



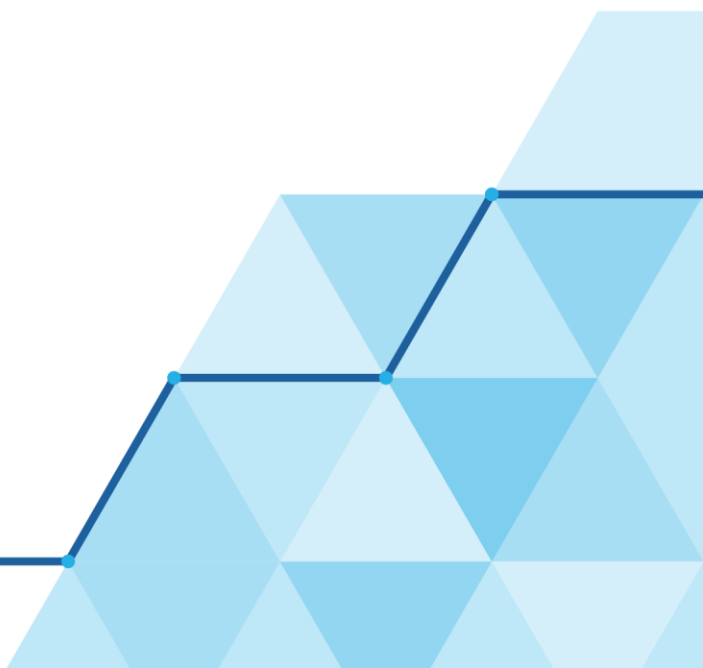
Ministry
of Justice

A Process Evaluation of Incentivised Substance Free Living Wings in Three Prisons

Part of the Tackling Drug Misuse in Prisons Evaluation Programme

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RAND Europe

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Glossary

10 Prisons Project

A pilot project involving 10 prisons in England and Wales that aimed to enhance security and boost leadership within these prisons. One of the changes that was introduced through this project was the incentivised substance free living wings.¹

Category C prison

Category C prisons house prisoners who are deemed low risk of escape and threat. Category C prisons provide prisoners with the opportunity to develop their own skills to support their resettlement upon release.²

CHIME model

A model encompassing five elements of recovery: Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning, and Empowerment.

Incentivised Substance Free Living wings (ISFLs)

ISFLs are designated areas of prisons where prisoners can receive support and treatment to live substance free and are incentivised to do so through activities, such as access to gym equipment, a garden, cooking facilities, music lessons, and priority family days.

Compact

Compacts are contracts between the prison and prisoner stating the terms and conditions of a process or intervention.

Compact-Based Drug Test (CBDT)

A voluntary drug test taken by the prisoner as part of an agreement or compact.

¹ For more information see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-announces-10-prisons-project-to-develop-new-model-of-excellence>

² For more information see: <https://prisonjobs.blog.gov.uk/your-a-d-guide-on-prison-categories/>

Abbreviations

CBDT	Compact Based Drug Test
CHIME	Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning and Empowerment
HMP	His Majesty's Prison
HMPPS	His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
ISFL	Incentivised Substance Free Living Wing
MDT	Mandatory Drug Test
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
OMU	Offender Management Unit
RCT	Randomised controlled trial
rMDT	Random Mandatory Drug Test
SBDT	Suspicion-based Drug Test

1. Executive summary

Incentivised Substance Free Living wings (ISFLs) are designated areas of prisons where prisoners can receive incentives, support, and treatment to live free of substance misuse. Incentives include activities, gym equipment, gardens and cooking facilities. ISFLs are informed by the CHIME³ model, which emphasises personal recovery whilst also providing a theoretical framework to policy makers and service providers (Leamy et al., 2011). This research was funded through the Cabinet Office Evaluation Accelerator Fund.⁴

This study aimed to understand how well established ISFLs are being implemented in three male prisons in England in relation to safety, accountability and support; what is or is not working well in supporting a safe and stable environment; and what factors have contributed to driving or limiting progress towards desired outcomes.

Qualitative data was gathered using observations of the prison wings over three days in total, plus interviews and focus groups with a total of 25 staff and 28 prisoners. Data collection took place between August and October 2024.

Through thematic analysis, four main themes were identified that reflected the experiences and views of staff and prisoners on these ISFLs. These were:

- **The ISFL environment** - prisoners and staff reported that the spaces on the ISFL were clean, calm, and facilitated drug-free living.
- **Prisoner and staff accountability** - prisoners understood they had to abide by certain rules and norms on the ISFL to enjoy its benefits. Staff also reported that they were held accountable by colleagues and prisoners for their own attitudes.
- **Building and maintaining relationships** - the ISFLs facilitated the development of strong bonds amongst prisoners and between prisoners and staff.

³ Connectedness, Hope, Identity, Meaning and Empowerment.

⁴ [Evaluation Accelerator Fund - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/programmes/evaluation-accelerator-fund)

- **The identity of the ISFL** - Perceptions of the ISFLs differed across the prison. Some staff and prisoners in other wings had negative impressions of the ISFL, often relating to stigmatisation of people who use drugs.

The findings suggested that ISFLs support prisoners' recovery in ways which reflect the CHIME model — building Connection, Hope, Identity, Meaning, and Empowerment. Prisoners and staff talked about strong relationships that encouraged support and responsibility. Living in a drug-free space gave people hope for change and a better future, while taking part in activities and learning new skills helped them see themselves in a more positive light. Good access to health services and caring staff supported their wellbeing and sense of purpose. Overall, prisoners felt more in control of their recovery and worked alongside staff to create a safe, supportive, and responsible community.

This report sets out four key pieces of learning identified by the study team that may be used to create and improve the safety and stability of ISFL environments. In summary:

Learning 1: Creating and sustaining a sense of community in the ISFL is a cornerstone in forming a safe and stable environment for staff and prisoners.

Staff and prisoners pointed to opportunities for prisoners to share positive experiences with each other through communal, and especially peer-led, productive activities as effective in building a community atmosphere. Within this community, prisoners also reported feeling a greater sense of social obligation and accountability to each other and to staff, which facilitated prosocial behaviours such as care for their physical environment and a commitment to sharing skills and knowledge.

Relationships on the ISFLs were strengthened by encouraging and demonstrating open and trusting communication practices, which in turn allowed prisoners to resolve disputes constructively and avoid acts of aggression seen in other wings of the prisons.

Prisons should seek to prioritise and foster community in their efforts to establish a safe and stable environment in the ISFL, which can in turn supports prisoners' recovery journeys and healthy decision making.

Learning 2: Having a balanced population on the ISFL of prisoners who are at different points in their recovery journey, and those without a history of drug use, provided prisoners with new insights and opportunities for personal growth.

Staff and prisoners spoke positively about the effects of having a mix of prisoners on the ISFLs in terms of their experience with drug use, including a minority of prisoners without a recovery need. For those who were early in their recovery journey, living with and learning from others who had maintained their recovery over the long term was a source of inspiration. Similarly, prisoners who had also experienced difficulties in their lives but had not engaged in harmful drug use were also seen as positive examples to others.

For prisoners without a recovery need, living with people in recovery was described as providing opportunities for mentorship, which helped them gain confidence and self-esteem, as well as further developing empathy and understanding of others.

Prisons should aim to ensure a diverse range of experiences in their ISFL population, including those without a recovery need, to facilitate opportunities for mutual learning and personal growth.

Learning 3: Working on the ISFLs can provide staff with opportunities for professional growth and a more rewarding experience at work.

Across the three prisons, ISFL staff reported finding their work with prisoners satisfying and meaningful. This contributed positively to their health and wellbeing, and may also support staff retention and fewer staff absences. Some staff also reflected on professional and personal growth in their roles. This was further facilitated by constructive challenge from and accountability towards other staff and prisoners on the wing.

Selecting staff who have a strong interest in, understanding of, and commitment to the ethos of the ISFL in supporting recovery and personal growth is a key component of its success. Prisons should emphasise opportunities for professional development and the enriching experiences that are on offer in the ISFLs.

Learning 4: There is more work to be done, particularly amongst prison leadership, in raising awareness of the purpose and potential benefits of ISFLs to support progress towards desired outcomes.

In two prisons, study participants from the ISFLs reported that some staff and prisoners in other wings had negative impressions of the wings, or little understanding of its purpose. The potential for the ISFLs to support prisoners' recovery and personal growth could be increased by ensuring that all staff and prisoners are aware of and understand the wing's identity and purpose. Prisoners and staff could therefore enter the ISFL with a full commitment to its ethos.

2. Introduction

2.1 Context

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP, 2022; 2024) cites common drug use in prisons across England and Wales as drivers for violence, bullying and debt across the prison estate (HMIP, 2022; 2024). While there are many reasons that prisoners may consume drugs, the most recent HMIP annual report stated that boredom, frustration and poor behaviour led to demand for drugs that was “often underpinned by poor relationships with staff, a failure to establish or reinforce the rules, and far too little purposeful activity” (HMIP, 2024).

In 2023/2024, close to a third of prisoners reported that it was ‘easy’ to get illegal drugs in prison (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2024). In 2021, the UK Government published its 10-year Drug Strategy, with one of its aims to reduce drug use in prisons (HM Government, 2021). However, wider capacity issues within the prison estate may limit the impact of these initiatives (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2024). Staff shortages, overcrowded prisons, and an increasing prison population present continued challenges to any progress (Downs and Low, 2024).

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) manage a programme designed to address three key areas of drug policy within prisons (MoJ, 2022):

1. **Restrict supply of drugs** - by improving security, building intelligence, and targeting the criminal networks who bring drugs into prison.
2. **Reduce demand for drugs** - by developing more meaningful regimes, providing more constructive ways for prisoners to spend their time and ensuring the balance of incentives encourages prisoners to not take drugs.
3. **Build recovery** – by working closely with health partners to support prisoners in treatment and providing prisoners with environments that support recovery.

Incentivised Substance Free Living wings (ISFLs) are an intervention that contribute to these aims. ISFLs are designated areas of prisons where prisoners receive support and treatment to live substance free and are incentivised to do so. The incentives that are available to residents vary from prison to prison, but examples include access to gym equipment, a garden, cooking facilities, music lessons and priority family days. The intention is to create an environment where it is “easier to get support than to get drugs” (HM Prison and Probation, 2020). Many ISFL residents have a history of drug use; however, it is not a prerequisite for being placed on these wings.

ISFLs were launched in 2018 as part of the 10 Prisons Project (10PP)⁵ to reduce violence and drug use. They have since grown to over 80 prisons across England and Wales, serving all prison functions, in both the male and female estate (as of April 2024).⁶ Findings from the 10PP included a reduction in violence and drug consumption on the ISFLs and the wider prison population, as well as a positive community feel to ISFLs reported by prisoners and staff (HM Prison & Probation Service, 2020). However, this pilot was conducted with multiple other interventions to reduce violence and drug consumption occurring simultaneously, including the introduction of body scanners, drug detection dogs, and learning and development for leadership within the prison. Therefore, the findings may not solely be attributed to ISFLs.

