A Timely Convergence: Understanding and Supporting the Desistance-Potential of Fatherhood among Young Offenders

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Humanities.

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Abstract

The University of Manchester

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PhD

A Timely Convergence: Understanding and Supporting the Desistance-Potential of Fatherhood among Young Offenders

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This thesis analyses findings from a predominantly qualitative study of young (aged 18 to 24) imprisoned fathers interviewed in prison shortly before release, some of whom were also followed into the community. The research focused on the experiences of these men in prison, and how being a young father in prison affected their attitudes to offending, fatherhood and the future. Furthermore, this work investigated how these men then reintegrated back into the community and whether they managed to fulfil their hopes for change, focusing on what factors helped or hindered this process.

This research applies desistance theory and identity theory to the lived experience of young imprisoned fathers; a group that has been largely ignored in previous research. The work is informed by both social-psychological (Maruna, 2001; Farrall, 2002; Meek, 2007a) and sociological perspectives (Laub and Sampson, 2003).

This thesis adds to knowledge about the process of change for young offending fathers, highlighting it to be a gradual and active process that draws on both internal and external influences. Change is a complex activity, especially for men with transient relationships and lifestyles, which relies on the fragile coincidence of many interconnected factors. Due to the instability of many of these factors, it is a process characterised by successes and failures. This thesis argues that criminal justice policies need to support fatherhood to take full advantage of fatherhood’s desistance-potential. The findings provide evidence to support Maruna et al’s (2004a) description of a three track process of change, requiring self-determination, formal support and informal support. They also suggest the need for the additional important factors of identity transformation (Maruna, 2001; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009) in positive social and personal contexts (Farrall, 2002; Walker, 2010). Fatherhood adds an additional layer to these factors. This thesis also contributes to knowledge of how agency and structural factors interact.

Keywords: prison experience, reintegration, desistance, fatherhood
Declaration

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At roughly the same time as starting my PhD I met Howard and the two journeys have run simultaneously. My journey with Howard has provided the happiest moments of my life. In the same time as researching and writing my PhD we have been on amazing holidays, had a baby boy, got married and moved into our new family home. Howard’s support, both emotionally and financially, has meant the world to me and kept me going and determined to finish. He has had to put up with a lot of tears and regular crises of confidence and always did so in such a lovely way, always managing to make me laugh even in those times when I wanted to cry. I can never put into words how grateful I am for having Howard in my life every day. I love you baby!

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endless questions (especially about the computer systems) and gave great advice on how to more ethically carry out the research. The young fathers gave up their time, both in and out of prison, and answered my questions in an open, honest and often amusing yet often heart wrenching way. I hope that I have done justice to the men’s stories in this thesis and that in the analysis I have not lost sight of the men as individuals who were often going through a very difficult time.
This PhD is dedicated to three absolutely amazing fathers:

My lovely dad, my step-dad and my son’s dad.

For Mel, Mike and Howard

xxx
The Author

Having completed an undergraduate degree in Law and Criminology at The University of Sheffield in 2003, Emily went on to study for her Masters of Research in Crime and Criminal Justice Research at The University of Manchester. Emily then worked as a Research Assistant in the School of Law, at The University of Manchester, for five years. Starting in the Criminal Justice Research Unit she worked on a number of prison based projects including researching an innovative scheme for sex offender reintegration, evaluating a regime at a Young Offender’s Institute and investigating race relations policy and practice and equity of access to education, training and employment in British prisons. Following this she was part of ESRC funded research looking at alternative dispute resolution in special educational needs disputes.
1.1 The unknown significance of fatherhood to young offenders

This thesis contributes to an understanding of the role of fatherhood in the change process of young fathers leaving prison, and suggests ways this role could be supported to take full advantage of fatherhood’s desistance potential. Using empirical evidence, this thesis investigates the experiences of young fathers in prison, and how being a young father, and prison, affect attitudes to offending and fatherhood, and hopes for the future. Furthermore, this work considers how these men then reintegrate back into the community and whether they manage to fulfil their hopes, considering what factors help or hinder this process.

