
 cope and being better. kept  
 himself busy after police.

Gave him freedom once he had  
 retired, tried to feel better

I'm on the upward slope, ~~the~~ the fact  
 that he's feeling better, this is in  
 spite of the CIS as he says that he  
 doesn't think being in prison will  
 make it worse so shows his  
 negativity about CIS. Hoping he  
 can be helped with the  
 interventions.

- 1 it's a relief talking to you ~~you~~ know because you have released a lot of inner  
2 feelings you know and I feel that we've had a good chat you know
- 3 LF: that's good
- 4 JR: it would have been nice if I could have stayed there you know up in [names  
5 location] but the people there are very helpful as well and very supportive to be  
6 able to sit down and talk about personal things is good you know
- 7 LF: ~~yep~~ ((pause)) I don't have anything else to ask you are you is that alright?
- 8 JR: yeah that's fine
- 9 LF: well I'll turn these off now.

Talking helps him release his inner feelings- this is not usual thing for him, relieved to chat. Talking to probation also helped. Support through talking



## Appendix 21

### **Diary instructions for participants**

Dear diary writer,

Thank you for agreeing to write this diary as part of my research. I want to include diary entries as part of this research because it will help me to understand what you are thinking about, feeling and experiencing over the course of the research project and, importantly, at the time that it happens. Writing a diary will allow you to tell your own personal stories at a time and in a location that suits you. In previous research, not much is known about what men experience and how they understand this when they are under investigation for offences relating to indecent images of children. I want to explore more about this.

The diary is for you to complete in your own time, at your own pace and in whatever way you wish. I am interested in learning about how you feel and think about your experiences of the criminal justice system as you experience them. I would like you to think about how the investigation from your arrest or voluntary interview onwards has affected all parts of your life and to record your thoughts and feelings about this. You can record your experiences in the present but also how you think and feel about your experiences in the past and how things might be in the future. I would like you to make a diary entry every time you have some contact with anyone involved in the criminal justice system. This could be the police, solicitor, etc. and could be by phone, by letter or in person. I would also like you to make a diary entry at least weekly if possible; however, it is up to you how often you want to write in it.

I am interested in how you feel and think about your experiences, how they have affected you, as well as how you think they have affected your friends and your family. I am also interested in how you feel that you have responded to and coped with these experiences and their impact.

When completing each diary entry, please include:

- 1) The date
- 2) Information about the event or experience (i.e. what has happened)
- 3) How you feel and what you think about the experience
- 4) Anything else that you want to include

For some diary entries you might write a lot; for other diary entries you might not want to write much. This is absolutely fine. I have given you some ideas about how and when to complete your diary entries; however, this is your diary and I would like you to complete the entries whenever and as often as you feel that you want to. Some people have found that writing about how they think or feel about something that has happened to them helps them to understand their experiences better. Some people have also found that writing about something that they find difficult or upsetting also helps them to feel better about it.

Please bring your diary entries with you each time we meet. The diary entries that you choose to share with me will be typed word for word and stored under your chosen fake name (pseudonym).

Thank you for participating and I hope you find the diary useful.

Lynsey

## Appendix 22

### Initial interpretation- James

#### Pen portrait

James is a man in his mid 40s, who at the time of his initial arrest was a full time employed, married man with four children under the age of 16, two of whom have disabilities. James was a prominent and active man in his local community and in his local church but also talked about his feelings of isolation, stress and his lack of being able to show emotion. I initially interviewed James in October 2021, around 6 months after his initial arrest. At this point he was living alone in a small flat, on the brink of being divorced and with very little contact with his children. This contact was only verbally over the phone. His flat was sparse and his belongings were all in boxes. He had interventions from the mental health team and a counsellor as he had attempted suicide on more than one occasion. He had very little support from family and friends with most of his interactions with other people coming from his mental health support, other professionals or with his one work colleague. As the course of the pandemic continued James moved to working from home which meant that he rarely left his flat and, eventually, once charged he lost his job altogether. James talks about the effects of the criminal justice system on not only himself but also the effects on his family. After around 18 months of investigation James was charged and at court the bail conditions relating to his children were altered so that he was able to see them in person, supervised and at the discretion of his ex wife.

Over the course of the 18 months that he was under investigation he became very isolated and withdrawn, both in terms of his own behaviour and his perception of how he is treated by others. He has to work hard to be able to get himself out of the flat.

*'I erm think to a certain extent everyone's cut themselves off from me'*

*'like I need to go to town to get some new trousers it literally took me four hours to get out of the flat and into the shop and I'd got it into my head where to go and you know they didn't have any in and it really freaked me out and I went into a panic situation'*

He had support from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation through Inform Plus, the helpline and online resources along with Mental health services and his counsellor. He explains that his counsellor had been seeing him for free in the later months of the investigation as he had started to struggle financially and was bringing him food to make sure that he ate and got out of the flat. He initially found the idea of a group programme through LFF a difficult prospect.

