

**‘Once a finger is pointed at you, that part of you has gone’:
The completion of Horizon programme in the community
and carceral citizenship for men with sexual convictions**

FOWLER, Andrew <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0164-9915>>, BROWN, Peter
and BICKLEY, Thomas

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'Once a finger is pointed at you, that part of you has gone': The completion of Horizon programme in the community and carceral citizenship for men with sexual convictions

Andrew Fowler 

Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK

Peter Brown

Probation Service, Rotherham, UK

Thomas Bickley

Project Collaborator, UK

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Abstract

This study presents an analysis of the experiences of 15 men convicted of sexual offences, from England and Wales, who have completed the Horizon treatment programme in the community, facilitated by The Probation Service. We found that whilst men felt initially coerced into the programme, finishing the programme was experienced as a significant loss of support. Beyond the programme, the men described the constraints on their citizenship, difficulty accessing support, and rejection in society due to their offence. We conclude by discussing the limitations of personal

Corresponding Author:

Andrew Fowler, Department of Law and Criminology, Sheffield Hallam University, Heart of the Campus Building, Collegiate Crescent, Collegiate Campus, Sheffield S10 2BQ, UK.

Email: a.fowler@shu.ac.uk

rehabilitation, the need for social rehabilitation, including tailored support beyond the programme, the importance of user voice and a 'community integration paradox'.

Keywords

community integration, shame, stigmatisation, citizenship, sexual offending

Introduction

This paper analyses community integration following the completion of the Horizon programme by men on licence and on community sentences and – more widely – probation supervision through the lens of carceral citizenship (Miller and Stuart, 2017) and four forms of rehabilitation (McNeill, 2012; McNeill and Graham 2021; Renehan and Henry, 2022). We consider what integration looks like and argue that the end of Horizon and probation supervision should be considered as a significant stage in the process of community integration. There is limited qualitative research about men convicted of sexual offences on community sentences in England and Wales.

A challenge for this article has been to find the appropriate terms to describe the process or status for someone who has completed the Horizon programme in the community and their relationship with society or the community. If the participants were leaving prison there are a range of familiar terms to describe this process, for example, re-entry, reintegration and resettlement. This article uses the term 'community integration' (see McCartan, 2022: 9–10; McCartan et al., 2021; Winder, 2022: 12), which does not presume the participants were integrated before sentencing and is inclusive of people on community sentences or custodial sentences. The term *community* is considered essential to the reintegration of men convicted of sexual offences (McAlinden, 2011, 2016; McNeill, 2012; McNeill and Graham, 2021). We consider the role of Horizon in this community integration process through the experiences of the participants in the research.

In research with men convicted of sexual offences, the reintegration process generally focuses on the period following the person's re-entry to society from prison which is only partially helpful for our understanding of the cohort in this research because those on community penalties – who do not leave prison as part of their reintegration process – are rendered invisible. The end of probation supervision or an intervention has received little attention in academic literature. HM Inspectorate of Probation (2020) draws attention to the evidence base that supports the importance of effective relationships with mandated clients to change attitudes and behaviours, adopting the term 'working alliance' when considering the evidence base for supervision skills. Whilst rooted in psychotherapy (see Bordin, 1979; Raynor, 2014), the relationship between the probation practitioner and person on probation differs from the therapeutic relationship by, for example, having no requirement for consent (see Raynor, 2014). Renehan and Henry (2022: 71) characterise the relationship between the group programme facilitator and group member as a 'therapeutic alliance'. Importantly, in psychotherapy

'endings' are a significant part of the therapeutic process with Feltham and Horton (2012: 127) suggesting that the ending phase for clients may present a 'real or symbolic loss'. Whilst there is a definitive end to the programme and probation supervision, the end of the pains of the sentence are ambiguous (see Hayes, 2015).

The participants in this study describe the structural constraints of the label attached to their offending status, ongoing surveillance and disintegrative shaming which presents a challenge to the aim of personal rehabilitation at the core of the Horizon treatment programme. The lens of carceral citizenship is helpful to make sense of this distinct status experienced by people with sexual convictions as a political membership shaped by crime control. Focusing on what makes citizenship, rather than problematic behaviour can move us to a deeper understanding of what shapes the experiences of men with sexual convictions.

