



HM Prison &
Probation Service

An Evaluation of the Experience and Meaning of Shared Reading in Psychologically Informed Planned Environments in Prisons

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1. Summary

Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPEs) have been developed jointly by NHS England and HMPPS as part of the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway, to consolidate the benefits of more formal treatment, and to support ‘stuck’ prisoners (and former prisoners) through a pathway of change, including through socially creative sessions. Shared Reading groups, run by The Reader (a charitable organisation), are offered weekly in all prison PIPEs. The shared reading of literature is thought to provide opportunities for PIPE residents to participate socially, communicate more effectively, and make meaningful sense of themselves and others.

The aim of this research was to identify and describe the contribution that Shared Reading groups make to the work of PIPEs in prisons and to identify the processes through which change, if any, takes place.

Methodological approach

The research took place over two Phases. Phase 1 involved fieldwork at three sites (2 Category C prisons and a prison for women). The research team attended and observed Shared Reading groups, spent time learning about the environment of each PIPE, engaged in informal conversations with participants, group facilitators and staff members, and recorded one-to-one interviews.

On the basis of the qualitative data generated during Phase 1, the research team developed a new research tool, the Measuring the Experience of Reading Groups (MERG) survey. The MERG is intended to provide a way of measuring nuanced aspects of the Shared Reading experience which might contribute to growth or positive change. Its 10 dimensions fall into two broad groupings: ‘holding’ experiences (*Feeling secure; Absorption; Ordinariness; Supportiveness; Memory and recognition*), and experiences of ‘growth’ (*Being myself; Confidence and agency; Openness to and engagement with others; Meaning and understanding*).

The dimensions that emerged arose from data collected with groups whose make-up and preoccupations at the time of the research may have influenced the thematic

content. This possible limitation was mitigated by the collection of data at three different sites, and by participant checking at other sites in Phase 2. While further validation would be required, engagement with users and the Reader suggested that these dimensions captured important aspects of the experience of shared reading well.

During the second phase of the evaluation, the MERG was administered twice at six-month intervals in six prisons to members of the Shared Reading Groups, alongside the Intermediate Outcomes Measurement Instrument (IOMI) which was completed by the wider PIPE populations as well as reading group participants, for comparison. This was a relatively small-scale study across 8 PIPEs and care should be taken regarding the generalisability of these findings.

Key findings

Overall, the Shared Reading groups were regarded very positively by participants, and engagement with literature in this 'shared' and open way was described as highly meaningful. Participants rated almost all of the 10 dimensions of the MERG at 3 (out of 5) or above across the sites. The highest rated dimensions were *Ordinariness* and *Being myself*. The quantitative results showed that the more sessions a SR group participant attended, the higher their mean dimension score. This relationship was statistically significant for four dimensions: *Feeling secure*, *Ordinariness*, *Memory and recognition*, and *Meaning and understanding*.

Measurable and significant differences in IOMI scores between participants in Shared Reading and non-participant PIPE residents were found, with participants reporting higher levels of *Wellbeing*, *Hope*, *Agency and self-efficacy*, and *Interpersonal trust*. The more sessions participants attended, the higher their scores on *Hope*, *Motivation to change*, *Interpersonal trust*, and *Relationships with staff*. These results were found for both men and women, and across the age range of the participants. These findings made theoretical sense and they were supported by individual, first-person accounts of experiences of change over time.

The Shared Reading groups experienced processes that contributed to positive change, and that were very close to the overall aims of PIPEs. These included:

moving between comfort and discomfort from a secure base; moving between familiarity and difference, or support and conflict in the group; being able to read or hear literature that is imaginatively engaging without being overwhelming; and taking a personal risk of the right size. These processes were gradual. Aspects of the group that were most highly valued included its continuity and weekly regularity, the ways in which it 'brought the outside in', and the way that the activity could be enjoyed for its own sake, rather than being instrumentally therapeutic or rehabilitative. At its best, participants developed new habits of, or capabilities for, communication and reflection.

Two main underlying processes contributed to development and change: i) 'venturing out from a secure base'; and ii) 'imaginative consideration and connection'. In a statistical model exploring some possible pathways, *Mutual Support, Ordinarity, and Meaning and understanding* (all facilitated by a *Feeling of Security*) led to a stronger sense of *Being Myself*, which in turn built *Confidence and agency*: that is, beginning to develop a deep, single, centred nucleus of being, self-governance, and self-direction, or 'establishing the self as a seat of action'. This made it more possible to pursue human goods, including relationships with others, in a full and self-responsible way.

Conclusions

This may be the first study to find significant, measurable positive outcome results for the effects of Shared Reading in a prison setting, despite a relatively small sample and short timeframe. The MERG has considerable potential to be developed in ways that might facilitate broader evaluation of PIPE and Enabling Environment settings. The qualities identified as aspects related to a high quality PIPE service could also be used as the basis for creating a research instrument that could help in articulating and understanding what it is that PIPEs do best and why they differ so significantly in culture and quality.

2. Context

2.1 Background

In September 2017 a research team from the Prisons Research Centre at the University of Cambridge's Institute of Criminology, led by Professor Alison Liebling, was commissioned by NHS England & Improvement and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to undertake an 'Evaluation of the Get Into Reading model for the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway'. The aims of the evaluation were to examine the role of Shared Reading (SR; formerly 'Get into Reading') in Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPEs); to identify any contribution SR makes to change in these settings; and to identify the processes through which change takes place. It aimed to increase understanding of promising areas of work under development in criminal justice, such as the development of PIPEs and Enabling Environments.

PIPEs form part of the Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) Pathway within the Criminal Justice System. The OPD Pathway is jointly funded, commissioned and delivered by HMPPS and NHS England, and aims to work together holistically to improve psychological wellbeing, reduce risk of reoffending, and improve the competence, confidence and attitudes of staff working with complex offenders who are likely to have a 'personality disorder'.¹ The role of relationships and social environments are seen as a key mechanisms of change. The implementation of the PIPE model aims to provide and support the overarching aims and bring about improvements in wellbeing, pro-social behaviour and relational outcomes for those screened into the OPD pathway.

The development of PIPEs arose from the need to provide progression options for those involved in OPD treatment services within the criminal justice system. They are

¹ 'Personality Disorder' is a form of Mental Disorder with diagnostic criteria described in both DSMV and ICD10. The criteria revolve around thinking, feeling and behaving differently to social expectations, causing sometimes severe problems in functioning. The concept of 'personality disorder' is contested, in terms of how it is defined, the evidence that underpins it, and the way the diagnosis draws on a disease model to explain a person's difficulties. In recognition of these diagnostic criticisms, the OPD pathway moves away from diagnostic categories and instead refers to the need for personality difficulties to be described as problematic, persistent across the lifespan and pervasive (i.e. present across a person's functioning).

specifically designed environments (units in prisons or Approved Premises in the community) staffed by prison and probation staff, in partnership with health staff, who undergo a two-day training course on understanding and working with Personality Disorder (the Knowledge and Understanding Framework (KUF)), and an introduction to Enabling Environments (see Akerman, Needs, & Bainbridge, 2018; and below). Each PIPE clinical lead also arranges regular additional training and clinical supervision to support staff in their work, covering a wide variety of topics, such as 'attachment issues', trauma and formulation.

PIPEs are designed to have both a Clinical and Operational lead, and to develop their ring-fenced and specially trained staff to work with residents relationally. At the core of each PIPE is the concept of an Enabling Environment: an environment that 'creates and sustains a positive and effective social environment', meeting ten standards: belonging, boundaries, communication, development, involvement, safety, structure, empowerment, leadership, and openness (Benefield, Turner, Bolger, & Bainbridge, 2018; Haigh, Harrison, Johnson, Paget, & Williams, 2012). Accordingly, PIPEs focus on relationships and interactions in the social environment, aiming to maximise ordinary situations and experiences; qualities that are assessed through successful applications for Enabling Environment (EE) Status (Paget & Woodward, 2018).

The first PIPEs were set up in 2011, and by 2019 there were 19 in custody and 8 in the community, in Approved Premises. Four variations on the model exist: 'Preparation' (pre-treatment); 'Provision' (for those undergoing treatment); 'Progression' (post-treatment) and 'Approved Premises' (in probation hostels/Approved Premises in the community). The complex challenges faced by many PIPE residents include a combination of mental health and relational problems, habitual and violent offending, other destructive behaviour, and a lack of either suitable provision or constructive engagement with services and programmes designed to lower risk. Prison PIPEs aim to help long-term, high-risk, complex offenders whose prison experiences and behaviour are likely to have been destructive, and who may have undergone long-term treatment but who remain difficult to place in mainstream conditions. The term 'stuckness', used by The Reader (Davis et al., 2016, p. 17) and others (e.g. Liebling, Arnold, & Straub, 2011; Liebling,

Laws, Crewe, et al., 2019)² describes a complex condition characteristic of many long-term prisoners, especially those meeting criteria for ‘personality disorder’ (irrespective of DSM diagnosis) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Alongside lack of fulfilment, low self-esteem, insecurity and ‘unconnectedness’ (Davis & Magee, 2020), ‘stuckness’ is experienced through:

- Being beyond tariff, remaining on a high security category, getting parole denials and delays.
- Lack of hope, of a meaningful plan or prospect of doing what is required to ‘progress’ (that is, work towards release).
- Lack of agency.
- Lack of trust in the prison/criminal justice system and/or staff.
- Dependence on illegal or prescription drugs.
- Cycles of destructive habits and relationships, including violence and self-harm.

One aspect of the PIPE model is the provision of planned Socially Creative activities (see Ryan, Benefield, & Baker, 2018, p. 201) intended to model and facilitate pro-social ways of experiencing and relating to the self and others, and addressing personal problems in a safe and supportive environment. A wide range of Socially Creative sessions is provided, including informal activities led by service users and staff as well as activities led by specialised practitioners and external agencies, including The Reader. Shared Reading (SR) groups are offered in prison and probation PIPEs as part of this programme. They are led by a trained Reader Leader. Prison and probation staff may also be trained by The Reader as group leaders.

The Reader is a national charity that was founded in 2002 out of the conviction that literature could meet deep human needs arising from the general human condition. Human problems are made more painful by ‘not being able to think’ (Billington, 2016, p. 13).³ SR can lead to ‘having a language to express complex experience as a

² One of the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) items (in the dimension, ‘Bureaucratic legitimacy’) is ‘I feel stuck in the system’ (see Liebling et al 2011). At Whitemoor in 2019, 84% prisoners involved in an MQPL survey (n= 96) agreed or strongly agreed with this item.

³ See <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2012/jun/27/reader-organisation-mutual-improvement-society-modern>.

means of tolerating and surviving it' (Dowrick, Billington, Robinson, Hamer, & Williams, 2012, p. 16). Although 'literature has a role' analogous to psychoanalysis (ibid, p.17), discovering its benefits depends on making the primary aim attention to, and enjoyment of, the literature. The essential elements of the SR model, developed over 20 years, are:

- The use of a variety of high-quality literature (short stories, extracts from novels and poetry).
- Making the literature accessible to everyone in the room through reading aloud, irrespective of literacy level, led by a trained Reader Leader. Within the Criminal Justice System, this includes officers, who are actively encouraged to take part.
- The concept of 'attentive reading', taking time or slowing down to seriously consider the text and its possible meanings (Davis and Magee, 2020).
- The sharing of personal responses to the literature in a supportive environment.
- Voluntariness of participation, including the 'freedom to pick up resonances' (Ibid.: 15).
- Regular weekly provision of the group (see Billington, Longden, & Robinson, 2016, pp. 231-232; see also <https://www.thereader.org.uk/what-we-do/shared-reading/>).

The Reader has developed a 'Theory of Change in the Criminal Justice System' (TCCJS), based on its engagement with PIPEs (see Appendix A). The 'input' in the model is Shared Reading, and the desired 'outcomes' correspond closely to the relational, behavioural and well-being intermediate outcomes of the PIPE model.

2.2 Previous research

Research supports the potential contribution made by the arts in wellbeing and in criminal justice generally, as participants have been found to develop personal insight, communication skills, more positive identities, and a sense of self-efficacy and agency in the world as a result of engagement in arts courses (e.g., Arts Council England, 2018). However, study designs are often weak, change mechanisms are often under-theorised, and little of this research has been conducted on specific

initiatives (such as SR), or in OPD pathway services. An improved research base in these areas is needed.

Studies of SR in health settings (e.g. Billington, 2011, 2019; Davis et al., 2016; Dowrick et al., 2012) offer insights into the ways in which SR can be a therapeutic activity without being designed primarily as therapy (Davis et al., 2016; Gray, Kiemle, Davis, & Billington, 2016), through the relationships and sense-making that develop as a result of sharing literature.

Previous research on Shared Reading in prison settings, including in PIPEs, has been mainly qualitative, and focused on process rather than outcomes. Before The Reader was commissioned to offer SR groups in prison PIPEs, a preliminary study at HMP Liverpool (Category B local, men) and HMP Hydebank Wood (women, Northern Ireland) found that SR offered participants ways of considering deep experiences without having to encode them in language oneself; and opportunities for ‘bringing together internal and external human worlds’ (Billington, 2011, p. 79). In 2011-12 Billington, Longden and Robinson undertook a more extended study of two SR groups at HMP Low Newton (for women), one of which took place on a wing which was part of the then named ‘Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorder Programme’. The authors found improved social, emotional, educational and organisational wellbeing among SR participants over the 12 months of the research, based on qualitative data: observations of the groups, interviews with participants at the end of the research period (7 visits over 12 months), and comments from staff (Billington et al., 2016; Billington & Robinson, 2013). Billington and Robinson identified two psychological processes underlying these improvements: memory (shared recognition/memory in the group; significant individual experiences from the past; acknowledgement of the complexity of one’s relationship to the past); and ‘mentalisation’ – ‘the capacity to make sense of oneself and others in terms of subjective states and mental processes’ (Billington et al., 2016, p. 238; Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2004). Themes drawn from this literature were used as ‘orienting concepts’ (see Layder, 1998) during our research, providing a starting point for possible lines of inquiry about the value of Shared Reading in PIPE settings and the ways in which it might contribute to improved psychological health.

2.3 Questions addressed in this evaluation

The overarching (outcome) question this research addresses is:

1. Does participating in Shared Reading contribute to improved psychological health, self-development, relationships and overall well-being of individuals within the OPD pathway?

In order to answer this main question, secondary (process) questions include:

2. How does Shared Reading work in PIPE settings?
3. What are the key characteristics of the Shared Reading experience in PIPEs?
 - a. Can these experiences be conceptualised and measured?
4. What are the processes through which Shared Reading contributes to change (if any) in PIPE settings?
5. What does Shared Reading contribute to the ethos and aims of PIPEs?
6. How does the contribution of Shared Reading in PIPEs vary according to context, and what might be the reasons for this?

3. Approach

3.1 Overall research approach and design

The evaluation took the form of a prospective longitudinal design, integrating a process and outcomes study. The research methodology gave priority to detailed qualitative data collection and shared reflection, use of Appreciative Inquiry, (Liebling, Price, & Elliott, 1999) and drew on the technique of 'ethnography-led measurement' (Liebling, 2015), fusing qualitative with quantitative research methods (see appendix B).

The evaluation was designed in two Phases. In Phase 1 the first administration of an existing research tool, the Intermediate Outcomes Measurement Instrument (IOMI; Liddle, Disley et al., 2019; Maguire, Disley et al., 2019) was completed with all PIPE residents. The IOMI measures resilience, agency, hope, wellbeing, motivation to change, and interpersonal trust, and was selected because these closely matched the aspects of individual development through Shared Reading that were being explored (see Research Question 1). The measure has demonstrated good reliability and validity in criminal justice settings. During Phase 1 a bespoke research tool (the MERG: Measuring the Experience of Reading Groups) was also created and piloted with SR group participants. The aim was to develop an instrument to answer the Process Research Questions. In Phase 2, a revised version of the MERG was administered again. The IOMI was also completed for the second time.

Table 1: The Research Design

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Phase 1 (Mainly qualitative) | 3 months | 3 sites 1. HMP Wanshott (Closed, women) 2. HMP Tallingford (Category C, men) 3. HMP Aylam Sands (Category C, men) ⁴ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 8 visits to each site • Participant observation, conversations and recorded interviews • Initial collection of IOMI data⁵ |
| Phase 2 (Qualitative and quantitative) | 15 months (extended from 12) | 7 sites 1. HMP Wanshott (Closed, women) 2. HMP Tallingford (Category C, men) 3. HMP Bridhampton(Category B, men) 4. HMP Sleybury Heath (women) 5. HMP Denisham (Category B, men) 6. HMP Skelhope (High Security, men) 7. HMP YOI East Darrow (YOIs and men aged 21-25) ⁶ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 visits to each site • Collection of MERG and IOMI data • Participant observation and conversations • SR group attendance data collected |

Note: prison names have been anonymised.