*'worried because of the way I view myself I worry I'm gonna see everybody else in the same light'*

*'I find it difficult to open up and talk about stuff'*

However, he came to see the sessions as enjoyable and being a part of the group as an important part of his week. He recognised that he found the time under investigation a struggle and that he wanted to:

*'feel useful again, feeling useful would be great, I need to give something back'.*

He also wants to concentrate on building a relationship with his children with whom he had had only one in person visit since his initial arrest. He is hoping that this will increase over time and that he can support his ex wife with parenting.

James was sentenced in October 2021 where he received a two year community order, forty days probation supervision and one year of work with a mental health professional. He has also got five years on the sex offender register and a five year SHPO, during which time he



has to register any electronic devices and make them available to be checked when requested.

Texts: 2 1:1 interviews, group discussion post the end of the inform plus programme, 2 A4 pages of diary entries and observations from the programme sessions.

### **Initial analysis and interpretation**

***“Life is occupied in both perpetuating itself and in surpassing itself; if all it does is maintain itself, then living is only not dying.” - Simone De Beauvoir***

After our last supervision, and the suggestion by Paula of thinking about the data alongside the ‘fractions’ that Ashworth (2016) discusses as essential features of our ‘lifeworld’ I have considered the analysis and initial interpretation of James’s data using both these fractions and HP philosophical notions. This is a first draft of a first analysis! Your feedback and further dwelling with the data will help me to move closer to my interpretation.

Ashworth draws upon the philosophy of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty amongst others (see Ashworth, 2003, 2016) to identify eight ‘fractions’ that help us to understand and depict the lifeworld in a phenomenological manner. These fractions are:

Selfhood, Sociality, Embodiment, Temporality, Spatiality, Project, Discourse and Moodedness.

Here I am not using these fractions rigidly as part of the analysis but in the same way as the HP notions previously; to help me to think about the data and to draw out the interpretations. Ashworth himself argues that although these fractions will be evident in each event under consideration (so here James’s experience of the CJS and the support that he has had along the way) the fractions overlap, are not distinct and will be seen to varying degrees. In this summary I am concentrating on the fractions and notions that are more dominant/useful in uncovering meaning.

In his discussion around *being-towards-death*, Heidegger considers our authenticity. When we have a disruption, our focus is sharpened on our mortality, we are awakened from the unconscious routine of our lives and brought back to a more authentic way of living life. As Svenaeus (2011) states, in ill health we feel ‘unhomelike’ in the world, I have been thinking about this ‘unhomelike’ feeling as a way that James sees his life after ‘the knock’. He describes this in many ways across the interactions that I have had with him. Life in itself is not intrinsically meaningful, we make it meaningful and we make meaning from it (Langdridge 2007). I have been thinking here about the fractions of ‘self hood’ and ‘project’ (Ashworth, 2016 and Andrews et al, 2019);

Selfhood: This is the agency, voice, control and autonomy that we have within an event, we are part of a social world so this also encompasses the value placed on us by ourselves and others.

Project: How does the event relate to their ability to carry out the activities they see as important to themselves and central to their life?

### **Invisibility**

There are many themes running across the data produced with James however I wanted to discuss here what I have termed his invisibility as a central thought. The disruption of ‘the knock’ produces this unhomelikeness and James feels he becomes just a cog in the wheel of the system. He not only quickly loses everything that has had meaning in his life but he seems unable to know how to do anything about it. This seems something more than just loss, loss seems too passive a term and my interpretation of James is that he becomes invisible from himself, from others, from the world.

### Loss of identity

*'The cost is my sense of identity, I'm struggling to work out who I am'*

*'I feel defined by it I don't feel I have anything left to give'*

This is very different to Steve, James does not see his offending behaviour as almost belonging to a different person, a different identity, but his behaviour and the subsequent impact of the CJS does make him question who he is. He sees himself, as he describes in the initial part of our first interview, as a successful family man in a long term marriage with four children with a good and well paid job that he enjoys. He's a committed member of the church through which he leads a number of activities as well as being a school governor. This is what he sees as his 'project' and the value placed on him by others and by himself and, at least on the face of it, his value is high and positive. Similarly to Steve, the loss of these aspects of his life and his inability to *'feel useful again'* are stumbling blocks to his ability to feel 'homelike' again in the world. He also sees men who commit these types of offences including himself as *'the lowest of the low and deserves to die'* and therefore his value has severely diminished in both his own eyes but in those of everyone else as well.

His offending behaviour and the subsequent involvement of the CJS exposes that part of him that was kept well hidden and brings his world crashing down where he loses himself in the process.

### Loss of control

The system itself seems to be a real stumbling block for James (and this can be seen across a number of the stories told by the participants). James becomes invisible with no control, agency or voice. Although he discusses this throughout our conversations the full extent of his lack of control doesn't become apparent until he is able to discuss his situation with the other members of the inform plus group. He realises that perhaps the way he has been treated could have been different and this may have eased the strain on not just himself but also his family.