With ever-present concern over the high reoffending rates following prison, especially for young offenders (YOIs), consideration, and promotion, of any desistance potential within this group is important. This work applies the desistance literature and identity theory to a specific group of these young offenders. This group of young imprisoned fathers has been largely ignored in previous research and therefore this research fills a gap in the literature. In doing so, this work considers further the role of fatherhood in the process of change. This work is also important given the risks to the men’s families and children of not promoting desistance: the link between fathers’ and children’s offending being well documented (see especially Farrington, 1995).

This work takes a multifaceted approach with the data suggesting that more than one approach was important. This thesis draws on work from a social-psychological perspective (Maruna, 2001; Farrall, 2002; Meek, 2007a; 2011) but it also considers structural and agentic approaches that come from a more sociological perspective (Sampson and Laub 1993; Laub and Sampson, 2003).
This introductory chapter sets the context of the research, especially it locates the work within existing literature, defines key terms used throughout the thesis, states the research questions and aims that the thesis will answer, and gives an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Context
The journey that led to undertaking a PhD on young fathers in prison and on release began when working as a research assistant on a research project based in a Young Offender’s Institute (Haslewood-Pocsik et al, 2008). During the fieldwork two points really struck a chord. First, the number of men interviewed who were upset that although they had become fathers while serving their current sentence, they had never met their child. When following up the young men in the community, it was also striking the number of men who had not achieved the hopes that they had been determined and optimistic about when interviewed in prison just before release. These elements were outside of the objectives of that research and so were not considered further but sparked ideas for future research, especially around combining these two ideas.

This thesis draws on three main bodies of literature: the literature focusing on fatherhood, the desistance and change literature, and specific literature considering fathers in prison. Since the 1970s, but especially since the 1990s, there has been an increasing focus on fatherhood from many interdisciplinary perspectives (Marsiglio et al, 2000). At the same time academics have been divided over whether it is structural factors (Laub and Sampson, 2003) or cognitive factors (Maruna, 2001; Giordano et al, 2002; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009) that are the most important for promoting sustained change. This research adds to this debate in the context of young imprisoned fathers. Fatherhood can fit into both of these debates as becoming a father is a structural change in people’s lives but also being a father provides a clear and strong identity and motivator to want to change.
There is also debate over the role of human agency in the process of change and how agency and structural factors interact. This thesis adds to the knowledge of how the two interact for young imprisoned fathers.

There is an emerging body of research that has made an important contribution to this field that to some extent marries the fatherhood, identity and change literature (especially the work of Meek (2007a; 2011)) who focuses on the hopes and fears of young imprisoned fathers for release. Considering these hopes and the reality of such desires can clearly be linked to the process of change.

While fathers were generally ignored from policy and research until recent years, a burgeoning amount of literature in this area is now emerging (Lewis, 1986; Marsiglio et al, 2000; Lewis, 2002). Similarly, previous research on parenthood and the criminal justice system has tended to focus on mothers; imprisoned fathers as a distinct group were largely ignored until the late 1980s. In recent years there have been a number of studies but these have tended to focus on adults rather than young fathers (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Arditti et al, 2005; Clarke et al, 2005; Day et al, 2005; Walker, 2010; Losel et al, 2012), the effects of father absence through incarceration on children (Shaw, 1987; Skinner and Swartz, 1989; Shaw, 1992; Johnston, 1995; Kampfner, 1995; Philbrick, 1996; Boswell, 2002; Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Jaffee et al, 2003; Murray, 2005; Glover, 2009), the experiences and needs of incarcerated fathers (Arditti et al, 2005; Clarke et al, 2005; Day et al, 2005) and parenting classes (Caddle, 1991; Mardon, 1996; Dennison and Lyon, 2001; Jarvis et al, 2004; Meek 2007b). The majority of the research has come from the USA but there have been a small number of UK based studies (Clarke et al, 2005; Meek, 2007a; Walker, 2010; Meek, 2011; Earle, 2012). Meek (2007a) states that research (whether from the USA or the UK) has typically explored the practical and emotional aspects of parenting in custody with emphasis on parenting education courses in prisons. Nurse (2002) adds to this saying that
research has concentrated on the period of incarceration rather than what happens once the men leave prison.