Research examining staff and prisoner perceptions on ISFLs from the 10PP in 2019, found that positive feedback on the ISFLs was not just relating to the incentives offered, but also the positive and supportive environment created by the staff and prisoners (EP:IC Consultants, 2019). Indeed, the study reported that a challenge that arose in the implementation of the ISFLs was when the staff were not committed to and did not believe in the concept of the ISFL. It is encouraged through the ISFL guidance to carefully select the community (staff and prisoners) who are self-motivated and committed to the ISFL ethos of recovery and personal growth. This builds upon previous research in the prison setting whereby current or previous use of substances that is not responded to punitively, but with support and

⁵ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-announces-10-prisons-project-to-develop-new-model-of-excellence>

⁶ Approximate number provided by MoJ staff through protocol for ISFL randomised control trial.

understanding, is likely to be more effective in recovery (Wakeling and Lynch, 2020). Moreover, in an evaluation of drug recovery wings⁷ in prisons in England and Wales, the wing environments were seen to be more settled, and success was seen to require commitment from staff in creating a safe and respectful environment (Lloyd et al., 2017).

ISFLs have been reported, both anecdotally and through prior research⁸, to vary considerably in operation across England and Wales. They operate in every category of prison with different prisoner cohorts. However, the key elements that are intended to be standard include:

- A positive culture among both staff and prisoners to build a supportive and respectful community
- Voluntary drug testing where negative results are celebrated, and a positive test result ensures prisoners' access to further support
- A joint approach between Substance Misuse Services, and
- The use of a compact⁹ between the staff and each prisoner on the wing.

Recovery from alcohol and other drugs, while an individual experience, is not typically done in isolation (Best & Wheatley, 2019). Moreover, recovery is broader than changing one's consumption of drugs as it includes reconnecting with communities and becoming well holistically (Best & Wheatley, 2019; Wakeling & Howard, 2019). Indeed, recovery incorporates "recovery capital", which are resources that individuals can utilise to assist in their recovery (Wakeling & Howard, 2019). There are three components of recovery capital: personal capital, social capital and community capital (Wakeling & Howard, 2019). In prison, ISFLs can contribute to all three aspects of recovery capital with the aim of providing the ingredients for a successful recovery for prisoners.

⁷ These wings aim to provide a facility that promotes recovery-focused support for prisoners who are using drugs. NOMS (2014).

⁸ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-drug-misuse-in-prisons-a-qualitative-study>

⁹ Compacts are contracts between the prison and prisoner stating the terms and conditions of a process or intervention.

The ISFLs can foster a supportive environment for prisoners by creating a culture of change around substance misuse recovery. By shifting from a punitive approach to one that emphasises rehabilitation, ISFLs can create a supportive environment that enables prisoners to build a positive social network with likeminded individuals. Previous research has shown that successful recovery is accompanied by social support and a change in social identity, including the presence of people who do not consume drugs (Best & Wheatley, 2019; Longabaugh et al., 2010).

ISFLs are informed by the CHIME model, that emphasises personal recovery whilst also providing a theoretical framework to direct policy makers and people in services (Leamy et al., 2011). CHIME is built from:

- Connectedness i.e., peer support, relationships
- Hope i.e., community, belief in recovery, motivation to change, positive thinking
- Identity i.e., overcoming stigma, rebuilding a positive identity
- Meaning i.e., quality of life, spirituality, a meaningful life, and
- Empowerment i.e., responsibility, control, strength.

ISFLs, through the CHIME model, intend to create the environment for recovery to occur through “social contagion”; whereby recovery is passed from one to another through social learning and connectedness (Best & Wheatley, 2019).

Connectedness fosters hope and allows prisoners to build a new identity with meaning through activities provided in the ISFL (e.g., gardening, cooking).

Achievements can create a sense of empowerment, a strength which can be fed back into the recovery journey and passed on to others on the wing, including newcomers.

However, since their creation, there has been little research conducted into ISFLs, including whether ISFLs can effectively create safe and stable environments in the prison, and if so, how it is achieved. Alongside this study, a randomised control trial (RCT) was conducted by the MoJ to examine whether ISFLs create more stable environments. This study complements the RCT by filling important gaps in existing understanding of the implementation of these wings, and exploring how and why any changes observed in the RCT were achieved.

2.2 Study aims

The MoJ commissioned RAND Europe to conduct research to understand how ISFLs are being implemented in three male prisons in England.

The study had three main aims:

1. To understand how ISFLs are being implemented in the sites in relation to safety, accountability and support.
2. To understand what has worked or is working well, or less well, in supporting a safe and stable environment.
3. To understand what factors have contributed to driving or limiting progress towards desired outcomes.

A series of research questions were developed to meet these goals (see Annex A). Data collection took place between August and October 2024 in three prisons.

2.3 This report

This report forms part of a broader programme of work carried out by the MoJ and HMPPS into drug testing regimens and ISFLs in prisons. This report provides details of the methodology used in this project (Section 3); thematic analysis of the findings across the three prisons (Section 4); and conclusions and learning from the study (Section 5).

3. Methods

3.1 Design

A case study research design was chosen to gain a deep understanding of how ISFLs are being implemented. Qualitative research methods were used in three male prisons in England to explore the aims described in Section 2.2.

Data collection was through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and ethnographic observations. These methods allowed for in-depth examination and were used flexibly so researchers could adapt to preferences or last-minute changes in the prison. Prior research undertaken by the study team informed the development of data collection materials.¹⁰

3.2 Sample

Three adult male prisons were selected by the MoJ from four prisons that were included in the impact evaluation of the ISFL trial. These prisons were chosen because they had a relatively well established ISFLs which could help to inform guidance for best practices. The three prisons were in Yorkshire and the Humber, East Midlands, and the East of England and all were male Category C prisons.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

Data collection took place between two to three days in each of the prisons between August and October 2024. Two researchers attended each prison. All interviews and focus groups were conducted in-person or virtually and were semi-structured, following a standardised template developed in advance by the research team (see Annex C). These topic guides were developed by the research team and refined based on feedback from the MoJ. Prisoner and staff participants provided written consent to take part. Interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded in two of the three prisons. In the other, recording

¹⁰ The study team explored the lived experience of ISFLs in three prisons in England and Wales. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-drug-misuse-in-prisons-a-qualitative-study>

devices were not permitted due to local security practices, and therefore researchers took hand-written notes.

All participants – staff and prisoners – were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and what they discussed would be confidential.¹¹ For further information on recruitment and research ethics, see Annex B.

Staff interviews were conducted by the fieldwork team, on site or via Microsoft (MS) Teams, with staff working directly on the ISFL (e.g. prison officers – described as ISFL staff) and staff working indirectly on the ISFL (e.g. the substance misuse team – described as non-ISFL staff). Interviews with all staff were allocated up to 45 minutes each. **A total of 17 ISFL staff interviews and eight non-ISFL staff interviews were conducted over the three prisons.**

Table 3.1 Number of staff interviews conducted with ISFL and non-ISFL staff

Prison	ISFL staff interviews	Non-ISFL staff interviews
A	6	4
B	6	2
C	5	2

The staff interviews that were recorded ranged from 12 minutes to 90 minutes. Of the 25 staff interviews conducted, three were conducted virtually and recorded on MS Teams, and four were conducted in-person without a recording device. The remainder were conducted in-person with a recording device. The Drug Strategy Leads were interviewed in all three prisons.

¹¹ There were four exceptions to confidentiality that were relayed to staff and prisoners. Interviewees were told that prison management would be notified if researchers were told about: 1) a behaviour that could be harmful to themselves and others; 2) a breach of prison security; 3) a further offence for which a prisoner has not been convicted; and 4) when individuals have been named in the involvement of supplying drugs.

Prisoner interviews were conducted by the study fieldwork team on site and were allocated up to 45 minutes each. **A total of 13 prisoner interviews were conducted across the three prisons**, four interviews in two prisons and five interviews in one prison. All prisoners spoke with the fieldwork team prior to the interview beginning to build rapport and the interview ended when questions were complete, or the prisoner wanted to stop. The prisoner interviews that were recorded ranged from 12 minutes to 30 minutes. Of the 13 prisoner interviews, five interviews were conducted in-person without a recording device.

Prisoner focus groups were conducted on site for up to one hour each. **A total of three focus groups, including up to six prisoners in each focus group, were conducted across the three prisons.** Of the three focus groups, one was conducted in-person without a recording device. The focus groups that were recorded ranged between 40 minutes to 54 minutes.

A total of **eight hours of observations were conducted in each prison.** Researchers observed the ISFL and the outdoor space. Data collected through the observations was used to triangulate and validate data collected from the interviews and focus groups. Observations were recorded on paper using a semi-structured observation framework. See Annex C for the observation framework.

To inform analysis, interviews and focus groups recordings were fully transcribed with all personally identifiable information redacted. Hand-written notes were typed and integrated with the rest of the data. Semi-structured field notes of the observations were synthesised and summarised by the researchers for analysis. Thematic analysis was used to sort and examine the data to identify recurring themes. These themes were categorised by applying codes to a portion of data. Based on this, a coding framework was developed based on the seven research questions to systematically code and analyse the data (see Annex A). Themes were drawn out within prisons and across prisons. The framework was updated and refined as more detail emerged from the analysis.

Annex B includes further information on the recruitment, quality assurance, ethics and data protection processes used in this study.

3.4 Limitations

There are inherent limitations of qualitative research, such as small sample sizes and non-random sampling, which limit representativeness and generalisability beyond the scope of the study. The findings of three prisons cannot be generalised to the approximately 80 ISFLs in the prison estate in England and Wales. The qualitative approach, however, does provide rich, in-depth understanding of the experiences of those living and working on these units.

Another limitation of qualitative research is that self-reported data is subject to social desirability biases. Drug consumption is stigmatised, and possession is illegal, which may have impacted the honesty of answers or even dissuaded prison staff or prisoners from participating. The research design attempted to overcome this limitation by stating to participants that they did not have to answer any questions that they did not want to, that all data collected would be confidential¹² and that it would not be possible to identify participants in a publication.

A limitation specific to this study was that prison management recruited the sample of participants (see Annex B). While the researchers asked management to select interviewees who represented a range of views and experiences, it is not possible to assess the extent to which this was achieved and there is a risk that this could have biased the study findings.

To maximise insight regarding what makes a successful ISFL, prisons were selected based on best practice, as perceived by HMPPS operations. This may, however, have limited the understanding and the conclusions drawn on the challenges within ISFLs.