Site selection

Site selection for this study was based on advice the research team solicited on Shared Reading activities (for example, aiming to include the presence of a longstanding group), previous Prisons Research Centre knowledge of suitable (that is, high quality) settings, and the need to include as broad a range of sites as possible in terms of security category, gender and age. Data for Phase 1 was collected at three sites and data for Phase 2 was collected at seven sites (see Table 1 above).

The evaluation was originally intended to include SR groups in probation hostels (Approved Premises), this did not prove feasible, due to the unpredictability of attendance at the groups and the changes taking place in AP organisation at the time. IOMI data was not collected in HMPYOI East Darrow, because of the late date at which it was added. For the same reason there was no second round of MERG data collection there.

⁴ The Shared Reading group at Aylam Sands included residents from both the PIPE and the Therapeutic Community (TC) unit, with the majority of participants belonging to the TC.

⁵ The Intermediate Outcomes Measurement Instrument (described below).

⁶ HMP East Darrow was not included in the original sample but was added because at the time of the research Shared Reading was flourishing there, providing an opportunity to observe SR 'at its best', in line with our commitment to Appreciative Inquiry. As a YOI, it increased the sample's age range,

3.2 Phase 1

The aim of Phase 1 was to create a tool for reflection and analysis consisting of a series of statements that authentically described the experience of participating in a Shared Reading group. 35 Shared Reading group sessions were attended across the three Phase 1 sites during the period January – April 2019. The researchers' primary role was that of observers. During fieldwork visits, members of the research team spent time informally on the wings or in offices, observing and engaging in conversations with group members, PIPE residents, SR group leaders, and staff members.

Seventeen formal semi-structured interviews with group members were conducted, fourteen of which were recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim, and three were noted in detail.⁷ The length of interviews ranged from 14 minutes to 1 hour 10 minutes, with an average of 38 minutes.

An initial (Time 1) round of the Intermediate Outcomes Measurement Instrument (IOMI) was collected from all willing PIPE residents - both SR group members and non-group members - at HMP Wanshott and HMP Tallingford. The Reader's Theory of Change was also consulted for possible experiences to which researchers should be alert: for example, a sense of calm; a sense of self-worth; and confidence in articulating thoughts (see Table 3). Phase 1 led to the creation of the MERG questionnaire, of which more detail on this process can be found in Appendix C.

3.3 Phase 2

The aim of Phase 2 was to use the MERG survey to measure the key characteristics of Shared Reading in PIPEs, and to discover any correlations between participation in Shared Reading and positive change using both the MERG and the IOMI.

The MERG and IOMI surveys were administered twice at 6-month intervals at a total of 7 sites (see Table 1). ('Time 1' is the start of Phase 2, and 'Time 2' is six months later). All PIPE residents were invited to complete the IOMI in order to gain a broad

⁷ One prison did not allow a tape recorder to be brought in.

understanding of each PIPE. PIPE residents were approached on the PIPE wing during association by a member of the research team.

IOMI

The IOMI sets out to measure perceived ‘impact’ or reported positive change in a number of psychological constructs among offenders undergoing programmes (Liddle, Disley, et al. 2019). The IOMI consists of 21 statements about individuals and their current situation. Respondents are asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale. The statements in the IOMI relate to eight dimensions thought to be relevant to desistance: resilience, agency and self-efficacy, hope, wellbeing, motivation to change, impulsivity/problem solving, interpersonal trust and practical problems (see Table 2). Five additional items capture relationships with staff.

Table 2: Summary of IOMI Dimensions⁸

| Dimension | Description |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Resilience | Capacity to recover from adversity |
| Agency/self-efficacy | Ability to make autonomous decisions and ‘make things happen’ |
| Hope | Perceived scope for positive future change |
| Wellbeing | General, overall mental/emotional health or balance |
| Motivation to change | Positive engagement with emphasis on internal motivation |
| Impulsivity/problem-solving | Lack of reflection and planning; disregard for consequences |
| Interpersonal Trust | Attitudes to and connectedness with others |
| Relationships with staff | Attitudes to staff including trust and a sense of fairness |

The IOMI was chosen as the instrument most closely approximating to a measure of intermediate aims in PIPEs. It has the added advantage that it was developed for criminal justice settings after a rigorous review of existing research instruments (see Maguire et al., 2019). IOMI data was collected twice from each site at 6-month intervals, and each individual’s data was linked across these time points. Table 3

⁸ A full description of each dimension and their corresponding statements is given in Appendix G

summarises IOMI data collection; At T1, 76% of all PIPE residents completed the IOMI and at T2 72% completed it.

Table 3: IOMI Data Collection

| Site* | IOMI Time 1 | | | IOMI Time 2 | | | IOMI T1 & T2 |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| | No. Survey participants | No. PIPE residents | % Completed survey | No. Survey participants | No. PIPE residents | % Completed survey | No. Participants who completed both surveys |
| Tallingford | 30 | 37 | 81 | 24 | 38 | 63 | 11 |
| Wanshott | 21 | 23 | 87 | 13 | 20 | 65 | 8 |
| Denisham | 35 | 60 | 58 | 28 | 60 | 47 | 8 |
| Bridhampton | 39 | 44 | 89 | 37 | 41 | 88 | 18 |
| Sleybury Heath | 24 | 32 | 75 | 30 | 31 | 93 | 12 |
| Skelhope | 13 | 16 | 81 | 12 | 16 | 75 | 5 |
| Total | 161 | 212 | 76 | 144 | 206 | 72 | 62 |

* IOMI data was not collected at East Darrow due to the site joining the study at a later date

MERG

All Shared Reading group participants at each site were invited to complete the MERG twice at 6-month intervals (once at HMPYOI East Darrow), to capture any change. The MERG was administered mostly in a group setting, typically following a Shared Reading session. Group members were asked to each complete the survey and were invited to stay and discuss their experience further if interested. Each group comprised members who had different levels of attendance in the Shared Reading group, and had been residing on the PIPE for differing amounts of time. Questions on this were asked in the MERG. Where participants struggled with reading the survey, a team member assisted. According to The Reader, the average number of participants per group was 6, so these figures represent a successful rate of survey completion. Table 4 provides a summary of our MERG data collection. All Shared Reading group participants were invited to complete the MERG. At T1 74 participants completed the survey and at T2 55 completed it (see Table 4).

Table 4: MERG Data Collection: number of respondents

| | Completed Surveys | | | T1 & T2 |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|--|
| Site | MERG Time 1 | MERG Time 2 | TOTAL | No participants who completed both surveys |
| Tallingford | 13 | 4 | 17 | 3 |
| Wanshott | 9 | 6 | 15 | 2 |
| Denisham | 5 ⁹ | 6 | 11 | 1 |
| Bridhampton | 11 | 10 | 21 | 10 |
| Sleybury Heath | 16 | 23 | 39 | 8 |
| Skelhope | 6 | 6 | 12 | 3 |
| East Darrow | 12 | n/a | 12 | 0 |
| Aylam Sands | 1 | n/a | 1 | 0 |
| Acton House | 1 | n/a | 1 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 74 (69) | 55 | 129 | 27 |

3.4 Data analysis

The data collected from the IOMI and the MERG surveys were analysed in the same way. Data were entered into SPSS and dimensions were formed from the individual survey items. Cronbach's Alpha was used to examine the internal consistency of the dimensions. Mean dimension scores were produced so that different sites and/or dimensions could be compared. Reverse-coded items were recoded for both surveys so that higher mean dimension scores represented a more positive view on that particular dimension. Two-tailed T-tests were used to examine mean differences in dimension scores from T1 to T2, between Shared Reading participants, and between male and female participants. A multi-level model was used to model the relationship between the number of sessions a Shared Reading group participant had attended and their MERG dimension score. The random effects generalised least squares (GLS) regression XTREG routine in Stata version 12.1 statistical software for Windows was used. Estimates are based on robust standard errors, which take into account the non-independence of observations.

Bonferroni adjustments were not used in this analysis for several reasons; first, as Perneger (1998) and Feise (2002) have stressed, whilst p value adjustments may decrease type I errors, inevitably type II errors will increase (the probability of

⁹ 5 from the pilot were not included in the final sample.

accepting the null hypothesis when the reverse is true). A further criticism concerns the family-wise error rate (FWER), which is the probability of making a type I error. Confusion arises because the extent to which it applies is not clear. For example, Feise (2002) suggests that the quality of the study and the effect size must also be taken into account when interpreting research findings, as well as the significance tests. He also suggests that findings be examined in light of those from similar studies.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Every effort was made to design and conduct this study in a way that protected choice and wellbeing. Informed consent was obtained from all study participants for the survey and the interviews. The research documentation for this project was approved by the Institute of Criminology's Research Ethics Committee and HMPPS National Research Committee (ref: 2017-286).

All personal data was anonymised and is stored securely in the Institutional File Store provided by University Information Services, and connected to from a Windows domain network environment via an encrypted SMB2 share'.¹⁰

3.6 Limitations

For both surveys there was slight attrition from T1 to T2, which is to be expected. Each group comprised members who reported different levels of attendance in the Shared Reading group, and had been residing on the PIPE for different lengths of time. When analysing data for sites, samples sizes were small and care needs to be taken regarding the generalisability of findings.

Another limitation of the research was the time frame of 18 months (extended to 21 months). Although the timescale of the evaluation allowed for some longitudinal comparison, this was within a relatively short time frame given the severity of the mental health problems experienced by participants.

¹⁰ The Cambridge University data security policy is available at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2001-02/weekly/5895/8.html>

There were a number of technical challenges to the research design. It is important to take some account in this analysis of the difficulty of isolating the effects of one intervention or experience in the overall environment (Maguire et al 2019: 8; and see further Section 5.3). Since the aims of PIPEs and those of SR are closely aligned, separation of effects was necessarily difficult, and therefore the quantification of the contribution of SR to processes of change and other benefits in PIPEs could not be precise. The PIPE unit itself is not a true comparator for Shared Reading participants. It is possible that, due to criteria to become a resident on the PIPE, these individuals may have higher motivation levels than the rest of the prison population.

Completion of the two questionnaires, twice, imposed demands on participants, and there may have been a 'research fatigue' effect, for example, in the completion of structured questionnaires. Assigning (positive or negative) value to some of the descriptive items in the MERG was problematic, particularly as 'creative discomfort' was identified in participants' accounts and in the research literature as important. For example, the items: i) 'Sometimes during the group I remember things I haven't thought about for a long time'; and ii) 'It is important for stories to have a clear ending' illustrated significant but difficult experiences. The process of becoming used to open endings could be painful and challenging, but also a sign of a personal breakthrough.

This was a small-scale study, limited to 9 PIPE settings. The time scale was short (18 months, extended to 21 months, allowing a six-month follow-up period). The populations included in the research lacked diversity. We were not able to pursue the study in Approved Premises. A new measure of the Shared Reading experience was developed and used alongside the IOMI, which is a new research tool requiring further validation. Many of the MERG dimensions are closely related and these relationships require further analysis. The team were unable to access data relating to disciplinary or other incidents. Finally, it should be noted that the operational context in which the research was carried out was turbulent. This 'additional factor' could not be controlled for.

Despite these limitations, the results are promising.

4. Findings

4.1 Consistency and variation among groups

Shared Reading in PIPEs was a locally adapted set of practices based on the same core elements (the literature; techniques for making the literature accessible; shared personal response; voluntariness of participation; and weekly regularity), but varied according to the constraints of the setting, the population, and differing interpretations of the ethos of Shared Reading. These variations are summarised below before looking at the ten MERG Dimensions identified across all sites.¹¹

The Literature

As with Shared Reading groups in other settings, the intended pattern for a Shared Reading session was that either a short story and a poem, or a section from a longer novel and a poem, were prepared for each session. Often there was not time to read the poem, or it was read but not discussed, and offered to group members to take away. The choice of literature was made by the Reader Leader, taking into account the make-up of the group but not being bound by it, in consultation with the PIPE clinical lead, and in line with The Reader's protocol for literature suitable for prison groups. Reader Leaders in PIPEs are advised that some subjects should be avoided (e.g. suicide and excessive violence). Alongside these specific exclusions there was an awareness that certain subjects should be carefully handled. One woman commented:

'With memories, that's a very emotional thing. For example, if it was something about Grandmas, and you're left with those feelings, when that emotion has been brought to the surface. We have no control over things, so we don't want literature that brings things up emotionally, when you're left with that raw emotion.'

Several groups expressed a preference for longer novels, which were used mainly where there was a group with a strong regular core. At both women's prisons young adult novels that dealt semi-explicitly with profound themes (such as disability, loss,

¹¹ For four case studies illustrating different Shared Reading experiences, see Appendix J.

friendship and loneliness) worked well due to their emotional complexity but relatively simple language and short chapters, aiding accessibility.

There was a more polarised response to poetry than to prose: at one site the officer leading the group commented, '*Some love poetry, some don't*', at which a member of the group immediately said, '*I love it!*' (no-one said they hated it). During the Reader Leader training several prison officers expressed their nervousness about reading poetry and general expectation that it would be '*over my head*' or '*I just don't get it*'.

Making the literature accessible

Making the literature accessible to participants was achieved through careful preparation, pre-reading the literature, noting suitable points to pause and potentially fruitful themes, and observing anything that might give rise to difficulties of interpretation, or that might be emotionally sensitive. Participation in the Reader Leader training provided valuable insight into techniques that Reader Leaders used to pay attention, convey encouragement, calm, interest, and warmth, and enable participants to engage with the literature as fully as possible. Reader Leaders learned techniques for communicating interest and affirmation; making connections between contributions; including all members of the group; and bringing the discussion back to the literature. The aim was to make possible a safe and meaningful connection between the individual and the literature at a deep emotional level, and to elicit (albeit voluntarily) the articulation of that experience. A Prison Officer who completed the Reader training commented that it had been the '*best training for working on the PIPE*' that he had had.

Assumptions about 'reading', and what the group was for, were potential barriers to participation. Competent readers were reluctant to attend an activity they assumed was for the less literate, while for less confident readers, and people who had had negative experiences of school, the term 'reading' had unfavourable associations: referring to the group at Wanshott as 'Book Break' was an attempt to overcome this. Reader Leaders were also alert to individual obstacles to participation, for example providing large print copies where needed, or a coloured overlay for dyslexic participants.

The most distinctive characteristic of Shared Reading is that the literature is read aloud. At almost all the sessions attended, the Reader Leader read first. Reader Leaders are trained to read slowly, with attention to meaning, but avoiding dramatic expression. The ideal is to allow the literature to become 'live' in the room, while not imposing a strong personal interpretation, and leaving possibilities for meaning open.

After reading the first section aloud, and following the preliminary discussion, Reader Leaders usually asked whether another member of the group would like to read. In many groups there was at least one person who was willing, usually an established participant, but occasionally a confident newcomer. Willingness to read was variable and ranged from groups in which it was the convention for everyone to take a turn, to groups in which only the Reader Leader read. Sometimes, if none of the residents volunteered, the officer would take a turn. Reading aloud, particularly for the first time, was for many an intensely nerve-wracking experience, described (and observed) as having a powerfully physical effect: a man at Tallingford wiped his sweating face on his shirt; a woman at Wanshott said, *'look – I only read a couple of pages and the sweat is pouring off me!'*

For more confident or experienced readers, the experience of reading aloud helped them to pay close attention to the text. For some, especially those less comfortable with reading aloud, attending to punctuation, or to the correct pronunciation of individual words, made it *less* likely that they were taking in the general sense of the passage they were reading. Over time, with some individuals who attended regularly, the research team witnessed improvements in confidence and ability in reading out loud.

For many group participants, listening to readers other than the trained Leader demanded empathy but could also be a barrier to understanding the text. Outside the session, several expressed their frustration with the stumbling efforts of others. However, within the group, patience, support and appreciation were the norm. This supportive and uncritical behaviour was, according to prison staff, noticeably different from some residents' treatment of each other outside the group: *'If they stumble over a word in the group, no-one says anything, but if someone trips over on the landing they'd all be laughing'* (Officer).

Shared Response

Physical arrangements for the groups were intended to encourage a shared response. At most sites furniture was arranged in a circle, with similar seating as far as possible, to enable participants to see each other and to convey inclusion and equality, but at one site an L-shaped room awkwardly arranged with two small sofas and a table with six fixed stools made this difficult. At almost all sites there were arrangements for those attending to have tea or coffee.

The supportiveness and patience shown within the group was commented on at every site, and related particularly to attitudes shown towards people reading aloud, as well as the views and interpretations of other group members. Participation required, and elicited, trust, as well as the ability to listen, consider other points of view, and tolerate difference. One officer commented, *'Out of all the groups we do, this is the one where they feel most together. There is much less of the picking on you generally get. They can show their vulnerability – I don't think we have that in any other group.'*

In some groups, comments consisting mainly of information dominated, such as particular makes of car, or historical and political background. Sometimes interpretations of the text were expressed in clichés or ready-made language (*'He's out of his comfort zone'*, *'She's dealing with her demons'*). Although all comments were acknowledged by the Reader Leaders, they regularly brought the group's attention back to the text and encouraged comments that expressed a more personal connection. Reader Leaders were generally skilled in subtly encouraging comments from less confident members of the group and not allowing individuals to dominate the discussion.