The community integration of people on probation with sexual offences currently involves various practices and services that shape their citizenship. Drawing attention to the experiences of poor black Americans, Miller and Stuart argue (2017: 533) that 'carceral citizenship is a distinct form of political membership experienced by and enacted upon people convicted of a crime'. This is enacted from the moment a person receives a criminal conviction and there are material differences in consequences of carceral citizenship depending on the nature of the crime and the kind of person presumed to have committed the crime. They suggest that people convicted of sexual offences experience forms of regulation that exceed most other offence categories including murderers. In brief, Miller and Stuart (2017) outline three defining features of carceral citizenship:

- (i) how law and policies shape how formerly incarcerated people experience public welfare, labour, and housing markets
- (ii) how they are included in practices of supervision, for example, through probation, children's services
- (iii) how third parties in the private and public sphere are empowered to manage, sanction, correct and care for the carceral citizen.

Further to this, Miller and Stuart (2017: 537) explain that 'translation' renders the 'essence' of a person readable or legible from their criminal conviction. Miller and Stuart (2017) argue translation occurs across institutional settings and institutional actors including employers, landlords and teachers. In some instances, due to the need to safeguard children and vulnerable adults it is accepted that the nature of a sexual offence may legitimately disbar a person from a certain form of employment. Withstanding this, a conviction for a sexual offence can be seen to represent the 'essence' of a person and they can be subject to exclusion that is not legally sanctioned and discriminatory. Whilst carceral citizenship makes visible the process of exclusion from society, the four forms of rehabilitation offer the ingredients for citizenship.

McNeill's (2012) four forms of rehabilitation are a helpful conceptual framework to make sense of experiences of community integration. In brief, McNeill (2012) argues that four different forms of rehabilitation (personal, judicial / legal, moral,

and social) all contribute to integration. First, personal rehabilitation is where change occurs for the person to improve or develop the person on probation, for example, learning to manage unhealthy sexual thoughts on the Horizon programme. Judicial or legal rehabilitation is aimed at someone who is reintegrated into society as a full, free, equal citizen, for example, when a person with a sexual offence no longer must sign the sexual offender register. Moral rehabilitation is where the moral transgression in society is repaired with the victim and community. McNeill and Graham (2021) acknowledge the difficulty of this form of reintegration for people with non-sexual offences as well. Finally, social rehabilitation involves the restoration of the citizen's social status, where the person is accepted back into society. McNeill and Graham (2021: 13) suggest this is 'perhaps the greatest' challenge as it is subjective and heavily reliant on families, friends, and employment. They argue that rehabilitation and reintegration are interrelated, dependent on civil society and 'everyone's concern' (McNeill and Graham, 2021: 14).

An accredited group programme is seen, by the Sentencing Council, as a rehabilitative requirement on a community order and it can be part of a restrictive package on licence (Renehan and Henry, 2022). The Horizon programme addresses risk through a strength-based approach. The stated aim of the Horizon theory programme to 'provide an evidence-informed response to men in prison or on community sentences who have been convicted of a sexual offence' (HMPPS, 2018: 5). The Horizon Programme runs for 31 sessions and is divisible into 9 Blocks comprising the following four core themes:

- New me and sex,
- Managing emotions,
- Problem solving,
- Positive relationships.

The Horizon Treatment Programme was introduced in 2017 following a review of the existing suite of probation programmes after the core Sexual Offending Treatment Programme (SOTP) was shown to be ineffective (Mews et al., 2017). The Horizon Programme drew on current research around strengths-based principles (Maruna and LeBel, 2003) which emphasise the strengths a person possesses rather than a focus on failings, deficits or 'confessional, backward-looking approaches' (Farmer et al., 2015: p. 332). This move away from a programme that elicited shame (Tangney and Dearing, 2003) contrasts with the impact of prevailing punitive policies and prioritisation of the risk model (Mann et al., 2021). Mann et al. (2021) argue the prioritisation of the risk-based model is at odds with desistance research showing the importance of the community in facilitating the change process with the individual. Withstanding this, in relation to programmes more generally, Renehan and Henry (2022) argue that whilst there have been moves away from the concept of deficits, the language of deficits persists and the focus on the individual to change.

As we have seen from the four forms of rehabilitation, personal rehabilitation is not enough (McNeill, 2012; McNeill and Graham, 2021). It has been established that social isolation, social problems with housing, employment and relationships are difficult for people with sexual convictions leaving custody (Levenson et al., 2007; Mustaine and Tewksbury, 2009). In their exploration of the importance of employment for people with sexual convictions who have re-entered the community from prison, Tovey et al. (2023) found the label 'sex offender' intensified stigma, failure to find employment and engendered feelings of hopelessness. This is problematic for recidivism when we consider how such factors are associated with desistance (Harris, 2021; Mann et al., 2021). People with sexual convictions experience an added level of disadvantage due to their sullied identity compared to people leaving prison with non-sexual offences (Miller and Stuart, 2017; Winder, 2022). Stigma appears to intensify the experience of being a carceral citizen for those with sexual convictions.

