

Evaluating the impact of progression to the GALLANT projects within Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust

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ABSTRACT

This research study uses a number of outcome measures to demonstrate that the model of supervision that is delivered by Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust is having a significant and positive impact. The study shows that progression through the model is correlated with higher perceptions of self-control over life outcomes, higher perceptions of generativity (the performing of constructive activity that benefits others), overall reductions in reconviction rates, and a reduced frequency of offending.

KEYWORDS

Throughout this paper we have used the term ‘probationer’ to refer to an individual who is subject to probation supervision. The term ‘probationer’, we believe carries less negative connotations than the term ‘offender’ and is more appropriate to the overall aims of the model. GALLANT is the name of the projects which form part of the process of supervision¹.

INTRODUCTION

Probation practice has been characterised for at least the past two decades by the prioritisation of risk management and public protection. This focus has seen a corresponding shift to a ‘correctional’ model of working and the delivery of programmes of intervention that are based upon cognitive behavioural approaches (Raynor and Vanstone, 2007). More recently however, there has been an emerging body of research which focuses upon how people desist from crime, and a shift to thinking about how services can support individuals in this process of change. McNeil and Weaver (2010) suggest that the evidence about desistance lends itself more toward a ‘social’ model of rehabilitation and supervision, rather than that which is provided by the ‘correctional’ model. Drawing from this research, and following an internal service review, the Trust implemented a re-designed delivery model for the provision of offender management and supervision services. Pivotal to this redesign is the creation of the Trusts GALLANT projects which are intended to build upon the concept of a ‘social’ model of supervision, and which place particular emphasis upon the importance of identity change in the process of desistance.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE DELIVERY MODEL

The delivery model is meant to represent a forward looking progression for the probationer, and serve as an incentive to complete the more structured pieces of offence focused work.

¹ GALLANT projects are named after a particularly committed and caring member of staff

Some research has indicated how de-motivating backward looking supervision can be, an observation which is succinctly illustrated in the following comment:

“To sum it up, you’re saying you should look forwards not back. Yeah. I know that you have to look back to a certain extent to make sure you don’t end up like that (again). The whole order seems to be about going back and back and back. There doesn’t seem to be much “forward”.” (Farrall, 2002:225).

COGNITIVE – SKILLS PROGRAMMES

Supervision commences with the probationer engaging in work based upon cognitive behavioural theory in the form of an accredited programme or the Trusts’ one-to-one programme; Citizenship. Once the probationer has completed this work, made sufficient progress and risks of presenting harm are managed, they are transitioned into the second phase of supervision, the Community Supervision Service (CSS). CSS is a transitional phase which provides a monitoring function and or signposting service to agencies. The probationers who remain in the CSS phase will be those individuals with very few, or no needs with the majority being in full time employment. The CSS phase of supervision is not a focus of attention within this study.

Probationers who are demonstrating a motivation to move forward, or who need more support and help attend the GALLANT project. GALLANT is located outside of probation premises, delivered with partner agencies, and is based upon a drop in type of ‘one-stop-shop’ model. A number of theoretical concepts informed the development of GALLANT.

The deliberate use of a non-probation associated name for the project, and the location of GALLANT outside of probation premises is informed by the theoretical concepts around community integration and labelling theory.

In terms of community integration, research has repeatedly highlighted the importance of providing practical assistance that addresses basic human needs such as housing (McNeil and Whyte, 2007), and employment (e.g. Rutter *et al*, 1990; Sampson and Laub, 1993). Agencies tell us that sometimes the clients with the most needs are often the hardest to reach. The location of the GALLANT projects in focal community points and attendance of agencies that can provide immediate access in the ‘one-stop-shop’ type model, we believe, results in a greater take up rate, increased community integration, and in turn increased positive outcomes.

