

Institution: University of York		
Unit of Assessment: 4 - Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience		
Title of case study: Evidence-based interventions to improve prisoner behaviour and reduce recidivism		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010 – 2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (eg job title):	Period(s) employed by the submitting HEI:
Cynthia McDougall David Torgerson	Professor of Psychology Director of Health Sciences Trials Unit	Jan 2009 – present Jan 1995 – present
Mona Kanaan Belen Corbacho Martin	Reader in Health Sciences Research Fellow in Health Sciences	Sep 2007 – present Jan 2012 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Two evidence-based interventions in the prison service have resulted in direct benefits to prison staff, prisoners and broader society. McDougall's research on serious offenders shows that behaviour monitoring in prison can predict risk of reoffending after release. She has also shown that the introduction of digital technology terminals (for prisoners to request visits, health care, order food, etc.) brings significant benefits to behaviour within prisons and enhances rehabilitation. The research on behaviour monitoring provided empirical evidence relevant to difficult policy areas (e.g., managing prisoner release), and has resulted in significant institutional change. Enhanced Behaviour Monitoring was made mandatory in all pre-release prisons, and became a mandatory part of decisions on temporary release. The research on digital technology explored the feasibility of expanding self-service terminals for prisoners across public sector prisons, informing the Justice Minister's 2018 announcement of GBP7,000,000 to fund the introduction of digital kiosks in UK prisons and the implementation of digital technology in prisons across three states in Australia.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>The research on behaviour monitoring involves a series of studies conducted by McDougall which had the overall aim of examining difficult policy areas and building an evidence base to inform interventions to improve prisoner behaviour and reduce reoffending. Torgerson's contribution was to design and oversee the research assessing the impact of digital technology in a range of prisons. Kanaan and Martin were involved in drawing up the Benefits Realisation Methodology (5.6) to aid decisions relating to further roll out of digital technology in HM prisons. All of the references in Section 3 include a co-author from the Probation Trust.</p> <p>A continuing area of concern is risk assessment of serious offenders, which is particularly difficult with offenders who have spent long periods in prison. McDougall's research was originally conducted on life sentence prisoners who had committed murder, and demonstrated that behaviours that contributed to the original offence were still observed in prison and could be used retrospectively to assess ongoing risk. In 2010, following a number of high-profile murders committed by offenders after release, McDougall developed a prospective model using data on high-risk prisoners, whose in-prison behaviour (recorded by prison officers) had been monitored and was compared against their behaviour in the year after release (3.1). In comparison with traditional interview-based assessment methods, behavioural research demonstrated that the model could significantly predict those who would commit a serious offence after release, or be recalled for risk-related behaviour (3.2). This procedure of using in-prison behaviour to predict criminal activity after release is now known as <i>Enhanced Behaviour Monitoring</i> (EBM). In addition to the publications in English language journals, this research was published by invitation in a French language journal (3.3).</p>		

A second strand of research on improving prisoner behaviour was commissioned to investigate the institutional benefits of introducing prisoner self-service technology. Prisons are acknowledged to be inefficient, with little technology available for the use of officers or prisoners. Systems are mainly paper-based, with any requests for visits, food ordering, changes of employment, education and health care being processed by hand by officers. This leads to delays and errors, which are acknowledged to be a major cause of tension and assaults on staff. In addition to the benefits in efficiency of self-service technology, McDougall recognised its potential to rehabilitate, developing a Theory of Change which proposed that prisoners' acquisition of skills and increased responsibility would lead to positive psychological and social changes.

This research was instrumental in the introduction of prisoner self-service kiosks, with the system initially being rolled out in private prisons. The introduction of the kiosks was associated with a significant decrease of 22% in disciplinary adjudications over two years; in addition, staff sick absence was reduced by 12%. In due course, reoffending by those who had experienced the technology was reduced by 5% in the first year after release in comparison with those who had not experienced the technology (3.4). This reference is the only empirical published study on the positive impact of self-service technology on rehabilitation and re-offending, and led to an invitation to contribute to a book on international cyberdeviance and cybercrime, incorporating a previously unpublished Process Evaluation (3.5). Following presentation of the empirical evidence shown above, McDougall was commissioned by the HM Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS) Director of Digital Change to conduct new research examining the feasibility of rolling out digital technology across the whole public prison estate.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references) (York staff in bold)

References (3.1), (3.2) and (3.4) below are published in peer-reviewed journals. Reference (3.4) is being returned to REF 2021.