Arguably, for moral and social rehabilitation a strengths-based model is required. This model is connected to the restorative tradition which is represented by community partnership, reconciliation, and social inclusion (McAlinden, 2016), exemplified by Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) (Kitson-Boyce et al., 2018). In contrast, too much emphasis on the risk-based model for people with sexual convictions has serious consequences for desistance and reintegration (Mann et al., 2021). This leads to a community protection (Kemshall, 2008) approach with a focus on excluding 'deviants', and restrictive interventions, exemplified in approaches like tagging and sexual offender register and notification (SORN). Moreover, the risk-based model and strengths-based (Maruna and LeBel, 2002) models are not mutually exclusive, for example, COSA works towards reintegration and lowers the risk of reoffending to protect the public (see Kemshall's blended approach to risk management 2021). The management of shame is important to the integrative process.

In research considering the pain of community penalties Hayes (2015) reported that shame was one of the main pains experienced by those engaging with rehabilitation. Braithwaite (1993) sees the shaming process as integral to reintegration; arguing that it must be reintegrative rather than stigmatising. For this to happen, it needs to be 'disapproval dispensed within an ongoing relationship with the offender based on respect' (Braithwaite, 1993: 1) focusing on the act, rather than seeing the person as a sum of their worst behaviour. For Braithwaite (1993) stigmatisation is a process which creates outcasts and is essentially disintegrative. In contrast, reintegration involves processes of shaming to include the person who committed the offence in society through the following two mechanisms:

- (i) The explicit disapproval of the offending act by socially significant members
- (ii) Ongoing inclusion of the person who has offended in civil society. (McAlinden, 2016: 44)

Community integration is part of the desistance process (Maruna and Immerigeon, 2004). If research on desistance is about 'understanding why and how former

offenders' (Maruna and Immarigeon, 2004) cease criminal behaviour and theories of desistance suggest that reintegration is broadly related to feeling/being accepted back into the community, these two concepts are inextricably linked. One has to stop offending to become a part of society because offending causes a rift in their contract with society and has an impact on their identity as a citizen. There is a common misconception among the public that risks posed by men convicted of sexual offences are immutable and impervious to treatment (McAlinden, 2016). However, reintegration and rehabilitation are 'everyone's concern' (McNeill and Graham, 2021: 14). Society is needed to offer an olive branch and helping hand to those within their midst who have committed sexual offences (McAlinden, 2016) to meet moral and social forms of rehabilitation. For rehabilitation to succeed it is imperative that society recognises the desistance of people with sexual convictions and help to re-establish their identity as citizens, rather than 'carceral citizens'.

Research method

The research team included a former Probation Officer and lecturer on the Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP), a Group Programme Facilitator for Horizon and former service user who had completed Northumbria Sexual Offender Group (NSOG). Author 2 and 3 approached Author 1 about the desistance of men who had completed the Horizon programme. Prior to completing the research, we had discussions about the experiences of men with sexual convictions post-programme struggling to access support due to the label of being a 'sex offender'. This is not the same as post-supervision when the mandate to meet a Probation Officer as part of a community order or licence period has been completed. A participant could have completed a programme and still be under statutory supervision. We also discussed the absence of academic literature focusing on the experiences of men with sexual convictions after completing a programme. This is the focus of this article. The experiences of the former service user corroborated some of the experiences of the participants and offered insight into recommendations going forward. Whilst the Group Programmes Facilitator understood the aims, objectives, and content of Horizon to make sense of the participants' responses.

The broader aim of the present study was to examine men's experience of desistance following the completion of the Horizon Treatment Programme. The research was funded by the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abuse (NOTA). The data included in this article is from semi-structured interviews with 15 men who had completed the Horizon Treatment Programme in the community, delivered by the Probation Service. The research was completed in the Northeast of England between July and November 2021 following ethical approval from the Ethics Committee at Sheffield Hallam University, NOTA, and HMPPS' National Research Committee (NRC).

Qualitative research seeks to explain a specific human phenomenon from the perspective of those that have experienced it (Creswell, 2013). The interview guide focused on the questions outlined. Interviews ranged between 45 minutes and 90 minutes. The interview questions were developed around seven areas: (1) the

impact of Horizon on the desistance process (2) what skills from the Horizon programme have been helpful (3) what impact did the Horizon programme have on their sense of self (4) how the men experienced Horizon and probation generally (5) how optimistic are the men about their future (6) what have the men done following the programme (7) how men experienced the ending of the Horizon group. We also collected demographic data.