A small, but important, body of research has focused on young offenders who are fathers (Dennison and Lyon, 2001; Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Nurse, 2002; Sherlock, 2004; Meek, 2007a; 2011; Earle, 2012). These studies have tended to focus on the men while in prison or on release into the community, not both, and have identified a need for more follow-up research in this area and for more research in general into released fathers returning to the family home (Nurse, 2002; Bahr et al, 2005; Day et al, 2005; Meek, 2007a; 2011). Meek (2007a) especially pointed to the need for longitudinal research in this area: there is a gap in the literature when it comes to whether hopes become a reality on release and what factors have helped or hindered this transformation. This research answers the call for research on young fathers in prison and on return to the community.

Four main, influential, studies have begun to consider the hopes for release of young offending fathers and the experience of being a released father (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Nurse, 2002; Meek, 2007a; 2011). Meek (2007a) looked at the parenting possible selves (future orientated constructs) of fathers in prison in England/Wales by asking men in prison to complete a questionnaire, comparing the results with previous studies on fathers in the community. The work by Meek (2007a) was groundbreaking in looking at the hopes and fears of young fathers in prison for their future, and the possible implications of these for practitioners. In 2011, Meek considered how the parenting selves of young imprisoned fathers relate to the men’s identities as whole. In this work Meek (2011) investigates the identity processes of young fathers in prison. Boswell and Wedge (2002) carried out interviews with imprisoned fathers of all ages in UK prisons of varying security levels focusing on how various support systems aid or hinder fathering from prison, separating the results to have young offender specific findings. Nurse (2002) carried out research in the USA on parenting from within the juvenile justice
system, including both those that had been in prison and those serving community sentences. Fieldwork was conducted only in the community and focused on the effect of incarceration and parole in young men’s relationships with their children.

The main focus of the desistance literature has been on fatherhood as a turning point although a few pieces have considered fatherhood as a possible identity transformation (Giordano et al., 2011). Work in this area has generally been inconclusive so the role of fatherhood in the change process needs to be considered further. Meek (2007a) asserts that little attention has been paid to the identity processes of being a father in prison and so she begins to do this from a social psychological perspective and added to this work in 2011.

This work draws upon the work of Maruna et al. (2004a), who by bringing many of the debates together argue that there are three tracks necessary for change: self-determination, formal support and informal support. The thesis elaborates on each of these tracks with regard to young imprisoned fathers.

1.2.1 Young Imprisoned Fathers: A Unique Group

Young fathers in prison are a distinct group. They are distinct from fathers in the community, adult fathers in prison, and young men in prison. They face multiple issues which are the combination of issues that all these three groups face. As such, they need to be considered separately.

As well as the obvious difference of being relatively serious or persistent offenders, it is important that fathers in prison are considered separately to fathers in the community because how men see fatherhood has to be set in the relational context and the institutional context (Arditti et al., 2005; Clarke et al., 2005). The relational context is significant because the mothers of the children help frame fathers’ views of themselves and in the prison setting incarcerated fathers have a “unique dependence on mothers” (Arditti et al., 2005: 12). Prisons are very different to the norm and can be considered ‘total institutions’ (Goffman, 1961) where all parts of
life are controlled and individuals in them are subordinated to and dependent upon the authorities. Meek (2007a) found imprisoned young fathers are in some respects different to fathers in the community as they have different issues and therefore needs, especially over separation and attachment.

It is clear that Young Offending (YO) fathers have differing needs from adult imprisoned fathers for two reasons highlighted by Boswell and Wedge (2002). Firstly the children of YOs tend to be younger (mostly aged under two compared to Boswell and Wedge’s (2002) adult sample where the average age was 12-15). The strategies for dealing with, and the “relationship needs” (36) of this, developmental stage are different. Secondly YOs have different abilities to meet the needs of their children than adults (Boswell and Wedge, 2002), mainly because YOs are often still children themselves who may lack emotional maturity. This is something that prisons sometimes do not recognise, which has implications for supporting the emotional well-being of young people (Berelowitz, 2011).

Both young fatherhood (Elster, 1986; Moloney et al, 2009) and imprisonment (Nurse, 2002) are against the normal life course trajectory. Society prescribes an order of social roles (education, skills for financial independence, marriage, children), and problems are thought to occur when steps are not completed as expected (Elster, 1986). Premature fatherhood affects adolescent fathers socially, emotionally, developmentally and vocationally; especially as having a child before completing education makes it more difficult to get a job to support a child (Elster, 1986; Moloney et al, 2009). Further young fathers may be viewed negatively and they may be socially isolated (and peer groups are important for psychosocial development). Imprisonment when young is also likely to have an impact on developmental processes (Nurse, 2002).