3.1. Pearson, D. A. S., & **McDougall, C.** (2017). Serious offenders: Using evidence to predict and manage the risk. *Behavioural Sciences and the Law*, 35, 239-256. DOI: [10.1002/bsl.2288](https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.2288)

3.2. **McDougall, C.**, Pearson, D. A. S., Willoughby, H., & Bowles, R. A. B. (2013). Evaluation of the ADViSOR project: Cross-situational behaviour monitoring of high-risk offenders in prison and the community. *Legal & Criminological Psychology*, 18, 2, 205-228. DOI: [10.1111/j.2044-8333.2012.02059.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8333.2012.02059.x)

3.3. **McDougall, C.**, Pearson, D. A. S., Willoughby, H., & Bowles, R. A. B. (2013). Evaluation d'un projet d'évaluation du risque base sur l'observation des detenus (ADViSOR). *Actualité Juridique Penal*, No. 4. 204-207.

3.4. **McDougall, C.**, Pearson, D. A. S., **Torgerson, D. J.**, & Garcia-Reyes, M. (2017). The effect of digital technology on prisoner behavior and reoffending: A natural stepped-wedge design. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 13, 455-482. DOI: [10.1007/s11292-017-9303-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-017-9303-5).

3.5. **McDougall, C.**, & Pearson, D. A. S. (2019). Technology as a means of rehabilitation: A measurable impact on reducing crime. In T. J. Holt and A. Bossler (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of International Cybercrime and Cyberdeviance*. New York: Springer Publishing Company. DOI: [10.1007/978-3-319-90307-1_71-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90307-1_71-1)

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The beneficiaries of McDougall's research are (a) policymakers who have used the research to inform criminal justice policies, (b) prison staff and prisoners whose wellbeing has been improved by the implementation of findings from the research, and (c) the general public who are less likely to be the victims of crime due to the impact of the research on the rate of re-offending.

Benefits to Policymakers

The research on behaviour monitoring was commissioned by the Probation Trust Director of Public Protection (who co-authored 3.2 & 3.3) and was funded (as acknowledged in 3.2) by the current Director General of Prisons, who at that time was the Regional Director of Offender

Management, and later seconded to the Ministry of Justice's Strategy Unit (5.1). Further interest was shown by HM Assistant Chief Inspector of Probation, who had investigated one of the high profile re-offences that prompted the research (Serious Further Offence Case – Anthony Rice, 2006) (5.1). The research has provided senior managers of prison and probation with an evidence base for policy development on risk assessment of life sentence prisoners. In 2015, a Prison Service Instruction on EBM was issued. This instruction was mandatory for all 14 Category D open prisons in the UK (housing around 7,000 prisoners), from which the most serious offenders are usually released. The 2015 Instruction made it mandatory for reports on EBM of offenders to be reviewed by forensic psychologists before offenders were released (5.2).

Evidence that EBM was being used and received positively was corroborated in independent documents. EBM was acknowledged in a High Court Hearing as being used effectively as part of a Progression Regime in a Category C prison. Evidence of EBM in action was reported in an Unannounced Chief Prison Inspector's Report on HMP Warren Hill, October 2015, as follows: "4.26 The EBM process, supported by an effective key worker scheme, enabled the prison to monitor prisoners' attitudes, behaviour and thinking and to respond to risk issues" (5.2). In May 2019, the EBM Prison Service Instructions were upgraded to the status of mandatory permanent Policy Frameworks (5.2).

Following the introduction of EBM, an additional policy, Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL), was amended, making it mandatory for very high risk prisoners being considered for ROTL to be first registered for EBM. This strengthened the importance of EBM as a risk assessment tool. References to the mandatory use of EBM are made throughout the Prison Service Instruction on ROTL, and the risk assessment section states that the EBM case file must be considered when reviewing the main Prison Service risk assessment database (5.3). In May 2019, the ROTL Prison Service Instructions were upgraded to the status of mandatory permanent Policy Frameworks (5.3). Policy interest in the research extended to France, where McDougall was invited to present a paper to a criminal justice conference, and to collaborate with the University of Reims to put the research into practice in the French prison service (5.4).