Finally, in one of the prisons the researchers were not permitted to bring in recording devices to record the interviews and so detailed written notes were taken for these interviews and focus group. The data quality retrieved from the prisoners and staff at this

¹² There were four exceptions to confidentiality that were relayed to staff and prisoners. Interviewees were told that prison management would be notified if researchers were told about: 1) a behaviour that could be harmful to themselves and others; 2) a breach of prison security; 3) a further offence for which a prisoner has not been convicted; and 4) when individuals have been named in the involvement of supplying drugs.

prison would not be of the same level as that from the two prisons where recording devices were permitted. In particular, we have not been able to use verbatim quotes, which will reduce the prisoner voice in this prison. Furthermore, there is also the possibility of the introduction of researcher bias during observations and in writing notes.

4. Findings

4.1 Staff and prisoner perspectives on ISFLs

Four themes were identified from the analysis (see Table 4.1). These themes contained a further 15 subthemes that summarise the views and experiences expressed by participants during the period of the study.

Table 4.1 Themes and sub-themes from the analysis

Theme Category	Sub-themes
Theme 1: The ISFL Environment	Physical environment; Structure; Substance free; Opportunity to develop skills
Theme 2: Prisoner and Staff Accountability	Prisoners holding each other accountable; Incentives; Staff approach; Staff selection and training; Formal accountability mechanisms
Theme 3: Building and Maintaining Relationships	Sense of community; Support and collaboration; Mentorship; Role of non-recovery prisoners
Theme 4: The Identity of the ISFL	Understanding of the purpose of the ISFL; Differences in service provision

Theme 1: The ISFL Environment

“You can work in an environment where you've got good relations with the prisoners. It's clean, it's well ordered, and people have a smile on their face. That's the benefits of an ISFL. You create an environment and a culture where, as I say, people can thrive. Thriving brings a level of happiness and content that it's contagious.” – Staff

This theme related to the physical environment created on the ISFL. Both prisoners and staff described how the spaces on the ISFL were clean, calm, and facilitated prisoners' drug-free living and personal growth.

Physical environment

Prisoners and staff across the three prisons described the ISFLs as clean and calm. Staff and prisoners in two of the prisons discussed how the spaces within the ISFLs were appealing and contributed positively to prisoners' and staff members' experiences. For example, some staff members in one prison spoke of “the cleanliness of the wing” and spoke favourably about additions such as decorations and fresh paint. In another prison, staff and prisoners noted how elements such as a water feature, a Buddha statue, a fish tank, and an outdoor garden had benefited their mental health. One prisoner commented: “Those sorts of things make a space of well-being, and I think when you've got that space, you want to keep it like that.”

Structure

Across the three prisons, staff and prisoners spoke of how the ISFL created a sense of routine that fostered rehabilitation. One prisoner commented: “There's a good routine here. It is definitely a bit of a rehabilitation jail. They don't just let you walk in the cell.” Prisoners in one prison praised the ISFL staff for their punctuality when releasing them from cells and ensuring timely attendance at appointments. One prisoner remarked: “The longer you're in prison, the more routine is important.”

The consistency of staff working on the ISFL also created a sense of structure and stability amongst the prisoners across the three prisons. Prisoners across all three of the prisons spoke of how having the same staff members working in the ISFL gave them an opportunity to get to know each other more: “it's always the same faces. There's never new faces, which is good because then they are going to know you and you know them.”

Staff members in two prisons shared a similar view, stating that the consistency of staff enabled prisoners and staff members to build trust and rapport with each other.

Drug-free

Staff and prisoners across the three prisons discussed the shared commitment to ensure the ISFL remained drug-free. The drug-free environment of the ISFL was created and maintained in several ways. For example, the ISFL enabled prisoners to physically stay away from drugs because drug-free rules were strictly enforced. Staff supported this substance free living, with one staff member describing how their swift actions to deal with any intelligence that drugs were on the ISFL had become common knowledge around the prison:

"I think it's got round the jail that we're not going to put up with it, because we are going to be looking after our community. And we're going to look after the guys that are vulnerable and we're also going to look after the staff."

Opportunity to develop skills

Prisoners and staff across the three prisons spoke of the various types of activities offered in the ISFL. One staff member mentioned how activities in the ISFL were designed not just to help prisoners be substance free, but also to give prisoners life skills and enable them to make healthy decisions. Some prisoners across two prisons described the opportunities to participate in activities, such as meditation, using the gym equipment, cooking, and gardening. One prisoner saw an opportunity to better themselves through the resources and programmes provided in the ISFL: "I might as well make my time useful here and train every day. Train every day and get some education to empower myself." However, in two of the prisons, some prisoners and staff interviewees suggested that access to a wider variety of activities would be beneficial.

Prisoners and staff in one prison also spoke of peer-led activities, whereby prisoners could teach other prisoners the skills they had, such as cooking or budgeting. Staff and prisoners viewed these prisoner-driven activities positively. One prisoner spoke about recognising the value in sharing their experiences with others and wanted to continue to share what they had learned upon release. In addition, in one prison, staff reported that they had access to training programmes so they could learn how to teach activities such as yoga.

One staff member felt that these opportunities not only helped them up-skill but also enabled them to develop a rapport with prisoners on the ISFL.

Theme 2: Prisoner and Staff Accountability

"They come onto the wing knowing that 'I've got a lot to lose if I slip on here, I've got these incentives, but I've also got an environment where I'm around people with similar goal, a common goal.' And people don't want to lose that" – Staff

"I think if you're not going to stay by the rules and do what they say over here, well, you'd be fool because you're just going to get kicked off and you go back over there. What's the point?" – Prisoner

There was a consensus amongst participants that prisoners had to abide by certain rules and norms on the ISFLs to enjoy its benefits. Staff also reported that colleagues and prisoners held them accountable for their own attitudes and behaviour. However, prisoners discussed the limitations of formal accountability levers enforced by staff, and described a more self-policing approach whereby prisoners would model and regulate prosocial behaviours.

Prisoners holding each other accountable

Prisoners and staff across the three prisons reported that prisoners took ownership of their recovery by seeking help from each other when they needed it, looking out for other prisoners, and feeling empowered to report issues to staff members. For example, one prisoner noted the value of supporting other prisoners' development while on the ISFL: "it's not about learning and keeping, it is [about] learning and sharing." Prisoners and staff in two prisons also described how drug-free behaviours were regulated by prisoners themselves. This was attributed to strong, open and trusting communication between prisoners. However, one prisoner reflected on the balance in wanting to keep the unit drug-free to avoid compromising the unit's ethos, and 'grassing'¹³ on a fellow prisoner, stating: *"It's a fine line between self-policing and grassing."*

¹³ 'Grassing' is a slang term for informing on another person to an authority such as the prison.

In addition, prisoners reported holding each other accountable to ensure the ISFL remained clean. Staff members in one prison noted that prisoners took pride in their surroundings on the ISFL, made a concerted effort to keep the space clean and encouraged other prisoners to do the same. In speaking about prisoners, one staff member stated: "they want each other to respect the area and so they encourage each other to do that." Some staff members also described feeling safe in the ISFL because of how constructively prisoners worked to resolve conflicts, with one commenting: *"Over here, we create a mindset of humanity, whereas on the big wings they just breed violence."*

Incentives

Incentives available to prisoners on the ISFL were reported to support personal accountability. Prisoners reported that incentives were used to recognise achievement, motivate continued recovery and maintain family ties. They included certificates of achievement for negative drug test results and prolonged cessation of drug use. One prisoner spoke of being able to show these certificates to their families to demonstrate how important it was as an indicator of their progress in their recovery journey. Prisoners reported having more freedoms on the wing, to work and have more time outside of their cell, as well as having some control over how they structured their day. Staff in one prison reported that simply having the opportunity to live on a clean, calm and pleasantly decorated ISFL acted as an incentive for prisoners to make healthy behavioural choices.

Staff approach

The approach that ISFL staff took to supporting prisoners' recovery journeys was reported to be an important component of a successful ISFL. Prisoners and staff across the three prisons reported that wing staff were adaptive to prisoners' needs. They described staff members' approach as rehabilitative in focus while still holding prisoners accountable for their behaviour. Some senior staff interviewees across the three prisons reported that they challenged other staff to reflect on how their own attitudes or behaviour supported prisoners in their recovery. For example, one senior staff interviewee stated:

"If I hold the staff to account and challenge some of their ideals or some of the patterns of behaviour they might have fell in, it reinforces that I expect them to have the same approach with the prisoners. It's not one strike and you're out. It's a 'why'?"

Another staff member in the same prison reported that prisoners also played a role in holding staff accountable:

“They’ve got a relationship. They’re not fearful and anxious about telling staff or asking for help, and actually, they hold the staff to account themselves. So, if the prisoner has asked for X and [a] staff member has forgotten, that prisoner will hold you to account.”

One prisoner reflected on his observations of how staff on the ISFL were willing to help prisoners:

“They’ll just put things in place for them, do you know, to get them the help they need and all that. But they do work really hard with them.”

Staff interviewees also reflected that they have more time to help prisoners on the ISFL than on other prison wings. They considered that this was because they were not under similar time and resource pressures on the ISFLs. One staff interviewee stated that they were able to be more proactive rather than reactive in their work, which stood in contrast to how they often had to operate on the main wings.

Prisoners felt that staff had more time to dedicate to their role and to assisting prisoners with their recovery. Participants in one prison spoke positively about the smaller prisoner-staff ratio, and that enabled staff to have more time to engage with prisoners. One prisoner noted: *“on a wing like this, you can actually speak to officers because they’ve got a bit more time for you.”*

Some prisoners and staff interviewees discussed staff demeanour. For example, prisoners in two prisons described respectful and friendly staff attitudes towards them. One prisoner described their experiences interacting with staff: *“A lot of the screws on here are sounder. They treat you with a bit more respect. They just don’t talk down to you.”* Another prisoner felt that the way staff interact with prisoners was humanising: *“they see you as a human being.”* One staff member spoke of how using a less punitive approach to misbehaviour is *“important because that builds the bridges”* between staff and prisoners and builds trust.

However, this was not consistent across all prisons. One staff member reported that some of the younger officers on the main wings viewed the ISFL as a *“wing housing drug addicts”* and did not consider the rehabilitative effects the ISFL offered. In contrast, two

staff members in another prison believed that newer officers were more likely to buy into the ethos of the ISFL. This view was supported by observations by one of the researchers.

Staff selection and training

Staff members' approaches to prisoners' recovery were reported to be facilitated by the strategic nature of the staff recruitment process on the ISFL. Staff interviewees highlighted efforts made by prison management to ensure staff were brought onto the ISFL who were invested in its ethos and in supporting prisoners recovering from substance use. There was a focus on understanding why staff wanted to work on the ISFL and looking for certain traits in applicants during the selection process, such as compassion, understanding, a non-judgemental approach to prisoners' recoveries, and a rehabilitative focus. In addition, some staff members felt that an interest in understanding addiction was important, as one staff interviewee described:

"I want to understand in the mind what it's like, why these people have these addictions. What drugs? How is it affecting them?... That's the reason why I'm here, because I treat everyone with the same respect I want to be treated. So, I want to be there for the people to get a better understanding."