1.2.2 An Innovative Methodology
In responding to the gaps in the literature described above this work uses an innovative methodology. The empirical work for this research consisted of a
quantitative snapshot of young fathers in one Young Offender’s Institute (YOI) in England and Wales. The YOI will be referred to under the pseudonym Brocklebank Prison throughout this thesis. The Prison Service in England and Wales does not routinely monitor fatherhood status and so it was considered important to do this. Fatherhood prevalence estimates vary from a quarter (Her Majesty’s Chief Inspectorate of Prisons (HMCIP), 1997) to 30 per cent (Bullock and Cremin, 2001), to 40 per cent (Earle, 2012), to 51 per cent (Katz, 2002). Definitions of ‘young offender’ in these estimations also vary, however the wider definitions do not necessarily have the larger estimations. As Losel et al (2012) argue the lack of recording fatherhood status has implications for provision for fathers and for policy.

The quantitative snapshot that was carried out showed that 24 per cent of the men in the prison were fathers; young fathers form a substantial part of the young offending population at Brocklebank prison. Fatherhood status was measured using individual prisoner records, thus it relies on the accuracy of those records.\(^1\) Interestingly the fathers’ characteristics were not substantially different to the non-fathers in the prison: anyone in prison could be a father. This snapshot advised the selection of men to interview subject to inclusion criteria and their informed consent (both of these elements are consider in depth in chapter four). Nineteen young men took part in semi-structured qualitative interviews while in prison. The interview sample reflected the range of men who were fathers in the YOI, for example it included those with serious offending histories and those who were in prison for their first offence, those with no employment history and those who had worked previously. While the fathers were similar to the general prison population in Brocklebank Prison and nationally (for example, a lack of education and employment, poor health, dependency issues (Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), 2002)), they were unique in that, as well as this, they were experiencing being forcefully separated from their children. Additionally, interviews were also conducted with

\(^1\) There is further discussion of this approach (including the limitations) in chapter four.
people who the men identified as being supportive and with key professionals in the area (from prison, probation and the voluntary sector).

The men in Brocklebank prison were all over 18. In the English/Welsh Criminal Justice System people aged 18 to 21 are defined as ‘young adult offenders’. Consequently they do not fall under youth justice policies since 1998 which have aimed to divert under 18s away from prison through Youth Justice Boards, Youth Offending Teams and their partners (Home Office, 1997), and to have some extent been successful (The Justice Committee, 2013). At the time of starting this PhD in 2009 criminal justice policies had been becoming increasingly more punitive towards all adult offenders, including young adult offenders (Farrall et al, 2010). The Labour government had been “tougher on crime, the crime of marginalised sections of society, than it was on the causes of crime” (Sanders, 2011: 15). Sanders (2011) evidences such a claim with examples such as the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, minimum tariffs under the Criminal Justice Act 2003, and indefinite sentences of ‘imprisonment for public protection’ (IPP).² By the end of March 2009 there were 9543 young adults aged 18-20 in prison (Prison Reform Trust, 2009) and from 1997 to 2007 the number of sentenced young adults entering prison increased by 14 per cent (Prison Reform Trust, 2007). This meant that at that time more young adult offenders were spending time in prison away from their families. This is especially important given support systems, especially from family and friends, for those being released from prison have been found to be important in the process of change (Farrall, 2002; Visher and Travis, 2003; Maruna et al, 2004a). Mills and Codd (2008) suggest that positive family support reduces the risk of reoffending by between two and six times. Yet at the same time it has been estimated that 45% of prisoners lose contact with their families while they are inside (SEU, 2002).

²IPP sentences have subsequently been abolished.
Despite this, the views of prisoners’ families have often been overlooked (Jardine, 2013) (see Richards et al (1994) for an exception to this), especially in relation to their support giving role. In the literature on adult fathers in prison there have been calls for more involvement of mothers in the research (Shaw, 1987; Katz, 2002; Day et al, 2005; Roy and Dyson, 2005). This is because, according to Shaw (1987) and Katz (2002), men tend to be selfish and be in denial over family problems. Therefore people the men self-identified as being supportive of them in their role as a father were also included in the research. This aspect makes the methods innovative as a fuller picture was able to be gathered. It is important that this process was led by the men giving them some control, something which by virtue of being a father in prison is often inaccessible to them. It is the addition of those that have supported the young men that makes the methods unique.