Sometimes a word or phrase was spontaneously read out during the discussion. Twice, at different sites, someone took a poem line by line and interpreted each line as an aspect of prison life. Responses beginning with speculative words and phrases (*'Maybe he...'*, *'It could be...'*) were more tentative. Participants also visibly searched for their own, often uncomplicated, interpretation of what was important in the literature: *'What he had, he hasn't got it any more'*. When participants articulated something that appeared important to them, there was often a degree of hesitancy or effort, or a brief, oblique comment made while looking intently at the text, using phrases such as *'It's like when you...'*,

Occasionally there was a more explicitly confessional response, for example when one longstanding member of a small, stable group responded to a story by saying, '*I did something like that once*', followed by a deeply personal account of something of which the speaker was ashamed but wanted to share with the group.

Participation

Shared Reading sessions in PIPEs are in principle voluntary. However, the degree of this voluntariness was interpreted differently across the sites. At one, participation was more or less required, while at another, new residents were expected to attend two 'taster' sessions. The level of orderliness and organisation at different sites indirectly affected the degree of voluntariness of participation: at Tallingford, there was regular uncertainty about who was attending, and a round-up of people who were otherwise unoccupied sometimes took place just before the session, whereas at Bridhampton the attendance list was carefully organised by officers, Shared Reading being one of four optional activities scheduled at that time.

Where the group was timetabled against sessions that residents were required to attend, the choice to go to SR was compromised. The regularity and reliability of the group was highly valued by group members and by staff, with the groups becoming part of the structure and pattern of life on the PIPE over months or years: something that could be anticipated with pleasure and certainty. The continuity of the relationship with the group leader was an important part of SR, and contrasted with the brevity of some other arts programmes which lasted a few weeks or days, during which it was not possible to establish meaningful relationships (and where abrupt 'endings' could be difficult; see, e.g. Digard, von Sponeck, & Liebling, 2007).

Participants did not need to be literate to take part in shared reading sessions. Different conventions were developed across sites and the size of the group often determined whether verbal participation was possible for some group members. Attentive listening was an important form of participation for many who did not speak:

'There was a Somali lad who came for weeks and just lay on the sofa with his eyes shut. I got annoyed in the end. But he said he was never read to as a child and just loved listening to the Reader' (Officer).

Simply being in (and staying in) the room was also a significant act of participation for some PIPE residents.

4.2 The experience of Shared Reading in PIPEs

The MERG dimensions

The 10 dimensions of the MERG aimed to capture the Shared Reading experience from the qualitative data generated by Phase 1 of the research. These dimensions constitute the conceptual core of Shared Reading in PIPEs and the processes that identified as important for its value and contribution to psychological health. Table 5 summarises and defines these dimensions and the rest of this section elaborates on their meaning. For a more detailed explanation of the 10 dimensions, please see Appendix D.

Table 5: Summary of the MERG Dimensions

| Dimension | Definition |
|---|--|
| 1. Feeling Secure | Feeling safe, forgetting worries, calmness, a sense of warmth. |
| 2. Absorption | Attention, a sense of not being in prison, a sense of being 'in the literature', vividness. |
| 3. Ordinariness | A sense of ordinariness, natural relationships, non-prison interests, staff as real people. |
| 4. Supportiveness | Trust, tolerance of difference, support, sharing, community. |
| 5. Memory and Recognition | A sense of personal connection with (characters in) the literature, connection via memories, access to memories. |
| 6. Being Myself | A sense of acceptance, authenticity; of being 'the real me'. |
| 7. Confidence and Agency | A sense of agency, confidence in having and expressing a view, articulateness beyond the group. |
| 8. Openness to and engagement with others | Receptivity to others' views, openness to (the ideas of) others. |
| 9. Meaning and Understanding | Understanding the literature, and people, finding meaning in what is read, gaining new concepts and vocabulary. |
| 10. Flexibility | Tolerance of ambiguity and complexity. Willingness to change your view. |

The 10 MERG dimensions had high face validity, making conceptual sense and reflecting real aspects of experience. The MERG dimensions demonstrated good internal reliability; all had a Cronbach's alpha greater than .700 (see Appendix E for

full results). They were further divided analytically into ‘Holding’ dimensions (1-5) and ‘Growth’ dimensions (6-10). Based on theory and evidence (see, e.g. Winnicott, 1965; Bion 1962), it was hypothesised that the ‘holding’ or ‘containment’ dimensions support a group of ‘generative’ processes and operate holistically. There are close relationships between the dimensions, but they also operated independently.

4.3 How important is context for how Shared Reading works in PIPEs?

Considerable differences were observed between the PIPEs across the sites in addition to aspects such as scale, gender, turnover, age and sentence type of the population. Significant differences were identified in staff cultures, language, levels of trust, the quality of relationships and the overall atmosphere, contributing to the extent to which each PIPE acted as a supportive relational environment informed by psychological understanding. The term ‘PIPEyness’ was first heard at HMP Tallingford, used by the Custodial Manager, who commented that *‘some members of staff really get what PIPEyness is all about’*, and this term was adopted to help focus thinking about the essential qualities of, and differences between, PIPEs. PIPEyness was defined as: ‘a *person-centred,¹² supportive, professionally competent and attentive environment in which safety, understanding and growth are prioritised and facilitated’*.

Towards a PIPEyness Measure

For the purposes of this research, PIPEs were tentatively classified as ‘good’, ‘mixed plus’, ‘mixed embattled’ and ‘poor’ based on a series of observed characteristics. (see Table F1 in Appendix F).¹³

PIPEs categorised as ‘good’, and ‘mixed plus’, were ‘good enough’ (to be PIPEy, or meet a basic quality or model integrity threshold). The last two categories (‘mixed embattled’ and ‘poor’) were not. ‘Good enough’ PIPEs had adequate order, stability, a sense of purpose, and good relationships. They were ‘boundaried’, protected from problems elsewhere in the prison such as drugs and debt (or these problems, where they arose, were managed in a psychologically-informed way). Central to all these

¹² Person-centred is referred to in this context as approaching residents as possessing many capacities, and as radically interconnected rather than as ‘clients’.

¹³ As well as MQPL data, where it was available.

qualities were the staff, who were present in sufficient numbers to engage meaningfully with prisoners and were experienced in their roles. In the ‘good enough’ PIPEs, the uniformed officers were most visibly running the PIPE; they were present on the wing; alert to what was going on; and calm and communicative. Many of them were also able to articulate their role and the role of the PIPE clearly. In a ‘good enough’ PIPE, trained and committed staff remained on the unit long enough to build up experience and relationships. Governors were invested in them, sufficiently to protect staff from diversion into other wings. The stability of staff and the quality of staff-prisoner relationships constituted a crucial difference between a PIPE that we categorised as ‘Mixed Plus’ and one that we categorised as ‘Mixed Embattled’. This kind of difference (‘relationally reliable and consistent’ in Appendix F, and below) had a major impact on the overall ethos between these kinds of sites.

Other factors that contributed to PIPEs being ‘good enough’ included having a limited number of ‘lodgers’ (non-PIPE residents on the unit) and planned ways of managing their (otherwise complicated) presence; a programme of activities that was sufficiently full and smoothly run, and which involved some access to outdoor space; and some involvement of residents in planning activities in a way that felt authentic. All of this contributed to residents’ own understanding and appreciation of the purpose of the PIPE, their sense of why they were there, and the possibilities for progression.

Summary of qualities contributing to ‘PIPEyness’

Identifying a set of essential qualities represented an important first step towards measuring ‘PIPEyness’. (A next step would be to develop and test an instrument measuring the presence of these qualities more accurately, and weighting them).

These qualities were:

- ‘Good enough’ relationships¹⁴
- Consistent presence of experienced uniformed staff
- ‘Good enough’ order
- ‘Good enough’ stability
- A sense of purpose

¹⁴ This (and consistent presence, below) is the quality we would weight highest, on the basis of our observations.

- Boundaries/'boundary' problems managed, including presence of 'lodgers'
- Governors invested
- Residents authentically involved in planning
- Programme of activities including access to outdoors

Variations in culture, stability, responsiveness, the professional skills of PIPE staff, and staff-prisoner relationships impacted on the delivery of SR and on the experiences of participants. Where a clear understanding of the purpose of Shared Reading within a PIPE context was present and articulated, the potential for change was reinforced in a reciprocal way. Where risks could be taken, and exploration or integration of emotional experiences could be attempted, more possibilities for change arose. Safe, supportive 'containment' (in the Bion sense, 1962) encouraged, or 'enabled', exploration and growth. Better PIPEs created a 'continuous relational' and 'thoughtful' environment (see Benefield et al., 2018) and supported communication, choice and personal experience (Ibid: 184). There was a close fit between what went on in Shared Reading groups and the general aims of PIPEs.

Shared Reading could be a positive experience for PIPE residents even in settings with a lower level of 'PIPEyness', sometimes acting as a 'refuge' or 'space for thought' (Davis 2020). Where Shared Reading was practiced most successfully, it acted as a model in miniature of 'PIPEyness', even in PIPEs that did not themselves fully embody the PIPE ethos and aims. In general, better PIPEs, as well as longer attendance, were associated with higher MERG and IOMI scores.

4.4 Processes through which Shared Reading works in PIPE settings

According to qualitative observations and interviews with participants, the processes through which Shared Reading works in PIPE settings are related to its capacities in enabling participants to stay with uncomfortable feelings and respond to them in new ways.

Two main types of complex underlying processes through which Shared Reading appeared to work in PIPE settings were identified: a) 'venturing out from a secure

base' (a secure environment supporting the willingness to act in a new way); and b) 'imaginative consideration and connection' (access to imaginative literature providing an intermediary object for thinking about emotional experience). The second of these, in particular, may be inherently dependent on the unique elements of the SR experience.

These processes were unpredictable and complex. They took place in a relational environment in which many other things were going on. Individual participants engaged or drew back from these processes in a non-linear way. The research team sometimes observed the processes breaking down, stalling, or being avoided. This was unsurprising, given that they presented a challenge and took place at the limits of what could be tolerated, for many PIPE residents. On the other hand, 'venturing out', gaining in confidence, and the reaching of insight identified above, were also observed.

The dimension scores

The MERG was completed by Shared Reading group participants at Time 1 (T1; the start of Phase Two) and again, six months later (T2). Table 6 below gives the mean scores for each MERG dimension by site for T1 and T2. Each dimension mean score ranges from one to five and higher scores can be interpreted as a more positive view of that dimension by the research participants. A score over the neutral threshold of 3.00 can be interpreted as an overall positive view for the dimension, with higher scores indicating more positive evaluations. Scores of 4 and above are unusually high in similar surveys of the quality of aspects of prison life, and scores below 3 are frequent (see Liebling & Arnold, 2004; Liebling, Laws, Lieber, et al., 2019).

Table 6 shows that at all of the sites, almost all of the dimensions measured by the MERG were positively rated by group participants. 'Ordinariness' and 'Being Myself' came out as the highest rated dimensions overall. Whilst Table 6 shows no statistically significant moves upwards in MERG scores from T1 to T2, the MERG scores in the better PIPEs start higher at T1 and generally move upwards, whereas the MERG scores in the less good PIPEs start at a lower mean and in some cases, move downwards.

Table 6: MERG Results – Dimension Means

| | Good ¹⁵ | | | | Mixed Plus | | | | Mixed Embattled | | Poor | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | Bridhampton (n=21) | | Skelhope (n=12) | | Tallingford (n=17) | | Wanshott (n=15) | | Sleybury Heath (n=39) | | Denisham (n=11) | | TOTAL (n=129) | |
| | T1 (n=11) | T2 (n=10) | T1 (n=6) | T2 (n=6) | T1 (n=13) | T2 (n=4) | T1 (n=9) | T2 (n=6) | T1 (n=16) | T2 (n=23) | T1 (n=5) | T2 (n=6) | T1 (n=74) | T2 (n=55) |
| <i>'Holding' dimensions</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Feeling secure | 3.85 | 4.36 | 4.13 | 4.07 | 3.29 | 3.85 | 3.95 | 4.20 | 3.66 | 3.30 | 3.72 | 3.63 | 3.72 | 3.71 |
| Absorption | 3.66 | 4.00 | 3.92 | 3.50 | 3.23 | 3.85 | 3.93 | 3.93 | 3.38 | 2.96 | 3.40 | 3.20 | 3.54 | 3.36 |
| Ordinariness | 4.21 | 4.47 | 4.40 | 4.06 | 3.74 | 3.92 | 4.50 | 4.22 | 3.79 | 3.49 | 3.93 | 3.67 | 4.04 | 3.84 [†] |
| Mutual support | 3.94 | 4.13 | 4.28 | 4.22 | 3.55 | 4.00 | 3.76 | 4.11 | 3.76 | 3.22 | 3.60 | 3.75 | 3.81 | 3.68 |
| Recognition and memory | 3.62 | 3.75 | 3.60 | 3.46 | 3.29 | 3.69 | 3.63 | 3.71 | 3.33 | 3.20 | 3.55 | 3.50 | 3.45 | 3.43 |
| <i>'Growth' dimensions</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Being myself | 4.05 | 4.36 | 4.40 | 4.40 | 3.78 | 4.25 | 4.10 | 4.30 | 3.62 | 3.29 | 3.88 | 4.20 | 3.91 | 3.85 |
| Confidence and agency | 3.64 | 3.75 | 4.30 | 3.75 | 3.21 | 3.69 | 3.91 | 4.12 | 3.31 | 3.00 | 3.35 | 3.13 | 3.60 | 3.38 [†] |
| Openness and engagement with others | 3.85 | 4.04 | 4.24 | 3.87 | 3.41 | 3.80 | 3.58 | 3.80 | 3.39 | 3.07 | 3.33 | 3.43 | 3.56 | 3.49 [†] |
| Meaning and understanding | 3.63 | 3.88 | 4.08 | 3.92 | 3.25 | 3.84 | 3.56 | 3.83 | 3.36 | 2.91 | 3.25 | 3.21 | 3.46 | 3.37 |
| Flexibility | 3.75 | 3.95 | 4.20 | 3.71 | 3.38 | 4.00 | 3.66 | 3.87 | 3.55 | 3.22 | 3.30 | 3.75 | 3.61 | 3.58 |

† p < 0.10; * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

¹⁵ See section 4.3 for details on quality of PIPEs

Because many of our participants were already engaged in SR groups before we started the study (at T1), the relationship between the number of Shared Reading sessions each participant had attended¹⁶ was tested in relation to their MERG dimension score in a series of univariate regression models (see Table 7). This was a better test of the impact of SR over time than the T1, T2 analysis above.

Table 7: Univariate relationships for Shared Reading attendance and MERG dimensions (N = 111)

| MERG Dimensions | Number of sessions attended b (SE) | P Value |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Feeling secure | 0.011 (0.005) | 0.034* |
| Absorption | 0.009 (0.006) | 0.102 |
| Ordinariness | 0.010 (0.005) | 0.044* |
| Supportiveness | 0.008 (0.004) | 0.090 |
| Recognition and memory | 0.008 (0.004) | 0.045* |
| Being myself | 0.004 (0.005) | 0.486 |
| Confidence and agency | 0.010 (0.006) | 0.068 |
| Openness and engagement with others | 0.007 (0.004) | 0.233 |
| Meaning and understanding | 0.011 (0.005) | 0.020* |
| Flexibility | 0.005 (0.005) | 0.358 |

† p < 0.10; * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

The results showed that the more sessions a SR group participant had attended, the higher their mean dimension score (indicating a more positive rating of that dimension). This relationship was found to be statistically significant for four dimensions (see Table 7: *Feeling secure*, *Ordinariness*, *Recognition and memory*, and *Meaning and understanding*).¹⁷

The results of these analysis suggest a positive effect of sustained participation, over the study period, in SR groups overall.

¹⁶ We are grateful to The Reader for providing us with this data.

¹⁷ The change in one further dimension, *Confidence and agency*, approached statistical significance (p = .068). As this research is exploratory, and based on mixed methods, we include this observation despite its limitations.

IOMI

In addition to the MERG instrument, the IOMI was adopted as a potential measure of outcomes and experiences on the PIPE (see Appendix G). This was completed by all PIPE residents in 5 of the sites in order to provide some comparison between SR and non-SR attendees. The results in Table 8 show T1 data.¹⁸ Higher scores indicate a more positive rating of that dimension by the research participants.