Versions of labelling theory have highlighted how the internalisation of a deviant label such as ‘offender’ can contribute to a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy (see Maruna *et al*, 2004). The research also tells us how difficult it can be to reverse this process and for individuals to de-internalise the deviant label and change their perception of self. The non-probation term GALLANT and location of the project outside of probation premises is again an attempt to

signify to probationers that they are progressing and moving forward, in the hope that this can encourage a more positive and pro-social sense of self^{2 3}. Recognising the importance of ritual and ceremony (see Maruna *et al*, 2004), at each milestone in the supervision journey, the probationer is rewarded with praise, encouragement and, where appropriate, a formal certificate of their achievement.

The final milestone in the journey is the development of Social Action initiatives. Returning to labelling theory, this body of research has highlighted the importance of the de-internalisation of the deviant label of ‘offender’, and importantly, that this is reflected back to the individual in their social interactions, a kind of Pygmalion process (Maruna *et al*, 2004). Social Action is our attempt to facilitate this de-internalisation and contribute to the process of desistance.

Social Action is a concept that was developed from the study of how behaviours interact in terms of cause and effect (Weber, 1922). In common with some of the variations of labelling theory, Social Action does not view the individual as a passive agent of circumstance but as an active agent who will change their behaviour depending upon the subjective meanings which they formulate from their social interactions. Volunteering one’s time to help others, the environment, or perceived worthwhile projects in some form of Social Action is considered to be as beneficial for the volunteer as it is for the beneficiary. Some research has shown an association between volunteering, levels of trust and civic minded behaviour (Brown,1999); the promotion of favourable attitudes and good citizenship practices (Youniss and McLellan,1999); that volunteering can inhibit anti-social behaviour (Allen *et al*, 1994), and promote physical and mental health benefits (House, J. *et al* 1988; Moen. P. *et al* 1992; Thoits. P. 1983); that engaging ex-offenders as volunteers supports their civic reintegration (Uggen *et al*, 2004); and finally, and central to our efforts, that volunteering can promote desistance from crime (Edgar,K. *et al*, 2011). Maruna (2001) found that levels of generativity were a key theme in the maintenance of desistance, and that generative work through volunteering can provide probationers with the opportunity for restitution, legitimacy, fulfilment, therapy, and a pathway to citizenship and longer term desistance.

To develop Social Action the Trust is piloting three initiatives; local community projects sourced and managed directly by the trust, Social Action opportunities that are facilitated through local voluntary development agencies, and finally the trusts Peer Mentor scheme. Whilst the three strands of Social Action are at different stages of development the early indications are extremely promising and will be explored in more depth as a follow up to the current research study.

THE HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED

This research study is designed to test a number of hypotheses about the effectiveness of the model of supervision, in particular the GALLANT projects. To explore the hypotheses a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods will be used. With respect to the

² GALLANTS are typically run from community or faith premises, like Salvation Army Centres.

³ The GALLANT projects are supported by a team of the Trust’s volunteers.

more qualitative measures of the evaluation this research draws heavily from the work of Maruna (2001) and the findings of the Liverpool Desistance Study (LDS). Through the analysis of self-narratives the LDS was able to identify the differences in the self-perspectives and general world-views of active offenders and those offenders who were desisting from crime.

One of the more qualitative hypotheses which this research study intends to explore is whether reporting to the GALLANT projects, which are environmentally very different to 'traditional' probation supervision, has any impact upon how probationers feel or perceive their situation, particularly with regard to their perception of holding a 'deviant' identity. The research study aims to explore whether:

- 1) Reporting to the GALLANT project promotes a positive and pro-social sense of self and whether;
- 2) Reporting to the GALLANT project provides practical support and assistance that can promote community re-integration.

To test these hypotheses open-ended questions were asked of a random sample of probationers attending the GALLANT projects in three different areas. There are limitations associated with the use of open-ended questions in that respondents may not have accurately reported their beliefs, particularly given the fact that the researchers occupied a position of authority (see Robson, 2002). Also, and because the research was undertaken by a number of different staff, volunteers, and peer-mentors, we accept that this could result in a lack of consistency in the way the questions were asked⁴. The responses were interpreted by one of the researchers in an attempt to increase reliability. Overall, we consider that this method of research is sufficient to uncover similarities in the way in which probationers report their experience of the GALLANT projects.