1.3 Aims and Objectives
The overarching research question addressed in this thesis is:

What are the hopes and experiences of young fathers in prison, and on release, and how do these impact upon the process of change, successfully or otherwise?

In order to answer this research question the main aims and objectives of the research are to:

• Investigate the experiences of being a young father in prison and returning to the community.

• Consider what the young fathers hope for on release in terms of fatherhood and offending and examine what has led to these hopes.

• Examine how easy is it for these hopes to become a reality on release and what factors help/ hinder achieving these hopes, paying particular attention to the structural event of becoming a father, the role of human agency, the identity processes the men go though, and the role of formal and informal support.

• Contribute to debates about the process of change for young imprisoned fathers, especially the role of agency in the process and how agency and structural factors interact.
1.4 Definitions

For the purposes of this thesis a young offender is defined as aged 18 to 24. This is because this includes all of the ages that Brocklebank Prison houses. The original plan, following previous research on young adult offenders (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Meek, 2007a; 2011), was to only look at the 18 to 21 age group. Yet, there was no justification for excluding the 21 to 24 group because men can, and do, become fathers at all ages. Further the research is, among other things, interested in the aspect of formal support; it is the policies within this prison, as a case study, that will be considered and therefore the whole population in the prison will have experienced these. There are also calls for the ‘young adult’ age range to be extended to 24 year olds (HMCIP, 2006; Transition to Adulthood Alliance, 2009) because of the variability in ages of maturation. This differing approach from previous research may impact on the findings because there is a statutory distinction between the 18 to 21 and 21 to 24 age groups with the former young adult group currently being given extra protection (for example being subject to a Detention in a Young Offender Institution order).\footnote{While this specific legal status of under 21s has been removed through the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, it has not yet been brought into force.} Despite this, the statutory provision is minimal for 18 to 20s. It has been argued that the concept of maturity is very individual; the Transition to Adulthood Alliance (2009) argue that the idea of young adulthood is “blurry around the edges” (7) and in terms of the age-crime curve it is not until the mid 20s that men tend to desist from offending (Farrington, 1986). Therefore, whilst in statutory terms the two age ranges are seen as different there are arguments for them being similar and therefore the impact on the findings are likely to be small. What is of interest in the current research is a distinct stage of life; young adulthood, rather than statutory distinctions.

A wide definition of ‘father’ was used and included those with their own biological child (whether or not they had contact with them), men whose girlfriends were pregnant (expectant fathers) and those whose girlfriend had her own children but
they had a role in this or saw themselves as the father (step-fathers). This is because Moloney et al (2009) found that becoming a step-father could be just as an important motivator to change as becoming a father. Originally it was envisaged that only first time biological fathers would be included in the research with the assumption that a first child would act as a catalyst for wanting to change. But, as Moloney et al (2009) found it may not be the first child that brings about change but second or third children as the men in this study “attempted to avoid earlier, much regretted mistakes” (316) and so the men included in the research can be father to any number of children.

Like Maruna (2001) and Laub and Sampson (2003) change in this thesis is understood as a process. This is because the data in this study seems to suggest that change is cyclical, and not a moment, and the process is characterised by successful and unsuccessful periods. What this study is concerned with is what contributes to those successful and unsuccessful phases and how criminal justice policies may best contribute to lengthier, and possibly, permanent successful periods. This process encompasses change in behaviours, motivation and desires. As will be shown in this thesis the respondents are trying to change from absent fathers in prison (and in some cases before prison), to ‘good’ fathers who can ‘be there’ for their children and from offenders to non-offenders. The two are inextricably linked, for example, offending runs the risk of being imprisoned and not being able to ‘be there’ for children.