Prisoners also observed this motivation from staff on the ISFLs. One prisoner felt that staff are committed to ensuring the ISFL stays drug-free: *"the more you get to know them, the better it gets. Some of them are quite motivated to keep an eye on them and stop problems from happening."*

Relatedly, some staff members in two prisons reported that staff are given the freedom to be creative and adaptive to the individual needs of each prisoner on the ISFL. They described recognising the individual risks and needs of their prisoner population on the ISFL. As they had more time to devote to helping prisoners, they reported feeling able to develop more tailored approaches that met prisoners' needs.

While the recruitment process aimed to bring motivated staff members to the ISFL to assist prisoners in recovery, some staff expressed a desire for additional training to provide more tailored support. For example, one staff member spoke of a push to get *"compassionate focused training"* so that staff members were better equipped to understand why prisoners engaged in substance misuse:

“...[to] actually understand what sits behind that person and then know how some of your responses can actually make it worse for them and how you could perhaps respond in a different way that would kind of, you know, stop that escalation.”

Additionally, in one prison, some staff and prisoners described the need to make further refinements to their recruitment strategy to ensure staff with the right motivations were being recruited onto the ISFL.

Formal accountability mechanisms

Formal accountability mechanisms were viewed differently across the ISFLs. For example, some prisoners in two of the prisons felt that the compact did not have a role in keeping them accountable. Another prisoner commented that concern about being sent to the main wings of the prison was most important for shaping prosocial behaviours amongst the prisoners.

Staff members placed more value on the compact as an accountability mechanism. However, they also recognised the importance of decision making discretion when describing the actions they take if a prisoner broke the rules of the compact. Across two prisons, staff members reported that they were more inclined to give prisoners more than one chance rather than immediately removing them from the ISFL. They recognised the challenges of recovery and spoke of having the time to gain insights into the prisoner's circumstances and working to get them help rather than punishing them. In addition, in one prison a staff interviewee said that they encouraged prisoners to actively seek help to prevent the prisoner from engaging in behaviours that may break the rules of the compact. Researcher observations reinforced this point, noting that the only exception to the rehabilitative approach in one ISFL occurred when prisoners were caught stealing or using Spice (a synthetic cannabinoid that mimics the effects of traditional drugs such as cannabis).

In addition to the compact, another formal lever discussed by participants in two prisons was drug testing. In one prison, staff and prisoners stated that it was not useful because it was unable to detect Spice. In another, some prisoners noted inconsistencies around the frequency of drug testing for some prisoners in the ISFL. In addition, one of the researchers observed unsettled feelings amongst prisoners in one of the prisons following the discovery that a batch of faulty drug tests had been recently used in the ISFL. Despite

these issues, some prisoners reported being proactive about undertaking drug tests as a way of reinforcing their recovery, with one stating: *"It just keeps you in check, and then you know that you are doing all right. You're not relapsing or whatever."*

Theme 3: Building and Maintaining Relationships

"This wing is probably the best wing I've ever come across. We are building such a big relationship. We're like one big family... Everyone says it's white shirts versus prisoners, but it's not. We're a big family. We all try to get along with each other." – Staff

"It's like a community sort of thing. Everybody gets on with everybody. There's no issues" – Prisoner

Prisoners and staff spoke of how the ISFLs facilitated the development of strong bonds amongst prisoners and between prisoners and staff. The relaxed nature of the ISFLs was reported to break down barriers between prisoners and staff. In addition, some prisoners spoke favourably about opportunities to mentor other prisoners, and about the effect of having a mixed population of prisoners with and without a drug recovery need.

Sense of community

Across the three prisons, staff and prisoners discussed the community ethos of the ISFL. It acted as a protective factor against conflict and was used to ensure that expectations for living on the ISFL were clear. A prisoner in one prison described the community feel of the ISFL as one that supported recovery from drug use:

"... we're like one big community over here. Everyone seems to get on and everyone's in that mind frame to want to reduce their use or completely come away from it."

In another prison, a staff interviewee discussed how the sense of community in the ISFL manifested through prisoners looking out for each other:

"Where there has been people that have been struggling, and as a community on the wing, lads will either wrap around them and support them, or they'll come to us and make us aware so that we can do that intervention."

A staff interviewee in a third prison spoke of how prisoners engaged with the rules and ethos of the ISFL in order to remain there:

“Prisoners go in there because they want to be on there and they want to engage in the community. And they realise that to remain part of that community they’ve got to abide by certain rules. And when you go on there, you can tell that it’s a much more relaxed atmosphere.”

Support and collaboration

The community ethos of the ISFL was reported to be upheld by the collaborative relationship fostered between prisoners and staff. Prisoners and staff interviewees described the ISFLs as supportive environments where they felt they could trust one another and work together. For example, staff members in two prisons spoke of how prisoners had started actively seeking help from staff when they had a relapse or had noticed another prisoner who may require help. In one prison, a staff member felt that staff-prisoner relationships were formed on a foundation of trust: *“... if the prisoners know that they can trust the staff, it goes a long way.”* In another prison, a senior staff interviewee spoke of how supportive their staff were of prisoners on recovery, noting that prisoners felt able to come to them for help:

“They know they can come and tell us if anything’s wrong or if anyone’s feeling threatened, because I think there have been times where there have been bullies on the wing, but they’ve been taken off. The wing workers are really good and supportive of the lads.”

Mentorship

One way that positive prisoner relationships were reported to be maintained was through opportunities to mentor each other, often informally. Prisoners and staff across the three prisons viewed mentoring on the ISFLs favourably. One prisoner stated that mentors were usually prisoners who had been on the ISFL for a longer period of time and who supported fellow prisoners, helped them navigate their time on the ISFL, and discuss any grievances. There was an understanding amongst some prisoners that they could reach out to each other for help if they needed to, and they were encouraged to speak to each other. One prisoner spoke of how it was helpful that prisoners were facing the same challenges: *“I suppose because everyone’s in the same boat, they just reflect on each other’s experience.”* Some prisoners shared that they felt empowered to be there for others if they needed help.

In one prison some prisoners described the mentors as having more of a reporting function: *"You've got mentors here who are watching. You've got other prisoners that are here watching and there are a lot of tattletales on this wing."* This statement referred to a discussion in one prisoner focus group around maintaining a drug-free environment on the ISFL. These prisoners reported that there was enhanced scrutiny from prisoners around the use of Spice, and that prisoners who came onto the ISFL for the wrong reasons were quickly identified and removed. Despite the use of the word "tattletale", the attitude amongst these prisoners to these measures was positive.

Effect of non-recovery prisoners

Prisoners and staff in two prisons discussed the impact of having mixed recovery populations on the ISFLs. One staff member reported that prisoners who were in recovery were models for newcomers to the unit. This was supported by a prisoner who described how prisoners who are not using drugs can act as role models:

"It shows people that basically if you're not on it, you're going to be a better person. With them seeing you here not using and stuff like that, they're going to see that they can be like that. See you like a role model really to other prisoners that obviously are battling drugs and stuff."

Two staff interviewees in one prison felt that having a mix of prisoners with differing recovery histories helped give prisoners beneficial perspectives on others' experiences. One of the staff interviewees further stated that interacting with those who had no history with drugs was a source of hope for prisoners in recovery, and for those with no drug histories, engaging with prisoners in recovery encouraged their empathy. Two prisoners in the same prison reflected on their experiences on the ISFL and felt that they were able to help others at an earlier stage of recovery. One prisoner noted the importance of care and compassion:

"I think it's good that now I'm in a position where I help other people in a position to come away from using and support them with better activities and things like that and attitude. So, I think the mix is good because obviously some people need that care from others as well and support from others in that way."

A prisoner in the second prison who did not have a history of drug use seconded this opinion, speaking positively about the ability to act as a role model for prisoners in recovery. Similarly, one staff member reported:

“We get hardened prisoners in here, and they soften, and they have empathy and not sympathy, but empathy for the guys that are in recovery. They will help and support them. I think they appreciate their role because we need them as well as we need the guys in recovery.”

The presence of peer-led support groups that included prisoners at various stages of recovery, as well as non-drug users, was also viewed positively by staff and prisoners in one prison. A staff member in one prison reported peer-led support groups that included prisoners not in recovery supported the conditions for prosocial modelling:

“I wanted that peer support of somebody who's never been in the addiction cycle, but actually, has had a pretty terrible life too. So, having somebody that can say, 'Look, I've made it. I've come out the other side. Yes, I might be in prison, but I'm healthy. I've come out the other side.' That was really important for me to have the two aspects of that, and I think that works really well.”

Staff and prisoners in two prisons discussed the support offered by prisoners in recovery. Other prisoners reported that he felt he could support other prisoners who may be struggling because they had been in their shoes and felt equipped to empathise with and support them.

“It's help out your own. You see on other wings, it's normal. It's not wrong, it's normal. And if you say something, then you involved, you are a grass or something. It's not even like grassing, it's just trying to help somebody. If they want to help themselves, you can help them.”

Theme 4: The Identity of the ISFL Wing

“Because people are coming in, know they've got the issues, we've got the meetings. They know what they're here for. So, it's better understanding.” – Staff

“I think a lot of people just don't want to come on a big wing, or they're so used to their wing they don't want to work on this wing, but they don't want to know what the wing is actually like.” – Staff

Perceptions of the ISFLs were reported to differ between staff and prisoners who were working and living on and off the wings. Prisoners and staff noted that some prisoners entered the ISFL with expectations that it would be like other wings in the prison and were pleasantly surprised by their personal transformation while living on it. In one prison, participants reported that the service provision was not sufficient to differentiate the ISFL from other wings in relation to the recovery support offer.

Understanding of the purpose of the ISFL

Staff members on the ISFL reported that they understood its purpose and worked to ensure the goals of the ISFL were met. However, some staff members in two prisons reported that there was a lack of understanding of the purpose of the ISFL amongst some staff and prisoners off the ISFL. One reported that some staff may be reluctant to go on the ISFL because of stigmatising attitudes towards people who use drugs. Another discussed how the more supportive conditions in the ISFLs can create perceptions amongst staff members and prisoners that people are being rewarded for their drug use. This view was supported by one of the researchers who observed that there seemed to be some misconceptions amongst staff and prisoners in one prison about the purpose of the ISFL, who it is for and how it should be run.