Table 8: IOMI Dimension Mean Scores According to SR Group Attendance

| | Tallingford (n=30) | | Wanshott (n=21) | | Denisham (n=34) | | Bridhampton (n=39) | | Skelhope (n=13) | | TOTAL (n=137) | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| | SR | | SR | | SR | | SR | | SR | | SR | |
| | No (n=10) | Yes (n=20) | No (n=7) | Yes (n=14) | No (n=19) | Yes (n=15) | No (n=12) | Yes (n=27) | No (n=3) | Yes (n=10) | No (n=51) | Yes (n=86) |
| Resilience | 3.30 | 3.66 | 3.14 | 3.36 | 3.18 | 3.30 | 3.50 | 3.50 | 3.33 | 3.95 | 3.24 | 3.41 |
| Agency / self-efficacy | 3.73 | 3.95 | 3.33 | 3.62 | 3.39 | 3.49 | 3.72 | 4.09 | 3.67 | 4.30* | 3.54 | 3.79* |
| Hope | 4.11 | 3.95 | 3.14 | 3.57 | 3.12 | 3.49 | 3.67 | 4.22† | 4.00 | 4.20 | 3.46 | 3.81* |
| Wellbeing | 3.77 | 3.98 | 2.62 | 3.36 | 3.37 | 3.44 | 3.50 | 4.05* | 3.89 | 4.30 | 3.37 | 3.67* |
| Motivation to change | 4.37 | 4.51 | 4.24 | 4.29 | 3.79 | 3.98 | 4.42 | 4.33 | 4.33 | 4.67 | 4.15 | 4.31 |
| Impulsivity / problem solving | 4.13 | 4.02 | 3.29 | 3.19 | 3.28 | 2.71† | 3.85 | 4.35* | 3.78 | 4.10 | 3.60 | 3.63 |
| Interpersonal trust | 3.56 | 3.87 | 3.39 | 4.16† | 2.91 | 3.12 | 4.15 | 3.88 | 4.25 | 4.43 | 3.48 | 3.88** |

† p < 0.10; * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

The IOMI results indicate statistically significant differences between SR and non-SR attendees in four areas (of seven): PIPE residents who participated in Shared Reading had significantly higher reported average levels of interpersonal trust, wellbeing, hope, and agency/self-efficacy than non-participant PIPE residents. This did not seem to be related to higher motivation or other systematic differences

¹⁸ It was not possible to do this analysis for the Sleybury Heath data, because at T1 only one participant who completed the IOMI reported that they did not attend the Shared Reading group. For T1/T2 differences by establishment, see Table B1 in Appendix H.

between PIPE residents engaging with SR and others (we observed variations in levels of motivation and considerable challenge within SR groups).¹⁹

Gender Differences

Scores for women on both measures were lower overall, and their response to literature, which could be highly resonant, was more raw, or emotionally sensitive.²⁰ One of the women at Sleybury Heath said, 'We have no control over things, so we don't want literature that brings things up emotionally'. There was often a stronger sense in the women's groups that reading together was a potential minefield in which painful experience might be touched on unexpectedly. There was, on the whole a more noticeable lack of trust and greater suspicion of each other and the group leader in the women's groups, and, more often (not always), a lower level of tolerance and openness.

While there were exceptions, a stronger sense of uncertainty was linked to a lower level of tolerance for newness, difference, ambiguity, and difficulty in the literature that was offered to the women's groups. There did not appear to be lower levels of literacy among the women.

One of the things that made Sleybury Heath different from all the other sites in our sample was that SR was more or less obligatory. Apart from one woman who was exempt from participating, all were expected to attend one of the three (or four) sessions, unless they had essential medical or legal appointments, thus removing the element of choice or agency that was intended to be one of the characteristics of SR.

¹⁹ On the other hand, all of the IOMI scores were relatively high compared to other offender groups (Liddle, personal communication, February 2020). This may be linked to a move out of mainstream locations, or a feeling of no longer languishing in high security prisons; PIPE prisoners tend to be mid to late stage, meaning they may have moved through the 'emotionally hazardous' early years of 'fractured or stunted reflexivity/agency' or 'coping-survival', associated with long and indeterminate sentences, towards 'coping-growth', in which hope, purpose, and a stronger sense of agency, seemed less out of reach (see Crewe, Hulley & Wright, 2020, p. 154). The relatively high scores may also be related to the more stable, relational and person-centred character of PIPE environments.

²⁰ The population in women's prisons are both more vulnerable, and more diverse in terms of sentence type and length and geographical origin, than in men's prisons. Both of the women's PIPEs combined residents on a Progression regime with residents at a different, earlier stage of PIPE. Residents were mixed in the SR groups in the afternoon group at Wanshott, and all the groups at Sleybury Heath. This may have contributed to their relative volatility. Both women's prisons were in the process of getting used to a new group leader.

On the second visit to Sleybury Heath (T2) several influential residents voiced strongly negative views of SR, which may have affected the attitudes of others, especially given the expectation that everyone would attend. This was probably linked to the loss of a very well-liked and long-term Reader leader.

PIPEs for men and women appeared to have different strengths (for example, better physical conditions and space in the men's PIPEs and a greater emphasis on keeping the residents occupied, and on group activities in the women's PIPEs) and different weaknesses (for example, some cultural problems in some of the men's PIPEs, and a degree of over-paternalism in the women's PIPEs). However, both women's PIPEs were contending with difficulties in the form of complex populations and cramped and inadequate facilities. The combination of two different PIPE regimes and lodgers, with the greater diversity of population found in women's prisons, made for difficult relationships among the residents, and diverse needs for the staff to meet. Other important differences between the two women's prisons were that staffing at Wanshott was more stable, with dedicated and trained uniformed staff who were known and trusted. At Sleybury Heath there was more staff movement between the PIPE and the rest of the prison.

The PIPE at Sleybury Heath was also, at the time of our first visit, going through a period of re-organisation, and many of the women had had to change cells. Most of the differences in MERG and IOMI scores between men and women were accounted for by Sleybury Heath, this would be obscured by combining the data for the two women's prisons. We have therefore separated out the scores for the two women's prisons in Tables 9 and 10 below.

MERG

The MERG dimension scores were compared for the male and female participants. At both time points (T1 and T2) the male participants were found to have higher mean scores for almost every MERG dimension (see Table 9). The differences in scores were more pronounced when the male scores were compared to the female scores in Sleybury Heath (F1); at T1, the differences in scores were statistically significant for three Growth dimensions (Being myself, Confidence and agency, and Openness and engagement with others). At T2, this was the case for every

dimension. When comparing the male scores to the female scores at Wanshott (F2) although the male scores were generally higher, none of them reached statistical significance.

Table 9. MERG dimension mean scores – Two-tailed T- tests for male and female participants

| | T1 | | T2 | | T1 | | T2 | |
|---|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| MERG dimension | Males (n=49) | Sleybury Heath (F1) (n=16) | Males (n=26) | Sleybury Heath (F1) (n=23) | Males (n=50) ²¹ | Wanshott (F2) (n=8) | Males (n=26) | Wanshott (F2) (n=6) |
| <i>Holding dimensions</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Sense of security | 3.73 | 3.57 | 3.95 | 3.30*** | 3.71 | 3.95 | 3.95 | 4.20 |
| Absorption | 3.56 | 3.27 | 3.58 | 2.96** | 3.53 | 3.93 | 3.58 | 3.93 |
| Ordinariness | 4.05 | 3.76† | 4.05 | 3.49** | 4.05 | 4.50† | 4.05 | 4.22 |
| Supportiveness | 3.86 | 3.68 | 4.00 | 3.22*** | 3.83 | 3.76 | 4.00 | 4.11 |
| Recognition and memory | 3.48 | 3.27 | 3.57 | 3.20* | 3.46 | 3.63 | 3.57 | 3.71 |
| <i>Growth dimensions</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Being myself | 4.00 | 3.53* | 4.24 | 3.29*** | 3.98 | 4.10 | 4.24 | 4.30 |
| Confidence and agency | 3.68 | 3.20* | 3.54 | 3.00* | 3.65 | 3.91 | 3.54 | 4.13† |
| Openness and engagement with others | 3.65 | 3.28* | 3.79 | 3.07*** | 3.65 | 3.62 | 3.79 | 3.80 |
| Meaning and understanding | 3.50 | 3.28 | 3.67 | 2.91*** | 3.48 | 3.56 | 3.67 | 3.83 |
| Flexibility | 3.66 | 3.45 | 3.83 | 3.22*** | 3.63 | 3.66 | 3.83 | 3.88 |

† p < 0.10; * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

²¹ Figures in this column are different as there was one prisoner at Sleybury Heath who identified as male.

IOMI

The IOMI mean dimension scores were compared for the male prisons and each of the female prisons (Sleybury Heath and Wanshott) in turn (see Table 10). At T1 the females at Sleybury Heath had lower mean scores for every dimension (except *Interpersonal trust*), and all but one of these scores indicated that the difference between males and females was statistically significant. This finding was replicated at T2 (Hope was approaching significance). When comparing the mean scores for males to the females from Wanshott, they were lower for the females in almost every case. At T1, Wellbeing and Impulsivity / problem solving were statistically significant, and at T2 Wellbeing and Agency were statistically significant.

Table 10. IOMI dimension mean scores – Two-tailed T- tests for male and female participants

| IOMI Dimension | T1 | | | | T2 | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| | Males (n=116) | Sleybury Heath (F1) (n=24) | Males (n=116) | Wanshott (F2) (n=21) | Males (n=101) | Sleybury Heath (F1) (n=30) | Males (n=101) | Wanshott (F2) (n=13) |
| Resilience | 3.45 | 2.91* | 3.46 | 3.29 | 3.55 | 3.19* | 3.55 | 3.50 |
| Agency / self-efficacy | 3.80 | 3.39** | 3.81 | 3.52† | 3.92 | 3.50*** | 3.92 | 3.56* |
| Hope | 3.82 | 3.33* | 3.82 | 3.43† | 3.83 | 3.54† | 3.83 | 3.90 |
| Wellbeing | 3.77 | 2.95*** | 3.78 | 3.10*** | 3.82 | 3.28*** | 3.82 | 3.38* |
| Motivation to change | 4.27 | 4.19 | 4.27 | 4.27 | 4.30 | 4.30 | 4.30 | 4.46 |
| Impulsivity / problem solving | 3.78 | 3.19* | 3.78 | 3.22* | 3.77 | 3.23** | 3.77 | 3.69 |
| Interpersonal trust | 3.69 | 3.95 | 3.67 | 3.90 | 3.78 | 4.02 | 3.78 | 3.87 |
| Relationships with staff | | | | | 3.81 | 4.07 | 3.81 | 4.05 |

† p < 0.10; * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

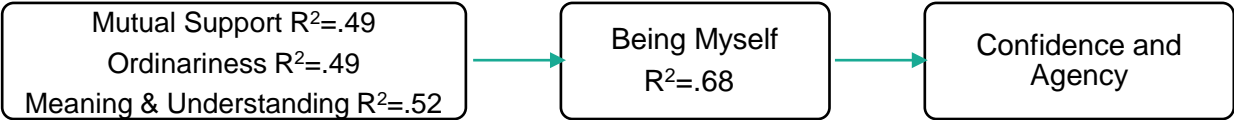
Further research would be required to draw conclusions about gender differences in the Shared Reading experience.

4.5 Towards a Model of the Experience and Impact of Shared Reading

As reported earlier (4.3) two main types of underlying processes were identified through which Shared Reading appeared to work in PIPE settings: a) ‘venturing out from a secure base’ (a secure environment supporting the willingness to feel, think or act in a new way); and b) ‘imaginative consideration and connection’ (access to imaginative literature providing an intermediary object for thinking about emotional experience). The second of these, in particular, seemed to be inherently dependent on the unique elements of the SR experience. The ‘venturing out’ was made possible by the feeling of security, ordinariness, support, absorption, and access to memory and recognition created over time in a Shared Reading group. Engagement with the literature, together and individually, provided both the ‘space for thought to work in’ and the material needed to encourage this, or make it possible.

Despite the complexity of causes, and the relatively short time-frame of this evaluation, a statistically and theoretically plausible pattern was found in the results (see Figure 1 below).²² In this model, exploring the relationships between the dimensions and some possible pathways, *Mutual Support*, *Ordinariness*, and *Meaning and understanding* (all facilitated by a *Feeling of Security*) led to a stronger sense of *Being Myself*, which in turn built *Confidence and agency*. Using *Confidence and agency* as the dependent variable, *Mutual support*, *Ordinariness*, and *Meaning and understanding* were all significant independent predictors. Adding *Being myself* to the model significantly improved each of the three models (the R square increased; overall size .68.). See Appendix I for detail on the model.

Figure 1. An empirical/theoretical model of the experience and impact of Shared Reading



²² Using *Being myself* as the dependent variable, we found that *Mutual support*, *Ordinariness*, and *Meaning and understanding* were all significant independent predictors. Adding *Being myself* to the model significantly improved each of the three models (the R square increased to .68).

Confidence and agency and *Being myself* were highly correlated with each other (.74) and were relatively similar in terms of their content.

Reading literature aloud together therefore provided an opportunity ‘to change as well as to restore’ (Iser, 1978, p. 127). It is important to note that *Meaning and understanding* featured alongside *Supportiveness* and *Ordinariness* as among the key conditions from which the effects of Shared Reading arose (see Figure 1). This suggests that it is not just the relational aspects and ethos of the group that matter, but the specific activity of reading together that is important for the effects of Shared Reading – the access to language, imagination, ideas, resources for thinking, and new metaphors ‘to live by’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In other words, we see in our findings an indication that SR has distinctive qualities that give it value in PIPEs that arise from the particular activity rather than being generic benefits of being in a supportive group.

5. Conclusions and Implications

5.1 Conclusions

The aim of this research was to identify and describe the contribution that Shared Reading groups make to the work of Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPEs) in prisons. Shared Reading was found to make a positive contribution in several ways. The findings should be considered in light of the methodological limitations set out earlier in this report.

Shared Reading contributed to the overall ethos and aims of PIPEs by developing new habits of, or capabilities for, communication and reflection among participants. The 10 related dimensions of the MERG: *Feeling secure; Absorption; Ordinariness; Supportiveness; Memory and recognition; Being myself; Confidence and agency; Openness to and engagement with others; Meaning and understanding; and Flexibility* are nurtured by long-term engagement in Shared Reading, a process which is intrinsically linked to the ethos and aims of PIPEs. It is significant that 'Ordinariness' and 'Being Myself' came out as the highest rated dimensions overall.

PIPE residents who participated in Shared Reading reported statistically significantly higher average levels of interpersonal trust, wellbeing, hope, agency and self-efficacy than non-participant PIPE residents. These outcomes are relevant to the aims and ethos of PIPEs.

Shared Reading may contribute to higher levels of wellbeing, hope, agency and interpersonal trust for PIPE residents. Combining the results from the MERG data (improved scores on *Feeling secure, Ordinariness, Recognition and memory, and Meaning and understanding*) with the above results from the IOMI, suggest evidence of positive impact.

Shared Reading was positively rated in all of the PIPE settings: that is, it scored well on all of these dimensions. The highest rated dimensions were *Ordinariness* and *Being myself*. Other aspects of the group that were most highly valued included its continuity and weekly regularity, the ways in which it 'brought the outside in', and the

way that the activity could be enjoyed for its own sake, rather than being instrumentally therapeutic or rehabilitative. The quantitative results showed that the more sessions a SR group participant attended, the higher their mean dimension scores. This relationship was statistically significant for four dimensions: *Feeling secure*, *Ordinariness*, *Memory and recognition*, and *Meaning and understanding*.

A measurable and significant difference in IOMI scores between participants in Shared Reading and non-participant PIPE residents was observed, with participants reporting higher levels of *Wellbeing*, *Hope*, *Agency and self-efficacy*, and *Interpersonal trust*. The more sessions participants attended, the higher their scores on *Hope*, *Motivation to change*, *Interpersonal trust*, and *Relationships with staff*. These findings made theoretical sense and they were supported by individual, first-person accounts of experiences of change over time.

Participants developed new habits of, or capabilities for, communication and reflection. Two main underlying processes contributed to development and change: i) 'venturing out from a secure base': a process in which experiences of feeling secure, ordinariness, support, absorption, and access to memory and recognition created over time in a Shared Reading group made it possible for someone to act with greater self-governing agency; and ii) 'imaginative consideration and connection', in which access to and engagement with imaginative literature provided an intermediary object for thinking about and finding possible meanings in emotional experience, including remembered experience, together and individually. Although these processes often took place at the individual level, the conditions were provided by the shared nature of the Shared Reading experience.

A statistical model exploring the relationships between the dimensions and some possible pathways found that *Mutual Support*, *Ordinariness*, and *Meaning and understanding* (all facilitated by a *Feeling of Security*) led to a stronger sense of *Being myself*, which in turn built *Confidence and agency*: that is, beginning to develop a deep, single, centred nucleus of being, self-governance, and self-direction, or 'establishing the self as a seat of action'. This made it more possible to pursue human goods, including relationships with others, in a full and self-responsible way.

The distinctive qualities of Shared Reading – being read to, reading aloud, and sharing literature – made a unique contribution to residents’ experience that was not replicable through other activities, via clarifications of meaning, the experience of ‘Being myself’ and the strengthening of agency. It also made an important contribution to PIPE staff competence, especially through the Reader Leader training and experience of leading groups.