An internal report on McDougall's self-service technology research was widely circulated in 2016 within HMPPS. Policy interest was evident when HMPPS Director of Digital Change, having attended a seminar on the research, commissioned further research to investigate the feasibility of implementing digital technology across public sector prisons in order to inform policy on how the technology should be implemented. Performance measures were monitored on two (1,000 prisoner) 'proof of concept' prisons, and staff and prisoner focus groups were conducted. Results showed positive improvements in assaults against staff, prisoner complaints, disciplinary adjudications, self-harm and staff sickness (5.5). After the technology had been in place for 9 months, an interim evaluation report was completed and a cost benefit analysis was included in an HMPPS Business Case to the Ministry of Justice (5.6). In July 2018, the Justice Minister published his strategy for security, decency and rehabilitation (5.7). This included an announcement of proposed expenditure of GBP7,000,000 on in-cell telephony and digital kiosks in prisons. This was the first time the potential use of digital kiosks in public sector prisons had been publicly announced by the Ministry of Justice. The contract to supply digital technology to prisons has subsequently been expanded to cover over 40 prisons in the UK (5.8).

The research on digital technology has also achieved impact overseas. McDougall was invited to present a webinar for senior prison managers in Australia in 2016. As a result of this presentation, self-service technology has been used for the past three years in fifteen Australian prisons (in South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia), housing around 5,000 prisoners (5.8).

Benefits to prison staff and prisoners

In the case of prison staff, the EBM and ROTL schemes place more responsibility for risk assessment on prison officers, who know the prisoners well, having observed them in a range of situations. This new responsibility raises the status of the prison officer, and demonstrates their

ability to provide risk information. As for the prisoners, they are informed of the benefits of EBM and ROTL procedures in reducing their likelihood of reoffending (5.1 – 5.3).

It is evident from focus groups with prison staff and prisoners that the introduction of technology is popular. It relieves officers of the mundane routine tasks involved with handling paper-based requests, freeing them to do more skilled work. It is popular with the majority of prisoners as it gives them more self-responsibility, and results in less tension with prison officers. The positive impact on performance measures described above empirically demonstrates improvement in well-being for both staff and prisoners (5.5). The evident motivation of prisoners to learn new skills highlights the potential use of technology in the context of prisoner rehabilitation.

Benefits to Society

Society will benefit from the mandatory introduction of EBM and its inclusion in ROTL through the associated reduction in crime and reoffending in high-risk offenders. Digital technology also greatly improves efficiency in prisons and therefore reduces the costs of imprisonment. Savings to tax payers are evident in (a) increased efficiency as a result of the implementation of digital technology due to the reduction in staff absences, prisoner disciplinary procedures and assaults on staff (5.5, 5.6 and 3.4), and (b) the reduction in police and court costs as a result of the decreased rate of reoffending (5.6, 3.4).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1.** Portfolio of evidence from the (a) Director of Public Protection, Durham Tees Valley Probation Services; the Prison Service MAPPA Co-ordinator; (b) Director of Regional Offender Management, (c) HM Assistant Chief Inspector of Probation.
- 5.2.** Portfolio of evidence on implementation of EBM:
 (a) NOMS (now HMPPS) Prison Service Instruction. Enhanced Behaviour Monitoring (EBM). Effective: 1 July 2015. Instruction applies to Public Sector Prisons, Contracted Prisons and the National Probation Service. (b) Secretary of State for Justice – Courts and Tribunals. (c) HM Chief Inspector of Prison's Unannounced Report of HMP Warren Hill (Introduction, paragraph 5). (d) Enhanced Behaviour Monitoring Policy Framework. Issued by Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.
- 5.3.** Evidence on ROTL scheme:
 Improvements to the ROTL Scheme document. Release on Temporary Licence Prison Service Instruction. Issued by Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.
- 5.4.** Correspondence with the University of Reims, (a) regarding collaborative research and (b) joining the Conference Francophone de la Probation.
- 5.5.** Monthly performance data (anonymised and using model data) on adjudications, violence against staff and prisoners, staff sick absence, prisoner self-harm, prisoner complaints, and offending behaviour programme completions. Internal Ministry of Justice Focus Groups.
- 5.6.** Example of Benefits Realisation Methodology (anonymised and redacted). Internal Ministry of Justice Reports (Confidential Internal Document). McDougall, C., Kanaan, M., Corbacho-Martin, B. & Pearson, D. A. S. (November, 2016).
- 5.7.** Justice Minister's speech on 'Crackdown on crime in prisons'. July 2018.
- 5.8.** Portfolio of correspondence with (a) Justice Analytical Services team (anonymised and redacted); (b) Australian Prison Service; (c) Managing Director of Unilink Software Ltd.