The recruitment of people convicted of sexual offences for research is difficult (Burrows, 2016) and so a convenience sampling technique was adopted. The participants were identified and initially contacted by a Horizon Programme Facilitator from the Probation Service's Delius database. The facilitators build relationships with the men throughout the Horizon programme. The research assistant had completed a programme and probation supervision. The research assistant's experiences helped us reassure participants that the research would be conducted in a safe environment. It was also an opportunity to give back augmenting the researcher's desistance journey (Weaver et al., 2019), promoted active citizenship and mutual learning (Cunningham and Wakeling, 2022). It was our hope that the combination of the group programmes facilitator and research assistant would ensure the men felt secure and safe in the research process. Blagden and Pemberton (2010) identify this group as a vulnerable population citing media representation of people with sexual offences and societal stigma. Having obtained the participant's consent, the research assistant made contact, by phone or email, to arrange an interview. The interviews were completed remotely following COVID-19 HMPPS research guidelines using telephones, video calling and digitally recorded. The team was mindful of the disinhibitory effect using remote interviewing techniques where the separation may result in the feeling of anonymity amplifying the desire to share (Block and Erskine, 2012). As a team we discussed the possibility of participants sharing sensitive information that was affecting them at the time. We also discussed signposting and in what circumstances we would break confidentiality (Cowburn, 2005). This was to maintain sensitivity and diminish the likelihood of a reduction of sensitivity towards the participants, a risk identified by Engward et al. (2022) due to the impersonal nature of remote interviewing. This method was time efficient, low cost and accessible for all our participants. The research team did not think remote interviewing significantly affected the data.

The participants all identified as White British, the ages of participants ranged from 28 years old to 63 years old, 4 men were employed, 2 self-employed, 2 medically unfit, 1 participant was retired and 6 were unemployed. Of the participants, 10 were on community sentences, with a range between 1 year and 6 months to 3 years. All of the participants were still under the statutory supervision of the probation service. In a recent (Elliot and Hambly, 2023) Ministry of Justice report on clinical outcomes for Horizon 88.5% of the participants were white, 6% were Asian and 2% were black which highlights how our sample is not representative of the ethnicity of participants on the Horizon treatment programme. This represents a limitation of what can be inferred from this study about men's experiences on completion of the Horizon Treatment programme. There were 5 participants on custodial sentences with a range between 1 year and 11 months to 16 years. At the time of interview,

4 of the participants were still subject to supervision by the probation service. Interviews were transcribed and anonymised before data was analysed utilising thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to generate codes and themes. Initially we divided the transcripts between the team and identified key themes from our overarching aim to explore desistance narratives. The themes generated relate to the men's experience of integration in the community. They include the personal rehabilitation journey, shame and stigmatisation, peer support and carceral citizenship. All the names used in the findings are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.

This is not a longitudinal study and therefore a limitation in the study is that it takes a cross-section, and it is difficult to determine the desistance process as it develops; as it is a process rather than an event (Farrall et al., 2014; Farmer et al., 2016: 1770). Findings cannot be generalised from this research project. Future research could look to capture the experience of men from a greater range of ethnic backgrounds and the therapeutic relationship between group programme facilitators and people on the group programme.

Findings

This section details the findings, starting with how Horizon has an impact on personal rehabilitation, the role of shame and how peer support facilitated reintegrative shaming. The final theme highlights limits of the Horizon programme and importance of community rehabilitation in the community integration process.

The personal rehabilitation journey

If you don't do this course, you can get recalled back to prison. However, it is voluntary.

The Horizon programme contributes to community integration and the process of personal rehabilitation (McNeill, 2012; McNeill and Graham, 2021) by being mandated through licence conditions or community sentence.

'Obviously, when I come out of prison, a few years ago, I...had to do this course. I done it because it was forced on me, it was, erm, the way probation set it up...They said you, you have to go on this course...If you don't do this course, you can get recalled back to prison. However, it is voluntary. And, straightaway, I've got my back up with that'.
(Fred)

The inherent contradiction presented by Fred is that completion of the 'course' is voluntary yet a failure to do so could result in being recalled to prison. This Hobson's choice, where something is presented as a free choice, when only one option is being offered, was expressed by a number of participants. Michael, a recipient of a community sentence, expresses being 'scared' that failure to complete the course would result in being returned to court.

'I didn't understand, the actual sentence of not completing the course... you have to go back to court... so, yeah... bit scared'. (Michael)

Canton (2022: 384) argues that 'attempts must always be made to gain consent' for treatment to achieve the aims of supervision resulting in a stark paradox whereby probation mandates a programme that seeks to promote strengths, choice, and personal autonomy. In spite of this, participants described subsequent benefits from participating in the programme.