5.2 Implications for Policy and Practice

This may be the first study to find statistically significant, measurable positive outcome results for the effects of Shared Reading in a prison setting, despite a relatively small sample and short timeframe. The methodology used attempted to ground the measures used in carefully conceptualised experiences of the Shared Reading process. The findings may also be due to the close fit between ‘what goes on’ in Shared Reading groups, and the understanding of primary emotional development or ‘growth’ underlying the OPD framework.²³ The results make conceptual sense, and support many of the existing claims made about Shared Reading. SR has considerable value, in itself, and as a support to other practices, including the understanding and operation of PIPEs and Enabling Environments, and the concept of Rehabilitative Culture. It can help us to understand complex processes of change among groups of offenders once considered to be ‘untreatable’.²⁴ These findings suggest that the model on which OPD and Enabling Environments work (and thinking) is based is promising.

Because on the nature of the work, and the quality of the training, clinical leads can trust Reader Leaders to come in and ‘hold’ groups of clients who struggle with their emotions. Staff value their own engagement and training in Shared Reading highly.

The results show that the long-term nature of Shared Reading is significant: it is not ‘an intervention’ but a sustained practice, whose benefits can increase over time as

²³ E.g., as Haigh argued: ‘Five experiences are judged necessary for health “primary emotional development”’: attachment, containment, communication, inclusion and agency. These can be deliberately recreated in therapeutic environments to form a structure for “secondary emotional development”’ (Haigh 2013).

²⁴ A Belgian PhD study of euthanasia requests by long-term prisoners found to be ‘untreatable’ illustrates the urgency of overcoming ‘stuckness’ (Devynck 2020).

trust is built and group members gain confidence. The results suggest that processes of change and growth are gradual and not always linear. They may be as much about ‘undoing rigidity’ (Davis, 2020, p. 181) as they are about learning new skills. They also suggest that the shared nature of the activity is significant – the practice is set in a relational field.

This research supports The Reader’s Theory of Change, although we have conceptualised the experience using a different language. The dimension, *Being myself* is closely linked to ‘Experiencing liveness’. One suggested addition to outcomes would be ‘strengthened agency and confidence’. Risk was not assessed however it is clear from related research (described earlier), and from increases in IOMI scores, that improvements in the dimensions *Being myself* and ‘strengthened agency and confidence’ are consistent with risk reduction over time.²⁵ Continued investment in this kind of work is justified.²⁶

5.3 Comments on Further Possible Research

The MERG could be used in further research by The Reader, in order to increase robustness of the research with a larger sample size and to test these findings with other populations. The MERG has considerable potential to be developed in ways that might facilitate broader evaluation of PIPE and Enabling Environment settings. The qualities identified as aspects of PIPEyness could be used as the basis for creating a research instrument that could help in articulating and understanding what it is that PIPEs do best and why they differ. Synthesis of these complementary research strands in order to better model a) ‘relational working’ and b) complex processes of change and growth in challenging offender populations, would make a valuable contribution to the knowledge base in this area.

²⁵ See also the study of prison climates and reconviction by Auty and Liebling (2020) which shows strong links between Policing and security, Prisoner safety, Decency, Personal autonomy or agency, Personal development and better reconviction outcomes.

²⁶ We do not claim that Shared Reading is ‘for everyone’ or that it is without tensions. On some occasions during the research we observed how two aspects of the SR format appeared to be in tension with each other: for example, ‘absorption’, especially the experience we have described as ‘narrative absorption’, and reflective consideration. If the story worked, for a group or individual – captured their imagination and drew them into that state of ‘enchantment’ – they were sometimes reluctant to come out of that state, suggesting that there was a sense of loss at being taken out of the story and asked to consider, respond or discuss. Both were valued aspects of SR and worthwhile experiences but they could pull participants in different directions.

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Appendix A

The Reader Organisation's Core Theory of Change and Theory of Change in the Criminal Justice System

Figure A1: The Reader Organisation's Core Theory of Change

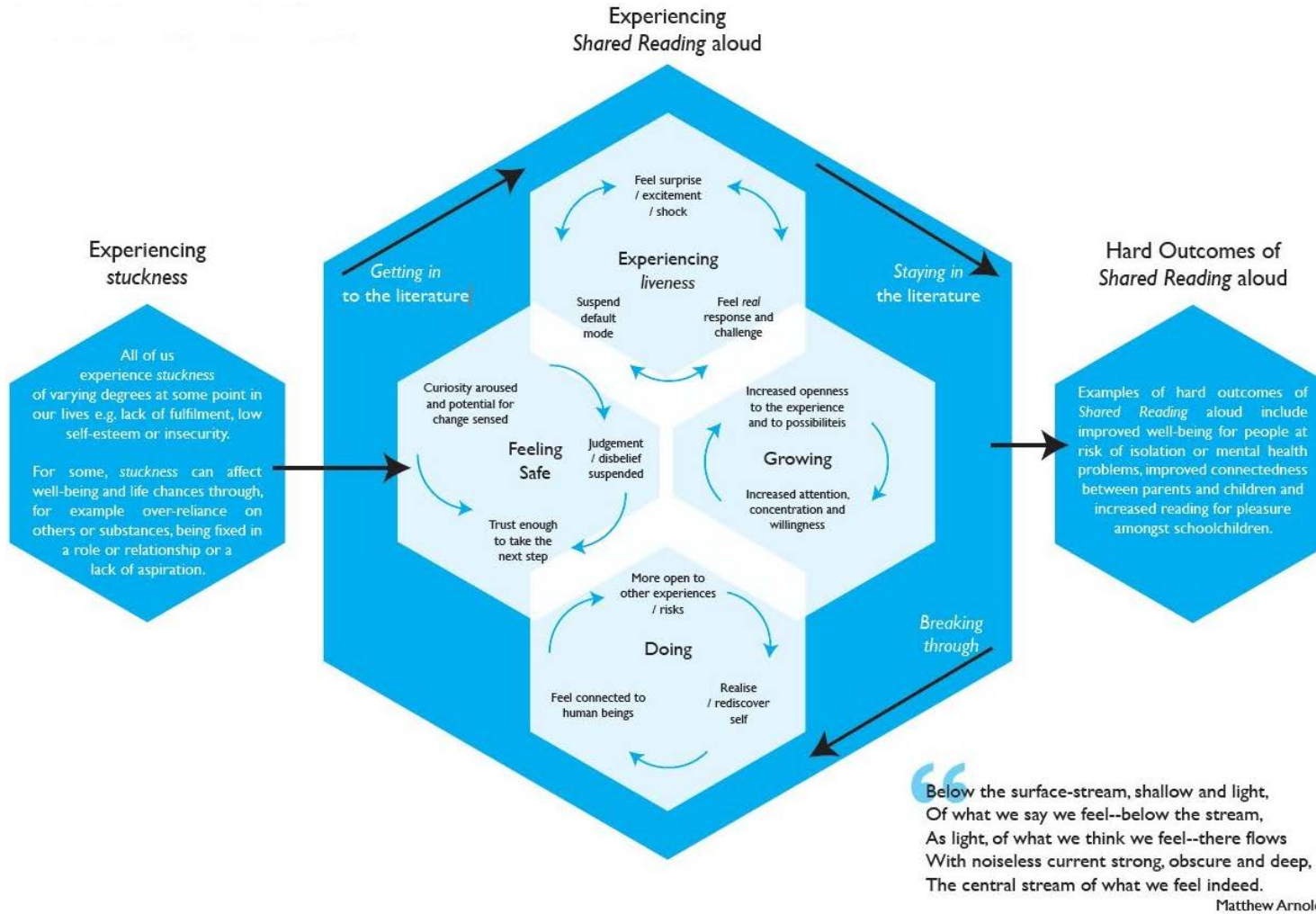
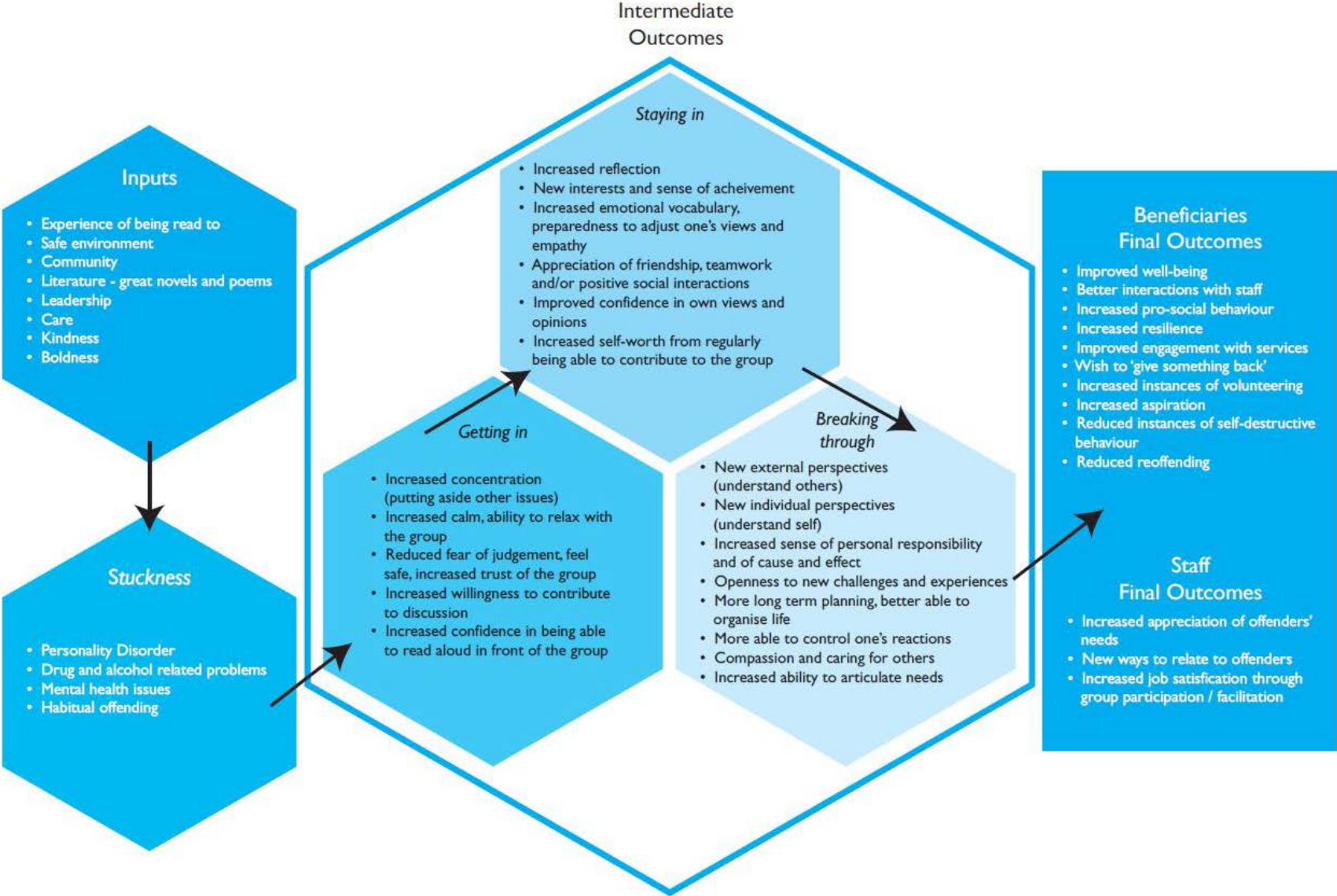


Figure A2: The Reader Organisation’s Theory of Change in the Criminal Justice system



Appendix B

Research approach and reflections

Overall research design and approach

The evaluation took the form of a prospective longitudinal design, integrating a process and outcomes study, as best suited to understanding the nature and value of a complex activity in a distinct type of setting. The research methodology gave priority to detailed qualitative data collection and shared reflection, and the use of Appreciative Inquiry, placing the emphasis on tapping into ‘best practices’ and ‘peak experiences’ (Liebling, Price, & Elliott, 1999). The research design drew on the technique of ‘ethnography-led measurement’ (Liebling, 2015) aiming to discern important, hard-to-describe and hard-to-measure aspects of experience, and fusing qualitative with quantitative research methods.

A highly experiential approach to the study was adopted, including the research team starting their own SR group. One member of the team trained as a group leader with The Reader, gaining valuable insights into the experience of Shared Reading from the points of view of both participants and Reader Leaders, and the research team immersed themselves in the field before attempting to move towards ‘measurement’ (described by Pawson as authentic empirical substantiation).²⁷ The tension between qualitative appreciation and quantitative assessment was acknowledged and supported by continuing with observation and dialogue throughout, revisiting the survey we constructed, and questioning assumptions or meanings we may have built into it, in the light of ongoing encounters. An ‘adaptive theory’ methodology (Layder, 1998) emphasised discovering the language and understandings of participants whilst also drawing on ‘orienting’ concepts drawn from existing research.

The evaluation was designed in two phases. Central to Phase 1 was the development of a new research instrument (the MERG) through ‘ethnography-led measurement’ at three sites, drawing on our experience of developing a similar (larger scale) instrument to capture qualitative data via quantitative measurement

²⁷ See Pawson (1989). Our approach is not ‘measurement-centred’ but *meaning*-centred. Paradoxically, we have found, this leads us to better measurement.

(MQPL: Measuring the Quality of Prison Life; see Liebling, with Arnold 2004; Liebling et al 2011). This involved the use of participant observation, interviews, and extensive dialogue with staff, prisoners and group leaders at three sites, generating rich qualitative data. This was developed into a nuanced measurement instrument designed to conceptualise and capture the multiple experiential processes involved in SR. The process of development, testing and use of the MERG is described in Section 3.2.

In Phase 2 the final version of the MERG was used at seven sites alongside the Intermediate Outcomes Measurement Instrument (IOMI), to make comparisons between SR participants and non-participant PIPE residents on dimensions such as Wellbeing and Resilience (see Section 3.3).

The creation of the MERG tool

Guiding principles for the creation of the MERG were that the statements should be as concrete and close to experience as possible; and that it should retain the range and complexity of experience, balancing this requirement with the need to keep the number of questions manageable. It should use the language of participants, and be created through an iterative process by a team who were all involved in fieldwork. It was treated as a 'work in progress' or 'living instrument', rather than a finished product (DeVellis, 2016).

The potential for variation between Shared Reading groups in PIPE settings was a challenge for the creation of the MERG, given that we were looking for characteristics that could be recognised by participants across eight differing sites (by Phase 2). For example, at all three Phase 1 sites the 'live' reading aloud of the literature was appreciated, but what was important and enjoyable about this differed. At HMP Wanshott the morning 'Book Break' (as the group was called) provided a period of relaxation, during which the women clearly enjoyed becoming absorbed in the experience of being read to; at HMP Aylam Sands the pleasure of taking turns to read was much more apparent; at HMP Tallingford group members appreciated the live reading and were prepared to have a go at reading aloud themselves, but seemed to take most pleasure in the to and fro of conversation relating to the story.

Poetry was received very differently at the three sites: at Aylam Sands and Tallingford individuals took deep pleasure in particular poems; at Wanshott the response to poetry was more often puzzled and resistant, with one or two notable exceptions. The right range and balance of items for the MERG was therefore carefully considered, to reflect this variation.

Fieldnotes, including notes taken in SR groups and the PIPE, on conversations with participants, staff, and group leaders, transcripts of recorded interviews, and the detailed notes from interviews that were not audio-recorded, were used to generate a list of possible statements for inclusion. NVivo was used to assist thematic analysis, and words and phrases used by participants were selected that best captured each key experience. These were compared throughout the process with the themes and concepts derived from the existing research literature. Statements were refined iteratively through further participant observation and interviews with group participants, prison staff and group leaders, to ensure that they captured the most significant components of the SR experience. The statements were piloted and tested with the research participants in a process that sought to ensure that there was congruence in meaning for each statement between the research team and the participants. This took place through conversation with participants during early, slowed down group administration of the pilot survey, and at the end of later interviews, taking particular note of any ambiguities or differing interpretations that came to light.

The MERG took shape through six drafts where a list of over 100 statements was reduced to 50 through combining, condensing, adding and removing, excluding items that were too broad, ambiguous or complex. Input from participants, prison officers, group leaders and The Reader confirmed that the statements we selected 'rang true', providing an authentic description, and capturing the most significant aspects of experience. The response to the MERG from group members and staff was very positive overall.

The final version (Appendix C) included 50 statements inviting responses on a Likert Scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree); questions on attendance at SR groups, and space for longer comments

on 'best moments' in the group, and for any other observations. The MERG was piloted with SR group members at HMP Denisham in a focus group setting, in which residents completed the survey individually before discussing each item as a group. This proved beneficial and resulted in some final minor modifications to the survey.