Some prisoners and staff in two prisons reported how some prisoners did not initially understand the purpose or ethos of the ISFL when they came onto the wing. For some of these prisoners the experience of living on the ISFL was unexpectedly transformational. One prisoner reported:

“So, someone comes from one of the upper wings, basically, where they’re just full of attitude, they land on the air, and the first couple of days they’re all like, ‘Oh yeah.’ They think they’re tough and that. When they see how we all are with each other, just chilled with each other, their attitude just changes. They’re calm and they’re happier.”

Differences in service provision

When assessing participants’ views of service provision across the three prisons, there appeared to be differences in their operation and availability. In one prison, prisoner and staff interviewees commented on the scarcity of available services. For example, one staff

member suggested that more investment be made into the ISFL to ensure effective resourcing:

“Health commissioners need to buy into this and when an ISFL is implemented, the drug recovery team need to be resourced to implement this. So, we have no more drug recovery and alcohol workers than we had before, but they're having to deliver this extra work. That's really difficult.”

Prisoners in the same prison reported that external recovery services (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous) had not come onto the ISFL, and raised concerns that recovery support was not sufficient. In another prison, one prisoner noted an absence of mental health support, and another stated that they did not feel that they had been made aware of many therapeutic or service offerings:

“I have not been approached by no officer on here to do with anything to do with my addiction. Anything to do with my addiction, I've had to initiate myself, either through my OMU worker, or there are recovery meetings here, which I attend.”

A staff interviewee from the same prison reported that staffing levels were hindering staff members' abilities to facilitate prisoner access to recovery support services: "There's an acknowledgement that the team isn't big enough to deliver the work that we would like to do." They mentioned the introduction of more laptops as a promising avenue to connect prisoners with support services.

5. Conclusions

This study aimed to understand how ISFLs are being implemented in three male prisons in England in relation to safety, accountability and support; what has worked or is working well, or less well, in supporting a safe and stable environment; and what factors have contributed to driving or limiting progress towards desired outcomes. The research gathered the views of staff and prisoners and four key themes were identified in the analysis: the ISFL environment, prisoner and staff accountability, building and maintaining relationships, and the identity of the ISFL. This final chapter reflects on what these themes tell us about the study aims in the context of the CHIME model for personal recovery (Leamy et al., 2011). The key learning points from the research are then presented.

The findings demonstrate how ISFLs can create an atmosphere of safety, accountability and support for prisoners on a recovery journey. Prisoners and staff reported that prisoners wanted to take what they had learned during their time on the ISFL – including practical, emotional and mental skills – and implement them post release. While study participants noted some challenges and areas for improvement, the findings suggest that the ISFLs largely appeared to be effectively capturing and reflecting the key components of the CHIME model, as set out below.

Firstly, many staff and prisoners reported that the ISFL fostered a sense of **connectedness** by facilitating a supportive community. In this community, prisoners were able to form meaningful relationships with both prisoners and staff. Staff and prisoners reported that the formation of these bonds enabled prisoners to share their experiences and challenges, support each other, and seek help when required. Many prisoners shared that, overall, their bonds with staff members and peer-led support initiatives gave them different avenues through which to seek help.

The positive atmosphere on the ISFLs was reported to function as a source of **hope** for prisoners both with and without a substance use history in two of the prisons. For prisoners in recovery, it exposed them to a consistently drug-free lifestyle, which some said demonstrated that recovery is achievable. Non-recovery prisoners reported that the

experience enabled them to empathise with the experiences of those who used drugs. A shared commitment to maintaining a drug-free environment reinforced this hope, as prisoners witnessed the tangible benefits of their efforts and the prospect of a healthier and more stable life post-release. While some prisoners and staff in one prison noted that Spice can occasionally be found on ISFLs, they noted that efforts were made by both prisoners and staff to detect it and identify the source so prisoners could continue living in a drug-free environment.

Prisoners' access to a range of purposeful activities was reported to provide them with opportunities to positively define their **identities** beyond that of simply being a prisoner or a person who uses drugs. The ability for prisoners to acquire new skills, whether they be practical, such as gardening or cooking, or emotional, such as developing empathy or the drive to help others, was reported to cultivate a sense of purpose and personal achievement. Across two prisons, some prisoners and staff suggested widening the offering of available activities for prisoners on the ISFL. However, there was consensus across prisoners and staff overall that the ISFL environment enabled prisoners to feel a sense of accomplishment in their recovery journeys. The culture of accountability on the ISFL enabled prisoners to begin redefining themselves as members of a supportive community. Some prisoners in two prisons reported that the care between staff and prisoners fostered a sense of belonging and understanding, and a shared identity focused on recovery and wellbeing.

The ISFLs were reported to provide prisoners in two prisons with sufficient access to health resources and services to address their mental and physical health needs. These provided prisoners with insight into the importance of wellbeing, the role it plays in their recovery and generated an internal motivation and sense of **meaning** to continue their recovery. The incentives for positive behaviour, such as certificates for achievements and increased freedoms, also allowed prisoners to connect their actions with meaningful outcomes. However, the more limited availability of services in one of the ISFLs was highlighted by prisoners, staff, and researchers as limiting progress towards desired outcomes.

Finally, the resources and services offered on the ISFLs, in addition to the self-policing approach described by both prisoners and staff, highlighted how prisoners in two prisons

were **empowered** to take accountability for themselves on the ISFL. Prisoners reported being able to take ownership of their recovery by actively participating in maintaining the drug-free environment and supporting one another. This empowerment was further reinforced through the strategic recruitment and training of staff who were selected for their commitment to supporting prisoners, fostering a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility. Overall, staff interviewees appeared passionate about and dedicated to their roles on the ISFL, and this was reinforced by the views of prisoners who for the most part spoke favourably of staff on their respective ISFLs.

Considering these conclusions, four key pieces of learning have been identified by the study team that may further support the development of safe and stable ISFLs. These areas of learning relate to the importance of generating a sense of community, having a mixed population of prisoners at different points on their recovery journey (or with no history of drug use), the opportunities for professional growth for staff, and improving understanding across the prisons about the identity and purpose of the ISFL.

5.1 Learning to inform the design and implementation of safe and stable ISFLs

Creating and sustaining a sense of community in the ISFL is a cornerstone in forming a safe and stable environment for staff and prisoners.

Most elements of the ISFLs highlighted by study participants as supportive of safety and stability could be linked to the sense of community on the wings. Participants pointed to opportunities for prisoners to share positive experiences with each other through communal, and especially peer-led, productive activities as effective in building a community atmosphere. Within this community, prisoners also reported feeling a greater sense of social obligation and accountability to each other and to staff, which facilitated prosocial behaviours such as care for their physical environment and a commitment to sharing skills and knowledge.

Relationships on the ISFLs were strengthened by encouraging and demonstrating open and trusting communication, which in turn allowed prisoners to resolve disputes

constructively and avoid acts of aggression seen in other prison wings. While the use of incentives was seen positively by prisoners on the ISFLs, esteem and recognition from staff and other prisoners appeared to be a more significant motivator for healthy decision making. Indeed, the incentives highlighted most consistently by prisoners, certificates for negative drug test results, were often seen as a tool to demonstrate their progress to others. In designing and implementing ISFLs, prisons should seek to centre and foster community in their efforts to establish a safe and stable environment, and in turn to support prisoners' recovery journeys and healthy decision making.

Having a population on the ISFL of prisoners at different points in their recovery journey, and those without a history of drug use, provided prisoners with new insights and opportunities for personal growth.

Staff and prisoners spoke positively about the effects of having a mix of prisoners on the ISFLs with varying experiences of drug use.. For those who were early in their recovery journey, particularly for prisoners who were new to the ISFL, living and learning from others who had maintained their recovery over the long term was a source of inspiration. Similarly, prisoners who had experienced difficulties in their lives but had not engaged in harmful drug use were also seen as positive examples to others. The impact of living with people in recovery on prisoners without a recovery need was also described by staff and prisoners as beneficial. It provided them with opportunities for mentorship, which helped them gain confidence and self-esteem, as well as further develop empathy and understanding of others. Prisons should aim to ensure a diverse range of experiences in their ISFL population, including those without a recovery need, to facilitate opportunities for mutual learning and personal growth.

Working on the ISFLs can provide staff with opportunities for professional growth and a safer and more rewarding experience at work.

ISFL staff reported finding their work with prisoners satisfying and meaningful. They valued the additional time and resources they had to work in a more proactive, intentional way compared to their experience in other wings. Some staff also reported feeling free to be more creative and adaptive to prisoners' needs. Importantly, some staff also reported feeling safe on the ISFLs compared to other wings. This positively contributed to their

health and wellbeing and may also support staff retention and fewer staff absences. Some staff reflected on their professional and personal growth in their roles. These included developing practical skills including running classes for prisoners, as well as interpersonal and emotional skills such as deeper empathy and self-awareness. This was further facilitated by constructive challenge and accountability from other staff and prisoners on the ISFL.

Recruitment of staff who have a strong understanding of and commitment to the ethos of the ISFL was seen as a key component for its success. To attract strong candidates to these roles, prisons should emphasise these opportunities for professional development and the enriching experiences that are on offer in the ISFLs. Staff should also receive appropriate training to ensure they are equipped to respond to the needs of prisoners and support them in their recovery and personal growth.

There is more work to be done in raising awareness of the identity and purpose of the ISFL across the prisons to support progress towards desired outcomes.

In two of the prisons, study participants reported that some staff and prisoners in other wings had negative impressions of the ISFL, or little understanding of its purpose. Some prisoners entered the ISFLs expecting it to operate like other wings were pleasantly surprised by its therapeutic ethos. However, the potential for the ISFLs to support prisoners' recovery and personal growth could be increased by ensuring that all staff and prisoners are aware of and understand the wing's identity and purpose. Prisoners could therefore enter the ISFL with a full commitment to its ethos.

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Annex A – Research questions

To meet the three research aims of this study listed in Section 2.2, the study team sought to answer the following five research questions:

1. What factors, behaviours or practices contribute to or hinder the creation of a safe and stable environment in the ISFLs? Why?
2. To what extent do available resources and services support the self-management and healthy decision making of ISFL residents? What are they, what hasn't worked, and why? How does this differ between those with and without a substance recovery need?
3. How is accountability in prisoner behaviour on the ISFL upheld? To what extent does this approach affect prisoners' progress to substance free living?
4. How are staff across the prison, at different levels, held accountable for delivering against the aims of the ISFLs? To what extent does this support or hinder prisoner progress and staff capability?
5. To what extent does time spent on ISFLs contribute to the development of an individual's internal and external resources that can be drawn upon to initiate and sustain recovery from substance use (recovery capital)? How?