Desisters in the LDS also appeared to have a strong belief that they were in control of their life outcomes, in comparison to the active offenders who articulated having little personal control over their futures. The extent to which people feel in control of their life outcomes is commonly referred to as being their 'Locus of Control'; that the higher the perception of control over one's life, the higher the level of Locus of Control (Rotter, 1966). Within this research study we hypothesise that the more progress a probationer makes through the model of supervision, and because they are being encouraged, and offered opportunities or pathways to make positive change, then the higher their perceptions of an internal locus of control will be. The research study will test whether:

- 3) Probationers reporting to the GALLANT projects have a higher internal locus of control than probationers reporting to an Offender Management Unit.

A follow up to this study, to test whether probationers who are volunteering for Social Action have a higher internal locus of control, will be undertaken.

Perceptions of probationer's levels of Locus of Control are measured through the administration of the Levenson's (1974) Locus of Control Scale. This instrument measures individuals perceptions of how much they are in control of life outcomes (internal control), how much life outcomes are influenced by fate (chance), or how much life outcomes are determined by powerful people (powerful others). The scale was administered to random

⁴ Approximately 10 individuals administered the questions and questionnaires.

samples of probationers reporting to Offender Management Units and the GALLANT projects. Because this scale is also reliant upon the self-report of probationers it is also subject to the same limitations as those associated with the administration of open-ended questions.

The interviews from the LDS also strongly indicated that offending may be used to 'fill a void' in active offenders lives, and that by being involved in generative pursuits, which are broadly thought of as pursuits that provide benefits to others or the community, provided the desisting interviewees with fulfilment, exoneration, legitimacy, and a form of therapy. Within this research study we also hypothesise that the more progress a probationer makes through the model of supervision, and because they are being encouraged via GALLANT to volunteer for Social Action, that the greater their measure of generativity will be. The research study will test whether:

4) Probationers who attend the GALLANT project have a higher generative behaviour score than probationers reporting to an Offender Management Unit.

A follow up to this study, to test whether probationers who are volunteering for Social Action have a higher generative behaviour score, will be undertaken.

Perceptions of generative behaviour are measured through the administration of the Loyola Generativity Scale, a self-report questionnaire (McAdams and De St Aubin, 1992) that measures self-perceptions of generativity. The scale was administered to random samples of probationer's reporting to Offender Management Units and the GALLANT projects. Because this scale is also reliant upon the self-report of probationers it is also subject to the same limitations as those associated with the previous two research methods.

The final, and perhaps most important hypothesis, which this research study aims to test is whether progression through the model of supervision is correlated with a reduction in reconviction. We have already noted that desistance from offending is a complex and subjective process, and accepting that it may be difficult to attribute a causal relationship between the variables (stage of supervision and reconviction rates) this more straightforward analysis will allow us to identify any correlations and to explore whether:

5) Probationers who attend the GALLANT projects have offended less frequently than similarly matched probationers reporting to Offender Management Units, and if;

6) Whether there is any difference in the number of offences that a re-offender commits and if this difference can be correlated with progression through the model.

Reconviction will be measured using PNC (Police National Computer) data. There are limitations associated with using this type of measure, in that the criminal activity has to be detected, proven, prosecuted and recorded. Research shows that a significant amount of offending never progresses through these stages (see, Lloyd, Mair and Hough, 1995). Whilst acknowledging these limitations, the use of PNC data does provide a timely and official comparison measure for the purpose of this research study.