Reflections on the research process

Despite the challenges of prisons research, this complex project worked very well. The research task (identifying and measuring the value and impact of SR in PIPE settings) required subtle measurement of complex concepts and processes, and sustained cooperation from the field. Almost all of our visits and correspondence were supported by responsive staff. The ways in which this support varied reflected the ethos of the different sites: stresses faced by individual PIPEs, such as disruptions to staffing, affected their ability to answer questions, run groups, or help us to locate individuals. At PIPEs with a settled population and an established routine, and where staff were not taken off to meet shortages elsewhere in the prison, we were able to carry out data collection more easily. The difficulties we faced in the research environment sometimes stemmed from the wider prison (such as late unlock after lunch, which shortened the time available for the Shared Reading group), and sometimes from the lack of organisation in the PIPE (so that the list of who was attending the group could not be found or was unreliable). Our experience as researchers echoed the experiences of staff-prisoner relationships at the various sites: where residents were closely watched, so were we; where they were listened to and staff had time for conversation, we found the same; where there were intelligent, confident and flexible attitudes to rules, in the interests of residents' flourishing, similar attitudes to our research were found.

Our actual and perceived roles, values and loyalties as a research team were constantly present as a factor in the research. Working in a prestigious educational institution, and being relatively at home with complex, imaginative literature, meant that we were to some extent identified with the activity that we were evaluating, rather than being 'value neutral'. Our 'dual loyalties' to reading and to 'truth seeking' in social research meant, we hope, that we managed to adopt a 'third standpoint'

from which all possibilities were available and potential distortions were minimised (see Gouldner, 1975; Liebling, 2001).

Appendix C

MERG Dimensions Revised

'Holding' Dimensions

A – Sense of security

| Item no | Item |
|---------|---|
| 48 | I feel safe in the Shared Reading group. |
| 15 | I can forget things I am worrying about when I am in the group. |
| 5 | When I am in the group I feel calm. |
| 21 | Reading together makes my heart feel warm. |

B - Absorption

| Item no | Item |
|---------|--|
| 4 | During the Shared Reading group I sometimes feel I am not in prison. |
| 17 | I can sometimes physically feel what's described in the story. |
| 28 | When I'm in the group, time goes differently from normal. |
| 41 | When I am in the Shared Reading group it feels as if I'm 'there', in the story. |
| 20 | Hearing the story or poem read aloud helps me pay attention to what is being read. |

C - Ordinarity

| Item no | Item |
|---------|---|
| 31 | The Shared Reading group feels 'normal' rather than 'like treatment'. |
| 35 | I enjoy chatting about 'non-prison stuff' in the group. |
| 39 | You see a more human side to the officers who join the group. |

D– Supportiveness

| Item no | Item |
|---------|--|
| 16 | I don't trust people in the group. |
| 13 | People are supportive of each other in the Shared Reading group. |
| 27 | Things come out in the Shared Reading group that don't come out in other groups. |
| 19 | The reading group is like a mini-community. |
| 3 | The Shared Reading group brings different kinds of people together. |
| 44 | I find others in the group annoying. |

E – Recognition and Memory

| Item no | Item |
|---------|--|
| 49 | I have moments when I think a character in a story might be me, or I could be that person. |
| 18 | At times, Shared Reading makes me re-live old memories. |
| 32 | Sometimes during the group I remember things I haven't thought about for a long time. |

'Growth' Dimensions

F – Being myself

| Item no | Item |
|---------|---|
| 1 | In the Shared reading group it is ok to say what you think. |
| 14 | I don't need to mask my feelings in the group. |
| 26 | I can be the real me in the group. |
| 25 | I don't feel judged in the group. |
| 37 | I can say what I think in the group. |

G – Confidence and agency

| Item no | Item |
|---------|---|
| 10 | I feel I can chose how much or how little to join in. |
| 38 | I am more confident about my opinions since coming to the group. |
| 11 | Shared Reading has built up my confidence. |
| 45 | I have got better at putting my point of view across in other situations. |

H –Openness and engagement with others

| Item no | Item |
|---------|--|
| 40 | Listening to other group members' views is interesting. |
| 29 | I can see other points of view more since coming to the group. |
| 34 | During the discussions, we build on each other's ideas. |
| 22 | I discuss what we have read with members of the group outside the sessions. |
| 23 | I discuss what we have read with people who don't usually come to the group. |

I –Meaning and Understanding

| Item no | Item |
|---------|--|
| 9 | I have got better at seeing the underlying meaning in what we read. |
| 36 | I like having the poems or stories around to re-read outside the sessions. |
| 12 | I 'get' poetry more since coming to the group. |
| 46 | Shared Reading gives me words and ideas to think with. |
| 33 | I often don't understand what we read. |

| Item no | Item |
|---------|--|
| 43 | I understand people better because of what we read in the group. |
| 6 | I care about what happens to the characters in what we read. |

J – Flexibility

| Item no | Item |
|---------|---|
| 24 | Shared Reading helps me see how things can have more than one meaning. |
| 50 | It's important for stories to have a clear ending. |
| 8 | Reading together challenges the way I think. |
| 30 | When the ending of a story is left open, you can add your own thoughts. |

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Topic: Shared Reading Groups in PIPEs

Please read this sheet before filling in the Consent Form.

1. What is the research about?

The research is about Shared Reading groups (run by The Reader Organisation) in Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPEs).

2. Who is doing the research?

The research is led by Professor Alison Liebling from the University of Cambridge. The research team also includes Dr Katherine Auty, Judith Gardom, and Elinor Lieber.

3. Who is sponsoring the research?

The research is sponsored by HMPPS and NHS England.

4. What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the research is to find out about the experience of participating in a Shared Reading group, and what life is like on a PIPE.

5. If I take part in the research, what will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to complete a survey. The survey was recently developed specifically for Shared Reading group members, and contains 50 statements. You will be asked to circle whether you agree or disagree with each one of these statements. Your answers will help us capture what it is like to attend a Shared Reading group. Following the survey, we will have a short group discussion.

6. If I decide to take part, can I change my mind?

Anyone who decides to take part can later withdraw at any time with no negative consequences. There is no advantage or disadvantage to deciding to take part in the research.

7. What will happen to the information that I give?

The surveys will be stored securely and the data will be entered into a computer database anonymously. Statistical software will be used to analyse the data, and the information may be used in the researchers' report.

8. Will my identity be protected?

Names and other identifiable details will be changed, and the identity of participants will be known only to the researchers.

9. Will the information I give be confidential?

All information will be confidential, apart from information concerning behaviour that is against prison rules and can be adjudicated against, illegal acts, and behaviour that is potentially harmful to you or to others (for example intention to self-harm or use violence against another person).

CONSENT FORM
TOPIC: SHARED READING GROUPS IN PIPES

Please read the attached Information Sheet.

Then answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had an opportunity to ask questions. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time and without giving any reason, without any consequences to my parole, standard of care, rights or privileges. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I understand that my completed survey may be looked at by appropriate members of the research team, where it is relevant to my taking part in research. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I agree to take part in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Name (Printed): _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Researcher's Name (Printed): _____

Any requests for information or queries about this research should be sent to:

Shared Reading Evaluation Project, Prisons Research Centre, Institute of Criminology,
Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DA Tel. 01223 335360

Measuring the Experience of Reading Groups (MERG)

The survey consists of 3 parts, and should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Part I asks for background information, Part II asks about your experience on the group, and Part III includes a space for you to add anything else you'd like us to know about the Shared Reading group. If you would like to have anything explained, please ask one of the research team members. Thank you for your cooperation!

Part I

1. What age are you? _____

2. How long have you been on this PIPE?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 month | <input type="checkbox"/> 7-12 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 13-24 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 2 years |

3. How long have you been coming to the Shared Reading group?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> This is my first time | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than a month | <input type="checkbox"/> 7-12 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 months | <input type="checkbox"/> More than a year |

4. How many times (approximately) have you been to a Shared Reading group meeting?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> This is my first time | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 times |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 times | <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 times |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 times | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 21 |

Part II

Below are 50 statements. Please read each statement carefully and circle the answer that best describes how you feel. Only circle one answer for each statement, and take care to answer each question.

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. | In the Shared Reading group it is OK to say what you think. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 2. | I have read things that were out of my comfort zone in the Shared Reading group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 3. | The Shared Reading group brings different kinds of people together. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 4. | During the Shared Reading group I sometimes feel I am not in prison. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5. When I am in the group I feel calm. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 6. I care about what happens to the characters in what we read. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 7. The things we read about in the group are irrelevant to my life. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 8. Reading together challenges the way I think. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 9. I have got better at seeing the underlying meaning in what we read. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 10. I feel I can choose how much or how little to join in. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 11. Shared Reading has built up my confidence. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 12. I 'get' poetry more since coming to the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 13. People are supportive of each other in the Shared Reading group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 14. I don't need to mask my feelings in the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 15. I can forget things I am worrying about when I am in the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 16. I don't trust people in the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 17. I can sometimes physically feel what's described in the story. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 18. At times, Shared Reading makes me re-live old memories. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 19. The Reading group is like a mini-community. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 20. Hearing the story or poem read aloud helps me pay attention to what is being read. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 21. Reading together makes my heart feel warm. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 22. I discuss what we have read with <u>members of the group</u> outside the sessions. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 23. I discuss what we have read with people who <u>don't</u> usually come to the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 24. Shared Reading helps me see how things can have more than one meaning. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 25. I don't feel judged in the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 26. I can be the real me in the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 27. Things come out in the Shared Reading group that don't come out in other groups. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 28. When I'm in the group, time goes differently from normal. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 29. I can see other points of view more since coming to the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 30. When the ending of a story is left open, you can add your own thoughts | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 31. The Shared Reading group feels 'normal' rather than 'like treatment'. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 32. Sometimes during the group I remember things I haven't thought about for a long time. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 33. I often don't understand what we read. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 34. During the discussion, we build on each other's ideas. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 35. I enjoy chatting about 'non-prison stuff' in the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 36. I like having the poems or stories around to re-read outside the sessions. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 37. I can say what I think in the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 38. I am more confident about my opinions since coming to the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 39. You see a more human side of the officers who join the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 40. Listening to other group members' views is interesting. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 41. When I am in the Shared Reading group it feels as if I'm 'there', in the story. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 42. Things we read bring back difficult memories for me. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 43. I understand people better because of what we read in the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 44. I find others in the group annoying. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 45. I have got better at putting my point of view across in other situations. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 46. Shared Reading gives me words and ideas to think with. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 47. I am more of a reader since coming to the group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 48. I feel safe in the Shared Reading group. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 49. I have moments when I think a character in a story might be me, or I could be that person. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 50. It's important for stories to have a clear ending. | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

Part III

What has been one of the best moments for you in the Shared Reading group?

Any other comments?

Thank you for taking part in the survey!

Appendix D

Detailed description of MERG dimensions

1. Feeling Secure

One aspect of the SR experience that was commented on most frequently was the physical and emotional sense of security that participants felt. One woman said, *'Yesterday I went in there feeling really anxious, and within a few minutes I was just comfy. And it all went away for a bit.'* Another said, *'I just feel proper settled.'* Relaxation, calm, pleasure, and an absence of stress were highly valued in prison environments in which wariness or a heightened state of alertness could become the norm. This was compounded by the internal sources of stress that PD sufferers may experience (which some participants described: 'feeling 'not myself', 'experiencing tension', 'being a loose cannon' or 'feeling triggered'): *'When you've got a personality disorder, like we find it hard to not fixate on things'*. The regularity (and longevity) of the group, the lack of judgment (also linked to Support, below) and the group's 'separateness' from the prison or from 'therapy' contributed to a feeling of security. MERG items in this dimension included 'I feel safe in the Shared Reading group' and 'I can forget things I am worrying about when I am in the group'.

2. Absorption

'The story, if it's well-written, can transport you to another place. You're picturing it in your mind as you read the words', said one participant. The power of imaginative literature to absorb, transport or 'enchant' (Felski, 2008) is widely recognised, although the additional power of hearing a story or poem read aloud is usually understood in relation to the experience of children (see for example Berg, 1977). The way that being read to allowed participants to be 'in' the story was appreciated: *'You can allow your mind to go with the story a little bit more... you're there but you don't have to concentrate on the words, you're just concentrating on the images those words are putting into your mind.'* The experience of 'being lost in a story' was a form of 'removal' (O'Donnell, 2014) to the alternative reality of a 'story world' (Hakemulder et al., 2017, p. 3) from which those who experienced it "returned" feeling refreshed, or altered in some way' (ibid, p.1). This state of 'narrative absorption', or enchantment, described by Hakemulder et al. (2017), and referred to

by participants as 'escape' or 'distraction', provided temporary relief from painful or stressful thoughts: *'It takes me away from being in my life'*, (Participant). This experience of deep engagement that a good story could induce provided a kind of 'holding state' (Davis 2020, p. 186) in which inner connections could emerge and participants could shift from 'pained self-absorption' to a 'sense of awakened life' (Billington 2019, p. 77). MERG items in this dimension included 'When I'm in the group, time goes differently from normal' and 'When I am in the Shared Reading group it feels as if I'm 'there', in the story'.

3. Ordinariness

'Ordinariness', or 'normality', one of the aims of PIPE environments, was a problematic concept for prisoners. As one man said, 'prison *is* normal life, for me.' The focus for this dimension was on the sense of staff being present as human beings alongside prisoners, and the literature and discussion not relating primarily to prison, although connections with prison life were often made. The activity was something that could be enjoyed for its own sake, without a defined therapeutic or rehabilitative aim. Group members often remarked that whilst *they* might not always 'feel normal', the group 'felt normal'. Several people commented on the pleasure of talking about 'non-prison stuff', and one participant's comparison with gardening was illuminating: *'It's like when I go out and do a bit of gardening, and when you're out there and you're on your hands and knees and you're working or whatever, you could just be anywhere.'* Items in this dimensions included 'The Shared Reading group feels 'normal' rather than 'like treatment'' and 'I enjoy chatting about 'non-prison stuff' in the group'.

4. Supportiveness

'I just feel like I've found a bit of a belonging'. The sense of mutual support was most strikingly seen in the groups in relation to the patience and encouragement shown when group members read aloud, especially for the first time or if they were anxious about their ability. *'You don't want to be condescending. You need to be sensitive'*, said one man. Supportiveness extended outside the group sessions: *'We talk, on a Friday, either I'll ask him or he'll ask me, are you going today, and if someone's not going, you know, have you got a visit... we're conscious of whether someone's there or not, if there's an empty chair'*. Items in this dimension included 'People are

supportive of each other in the Shared Reading group' and 'Things come out in the Shared Reading group that don't come out in other groups'.

5. Memory and recognition

Memory and recognition were unpredictable and potentially uncomfortable, as well as rewarding, aspects of the SR experience. Recognising that someone else (in a fictional narrative) was like you or shared your experience of the world, or that there was a name for what you felt, could be a source of relief and joy. On the other hand, the risk of being ambushed unexpectedly by a memory sparked off by the literature was made more acute by the company of others, and could generate feelings of anger, fear, or the need to escape. This quality of unexpectedness and involuntariness (Felski, 2008, p. 23) made this dimension one of the most powerful aspects of the SR experience. As one participant put it, '*Some stories can bring up a whole world-wind (sic) of memories for you*', an experience that was '*quite poignant, but really good as well*'.

Two kinds of story in particular seemed to evoke powerful experiences of memory and recognition. One was, not surprisingly, those set in an era in which participants had been young, with cultural details (such as makes of car) from the past that had childhood associations. More unexpectedly, stories with vivid descriptions of the natural world were catalysts for comments arising from memories, often expressed with great intensity and pleasure. A surprising number of these had to do with birds (and not just when reading the short story 'The Birds' by Daphne du Maurier, or Barry Hines' novel *Kes*, About a boy's relationship with a kestrel). Sometimes the connection was made with experiences in prison: birds are the form of wildlife most visible from a prison cell. One participant shared the memory of when '*a robin flew into the cell next to mine, and the big guy caught it in his hand. I looked at its face – it had such a kind little face.*' The natural world could be sweeter and more evocative of growth and renewal, or of a 'full sense of life', than the 'psychological' world (see Billington, 2011, p. 73; Billington et al., 2016, p. 237). MERG items included in this dimension included 'I have moments when I think a character in a story might be me, or I could be that person' and 'Sometimes during the group I remember things I haven't thought about for a long time'.

6. Being myself

Like 'ordinariness', the concept of 'Being myself' was complex and paradoxical in prison. Wearing a 'front' for survival was a reasonable adaptation for the majority of prisoners. The extra scrutiny that PIPE residents felt themselves to be under induced another layer of wariness, and a pressure to engage in burdensome 'narrative labour' or adopt an inauthentic self in order to persuade multiple audiences of reduced risk (Warr, 2019). For those with various forms of personality disorder, the 'self' was especially uncertain and fragmented, and so any question of 'being oneself' could be both puzzling and risky. For this group of prisoners, the problems of identity conflict, confusion and dissonance ('be this, be that'), vividly described in Warr (2019, p. 10) could be deeply challenging.