'Horizons is very good in that it focuses on rehabilitation and moving forward. Erm, it delivers...to be honest, it didn't deliver me a whole new set of skills. Erm, most of them I already had, made me think about certain things. Er, it made, I think the one thing that it made me think about was that you needed to talk'. (Charlie)

The focus on rehabilitation and 'moving forward' was seen as an improvement by Charlie who referred to the negative review of the SOTP. As has been outlined, this focus on 'personal rehabilitation' is one of the four forms of rehabilitation (McNeill, 2012; McNeill and Graham, 2021). Ken expresses how he feels the public see men convicted of sexual offences as having a fixed identity as a 'sex offender' who will go to reoffend and cannot be rehabilitated:

'...sex offenders go on these programmes and they're never rehabilitated, you know, they're, they're, they're never, it's just a, a day out in the park for them, you know, they never rehabilitated, they go on to reoffend, they go on to, er, commit other crimes, they don't learn from it, er, what's the point of having these programmes...[but] since actually doing the programme myself, it, it's opened my eyes that, you know, to the fact that, no it's not, you know, no it's not a walk in the park, you know, you, you're really taught to or learn and your taught to, erm, to rehabilitate through various different methods'. (Ken)

This perception of the public presented by Ken resonates with McAlinden (2016) and brings to the fore another form of reintegration outlined (McNeill, 2012; McNeill and Graham, 2021). This is social rehabilitation, where the person is accepted back into society. Arguably, the men experience a conditioned (Vaughan, 2000) or carceral social status (Miller and Stuart, 2017). McAlinden (2016) argues that reintegrative shaming involves disapproval of the offending act and ongoing inclusion in society. This shaming should be reintegrative rather than stigmatising (Braithwaite, 1993) where stigmatisation leads to exclusion.

Shame and stigmatisation

Once a finger is pointed at you, that part of you has gone.

A key part of community integration and social rehabilitation is shame management (Ahmed et al., 2001; Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2001). Shame management suggests shame is not merely seen as a tool to reduce reoffending but can help men convicted of sexual offences manage their feelings of shame in a constructive manner. Rehabilitative efforts must confront the additional consequences of conviction including stigmatisation and exclusion 'or be doomed to fail' (Maruna, 2011 in McNeill, 2014: 14). This challenge is partly dependent on social acceptance. Through the group men found some acceptance for the first time since committing the offence. Participants talked about the shaming process and stigmatisation. Fred talked about the impact of being in prison on his sense of self.

'And, when you've going to a place like HMP, you get drilled that you are 'x' number, you are 'x' number, that is your number, that's your number. Now, that number is imprinted in my life, that's me. Everything I do has to have those numbers. And I, don't see myself as a person that will go, "I'm going to in three years' time be the pillar of the community", or even being a really good, community member, because I've got the skills, I've got the, the thinking skills, I, I've got this, I've got this. Well, no. Once a finger is pointed at you, that part of you has gone'. (Fred)

Returning to the theme of the sullied identity, Fred expresses the challenge of diminishing the stigmatising effects of being in prison. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Anthony is nervous talking about personal matters:

'You know, erm, so yeah, I, er, I went onto the group and, erm, it were bit nerve-racking at first, you know, you're thrown by people and that and you have to talk about things you don't really wanna talk about'. (Anthony)

Ken is worried about being judged by the sum of his offending, by what is 'on black and white in paper'.

'I think that, obviously, in the back of my mind, I had this, sort of, image that, erm, everybody would judge, everybody would judge, everybody would, erm, see what's on black and white in paper'. (Ken)

The men had to confront their own shame and also felt shame by association resulting from having to spend time with people who had committed offences they deemed to be worse than their own:

'I just thought to me sen, I'm getting...charred with same brush as what...people who messes about with kids, you know what I mean?... I'm surrounded with people that's done summit to a kid and I would never dream of doing owt like that'. (Neil)

Despite some strong responses to the imposition of the Horizon programme, the men found it helpful. However, the focus on personal rehabilitation and the individual is limited in what it can achieve in terms of community integration.

Peer support

Because it feels when you're all in the same boat, sort of thing.

Research in the prison context has shown that peer support can provide opportunities to enact prosocial selves; addressing risk factors associated with loneliness, low self-esteem and emotional regulation (Perrin et al., 2018). Horizon also offers some degree of peer support which appeared to be the first experiences of community integration for some of the men:

'...On the group ourself that, we're all there to, like, help each other anyway. It was, the group wasn't just about one individual person'. (George)

This aspect of Horizon contributed to feeling part of a community and reduced loneliness.