Annex B – Additional methodological details

Recruitment

To recruit prison staff and prisoners to take part in data collection, researchers liaised with prison management prior to the visit. Researchers requested interviews with five staff members in each prison, including with the prison governor and the Head of Security and Drug Strategy Lead. For the other two or more interviews, the two main factors guiding the recruitment of staff interviewees were their experience working on ISFLs and ensuring that a wide range of views were covered across the interviews. Researchers asked prison management to approach prisoners who were current residents on ISFLs and who were broadly reflective of the ISFL population. Prisoners could be recruited regardless of whether they were actively consuming drugs. Researchers did not collect data on prisoner demographics to minimise the risk of identification, meaning it cannot be reported whether the interviewed prisoners were representative of the wider ISFL population. Prisoner recruitment was also dependent on availability and considered inter-prisoner conflict.

Quality assurance

This study was subject to RAND Europe's full quality assurance (QA) procedures. The QA process took place throughout the project. RAND Europe defines ten quality assurance standards, set out below. As part of the quality review process, the reviewers scored each of the ten standards on a scale of 1 to 6 and a report must score at least 4 against all scored criteria by all reviewers to be approved for publication. The ten criteria of RAND Europe's Quality assurance standards are:

- The problem should be well formulated and the purpose of the study should be clear.
- The study approach should be well designed and executed.
- The study should demonstrate understanding of related studies.
- The data and information should be the best available.
- Assumptions should be explicit and justified.

- The findings should be important, advance knowledge and bear on important policy issues.
- The implications and recommendations should be logical, warranted by the findings, and explained thoroughly, with appropriate caveats.
- The documentation should be accurate, understandable, clearly structured and temperate in tone.
- The study should be compelling, useful, and relevant to stakeholders and other decision makers.
- The study should be objective, independent, and balanced.

For this project, the QA process entailed:

Continuous review throughout the study: The research was subject to review and challenge at key points by one of the appointed reviewers. Continuous review points included draft research plans; data collection tools; ethics applications; pre and post fieldwork activities. The aim of the continuous review was to ensure that the evaluation design was robust.

Review of final reports against the RAND quality standards: The final report was subject to review in accordance with RAND's quality assurance standards by two reviewers. The reviewers assessed the final report against 10 standards and provided constructive suggestions for improvement where any of the standards were not met.

Ethics and data protection

Ethics

RAND Europe conducted this study in line with its principles for good ethical research. The project was formally reviewed by the MoJ Ethics Advisory Group and advice was sought from the RAND Europe's Research Advisory Group and RAND Europe's Data Protection Officer.

Safeguarding measures for participants

All participants invited to take part in the interviews and focus groups were given an information sheet, a consent form, a privacy notice, and a form that they could complete to opt out of the study if they changed their mind about taking part.

The information sheets, consent forms and privacy notices were sent to the prisons a week prior to the visit. Before conducting interviews or focus groups, researchers ensured that participants had received the documents and understood why the interviews and focus groups were being carried out and how their personal data would be used, stored, and destroyed. The researchers allowed time for participants to read information and, if needed, talked through the information with them. Researchers were available to answer questions regarding the study and the use of the data collected before conducting the interview. Prior to beginning the interviews and focus groups, the participants signed a consent form agreeing to their participation.

All participants were informed that interviews and focus groups would be confidential, barring serious safety or safeguarding concerns or breaches. Participants were told that remarks about drug consumption in prisons generally would be confidential but specific information (such as people involved in supplying drugs or times of drug dealing/entry) would not be confidential. If a participant revealed information that was exempt from confidentiality, researchers would notify the participant that the information would be passed to the Head of Security and the interview would be terminated. If the interview/focus group was terminated, the recording would be deleted and not transcribed and if possible, a replacement interviewee would be sourced. However, this did not occur in any prison.

It was considered possible that, for some prisoner participants, discussing their experiences surrounding drug testing would be upsetting. As a result, the consent form outlined which members of staff to contact in case of distress, and this information was verbally reiterated by researchers at the beginning of the interviews and focus groups.

Posters were sent to each prison prior to each fieldwork visit to raise awareness of the study and data collection activities taking place. Informed consent was not sought from the individuals observed during the observations, since there were minimal risks associated with participation, no personal information was collected, and to seek consent would

interfere with the natural behaviours the research team were seeking to observe. However, the researchers ensured that all parties being observed were aware of their identity and presence. If anyone expressed confusion or discomfort, they had the possibility to ask questions about the study. There was no evidence of such a response; the arrival of the researchers on a wing provoked reactions ranging from indifference to interest from prisoners and staff.

Finally, participants were given an 'opt-out' form which, if completed, would allow them to withdraw themselves and their data from the study. If a focus group participant withdrew from the study, only their information would be excluded. Staff and prisoners were told that they could withdraw their participation at any stage of the study up until the analysis. No participants chose to opt out of the study.

Safeguarding measures for researchers

Prior to each visit, researchers discussed with prison management the plans to safeguard the researchers conducting the data collection during their visits. The study team involved in fieldwork were experienced in conducting research with prisoners, prison staff and within a prison setting. All were escorted to interviews and workspaces by prison staff. The researchers debriefed after interviews and focus groups and provided support to each other when distressing topics or interviews arose.

Data protection

Data sharing agreements were set up between RAND Europe and the MoJ, allowing data to be shared safely and securely. A Data Safeguarding and Management Plan covering data security, confidentiality, data transmittal, data storage and destruction, procedure for notifying a security breach, and the specific approach to data management and security for this study was completed. A Data Protection Impact Assessment to share with the Data Protection Officer at RAND Europe was completed.

Annex C – Data collection tools

Prison staff interviews: ISFL staff

Tackling Drug Use in Prisons

Individual ISFL Staff Interviews – Interview Protocol (45 min.)

FOR STAFF ON THE ISFL AND HEAD OF RESIDENCE.

Introduction to study: RAND Europe is a not-for-profit organisation conducting independent research to inform policy making by government. RAND has been asked to carry out an evaluation on behalf of the Ministry of Justice of the Incentivised Substance Free Living wing (ISFL). This study aims to fill important gaps in our understanding of the implementation of these wings, which could lead to better implementation in the future.

During this part of the study, RAND will conduct interviews and focus groups with prison staff and prisoners in three UK prisons to better understand their experiences with the ISFL. This includes how the ISFL is being implemented in relation to safety, accountability and support, what has worked or is working well in supporting a safe and stable environment, and what factors have contributed to driving or hindering progress towards desired outcomes.

Prof. Rosie Meek and her team will be conducting interviews with staff on RAND's behalf.

Privacy and consent: Have you had a chance to review the privacy notice, information sheet, and sign your consent form?

If yes: Were any aspects unclear or do you have any questions?

I would like to briefly mention that your participation in this interview is voluntary and you can withdraw your participation at any time, including after the interview by completing the 'opt out' form.

This interview is confidential. The only time we would need to officially report anything to the relevant authority is if we hear about:

1. something that could hurt you or someone else
2. a breach of prison security, for example if you told us how and when drugs are coming into the prison
3. an offence that a prisoner hasn't been convicted of, and
4. if you name someone who has supplied drugs to the prison.

If you tell us about any of these four areas, we will have to pass it on to a member of the prison management team and the interview will be ended. You can speak about drug consumption in prisons, including in the ISFL, as we don't need to officially report that.

Information provided in the interviews will be included in reports which may be published and available to the public. The reports will bring together information from all study participants, and it will not be possible to identify any individual who participated in the study. We may also potentially use direct quotes from interviews, but this will only be reported anonymously. If you withdraw from the study, your data will not be included.

We would like to audio-record this interview to make sure we have not missed anything in the notes. This recording will not be shared with other people outside of the research team, except for a transcription company that will type up what you say. This company and the research team will delete the recording once the notes are developed. Can I confirm that you are happy for us to make a recording?

Background

1. Please could you start by briefly describing your current role and how long you've held it?
2. How did you come to work on the ISFL? *Prompt: did you choose to join it, were you transferred from another role in the prison etc*
3. How long have you worked at this prison overall, and have you had any other roles since you've worked here?
4. In your view, what is the purpose of an ISFL? *Prompt: How would you describe an ISFL to a potential resident?*
5. Who do you think does well in an ISFL? Who doesn't? What do you base this on?
Prompt: Has anyone surprised you with how well they have done on an ISFL? If so, what happened?

Environment in the ISFL

6. How, if at all, is the ISFL wing promoted or presented to staff and prisoners outside the ISFL?
 - Do you think this could be done more effectively? If so, how?
7. How would you describe the environment in the ISFL in terms of its safety and stability?
8. What factors and practices do you think influence the creation of a safe and stable ISFL wing? *Prompt: positive/negative staff behaviours, positive/negative prisoner behaviours, practices in the running of the ISFL.*
 - What about wider prison factors? *Prompt: effective security measures, opportunities for education.*
9. If the interviewee has described the ISFL as generally safe and stable: What impact do you think being in this kind of environment has on prisoners' capacity to focus on their recovery and personal development? Why?
10. If the interviewee has described the ISFL as generally not safe and stable: What impact do you think being in a safer and more stable environment would have on prisoners' capacity to focus on their recovery and personal development? Why?
11. What about those prisoners who do not have a substance recovery need – what kind of impact, if any, do you think being in a safer and more stable environment has/would have in terms of opportunities for their personal development?

12. How would you describe the relationships between prisoners on the ISFL?
 - a. How do you think these relationships impact prisoner behaviour, particularly in relation to safety and stability of the ISFL and their own recovery?
 - b. Could the ISFL better support positive relationships between prisoners?
 - c. Overall, are these relationships different than those between prisoners on other wings of the prison?
 - d. If so, what is it about the ISFL that might contribute to those differences?
13. How would you describe your relationship to prisoners on the wing?
 - a. How do you think these relationships impact prisoner behaviour, particularly in relation to safety and stability of the ISFL and prisoners' recovery?
 - b. Could the ISFL better support positive relationships between staff and prisoners?
 - c. Overall, are these relationships different than those between staff and prisoners on other wings of the prison?
 - d. If so, what is it about the ISFL that might contribute to those differences?

ISFL support

14. Could you talk a little bit about the services and resources that are available to prisoners on the ISFL? *Prompt: e.g. access to support groups, additional educational opportunities.*
 - How do the services and resources available on the ISFL differ from those available to prisoners on other wings of the prison, if at all?
 - How far do you feel these services/resources support prisoners' self-management and healthy decision making? *Prompt: e.g. increase their self-compassion, resilience.*
 - What has or hasn't worked as well? Why?
 - To what extent, if at all, do the experiences with these services/resources of prisoners without a substance recovery need differ from those with such a need?
 - Is there anything you feel has been missing in the offer to prisoners on the ISFL in terms of supporting their self-management and healthy decision making?
15. Beyond what we have already discussed, are there any other aspects of the ISFL that are supportive of prisoners' recovery journeys and give them the tools and resources they need? *Prompt: sense of community, shared purpose.*
 - a. If so, what are they and how do they support prisoners' recovery?
 - b. Is there anything that could be improved?