The experience of 'Being myself' seemed to be closely linked to the dimensions of *Feeling secure* and *Supportiveness*, experiences that came about through, and generated, trust among the members of the group. *'If I have trust in a group, I open up more, and I can be myself more'*, said one woman. *'I didn't feel judged or like I had to be anything'*, commented another participant.²⁸ Items in this dimension included 'I don't need to mask my feelings in the group' and 'I can be the real me in the group'.

7. Confidence and agency

Human agency is defined as 'the capacity to exercise personal power and capabilities to cause events to happen in the world' (Smith, 2015, p. 50) The experiences of 'confidence' and 'agency' were combined in one dimension because of the number of comments and reflections in our data in which they were inextricably linked, particularly in relation to deciding to read aloud in the group or expressing an opinion. It was noticeable how, for example, a man who seemed particularly withdrawn and wary in the group only began to contribute to the discussion after reading aloud. However, the choice *not* to read or speak was also an important exercise of agency for some. So this dimension reflected confidence in having and expressing a view, and in exploring feelings, situations and activities that might

²⁸ The important question of how this discovery and development of an authentic self 'worked out' at later stages of the PD journey, when participants would return to more challenging 'mainstream' prison wings, lies beyond the scope of our research.

facilitate personal change, and the link between this and strengthened agency, which could lead to better ways of relating to others.

Confident agency meant the opposite of being stuck, inert, or helpless – developing a self-governing centre of being, purpose and direction; possessing power to cause desired effects in the world, proactively, and coherently, rather than being ‘chaotic jumbles of disconnected and conflicting sensations, awareness, thoughts, desires ... and feelings’ (Smith, 2015, p. 42). Being ‘centred’, he argues, ‘prevents the unbearable confusion to which our myriad human capacities and tendencies would lead us, if they were not integrated and coordinated in relatively unified experience, identity and action’ (Ibid). This made it possible to strive, at least, to live in a particular way, to pursue human goods in a full and self-responsible way (Taylor, 1991, p. 74) notwithstanding the practical obstacles and difficulties that get in the way or make achieving this impossible (Shapland & Bottoms, 2011). Items in this dimension included ‘Shared Reading has built up my confidence’ and ‘I have got better at putting my point of view across in other situations’.

8. Openness to and engagement with others

‘This is not a natural friendship group’, one of the officers pointed out. A prisoner, similarly, commented, ‘You sit in a room and you’ve got four, five, seven, however many people, and who have all led completely different lives, and it just so happens we’re all in this room together at the same time, but experiences leading up to that point are so different that you can read a sentence and have seven completely different views of it. I like that.’ Exposure to others around a common purpose built relationships over time, and led to surprising discoveries. Tolerance of difference was not merely something that participants knew that they should, in principle, exercise; it was experienced as a pleasurable aspect of being in the group. Positive social experiences in a safe setting, and the exploration of common understandings, could lead to greater willingness to engage with others. Items in this dimension included ‘I can see other points of view more since coming to the group’ and ‘During the discussions, we build on each other’s ideas’.

9. Meaning and understanding

Gaining new concepts and vocabulary was an important aspect of the SR experience. An increasing confidence that the world, others, and oneself, were comprehensible was a crucial aspect of a sense of a possible 'Good Life'. Words and meaning 'broke through', bringing energy and vitality with them and being 'full of significance' (see Davis & Magee, 2020). As one woman put it, *'The way we digest everything and really think about it'* was a valued dimension of the SR experience, leading to a sense of satisfaction or even triumph when meaning emerged from something that seemed opaque, often expressed in the phrase, 'I get it', particularly in relation to the poems. Although what was understood was only partially expressed in words, development of the use of language was an important component in this dimension. The 'opening up' of meaning gave feelings shape and safety. Items in this dimension included 'Shared Reading gives me words and ideas to think with' and 'I have got better at seeing the underlying meaning in what we read'.

10. Flexibility

'Flexibility' contrasted with 'rigidity' of point of view, assumptions and approaches, and also with aspects of the 'stuckness' that characterised the experience of PIPE residents. 'Flexibility' involved tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty, holding several possibilities together, staying with a thought that was half-formed, or welcoming a change of mind. One of the aspects of SR where Flexibility (or its absence) was most noticeable was in the discussion of the endings of stories. A clear ending, preferably following a 'twist' or surprise, but tying up the threads of the story, was often preferred to the uncertainty and ambiguity of an ending that left readers without an answer to all the questions raised by the story. But when this could be tolerated or even welcomed, there was the potential for a deeper and livelier sense of possibility. There was a potential connection here between flexibility in relation to the literature, and the potential for a different 'story of self', for someone who was able to tolerate and even enjoy ambiguity. MERG items in this dimension included 'Reading together challenges the way I think' and 'When the ending of a story is left open, you can add your own thoughts'.

Appendix E

IOMI and MERG Reliability

Table E1: Results – Reliability: Cronbach’s Alpha for IOMI

| | α | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|------|---------|
| | T0 | T1 | Overall |
| Resilience | .563 | .500 | .540 |
| Agency / self-efficacy | .740 | .712 | .730 |
| Hope | .820 | .690 | .770 |
| Wellbeing | .797 | .817 | .805 |
| Motivation to change | .769 | .788 | .774 |
| Impulsivity / problem solving | .736 | .777 | .753 |
| Interpersonal trust | .842 | .837 | .840 |
| Relationships with staff | - | .837 | - |

Table E2: Results – Reliability: Cronbach’s Alpha for MERG

| | α | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|------|---------|
| | T0 | T1 | Overall |
| <i>‘Holding’ dimensions</i> | | | |
| Sense of security | .759 | .812 | .781 |
| Absorption | .746 | .843 | .794 |
| Ordinariness | .693 | .696 | .701 |
| Mutual support | .756 | .813 | .785 |
| Recognition and memory | .657 | .811 | .727 |
| <i>‘Growth’ dimensions</i> | | | |
| Being myself | .865 | .901 | .882 |
| Confidence and agency | .827 | .884 | .855 |
| Openness and engagement with others | .699 | .836 | .766 |
| Meaning and understanding | .813 | .857 | .836 |
| Flexibility | .685 | .723 | .708 |

Table E3: MERG Dimension Correlations

| | Security | Absorp~n | Ordina~s | Support | Recogn~n | Myself | Agency | Openness | Meaning | Flexibility |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|--------|--------|----------|---------|-------------|
| Sense | 1.000 | | | | | | | | | |
| Absorp~n | 0.8438 | 1.000 | | | | | | | | |
| Ordina~s | 0.7277 | 0.7373 | 1.000 | | | | | | | |
| Support | 0.7999 | 0.7025 | 0.6434 | 1.000 | | | | | | |
| Recogn~n | 0.5721 | 0.7225 | 0.5738 | 0.5229 | 1.000 | | | | | |
| Myself | 0.7370 | 0.6959 | 0.6253 | 0.7564 | 0.4659 | 1.000 | | | | |
| Agency | 0.7595 | 0.7359 | 0.7030 | 0.7030 | 0.4695 | 0.7357 | 1.000 | | | |
| Openness | 0.7491 | 0.7119 | 0.6502 | 0.7096 | 0.5774 | 0.6910 | 0.7114 | 1.000 | | |
| Meaning | 0.8041 | 0.8151 | 0.6533 | 0.7294 | 0.6061 | 0.7010 | 0.7234 | 0.7743 | 1.000 | |
| Flexibility | 0.6704 | 0.5834 | 0.5166 | 0.5916 | 0.4168 | 0.6012 | 0.6657 | 0.6953 | 0.6535 | 1.00. |

Appendix F

PIPEyness: Towards a Framework on the Quality of Prison PIPES and Cultures

| Prison & PIPE type | Prison Conditions and Culture | PIPE Conditions and Culture | Prison Impact on PIPE, & PIPE in Prison Context | PIPE Qualities present | MQPL Dimensions 3+ | Level of PIPEyness |
|---|--|--|---|------------------------|---|--------------------|
| HMP Aylam Sands Men, Cat C Progression PIPE | Small, well-resourced prison. Outstanding relationships; whole prison has Enabling Environment status. High levels of hopefulness. | PIPE on unit with TC, mostly separated with some shared activities. Very good facilities, well looked after. Office on wing. Animals and fish; very good gardens. High level of trust and responsibility. Strong sense of care, calm, and excellent communication. | Excellent culture and conditions support excellent PIPE. PIPE is one element in prison that has PIPE ethos throughout. | 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 | Entry into custody Respect/courtesy Staff-prisoner relationships Humanity Decency Care for the vulnerable Help and assistance Staff professionalism Bureaucratic legitimacy Fairness Organisation and consistency Policing and security Prisoner safety Prisoner adaptation Drugs and exploitation Conditions Family contact Personal development Personal autonomy Wellbeing Distress total 21 | Good |

| Prison & PIPE type | Prison Conditions and Culture | PIPE Conditions and Culture | Prison Impact on PIPE, & PIPE in Prison Context | PIPE Qualities present | MQPL Dimensions 3+ | Level of PIPEyness |
|---|--|---|--|------------------------|---|--------------------|
| HMP Skelhope Men, High Security Progression PIPE | Very good, well-resourced High Security prison with stable body of staff. | PIPE on Westgate (OPD) Unit with TC. Excellent physical facilities, dedicated & experienced staff working hard to encourage agency, good relationships and progression. | Good prison supporting well-protected PIPE. | 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 | Respect/courtesy Staff-prisoner relationships Humanity Decency Care for the vulnerable Policing and security Prisoner safety Prisoner adaptation Conditions Family contact Personal autonomy Total 11 | Good |
| HMP Bridhampton Men, Cat B Progression PIPE. | Well-run prison despite difficult conditions. Local prison, diverse population, high proportion of sex offenders. Old buildings and limited space and physical resources. Complex and varied population. | Ageing buildings; limited communal space and little access to outdoor space. Some scope for cooking. Considerable effort made with limited environment. Calm; experienced, committed and very present uniformed staff. All residents on PIPE are VPs; higher than average age and educational level. A sense of hope and purpose. | Limitations of architecture of prison as a whole affect PIPE. Regime/timing negatively affect PIPE; doing what they can to mitigate. Good prison culture supports the work of PIPE. Impressive & distinctive element in good prison. | 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 | Respect/courtesy Staff-prisoner relationships Care for the vulnerable Help and assistance Staff professionalism Policing and security Prisoner safety Prisoner adaptation Conditions Family contact Distress total 11 | Good |
| HMP/YOI East Darrow Young men, Cat B Progression PIPE | Lack of purposeful activity, inadequate regime and high levels of lock-up. Unsafe, with poor staff-prisoner relationships. | Lodgers integrated imaginatively; positive atmosphere; high level of supervision of residents; attractive but limited indoor space used well; limited outdoor space; very limited scope for cooking. | PIPE well-protected from many of the prison's problems. | 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 | Prisoner safety Prisoner adaptation Distress total 3 | Mixed plus |

| Prison & PIPE type | Prison Conditions and Culture | PIPE Conditions and Culture | Prison Impact on PIPE, & PIPE in Prison Context | PIPE Qualities present | MQPL Dimensions 3+ | Level of PIPEyness |
|---|---|---|--|------------------------|--|--------------------|
| HMP Wanshott Women's training prison, closed conditions. Preparation PIPE & Progression PIPE (one Unit, different landings) | Divers and complex population; prison runs several therapeutic regimes. Prison is well-run; little violence, good conditions and relationships. | Many lodgers 2 PIPEs not fully separated Cramped facilities but great efforts made to make spaces attractive. Staff very present (and protective of residents); staff distinguish PIPE from regular prison work. Volatile atmosphere, with some tensions between residents in the two PIPE categories. | Generally good conditions support PIPE. Protective and security conscious culture affects PIPE. PIPE offers distinctive & valued environment. | 2,4,5,6,7 | Respect/courtesy Staff-prisoner relationships Humanity Decency Care for the vulnerable Help and assistance Prisoner safety Prisoner adaptation Conditions Family contact Personal development Distress Total 12 | Mixed plus |
| HMP Tallingford Men, Cat C Progression PIPE | Some problems with drugs and violence; hygiene and safety; purposeful activity and time out of cell. In a state of transition and improvement. | Large. Other half of Unit is OPD Treatment facility, with communication between residents possible and office facilities indoors but in poor condition; garden underused with access strictly limited. A somewhat punitive and risk-oriented approach; PIPE activities seen as add-on rather than pervasive culture. | PIPE physical conditions better than rest of prison but staffing affected by shortages in prison. Conditions limit PIPE. Some highly committed individual staff but some uniformed and specialist staff punitive in language and behaviour. Culture negatively affects PIPE but PIPE somewhat better environment than prison. | 1,2,3,4,6 | Respect/courtesy Prisoner safety Prisoner adaptation Conditions Family contact Distress total 6 | Mixed plus |

| Prison & PIPE type | Prison Conditions and Culture | PIPE Conditions and Culture | Prison Impact on PIPE, & PIPE in Prison Context | PIPE Qualities present | MQPL Dimensions 3+ | Level of PIPEyness |
|---|---|---|---|------------------------|---|--------------------|
| HMP & YOI Sleybury Heath Women's local resettlement; closed conditions. Provision PIPE and Progression PIPE (in one Unit) | Well-managed, humane prison despite crowding, limited facilities, and complex population with diverse needs, high levels of drug use, violence and mental illness. | Cramped, noisy, lack of privacy. Some shared cells. No kitchens. No garden. Restless, noisy, difficult, present/hands on, lack of opportunity for responsibility, emphasis on safety and participation; caring/paternalistic staff. | Limited physical conditions affect PIPE but protected from staffing stresses. Positive culture of prison & staff commitment supports PIPE. PIPE offers important environment & is protected from prison problems. | 2,3,4,6,7 | Respect/courtesy Staff-prisoner relationships Humanity Decency Care for the vulnerable Help and assistance Staff professionalism Policing and security Prisoner safety Prisoner adaptation Conditions Family contact Personal development Personal autonomy Total 14 | Mixed embattled |
| HMP Denisham Men, Cat B Provision PIPE and Progression PIPE (separate Units) | Many high-risk prisoners and men serving long sentences. Unsafe. Problems with drugs, weapons and gangs. High levels of violence and self-harm. Many inexperienced staff. Lack of hope. | Large, 2 PIPEs separated. Many lodgers Good. Vegetable Garden with chickens and goats. Buildings/spaces off wing in garden area. Trying but can't keep rest of negative prison conditions and culture at bay | Poor conditions limit better conditions of PIPE. Negative staff culture affects PIPE. PIPE somewhat better than prison but not well protected from serious problems. | 1,3,4,6 | Conditions Distress Total 2 | Poor |

Prison Conditions and Culture: Buildings, staffing, population, leadership, regime, challenges, based on our observations, and Inspection and MQPL reports.

PIPE Conditions: Size, building & facilities, staffing, population, programmes, opportunities, from observations and discussion with staff and residents.

PIPE Qualities (see Turner, K., 'Therapeutic Environments in the NHS/HMPPS OPD Strategy'; 7-11 on Smith 2015)

1. **Has clear and protected boundaries but is open** (safe but not stifling or excessively risk averse; finds ways of bringing the outside in).
2. **Is flexible and responsive, constantly engaged in reflexive thinking** (affirming of individuals and alert to individual needs).
3. **supported to be creative and innovative** (staff are confident and skilful in looking for ways to be creative, encouraged to innovate, and support these qualities in residents).
4. **Has a purposeful ethos** (hopeful outlook and a sense that PIPE provides the possibility for change).
5. **Is relationally reliable and consistent** (stable staff; settled and reliable relationships; staff presence, knowledge and consistency).
6. **Offers opportunities to experience high quality relationships** (staff-resident, resident-resident, and with outsiders) that are respectful, trusting, honest, caring, fair, with good communication.
7. **Is conducive to a sense of social belonging** for residents.
8. **Facilitates agency** (residents allowed to take some responsibility).
9. **Conveys a sense of 'ordinariness'** (which will support the transition to life after prison).