'I think really the most valuable thing was, kind of, being part of the group, cause when you go what you went through it always felt like you were alone, that you were the only one going through it, and it kinda showed that, you know, you weren't...Because it feels when you're all in the same boat, sort of thing'. (Brian)

Brian expresses a form of 'reintegrative shaming' (McAlinden, 2016) where he feels included and not alone. The group provided an opportunity to manage the emotions of shame (Ahmed et al., 2001; Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2001; McAlinden, 2007). Although the men experienced feeling part of a group, they were also reminded of their status by the restrictions on contact with members of the group.

'It got me out and, obviously, say meet friends...no you can't, because, you're not allowed to have contact with them after the course. So they can't be friends. So, that that's a false thing. But, meet new people, that you'll never, ever see again'. (Fred)

The men experienced a pendulum swing from acceptance to restrictions. The punitive approach adopted here prioritises restrictions at the expense of community integration which goes against the Council of Europe's argument that evidence-based risk assessment should inform treatment as well as reintegration. It is difficult to locate the 'evidence-informed response' (HMPPS, 2018: 5) supporting non-association for people on group programmes, however, it could be a restrictive intervention imposed in licence conditions for Fred. The shame and stigmatisation experienced by the men in society contrasted sharply with the sharing of their experiences with each other in the group. It also emphasised the singularity of this experience and utility in constructive shame management (Ahmed et al., 2001; Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2001). The juxtaposition of the supportive group environment with the humiliation, rejection, and absence of support outside of the group is striking. This carceral citizenship shapes how the participants experience community integration through laws and policies; supervision practices and third-party

agencies who are empowered to manage, sanction and care for the carceral citizen (Miller and Stuart, 2017).

Carceral citizenship

Oh, sorry we can't find you any work, because of your conviction.

As stated earlier (Miller and Stuart, 2017; Tovey et al., 2023; Winder, 2022), the stigma that men with sexual convictions experience is different from people with non-sexual offences. Our participants also experienced challenges in their judicial / legal, moral, and social community rehabilitation (McNeill and Graham, 2021). When men commit a sexual offence, they are subject to the Sex Offender Register Notification (SORN). The SORN is intended to assist the police to know the whereabouts of people with sexual convictions. George talks about the highs and lows re-entering the community after serving part of his sentence in prison:

'The highs being back out, being able to see everyone again and get on with life. And the worst is probably the fact that I'm on the register for another few years, and I've got a criminal record now'. (George)

The SORN and criminal record mean they are not free and equal citizens. Mann et al. (2021) found that the SORN impedes the desistance process, as the person with the offence is defined by the offending past rather than their aspirational identity. Michael expresses the difficulty of not knowing when checks will be made, when you are on the sexual offender register:

'Obviously, I don't mind em...it's their job, they gotta do it, er, you know, answer all the questions and, you know, do whatever they want me to do, but, it's just, difficult to, you just don't want it happening when you've got friends round, or family round'. (Michael)

In addition, participants talked about the difficulty of accessing support, maintaining employment, and finishing the programme. Oliver explained that his criminal conviction resulted in a job offer being withdrawn.

'I had to disclose my, er, criminal conviction, because they asked ... And then they withdrew the job offer ... So, that put me in quite a low place...People are judging me on that one simple...mistake ... And it's tough, it's tough out here, if you're trying to find a job'. (Oliver)

There are also specific challenges for men with sexual convictions who experience carceral citizenship (Miller and Stuart, 2017) and are judged more harshly in the workplace due to their conviction. Lewis explained that he lost two jobs and thought the most recent loss was a consequence of someone finding out about his offending background from the news.

'I lost a job twice because somebody's found out, well one of the workers on my background, erm, because the first one was, I had a full-time job ...but then they took me off so I went for another job, and I've only been there, like, 6 months until then, there was this new guy, he's just, shouting for me to be out the job, and I think he probably, I think he probably knows me from the news, so it was just like, cause I had a day off, and like the next day, and then I've had a text from, from my work saying, er, that how shocked that they seen the news about me and that they don't want to see me ever again'. (Lewis)

The lack of acceptance experienced by Lewis was also expressed by George looking for support from companies and agencies specifically for people with criminal convictions.