Prisoners' behaviour on the ISFL

16. What happens when a prisoner breaks the terms of their compact? *Prompt: Is there a protocol/ what is it?*
 - Are procedures/protocols followed consistently? If not, why?
 - Does the process differ according to the disciplinary issue? If so, how?
17. In your experience, do prisoners usually engage with the disciplinary process meaningfully?
 - If so, why?
 - If not, what could be improved?

18. Overall, to what extent do you think that the disciplinary process supports prisoners' progress towards recovery?

- How and why / why not?
- Does this depend on certain factors? *Prompt: e.g. the length of the disciplinary process.*

Staff on and off the ISFL

19. Do the attitudes of staff outside the ISFL differ to that on the ISFL, in terms of the ISFL wings values and approach to prisoners' recovery and personal development?

- Does this differ according to staff level? If so, how?

20. Do staff who have a role in facilitating prisoner access to the ISFL do so consistently and knowledgeably?

- If so, can you give me an example of how this works in practice?
- If not, what are the barriers that prevent them from doing this?

21. Are ISFL staff held accountable for delivering against the aims of the ISFL?

- If so, can you tell me more about how? If not, can you tell me about why not?
- Does this differ across staff levels? If so, why and how?
- Do you think this approach to staff accountability makes a difference in terms of how prisoners behave and their progress towards recovery on the ISFL? If so, how? If not, why not?

22. Are you aware of how staff generally come to join the ISFL wing? If so, could you give a quick overview?

23. What career trajectories are possible for staff on the ISFL?

- Does this differ from staff not on the ISFL? If so, how?
- How long do staff typically work on the ISFL? Does this differ according to staff level?
- Does working on the ISFL offer meaningful opportunities for professional development?
- What are some of the main reasons that staff move on from the ISFL?

24. How would you say the ISFL is viewed by staff in other areas of the prison in terms of the opportunities it offers ISFL staff for their career and professional development?

Closing

Is there anything else that you would like to add to our conversation today?

Prison staff interviews: Non-ISFL staff

Tackling Drug Use in Prisons

Individual Non-ISFL Staff Interviews – Interview Protocol (45 min.)

FOR STAFF NOT ON THE ISFL, GOVERNOR, AND DRUG STRATEGY LEAD

Introduction to study: RAND Europe is a not-for-profit organisation conducting independent research to inform policy making by government. RAND has been asked to carry out an evaluation on behalf of the Ministry of Justice of the Incentivised Substance Free Living wing (ISFL). This study aims to fill important gaps in our understanding of the implementation of these wings, which could lead to better implementation in the future. During this part of the study, RAND will conduct interviews and focus groups with prison staff and prisoners in three UK prisons to better understand their experiences with the ISFL. This includes how the ISFL is being implemented in relation to safety, accountability and support, what has worked or is working well in supporting a safe and stable environment, and what factors have contributed to driving or hindering progress towards desired outcomes.

Prof. Rosie Meek and her team will be conducting interviews with staff on RAND's behalf.

Privacy and consent: Have you had a chance to review the privacy notice and information sheet, and sign your consent form?

If yes: Were any aspects unclear or do you have any questions?

I would like to briefly mention that your participation in this interview is voluntary and you can withdraw your participation at any time, including after the interview by completing the 'opt out' form.

This interview is confidential. The only time we would need to officially report anything to the relevant authority is if we hear about:

1. something that could hurt you or someone else
2. a breach of prison security, for example if you told us how and when drugs are coming into the prison
3. an offence that a prisoner hasn't been convicted of, and
4. if you name someone who has supplied drugs to the prison.

If you tell us about any of these four areas, we will have to pass it on to a member of the prison management team and the interview will be ended. You can speak about drug consumption in prisons, including in the ISFL, as we don't need to officially report that.

Information provided in the interviews will be included in reports which may be published and available to the public. The reports will bring together information from all study participants, and it will not be possible to identify any individual who participated in the study. We may also potentially use direct quotes from interviews, but this will only be reported anonymously. If you withdraw from the study, your data will not be included.

We would like to audio-record this interview to make sure we have not missed anything in the notes. This recording will not be shared with other people outside of the research team, except for a transcription company that will type up what you say. This company and the

research team will delete the recording once the notes are developed. Can I confirm that you are happy for us to make a recording?

Background

1. Please could you start by briefly describing your current role and how long you've held it?
2. What involvement do you have with the ISFL?
 - How often do you go into the ISFL?

Environment in the ISFL

3. How would you compare the environment in the ISFL to other wings in this prison?
Prompt: How does this compare to the wing you're currently working on? Relationships between staff and prisoners, how prisoners spend their time, the physical space of the wing.
4. How do you think this environment impacts levels of safety and security on the ISFL?
5. What kinds of practices and policies in the prison more widely contribute to a safe and stable ISFL? *Prompt: effective security measures, more opportunities for education or peer support.*
 - How does the creation of a safe and stable ISFL support what you are trying to achieve in your role, if at all?
 - Does having a safe and stable ISFL have an impact on the wider prison environment? If so, how? If not, why not?
6. If the interviewee has described the ISFL as generally safe and stable: What impact do you think being in this kind of environment has on prisoners' capacity to focus on their recovery and personal development? Why?
7. If the interviewee has described the ISFL as generally **not** safe and stable, or doesn't know: What impact do you think being in a safer and more stable environment would have on prisoners' capacity to focus on their recovery and personal development? Why?
8. For prisoners on the ISFL who do not have a substance recovery need – What kind of impact, if any, do you think living in a safer and more stable environment has on them in terms of opportunities for their personal development?
9. What aspects of the ISFL, if any, do you think are supportive of prisoners' recovery journeys and give them the tools and resources they need? *Prompt: sense of community, shared purpose.*
 - If so, what are they and how do they support prisoners' recovery?
 - Is there anything that could be improved?

Staff on and off the ISFL

10. How, if at all, is the ISFL promoted or presented to staff and prisoners outside the ISFL?

11. How would a prisoner go about applying/expressing interest to move onto the ISFL?

Prompt: Who would they speak to? What's your role in this?

12. How would you describe the attitudes of staff outside the ISFL towards the wing and its ethos?

- Does this differ according to staff level? If so, how?

13. On non-ISFL wings, what is on offer in terms of supporting prisoner recovery and personal development?

- How does this compare to what you know of the ISFL?

14. What career trajectories are possible for staff on the ISFL?

- Does this differ from staff not on the ISFL? If so, how?
- How long do staff typically work on the ISFL? Does this differ according to staff level?
- What are some of the main reasons that staff move on from the ISFL?
- Does working on the ISFL offer meaningful opportunities for professional development?

15. How would you say the ISFL is viewed by staff in other areas of the prison in terms of the opportunities it offers ISFL staff for their career and professional development?

Closing

Is there anything else that you would like to add to our conversation today?

Prisoner interviews

Tackling Drug Use in Prisons

Individual ISFL prisoner interviews – Interview Protocol (45 min)

Introduction to study: We work with RAND Europe, a research company. We have been asked by the Ministry of Justice to research how the Incentivised Substance Free Living wing (ISFL) works in this prison.

We will conduct interviews and focus groups with prison staff and prisoners in this prison and two other prisons to ask what they think about ISFLs.

We would like to ask you questions about your time in the ISFL. Please be as open and honest as you are comfortable being, but you do not have to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering. Is that OK?

Do you have any questions for us?

Privacy and consent: Have you had a chance to review the privacy notice and information sheet, and sign your consent form?

If yes: Were any aspects unclear, or do you have any questions?

I would like to briefly mention that your participation in this interview is voluntary and if you change your mind about participating, just tell us or fill out the 'opt out' form, and we won't include what you say. We won't tell anyone outside the prison or the research team that you are participating in this interview.

Everything you tell us today is confidential. The only time we would need to tell anyone else about what you tell us is if we hear about:

- 1) something that could hurt you or someone else;
- 2) a breach of prison security, for example if you told us how and when drugs are coming into the prison;
- 3) an offence that a fellow prisoner hasn't been convicted of; and/or
- 4) if you name someone who has supplied drugs to the prison.

If you tell us about any of these four areas, we will have to pass it on to a member of the prison management team and the interview will be ended. You can speak about drug consumption in prisons, as we don't need to tell anyone about that.

After this interview, we will look at everything you have told us, as well as what other people we have spoken to have told us and put it into a report. This report will be published online for anyone who wants to read it. We won't use anyone's name in the report or include any information that could identify anyone. We may also potentially use direct quotes from interviews, but this will only be reported anonymously. If you withdraw from the study, your data will not be included.

We would like to make a recording of this interview to make sure we have not missed anything in the notes. We won't share this recording with other people outside the research team, except for a transcription company that will type up what you say. This company and

the research team will delete the recording once we have written the notes. Can I confirm that you are happy for us to make a recording?

Background

1. Can I start by asking why you wanted to join the ISFL? *Prompt: (if not explicitly covered – if you don't mind me asking, was drug use part of the reason you wanted to join the wing)*
2. How did you find out about the ISFL? *Prompt: were you on another wing of the prison before you moved here, did you hear about it from staff?*
3. Have you been on an ISFL in a different prison, or any other wings that were good/effective at supporting people to stay away from drugs? *Prompt: Specialised wings? What did they look like?*
4. Is there anything you would like to achieve while you are living on the ISFL? *Prompt: work on personal development, learn skills etc.*

Environment in the ISFL

5. How would you describe the environment on the ISFL?
 - How safe and stable does the ISFL wing feel to you?
- 6) If the interviewee has described the ISFL as safe and stable: What about the ISFL helps make it feel safe and stable to you? *Prompt: how the staff treat prisoners, less/no drug use.*
- 7) Is there anything about the ISFL that doesn't feel safe and stable to you? *Prompt: relationships, the way staff or prisoners act in the ISFL.*
- 8) How would you describe your relationships with other prisoners on the ISFL wing? *Prompt: do people generally get along, or are there sometimes arguments?*
- 9) Do your relationships with other prisoners on the ISFL affect the way you behave and feel? If so, how? *Prompt: How does this differ from other wings?*
- 10) Does it make you open up; do you feel you are around people that understand you?
 - a. Could the ISFL change anything to help prisoners get along better?
- 11) How would you describe your relationship to staff on the ISFL?
 - a. Can you describe the relationships between staff and other prisoners on the wing? *Prompt: how do staff treat the prisoners?*
- 12) Do you think these relationships between prisoners and staff on the ISFL affect the way people behave and feel? *Prompt: do they trust the staff more or less than on other wings.*
 - e. Could the ISFL change anything to help prisoners and staff get along better?
- 13) Does the ISFL environment have an impact on you in terms of your recovery and personal development?

- a. If so, how?
- b. If not, why not?

14) Could anything be improved in the ISFL to better support you? Prompt: Community ethos/ stability/safety

ISFL services and resources

15) Could you talk a little bit about the services and resources that are available to you on the ISFL?