Appendix G

IOMI Dimensions and Information Sheets

| Dimension | Description | Items |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Resilience | Capacity to recover from adversity, to “move on” in a positive manner or begin again. Related to individual coping skills and wider relationships and support networks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times. • I have a hard time making it through stressful events. |
| Agency / self-efficacy | Whether one is able to make autonomous and independent decisions about one’s own life and to “make things happen” in the outside world as a result of those decisions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am confident that I can cope with unexpected events. • I feel capable of making decisions. • I make good decisions. • My life is full of problems which I can’t overcome. • My problems will dominate all of my life. |
| Hope | A calculation about perceived scope for positive future change. Linked to motivation and self-assessments of efficacy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel hopeless about my future. |
| Wellbeing | General or overall mental / emotional / psychological health or balance. Linked to positive self-regard and confidence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel confident. • I feel good about myself. • I usually deal with problems well. |
| Motivation to change | Linked to positive engagement, and a key focus within it is on internal rather than external motivation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I owe it to myself to change. • I am really working hard to change my life. • Anyone can talk about changing themselves; I’m actually going to do something about it. |
| Impulsivity / problem-solving | Lack of reflection and planning and a disregard of the consequences of behaviour. People who are highly impulsive also generally lack problem solving skills. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I often do things without thinking of the consequences. • I don’t really think about what I’m doing, I just do it. • I often do the first thing that comes into my head. |
| Interpersonal trust | Attitudes toward and connectedness with others. Links to notions of social capital. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are some people who I trust. • There are people who really understand me. • There are people who I can turn to when I have a problem. • I have close friends I can trust. |
| Practical problems | Extent to which respondents regard the key areas referred to as being problematic for them. The 8 areas listed are strongly linked to the “7 pathways” to rehabilitation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with money. • Problems with employment / prospects. • Problems with health and fitness. • Problems with housing. • Problems with drugs. • Problems with drink. • Problems with relationships. • Problems with gambling. |

| Dimension | Description | Items |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Additional scales | | |
| Relationships with staff | The importance of the relationship between offenders and practitioners in the desistence process has been highlighted frequently in previous research. The following questions were included in the instrument to capture the contribution of relationship building. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff here have treated me fairly. • The staff here have listened to me. • The staff here do what they say they'll do. • I feel able to trust the staff here. • The staff here have helped me to think differently about myself. |



INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Topic: Shared Reading Groups in PIPEs

Please read this sheet before filling in the Consent Form.

1. What is the research about?

The research is about Shared Reading groups (run by The Reader Organisation) in Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPEs).

2. Who is doing the research?

The research is led by Professor Alison Liebling from the University of Cambridge. There are three other researchers involved in the project who will introduce themselves by name.

3. Who is sponsoring the research?

The research is sponsored by HMPPS and NHS England.

4. What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the research is to find out what Shared Reading groups contribute to PIPE units.

5. If I take part in the research, what will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to complete a survey. The survey was recently developed for use with arts and mentoring programmes, and is meant to help us keep track of your experience and progress in the group. The survey takes around ten minutes to fill in.

6. If I decide to take part, can I change my mind?

Anyone who decides to take part can later withdraw at any time with no negative consequences. There is no advantage or disadvantage to deciding to take part or not take part in the research.

7. What will happen to the information that I give?

The surveys will be stored securely and the data will be logged into a computer anonymously. Statistical software will be used to analyse the data, and the information may be used in the researchers' report. The paper surveys will be shredded after being transferred to the computer.

8. Will my identity be protected?

All names will be changed and the identity of participants will be known only to the researchers.

9. Will the information I give be confidential?

All information will be confidential apart from information concerning behaviour that is against prison rules and can be adjudicated against, illegal acts, and behaviour that is potentially harmful to you or to others (for example intention to self-harm or use violence against another person).

**CONSENT FORM
SHARED READING GROUPS IN PIPES**

Please read the attached Information Sheet.

Then answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had an opportunity to ask questions. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time and without giving any reason, without any consequences to my parole, standard of care, rights or privileges. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. I understand that my completed survey will be looked at only by appropriate members of the research team. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. I agree to take part in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------|-----------|
| Name of Participant (Printed) | Date | Signature |
|-------------------------------|------|-----------|

| | | |
|------------|------|-----------|
| Researcher | Date | Signature |
|------------|------|-----------|

Any requests for information, complaints and queries about this research should be sent to:

Shared Reading Evaluation Project, Prisons Research Centre, Institute of Criminology,
Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DA Tel. 01223 335360

Shared Reading Groups in PIPEs

This questionnaire aims to collect background information about the PIPE, and participants' experience and progress in the Shared Reading group. It should take about ten minutes to complete. If you have any questions or would like to have anything explained, please ask a member of the research team. Thank you for your cooperation.

Part I

1. How long have you been on this PIPE?

2. Have you ever been on any other PIPE?

Yes

No

If so, where and when?

.....

Have you ever been to Shared Reading group while in this prison?

Yes

No

Have you ever been to a Shared Reading group run by The Reader Organisation anywhere else?

Yes

No

If 'yes', please write where

.....

3. How many times (approximately) have you been to a Shared Reading group meeting?

.....

4. When did you first go to a Shared Reading group meeting?

.....

Part II

Please read each statement carefully and circle the answer that best describes how you feel today. Only circle one answer for each statement, and take care to answer each question.

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. I have close friends I can trust | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 2. I don't really think about what I'm doing, I just do it | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 3. There are people who really understand me | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 4. My problems will dominate all of my life | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 5. I often do the first thing that comes into my head | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 6. There are people I can turn to when I have a problem | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 7. I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 8. I make good decisions | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 9. I feel confident | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 10. I feel hopeless about my future | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 11. There are some people who I trust | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 12. I feel good about myself | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 13. I feel capable of making decisions | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 14. I have a hard time making it through stressful events | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 15. I owe it to myself to change | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 16. My life is full of problems which I can't overcome | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 17. Anyone can talk about changing themselves; I'm actually going to do something about it | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 18. I often do things without thinking of the consequences | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 19. I usually deal with problems well | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 20. I am confident that I can cope with unexpected events | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 21. I am really working hard to change my life | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |

Please turn over

Please indicate whether the problems below are a big problem for you or no problem for you by circling a response to the right of the statement. Please answer all of the questions and remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Problems with money | Big problem | Problem | Small problem | No problem at all |
| 2. Problems with employment/prospects | Big problem | Problem | Small problem | No problem at all |
| 3. Problems with health and fitness | Big problem | Problem | Small problem | No problem at all |
| 4. Problems with housing | Big problem | Problem | Small problem | No problem at all |
| 5. Problems with drugs | Big problem | Problem | Small problem | No problem at all |
| 6. Problems with drink | Big problem | Problem | Small problem | No problem at all |
| 7. Problems with relationships | Big problem | Problem | Small problem | No problem at all |
| 8. Problems with gambling | Big problem | Problem | Small problem | No problem at all |

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!

Please put the completed questionnaire in the envelope, seal it, and return to one of the research team members.

Appendix H

IOMI Results – Dimension Means

Table H1: IOMI Results – Dimension Means

| | Good | | | | Mixed Plus | | | | Mixed Embattled | | | | Poor | | TOTAL | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|--|
| | Bridhampton (n=76) | | Skelhope (n=25) | | Tallingford (n=54) | | Wanshott (n=34) | | Sleybury Heath (n=54) | | | | Denisham (n=62) | | TOTAL (n=305) | |
| | T0 (n=39) | T1 (n=37) | T0 (n=13) | T1 (n=12) | T0 (n=30) | T1 (n=24) | T0 (n=21) | T1 (n=13) | T0 (n=24) | T1 (n=30) | T0 (n=34) | T1 (n=28) | T0 (n=161) | T1 (n=144) | | |
| Resilience | 3.50 | 3.55 | 3.81 | 3.67 | 3.53 | 3.75 | 3.29 | 3.50 | 2.88 | 3.19 | 3.24 | 3.34 | 3.35 | 3.48 | | |
| Agency / self-efficacy | 3.97 | 3.90 | 4.15 | 4.06 | 3.87 | 3.92 | 3.53 | 3.56 | 3.38 | 3.50 | 3.43 | 3.88** | 3.71 | 3.80 | | |
| Hope | 4.05 | 3.86 | 4.15 | 3.86 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 3.43 | 3.90 | 3.32 | 3.54 | 3.28 | 3.61 | 3.70 | 3.77 | | |
| Wellbeing | 3.88 | 3.77 | 4.21 | 3.89 | 3.90 | 3.86 | 3.10 | 3.38 | 2.96 | 3.28 | 3.40 | 3.84* | 3.57 | 3.67 | | |
| Motivation to change | 4.36 | 4.29 | 4.59 | 4.27 | 4.46 | 4.38 | 4.27 | 4.46 | 4.19 | 4.30 | 3.87 | 4.26* | 4.26 | 4.31 | | |
| Impulsivity / problem solving | 4.20 | 3.76* | 4.03 | 4.11 | 4.05 | 3.91 | 3.22 | 3.69 | 3.18 | 3.23 | 3.03 | 3.50† | 3.62 | 3.65 | | |
| Interpersonal trust | 3.96 | 4.02 | 4.38 | 4.21 | 3.78 | 3.82 | 3.90 | 3.87 | 4.00 | 4.02 | 3.00 | 3.29 | 3.75 | 3.84 | | |
| Relationships with staff | | 4.22 | | 4.02 | | 3.80 | | 4.05 | | 4.07 | | 3.16 | | 3.90 | | |

† p < 0.10; * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Table H1 above gives the mean scores for each IOMI dimension at T0 and T1 for every PIPE in our sample. T-tests indicated that there were very few significant differences in scores from T0 to T1, which suggested that these PIPE environments have been relatively stable over the six-month period.

Appendix I

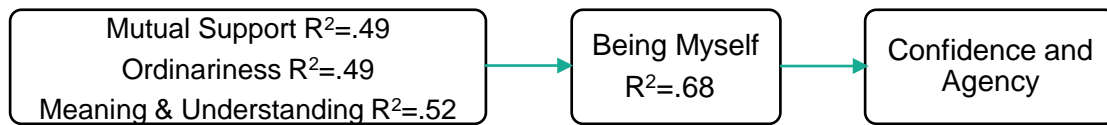
Towards a model of Shared Reading – additional detail on model development

Under *Being myself*, we included experiences that occurred during the SR sessions, such as ‘saying what I think’ and ‘not needing to mask my feelings’. Under *Confidence and agency* we included comments about changes experienced by group members that were longer lasting and went beyond the sessions, such as ‘being better at putting my point of view across’. Despite this close relationship between the dimensions, each variable made a distinct contribution to the model. ‘Confidence’ was the word most often used, and used first, by participants, staff and Reader Leaders, when asked general questions about the value of Shared Reading in PIPEs (which is why it was selected as the most plausible dependent variable). This term does not simply mean belief in self. It refers to beginning to develop a deep, single, centred nucleus of being, self-governance, and self-direction. This is clearly linked to the concept of, or strengthening of, agency ‘establishing the self as a seat of action’ (Haigh, 2013, p. 14), which makes it more possible, theorists suggest, to strive, at least, to live in a particular way, and to pursue human goods, including relationships with others, in a full and self-responsible way.²⁹ This is a highly desirable outcome.

The data suggests that changes took place in participants who attended Shared Reading regularly over periods of months rather than weeks. The qualitative data also suggest that there can be setbacks or stalling along the way. The process of change is one in which the development of personhood takes place not through ‘linear, closed-system, deterministic forces’, but as involving natural capacities, limitations and tendencies (Smith, 2015, p. 50). Self-directedness, or agency, is also involved in the response to causal influences (p. 51; and see Ward & Maruna, 2007, p. 113). Real causal factors, including individual agency, ‘operate in extraordinarily complex and interactive ways’ to produce ‘various, complicated, and often unpredictable outcomes’ (Ibid.) that are not mechanistic or predictable.

²⁹ The ideas of ‘meaning’, ‘making sense’ and ‘possibility’, or the realising of human potential, are also central to the Good Lives Model of offender rehabilitation (see Ward and Brown 2004; Ward and Maruna 2007).

Figure 11. An empirical/theoretical model of the experience and impact of Shared Reading



Meaning emerged as a key component in the development process we describe in this research (see Figure 11). The spontaneous provocation or recognition of thoughts and feelings via literature, or the way a phrase or word ‘finds us really out’ (Davis, 2020, p. 40), through recognition and memory, may help, in a supportive context, to clarify meaning and help individuals in ‘Being myself’, which builds agency:

Readers discover themselves ... by finding what unpremeditatedly moves them ... It is ... like the human subject finding himself or herself through involvement ... what in the act of reading they actually do – that is, feel, point at, think, or say, unforeseen in the moment (Davis, 2020, p. 39).

Reading literature aloud together gave participants the chance to pay mental and emotional attention to what Davis calls a ‘nameless dilemma’ (Davis 2013:12) that needed mental and emotional attention. The literature was able to act as a ‘holding-ground’, a ‘focal space, a field’, where experience was held, as it were at a slight distance, for safe consideration. A ‘dynamic interplay of expectation and memory’ (Billington, 2011, p. 74) could take place, requiring mental, moral and emotional flexibility, connecting the ‘past and present self’ (Gray et al., 2016, p. 252). This kind of ‘distanciation from immediate experience’ (Martin & Gillespie, 2010, p. 253), and from a single perspective, is central to the development of human agency, because it enables us to ‘live in a larger environment’ (ibid, p 256).

This model supports the argument that reading literature brings ‘the real’ to life: a kind of primary consciousness, ‘prior to language’, known only by experience or discovery. Its presence can be recognised or felt, but it cannot be abstractly comprehended except in the moment of happening (Bion, 1970, p. 26). It is at these unexpected moments, of emergence or recognition of emotional experience, that thinking *begins*. Such moments can be powerfully triggered in a literary moment that

opens us up as words, or fragments of thought, 'explode into human meaning'
(Davis, 2020, p. 167).

Appendix J

Four Narratives from Fieldwork Notes

1. Grace: sticking with the sonnet

We move on to the poem, a sonnet by Edna St. Vincent Millay called 'Love is not All'. It's not the easiest of poems. Silence. 'I don't get it', someone says. The leader's efforts to elicit a discussion are met with resistance. 'Basically no one knows what this poem means' a resident declares loudly. Grace sits on the edge of the sofa. She is holding the poem close to her face, her eyes repeatedly going from left to right, her mouth muttering the words. She seems oblivious to the restless mood. She begins to read the poem again, out loud. "*Love is not all: it is not meat not drink...* When she gets to the last few lines, she sits upright, raises her voice, slows down her reading. She's emphasising certain words, giving the poem a new rhythm and feel. "*It WELL MAY BE that in a difficult hour, / Pinned down by pain and MOANING FOR RELEASE, / I MIGHT be driven to SELL your love for PEACE, / Or trade the memory of night for FOOD. / IT. WELL. MAY. BE. I do not think I would.*" 'I think I get it', she says.

2. Eric: recognising himself

Eric has been coming to the group for more than a year, and is hugely positive: it's lovely, he says, 'It's always ever so nice. I love the little chats we have in the group, the stories always make me smile, there's always something to laugh about'.

The short story today is 'Thief' by Jess Walter. Eric reads the section in which the father in the story sets a trap for his children to see who has been stealing the holiday money. As he reads it his voice becomes more hesitant, slow and deliberate. A moment's silence. Eric says, "I did something like that once". He talks about the feeling of guilt and anger, the dilemma of wondering whether it is better to know or not know the truth.

After a pause the group leader says, "Thank you for sharing that, Eric." Later, after the group, she adds, "Eric never used to say anything that would make him look bad in other people's eyes – he's changed."

3. Rachel: taking the plunge

It's a cold day, and everything outside is white. The Beast from the East has struck. Rachel and Sarah have arrived and are sitting on the sofa. We get the box with the sugar, tea and coffee out of the locked cabinet and everyone makes themselves a drink as people drift in. We are still reading *Wonder*, by R. J Palacio. We start by giving a summary of the plot so far as a few residents missed last week's group. Those who were there chip in. The chapters are short, and easy to follow. I look up, and everyone is following as the leader reads, some looking at their copy, others just listening. Lounging on the sofas, covered in blankets, with a book in one hand and a hot cup of tea in the other, it's cosy, as one of the residents says. Tom, the officer, reads a few chapters, and so does Sarah. When we get to the part where Jack punches Julian in the face, everyone cheers. After a short discussion, Rachel offers to read – her first time. She reads very fast, without any punctuation. She's nervous, but slowly finds a rhythm. She stumbles over some of the words, and the women help her out, but in a tactful, casual way. She stops at the end of the chapter. The Reader thanks her. Smiling, Rachel says: "Look – I only read a couple of pages and the sweat is pouring off me!" Everyone laughs.

4. Danny: coming out of hiding

Danny didn't go to Shared Reading the first week because we were there. He's very up and down, say the staff, but better now he has got a job in the Laundry. He is suspicious of everyone including Joanna, the reading group leader: 'She's like a screw', he says: 'She writes about us, and that's the trouble with the PIPE, they watch you, you can get into trouble over anything.' He declines all our invitations to fill in surveys, and clams up at the sight of a notebook.

But over the following weeks Danny is almost always at the group, often the first to arrive, making straight for the same corner, sometimes pulling the neck of his jumper up over his face as he settles himself deep into the beanbag. Sometimes, though, during the hour and half session, Danny begins to look up and stretch out, occasionally laughing with the others when the mood is light – but rarely saying anything.

We are reading the last part of 'The Birds', by Daphne du Maurier, which has taken us four weeks. Gulls calling outside the window. Danny is hunched up on the beanbag. There is about a page and a half more to read, and Danny suddenly says, "I'll finish it". He reads with visible effort and concentration, like a novice driver sticking in first gear. Just as we turn the last page, someone bangs loudly on the window between us and the landing. Danny falters for a moment, but carries on.

People make suggestions about how they would have got rid of the birds, and Danny joins in. When he leaves at the end, we go and look for him, hoping for a conversation, but Danny has shut himself in the Laundry.