THE FINDINGS

The findings from all four types of data collection are now presented. It should be noted that the analysis does not follow the same cohort of probationer's throughout the journey of supervision. However, because probationer's can only progress through the model in

sequential order; OMU-CSS-GALLANT means that all probationer's in the GALLANT projects have progressed through the first two stages. The analysis of the data shows clear correlations which correspond to the stage of the probationer's supervision i.e. the Offender Management Unit (OMU) and the GALLANT project.

RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

This element of the research aimed to explore whether; reporting to the GALLANT project promotes a positive and pro-social sense of self and, if reporting to the GALLANT project provides practical support and assistance that can promote community re-integration.

The findings show clear support for these two hypotheses:

Table 1 Responses to open-ended questions

GALLANT project	Percentage of probationer's who describe the project as promoting a positive sense of self	Percentage of probationer's who describe receiving practical support that promotes re-integration
Area A	69.5%	71%
Area B	62.5%	62.5%
Area C*	52%	48%
Overall	61.33%	60.5%

*The project in this area at the time of undertaking the research was still operating out of probation premises.

The location of the GALLANT project outside of probation premises is intended to be environmentally different to 'traditional' probation supervision, and as such contribute to the de-labelling of the deviant identity and the promotion of a pro-social sense of self. The qualitative content of the responses provides further supporting evidence:

"It's less stressful than attending probation"

"It's less intimidating, more relaxed and has less stigma"

"Don't feel like a criminal"

"Don't feel ashamed as much, you don't feel like a criminal"

“Less stressful, more relaxed-able to speak freely”

“More at ease helps me focus on keeping out of trouble”

“Seeing Peer-Mentors shows me that it is possible to change with help”

‘Relaxed’, ‘less stressful’, ‘helpful’, and ‘easier to talk’ were common responses. Whilst this in itself may not achieve the outcomes the Trust is seeking, one would assume that by having a positive experience of supervision and feeling less like a ‘criminal’ would contribute to the positive de-labelling effect which we are seeking. The content of the responses with respect to promoting community re-integration also provides further supporting evidence:

“Speaking to people here encourages me to look for work”

“Agencies actually here to talk to...at office is referral and waiting for appointments”

“Everything in one place-by having different agencies in one place helps me to engage with such agencies”

“It encourages me to keep focused, stay focused on a better future”

The responses indicate that probationers are much more likely to access any support and guidance which they need by reporting to a ‘one-stop-shop’ type model.

RESPONSES TO THE LEVENSON (1974) LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE

This aspect of the research aimed to explore whether; probationer’s reported locus of control increases as they progress through the model of supervision. The Levenson scale is comprised of three scales which reflect how much an individual feels in control of their life:

- The Internal scale, which is where the individual feels that they are in control of their life outcomes;
- The Powerful others scale, which is where the individual feels that life outcomes are determined by powerful people;
- The Chance scale, which is where the individual feels that life outcomes are determined by chance.

A higher locus of control on the Internal scale was used to denote a higher perception of control over one’s life outcomes. The findings show clear support for the hypothesis:

Table 2 Percentage of respondents who report having a high Internal control scale

Score	OMU	GALLANT
Score minus 70 to minus 30	0%	0%
Score minus 29 to plus 10	69%	49%
Score plus 11 to plus 40	31%	51%
41 plus	0%	0%

One can see that the Internal scores increase by 20 percentage points for those probationer's who are reporting to GALLANT, indicating that this group of respondents perceive that they are more in control of their life outcomes. In Table 3, one can see that the perception that Powerful others are in control of life outcomes are slightly higher in the OMU reducing to 4 percentage points in the GALLANT projects.

Table 3 Percentage of respondents who report having an high Powerful Others Scale

Score	CSS	GALLANT
Score minus 70 to minus 30	0%	0%
Score minus 29 to plus 10	94%	96%
Score plus 11 to plus 40	6%	4%
41 plus	0%	0%

Finally, the perception that life outcomes are perceived to be influenced by Chance reduce from 13 percentage points to 7 percentage points.