I've struggled mainly finding work. I've had companies and agencies that say they, they're there specifically for people who's got criminal convictions and then they've turned me down because of me conviction. And that, I think that is probably the hardest part, is when an agency or a charity who supposed to help people like me find work...turns round to me and says, "Oh sorry, we can't find you any work, because of your conviction". I think that is probably the hardest part, probably where I would say...I could do with more, could probably do with more supporting'. (George)

George suggests that more support is required specifically for people with sexual convictions. The third parties that are supposed to care for the carceral citizen turned George down and serving to reaffirm his carceral status where their offence is translated into their essence (Miller and Stuart, 2017). The exclusion experienced by Oliver, Lewis and George is an example 'disintegrative shaming' which can have a long-term negative effect on self-esteem (Braithwaite, 1989; McAlinden, 2005). The absence of support was strongly evidenced by participants' experiences:

'You've heard of Circles of Support? It doesn't exist anymore. It's been, it's been defunded...Erm, I, I, I think the people with sexual convictions, I think, if you haven't got the support of family and friends, and let's face, the majority don't. I think a network of something like Circles of Support, really needs to be re-set up'. (Charlie)

For those with sexual convictions the pool of supportive resources diminishes, particularly when support tailored to their offence background is not available. Whilst we know Circles of Support has not ended it was not available where the participant lived. Due to lack of support in the community for men with sexual convictions, the end of probation and Horizon represented the termination of the support network available to Oliver:

'My experience is, once probation is over and once Horizon's over, there is nobody to help me ... I mean, if I felt, if I felt the need to reoffend, or well, let's put it that way, but if I felt the need to reoffend, there would be nobody for me to...go to talk to, cause...I used to feel this, whereas if there was somewhere for me to go, talk about...things, it might help'. (Oliver)

Some of the men found volunteering opportunities and had social networks. However, as Charlie stated earlier, and from listening to our participants, the networks of supportive family and friends were not the norm. Neil expresses feeling 'lucky' to have his own supportive network:

Yeah, I were very lucky, I mean, compared to most people that come out of jail, I had... well, I had everything really, I didn't want for anything ... Well, my family were there, me friends were there and me job were there, when I got out. I just...I were lucky really (Neil)

Oliver expresses the 'void' left by the end of the programme:

To be honest with you, I'm quite devastated, because...on a personal level, I mean... erm, I felt a connection with... (*Facilitator's name*) ...don't get me wrong, I mean... nothing like that. But she's bloody good at her job. ...it's a void that I've gotta fill, somehow and...to be honest with you, I, I mean, I wish the Horizon course had gone on forever, but it doesn't' (Oliver)

Ken explains the support that is offered beyond the end of the Horizon programme:

'You're support has ended, you, you've done your Probation, we are still here, if you need us, you know, we are still here, if you are at a time when you're feeling lonely or you need support or, you know, you just need a shoulder to, to cry on, basically, you know, erm, but I think also a lot of people struggle with...potentially, with sexual convictions, a lot of people struggle with, er, adapting to, erm, you know, society and getting back into society again. So, and, and you do a lot of work on the Horizon Programme with that'. (Ken)

Notwithstanding this offer, Ken suggests that the end of probation and the Horizon programme is a difficult time for men adapting to society. Despite the expressed coercion, initial nerves and reluctance to start the programme, the men found the programme to be a rare form of support for people with sexual convictions. When we consider the interrelated four forms of community integration: personal, judicial/legal, moral and social (McNeill, 2012; McNeill and Graham, 2021; Renehan and Henry, 2022). The Horizon programme recognises the limitations of the help in society with an open-ended offer of support.

Discussion

The participants in the study brought to the fore the challenges of community integration for men convicted of sexual offences completing Horizon as part of a prison licence condition or community sentence. Despite some strong responses to the imposition of the Horizon programme, the men found it helpful. The shame and stigmatisation experienced by the men in society contrasted sharply with the sharing of their experiences with each other in the group. It also emphasised the singularity of

this experience and utility in constructive shame management (Ahmed et al., 2001; Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2001). The juxtaposition of the supportive group environment with the humiliation, rejection and absence of support outside of the group is striking. This demonstrates the complexity of community integration when analysed against the four forms of rehabilitation aiming at reintegration (McNeill, 2012; McNeill and Graham, 2021).