*'it was a shock starting the course and you know learning that what others have had'*

*'they [the police] point blank refused to facilitate any face to face contact and they don't take any time to look from the child's perspective'*

Social care had no contact with him, they told the children (two of whom were under 10) why he had been arrested and then he was not allowed video calls with them for many months. It was 18 months after his initial arrest that he was able to see his children again in person. There seems to be very little knowledge about how he can employ his voice and agency within the system, very little information about his rights seems to have been explained to him even by his solicitor.

This loss of control was a running thread for James throughout his involvement with the agencies across the CJS. As a result of his mental health deteriorating after his arrest, James attempted suicide. He was subsequently referred through to the Mental health services, an alarm was raised and he found himself surrounded by five police officers and an ambulance when he was out at lunch with his parents. He had had no phone contact from anyone prior to this. He was taken to hospital where he over heard a nurse saying they were going to fob him off to the crisis team so he discharged himself and found he had a number of issues with mental health services with little in the way of his control.

Lastly, his interactions with the police and probation have been fraught and not helped this feeling of invisibility. With the police he has no control over what happens with the investigation or the conditions put on him. He gives an example of being *summoned* to open

one of the devices they have removed because it has facial recognition despite telling the police at the time. This is a long road trip for him and there seems no discussion around facilitating this around when it's convenient but equally he also doesn't seem to feel he can suggest alternatives. He makes a request to change the initial bail condition to video calls and this is not facilitated, he calls to change his address and is told that the officer in the case can't do that and he worries that he is in breach of his bail conditions. He also contacts probation as he knows that he needs to meet them for his pre-sentence report and probation officers don't arrange this and he ends up phoning the probation officer himself to get it completed. The feeling of loss of control and helplessness were clear when he describes these events. Noone listens to him or takes him into consideration. He feels that he is made by the system (what's the right thing to think about here?), that he has lost any autonomy over any part of his life.

### Invisibility as a choice?

It seems to be a circle, his involvement in the system has removed much of the meaning he had to his life and he feels invisible as a result, unhomelike and not knowing who he is or where he fits into the world. To try and exert some control he has chosen to cut himself off.

*'I have completely shut down, I changed my number and shut all social media and I've been in a bubble'*

In a similar way to Steve he is also 'playing the game' with mental health services and the police/probation. He says what he needs to say to keep services at bay and being less intrusive with him where possible.

He struggles to maintain eye contact and says this is something that he feels he ought to work on. I can see this in the Inform plus sessions more so than in our interviews as he rarely looks at the camera. He doesn't want to see or bump into anyone because he doesn't want to have to explain what is happening to him or to lie about it and so he keeps himself out of the public eye and mostly in his flat.

### Can you reappear?

This invisibility is to a certain extent counteracted by the support that James has had from the Inform plus sessions and also his counsellor and mental health workers. James talks about the fact that he expects to be treated as he has been by the professionals, friends and family and is both surprised and heartened by being treated like a human.

*'I'm always surprised when people are ok talking to me'*

With regard to the Inform Plus sessions, the discussion between the participants about their experiences and the information provided to them by the facilitators and group speakers seems to have been both beneficial and empowering to James. In providing this space and information to James he was able to take some control and arrange for his conditions to be changed at court to enable him to see his children.

He states that *'I feel more at ease with myself and have a more positive feeling'* when talking about how he feels during week 5 of the course.

Towards the end of the course he mentions that he has started to feel much more positive and has bought himself a coffee machine. This may sound innocuous however for the whole time that James has lived in his flat he has never unboxed his belongings, bought anything for himself other than a laptop to enable him to work and doesn't even generally have food in his flat. The police officer that visited him wasn't convinced that he even lived there. This small action suggests that he may have started to feel a little less invisible.

### So what?

The things that I need to think about here is the so what- what difference will this make? Link this to the support stuff, what does support do that makes a difference to their lives and why might that be important?

What does it mean to be human?

### **Final thought**

Whilst we were in discussion in a break one session, James talked to me about the poem that Amanda Gorman had written for President Biden's inauguration. It had struck a chord with him when we were discussing the possibility of moving forward and I wanted to share the last part of the poem here.

***When day comes, we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid.***

***The new dawn blooms as we free it.***

***For there is always light,***

***if only we're brave enough to see it. – Amanda Gorman***

### **Comments from supervisors**

One of the things that occurred to me was how this notion of him being invisible as a person is, however, in sharp relief with the (now) visibility of his offence, and the tensions between these.

Also, I wondered whether 'invisibility as a choice' was perhaps a way of somehow trying additionally to "invisibilise" his offence.

A way of coping with the visibility that the cjs brings to you and your offending behaviour as the label of a sex offender and the subsequent invisibilising of you as a person. As he says it defines you rather than it just being something that you have done. It is seen as you- look at the background stuff as a result of this!

## Timeline of participants' data collection