Prompt: e.g. access to support groups, additional educational opportunities.

- a. Have any of these been helpful to you in terms of supporting you to make good decisions and feel like you can manage things in your life? Why?
- b. What hasn't worked as well for you? Why?
- c. Is there any other service you think could be provided to you or others on the ISFL that would be helpful?

Prisoners' behaviour on the ISFL

16) What is your understanding of the behavioural compact? Prompt: what's its purpose? Is it clear?

17) What happens when someone breaks the rules in their compact or gets into trouble on the ISFL?

18) What do you think about the process of what happens when someone breaks the rules?

- a. Do you think it helps them to deal with their problems and become healthier?
- b. If so, how? If not, why not?

19) Overall, do you think that the way prisoners are dealt with when they break the rules is fair? If so, why? If not, why not? Prompt: *(if not mentioned) ask prisoner to consider impact on others of rule breaking*

20) Can you explain how the voluntary drug testing works on this ISFL? [*clarify that this is the drug testing outlined in their compact*]

- a. What purpose do you think it serves?
- b. Do you think it is helpful as part of supporting your or other prisoners' recovery? If so, how? If not, why?

21) When prisoners do voluntary drug testing, how do they tend to react when tests come back positive? When they come back negative?

Staff on and off the ISFL

22) Overall, do you think that staff on the ISFL are supportive of your recovery journey and your personal development? If so (*or not*), how do they show that?

23) Do you think prisoners' personal successes when they are on the wing are acknowledged or celebrated by ISFL staff?

- a. What is most effective in making prisoners feel they have achieved something important?

- b. How else do you think successes could be celebrated?

Closing

Is there anything else that you would like to add to our conversation today?

Prisoner focus groups

Tackling Drug Use in Prisons

ISFL prisoner focus groups –Protocol (1 hour)

Introduction to study: We work for RAND Europe, a research company. We have been asked by the Ministry of Justice to research how the Incentivised Substance Free Living (ISFL) wing works in this prison.

We will conduct interviews and focus groups with prison staff and prisoners in this prison and two other prisons to ask what they think about ISFLs.

We would like to ask you questions about your experience living on the ISFL. We would like everyone to have an opportunity to share their opinion and bounce ideas off each other. Please be as open and honest as you are comfortable being, but you do not have to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering. We want everyone to feel comfortable to share their thoughts, so we ask you all to keep everything that's discussed today in this room and not talk about it to anyone else. Is that OK? Do you have any questions for us?

Privacy and consent: Have you had a chance to review the privacy notice and information sheet and sign your consent form?

If yes: Were any aspects unclear or do you have any questions?

I would like to briefly mention that your participation in this focus group is voluntary and if you change your mind about participating, just tell us or fill out the 'opt out' form and we won't include what you say in our report. We won't tell anyone outside the prison or the research team that you are participating in this group.

The only time we would need to tell anyone else about what you tell us is if we hear about:

- 1) something that could hurt you or someone else;
- 2) a breach of prison security, for example if you told us how and when drugs are coming into the prison;
- 3) an offence that a fellow prisoner hasn't been convicted of; and/or
- 4) if you name someone who has supplied drugs to the prison.

If you tell us about any of these four areas, we will have to pass it on to a member of the prison management team and the focus group will be ended. You can speak about drug consumption in prisons, as we don't need to tell anyone about that.

After this focus group, we will look at everything you have told us, as well as what other people we have spoken to have told us and put it into a report. This report will be published online for anyone who wants to read it. We won't use anyone's name in the report or include any information that could identify anyone. We may also potentially use direct quotes from interviews, but this will only be reported anonymously. If you withdraw from the study, your data will not be included.

We would like to make a recording of this focus group to make sure we have not missed anything in the notes. We won't share this recording with other people outside the research team, except for a transcription company that will type up what you say. This company and the research team will delete the recording once we have written the notes. Can I confirm that you are happy for us to make a recording?

Background

1. Can I start by asking you how you found out about the ISFL? *Prompt: were you on another wing of the prison before you moved here, did you hear about it from staff?*
2. Why did you want to join the wing?

Environment in the ISFL

3. How would you describe the environment on the ISFL?
 - How safe and stable does the ISFL wing feel to you?
4. What about the ISFL helps make it feel safe and stable to you? *Prompt: how the staff treat prisoners, less/no drug misuse.*
5. Is there anything about the ISFL that doesn't feel safe and stable to you? *Prompt: relationships, the way staff or prisoners act in the ISFL.*
6. How would you describe the relationships between prisoners on the ISFL wing? *Prompt: do people generally get along, or are there sometimes arguments?*
7. Do you think the relationships between prisoners on the ISFL affect the way they behave and feel? If so, how? *Prompt: does it make people open up, feel like they are around people who understand them?*
8. How would you describe the relationships between staff and prisoners on the ISFL wing? *Prompt: how do staff treat the prisoners?*
9. Do you think these relationships between prisoners and staff on the ISFL affect the way people behave and feel? *Prompt: do they trust the staff more or less than on other wings?*
10. Overall, how does the environment on the ISFL affect you?
 - c. Does it help you focus on your recovery and personal development?
 - d. If so, how?
 - e. If not, why not?

ISFL services and resources

11. Could you talk a little bit about the services and resources that are available to prisoners on the ISFL? *Prompt: e.g. access to support groups, additional educational opportunities.*
 - d. Have any of these been helpful to you in terms of supporting you to make good decisions and feel like you can manage things in your life? Why?
 - e. What hasn't worked as well? Why?

Prisoners' behaviour on the ISFL

12. What behaviour is expected on an ISFL? *Prompt: how does this differ to other wings?*
 - What happens when someone breaks the rules?
 - Do you think it helps them to deal with their problems and become more healthy?

- If so, how? If not, why not?

13. When prisoners do voluntary drug testing, how do you all react/feel when you get your result? Does it vary depending on whether it is negative or positive?

Staff on and off the ISFL

14. Overall, do you think that staff on the ISFL are supportive of your recovery journey and your personal development? Prompt: could they do more/something different to support this?

15. How important are the attitudes and actions of staff on the ISFL to making it work well?

- Do you know if the prison take action to make sure staff work as expected on the ISFL? Prompt: can you give an example? Can you tell me more about why not?

Closing

Is there anything else that you would like to add to our conversation today?

Observation protocol

For each case study site in Strand 3 of this study, we will conduct non-participatory, structured observation of the operation of the prison's Incentivised Substance Free Living wings (ISFLs). Researchers will record their observations in line with the protocol set out below, which seeks to produce data pertaining to Strand 3 research questions 1-5. The structured observation will thus help the community to share an understanding of where they are and where they want to get to, and then to review the extent to which they have made progress towards that goal. Interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders will be used to supplement these findings.

Observation objectives

The main objectives of the observations are the following:

- To gather evidence to improve understanding on how ISFLs are being implemented in the sites in relation to safety, accountability and support.
- To understand what has worked or is working well in supporting a safe and stable environment in the ISFL.
- To understand what factors have contributed to driving or limiting progress towards the desired outcomes of the ISFL.

Observation procedure

One day of non-participant observations will be conducted over three days in each prison site.

Observations will be made about each of the following elements in order to meet the above objectives:

- The physical setting: organisation of the physical space (such as the ISFL wing, other wings etc.)
- The human setting: how staff and prisoners are organised in the ISFL wing, their composition and actions, appearance and behaviours of individuals.
- The programme setting: the activities taking place and how resources are organised.
- The interactional setting: the formal and informal interactions that take place.

If the activities include group sessions, the researcher will, where possible, move between groups to capture a variety of observations. For group sessions or parts of group sessions that the researcher is unable to observe, the researcher will review any available materials to understand the activities and interactions that took place during these sessions.

Observations will also take place outside meetings or other formal activities, and researchers will aim to collect additional data by observing, for example, informal conversations taking place between staff and/or prisoners. Researchers will also seek to conduct short, opportunistic conversations with staff and prisoners about their experiences and views of the ISFL, on an ad hoc basis.

Recording of observations

Observations will be recorded using a semi-structured observation framework. This will not be used to systematically record information on the site and specific location, date, time,

length of observation, individuals present, but to broadly capture the context of the observations, including analytic notes/observer comments and subjective reflections (identified separately). Brief notes will be taken on site and later summarised by the researchers.

Based on the general aims of this strand of the study, researchers will use the following questions and themes as prompts to structure their observations. However, it should be noted that observations will not be limited to or constrained by these prompts and that, should additional themes emerge, they will be recorded.

Content of each point in the event agenda

Keep track of the content of the activities being observed. A one-line **description** of each activity prior to the more detailed observations will be useful for future analysis and reference. Please be as detailed as possible in your ethnographic observations.

Ethnographic observations

- How is the physical space of the ISFL organised – for example the layout, size, physical capacity, position in relation to the rest of the prison?
- What can be observed about the profiles of the prisoners in the ISFL, particularly study participants, in terms of their background, drug use, motivations for joining the ISFL etc.?
- What roles do staff selected to work on the ISFL fulfil and how and to what extent are expectations of these roles appear to be communicated and upheld?
- What are the services and other forms of support available to prisoners on the ISFL and how are they operationalised and accessed? Does this differ between those with and without a recovery need?
- If any disciplinary incidents on the ISFL are observed, how are they responded to?
- What is the nature of the observed interactions in the ISFL between staff, between staff and prisoners, and between prisoners themselves, particularly in relation to safety, community and accountability?
- What, if any, factors are facilitating or hindering a safe and stable environment in the ISFL?
- How, if at all, is the ISFL presented or promoted to staff and prisoners in the rest of the prison?
- What can be observed about prisoner and staff (on and off the wing) attitudes towards different aspects of the ISFL?
- What factors are influencing the flow of prisoners onto the wing?

Analysis

The semi-structured field notes will be synthesised and summarised by the researcher in order to provide a summary of background and contextual information. These syntheses will be analysed alongside the data coming from the interviews with senior leaders and administrative and operational staff in the prison and interview and focus groups with prisoners.

Consent / notification of research being undertaken

Informed consent will not be sought from the individuals observed during the observations, since there are minimal risks associated with participation, no personal information will be

collected and to seek consent would interfere with the natural behaviours we are seeking to observe. However, researchers will ensure that all parties being observed are aware of the identity and presence of the researchers. Posters will be displayed prior to arrival to notify ISFL residents of the researcher's presence on the wing. If anyone expresses confusion or discomfort, they will have the possibility to ask questions about the study. Researchers will halt the observation in the presence of any person who requests us to do so. Data which relate to the presence of the person who has requested removal will be destroyed. Physical/structural observations that does not include the person will be retain, e.g., observations of buildings or space. Observations will be resumed once the person or researcher has vacated the space.