The research offers an insight into men's experiences of the Horizon treatment programme and beyond. There is a paucity of research about people's experiences with sexual convictions in the community in England and Wales. At the time of writing this is the first study in England and Wales considering the experiences of men convicted of sexual offences who had completed the Horizon Treatment programme. There has been a useful analysis by Cresswell (2020) of community-based programmes for people with sexual convictions in the Republic of Ireland. A key finding was the impact programmes can have on social rehabilitation, building relationships beyond the programmes. As we can observe from our participants, personal rehabilitation is not enough as programmes do not operate in a vacuum (Cresswell, 2020; Renehan and Henry, 2022). Further to this, more could be done to support group members beyond the programme (Renehan and Henry, 2022), to bridge the gap between personal, moral and social rehabilitation (McNeill, 2012; McNeill and Graham, 2021). We found that the end of the Horizon programme can be experienced as a profound loss due to the loneliness and isolation experienced by the men. In addition, the loss of the supportive relationship with the groups programme facilitator is a significant loss for Oliver. Renehan and Henry (2022) suggest inviting significant others to witness and celebrate change could have a reparative or restorative impact. In addition, they argue the therapeutic relationship between group programme facilitator and group member could 'support a wider role in supporting reintegration within and beyond group interventions' (Renehan and Henry, 2022: 71). It is recommended that this relationship could be used to support social rehabilitation. Our analysis shows that the complex interplay of personal, judicial, moral and social rehabilitation (McNeill, 2012; McNeill and Graham, 2021) requires a holistic approach to desistance that is clearly beyond the scope of a single accredited programme.

The community integration process comprises significant stages for each individual. We would argue that the end of Horizon and probation supervision requires more attention. We found that the participants experience ostracisation and rejection due to stigmatisation. Horizon provides a rare form of support and peer support in the community. It would be helpful to learn more about how men convicted of sexual offences successfully integrate against the four forms of rehabilitation. Earlier Charlie lamented the absence of COSA (see Hanvey et al., 2011) and the importance and the absence of a network of support is noted by our participants. A further suggestion would be to adopt consistent language in relation to the integration process, with an emphasis on the importance of the *community*. McNeill (2012) argues that rehabilitation is not just about the individual and their readiness for integration, it is also about rebuilding in the community. The absence of COSA in some

areas and the severing of community involvement with men convicted of sexual offences means there is no olive branch or helping hand to support moral or social rehabilitation. Without this community support, the men are stuck with their status as a carceral citizen.

This research process and analysis has benefited from the insight of someone who has completed the Horizon programme. McCartan et al. (2021) argue that the perspective of those subject to the programme should be heard. The hitherto absence of the user voice within the development of treatment programmes for men convicted of sexual offences, is concerning, and could be seen as a perpetuation of the societal stigma disclosed by our participants and risks running contrary to the message of community integration. There have been calls from HMPPS for lived experience to shape the next generation of programmes. In addition to the privileging of service user voice in the development of any programme, there should be an ongoing feedback process to understand the impact of the programme on the men convicted of sexual offences. Moreover, we would argue that there could be further advances in our understanding if people with lived experience were included in the whole research process.

At the heart of the men's experience is the community integration paradox. The men are mandated under threat of a worse outcome to engage in a rehabilitative programme to support their community integration. This process both excludes and includes. The forward-looking approach builds their self-esteem and strengths in a punitive penal context where they are not encouraged to contact peers outside the group. The men convicted of sexual offences are encouraged to consider their social and cultural capital then experience rejection, humiliation, and a lacuna in support beyond the probation experience. It is beyond the scope of this article to recount the debate about whether treatment or welfare should be mandated under the threat of enforcement action (see Canton, 2022). However, our data suggest that treatment and welfare should not be coterminous, and that support should continue beyond the programme (see Cresswell, 2020). When we consider the men's experience of the Horizon programme it was valued and experienced as a profound loss when it ended, in contrast to some participants initial feelings of coercion to the imposition of the requirement to complete the programme. Beyond the programme the men convicted of sexual offences continued to inhabit the status of carceral citizen (Miller and Stuart, 2017). The evidence supports Renehan and Henry's (2022) argument that group interventions need to be part of the rehabilitative journey, not all of it.

Conclusion

Community integration is part of the desistance process (Maruna and Immarigeon, 2004) and too much emphasis on the community protection model of working with people with sexual convictions perpetuates the negative connotations that emanate from the label 'sex offender'. Overcoming this is the key to community integration and desistance and requires community integration to be 'everyone's concern' (McNeill and Graham, 2021: 14). Despite initial fears and concerns, the

participants explained how the Horizon programme is supportive, builds hope and offers and contributes to 'integrative shaming' (Braithwaite, 1989; McAlinden, 2016). Beyond the Horizon programme there needs to be ongoing support in the community that reaches men convicted of sexual offences who may potentially face 'disintegrative shaming' (Braithwaite, 1989; McAlinden, 2016) leading to unemployment and other elements of carceral citizenship. There needs to be tailored support recognising the unique challenges faced by someone with a sexual conviction, for example, where they are not eligible for support from agencies and third parties established to work with people with criminal convictions. Further for probation to be more effective in this area, their unique desistance journeys require further exploration in the context of the challenges of building networks and supportive relationships in the community.

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ORCID iD

Andrew Fowler  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0164-9915>

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