Table 4 Percentage of respondents who report having a high Chance Scale

Score	OMU	GALLANT
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Score minus 70 to minus 30	0%	0%
Score minus 29 to plus 10	87%	93%
Score plus 11 to plus 40	13%	7%
41 plus	0%	0%

RESPONSES TO THE GENERATIVE BEHAVIOUR CHECKLIST

This aspect of the research aimed to explore whether; probationers reported levels of generativity increase as they progress through the model of supervision. A higher level of generativity would indicate a greater level of participation as a more active citizen within their community. It is envisaged that probationer's volunteering to undertake Social Action will have the highest generativity scores, a hypothesis that will be tested as part of a follow up study.

The findings show clear support for the hypothesis:

Table 5 Reported levels of generativity

Score	OMU	GALLANT
Score 0-10	26%	22%
Score 11-20	39%	24%
Score 21-30	25%	35%
Score 31-40	7%	13%
Score 41-50	2%	6%

One can see that the scores in the 21-40 percentage point range increase with progression through the model. These findings would indicate that levels of generativity are correlated with the progression of supervision.

In summary, the findings thus far show a correlation between reporting to the GALLANT project and perceptions of a pro-social sense of self, also that probationers perceive the

projects provide a higher level of support to promote community re-integration. The findings also show a correlation between progression and probationer’s perceptions of how much control they have over their lives and a correlation with perceptions of generative behaviour. These findings all indicate that the model of supervision is correlated, or further encourages, a positive progression toward desistance. Crucial to the outcomes we are seeking however is whether progression through the model actually encourages a reduction in re-offending.

RECONVICTION RATES

PNC data was used in order to test the hypothesis that progression through the model of supervision is correlated with a reduced rate and frequency of reconviction. A total sample of 144 probationers in each of stage of supervision was matched on their likelihood of reconviction scores, (Offender Group Reconviction scale), OGP score (OASys General Predictor score), and Risk of Serious Harm levels. The reconviction rates of the matched sample of probationers showed clear support for the hypothesis that progression through the model of supervision is correlated with a reduced rate of reconviction:

Table 6 Reconviction rates of sample matched by OGRS 3, OGP score and risk of harm

	OMU	CSS	GALLANT
Proportion of probationers who re-offend	61.11% re-convicted	45.16% re-convicted	34.14% re-convicted
Average no of re-offences per re-offender	4.56 offences	2 offences	2.57offences
Average no of re-offences per cohort	2.79 offences	0.9 offences	0.87offences

These figures would indicate that the lower reconviction rates of probationers supervised by the CSS and Gallant projects are reducing the overall reconviction rates for the Trust. The results of the overall sample show that probationers supervised by CSS have the lowest reconviction rates, a finding which is perhaps unsurprising, given the fact that the majority of this group of probationers are employed and the research evidence which shows a strong correlation between employment and desistance (Maruna 2001, Shapland *et al* 2012). One might assume that because the majority of probationers supervised by the GALLANT projects are unemployed, that the rates and frequency of re-offences would be much higher for this cohort.

SOME CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This research study has showed positive correlations with progression through the model of supervision that is delivered by the trust, and *all* of the hypothesis which were tested.

It is hoped that this evaluation has furthered our understanding of the factors associated with an effective model of supervision, and provides an impetus for future research and discussion. We would suggest that none of the elements of supervision delivered alone would be as effective as progression throughout the whole model. It is the combination of effective offender management and the delivery of community based rehabilitative services, or the marriage of cognitive behavioural theory and the theoretical concepts which inform our understanding of desistance, that is the critical ingredient to success. Further debate and re-design is likely and what is certain is that this needs to be informed and underpinned by the most up to date evidence base about what works.

“The process of desistance takes far too long and leaves too many victims in its wake. The lesson of desistance research is that correctional interventions should recognise this ‘natural’ (or at least normative) process of reform and design interventions that can enhance or compliment these spontaneous efforts” (Maruna and Le Bel, 2010).