Self-determination is understood in this thesis as more than, but including, a subjective and agentic individual decision to change. However, it goes further in that it also requires an element of resolve (persistence and staying determined over time) and resilience (staying determined when things go wrong) and also self-efficacy (a belief in the ability to change). These understandings emerged from the data but fit with Deci and Ryan’s (1985; 2000) cognitive self-determination theory. In this theory the processes through which outcomes are pursued are as important
as, yet different from, the contents of goals. Similarly the focus of this research is on the factors that are important in the process of change. Ryan and Deci (2000a; 2000b) discuss intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in self-determination. The former is about being motivated by the inherent satisfaction one can gain whereas the latter is when a person’s motivation is pushed by others. Deci and Ryan (1991) argue that when motivation is internal and coming from a personal commitment (and is therefore more authentic) then this manifests itself in enhanced performance, persistence and creativity. Therefore, like the current study, Deci and Ryan (1991) and Ryan and Deci (2000a; 2000b) acknowledge the importance of agency. Furthermore, the degree to which people are able to satisfy their psychological needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness as they pursue their desired outcome is seen as critical to Deci and Ryan (2000). Deci and Ryan (2000) elaborate on this saying that competence is about the need for positive feedback and relatedness is about engagement with others. The findings in chapter seven looking at the importance of informal support suggest that feedback and closeness to others helped the young fathers to be resilient and maintain their resolve.

A major focus of this thesis is on formal and informal support mechanisms. For the purpose of this thesis support refers to social support which encompasses both practical and emotional support. Hobbs and Dear (2000) define emotional support as “assertions or demonstrations of empathy, esteem, understanding and acceptance” (128). Bailey et al (1994) define practical support as “the provision of resources and services to help resolve problems or maintain other life functions” (128). Maruna et al (2004a) see formal support as comprising of rehabilitation, treatment and reintegration. This definition is followed in this thesis. Formal support also includes quasi-formal support from the voluntary sector. Formal support is something therefore that all young fathers in prison have the opportunity to use and engage with. While Maruna et al (2004a) used informal support in a fairly broad sense encompassing “friends, acquaintances, family, neighbours and
significant others” (13) informal support, for the purpose of this thesis was defined by the men in the study and includes support from significant others, friends and family. This therefore is support from people outside of the Criminal Justice System and is something to which not all young men have access.

1.5 Structure of this thesis
Chapters two and three, the literature review chapters, consider the literature drawn on throughout the thesis that addresses three main areas: fatherhood, desistance, and more specifically young fathers in prison. Chapter two outlines previous research focusing on the context under which these men are experiencing change; being a father and being in, and released from, prison. Chapter three provides a detailed overview of the desistance literature focusing on the debate over whether informal social control or cognitive transformation is the most important element for change. As identity is an important part of cognitive transformation, the identity theory literature and the literature on fatherhood roles and identity are also reviewed.

Chapter four describes in detail the methods used in the research and highlights throughout how ethics were extremely important in this sensitive research, impacting on the planning and implementation of the research design. This chapter describes research strategy, design and planned method. The research in action is described in detail including: the negotiation of access; the collection of quantitative data; the design of the interview schedule; the selection of respondents and the process by which they were asked to participate (for the men in prison, the professionals, and those who had supported the young men); and includes some reflections on the interview process. This chapter also describes the characteristics of the interviewed men, providing the context to the findings chapters.
The findings chapters are structured around Maruna et al’s (2004a) three track process of change. Chapter five, the first of the findings chapters, considers the important role of human agency in the process of change. This chapter presents data to show that there are two elements to human agency; self-determination or openness to change and identity transformation, and these two elements are both very important and inter-linked. The desire to change was almost universal in the sample and this was often brought on by a combination of factors including being a father and experiencing fatherhood from prison. This self-determination meant that the men saw being a father as a positive and that fatherhood was an alternative identity away from offending. Therefore while structural events affect self-determination, this self-determination also changes the way the men see structural events. Chapter five also applies Maruna’s (2001) idea of ‘making good’ in desistance to a different area of social change: becoming a good father, and in doing so considers the script the men are considering in order to enact their fatherhood identity in the community. This chapter uses identity theory to look at the kind of fathers the men were before and during prison and want to be on release from prison.

Chapter six looks at the nature of interventions by the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales that are opportunities to build upon self-determination and identity transformation. It considers how visits, inter-personal relationships, and focused interventions impact upon self-determination and identity either indirectly or directly, and whether these formal interventions are adequate in terms of promoting change.

In chapter seven, the informal support the men receive from parents, mothers of their children and friends are discussed. This is important for developing emotional engagement and for providing practical assistance but further it is shown how this is important in affecting the men’s personal and social circumstances. The young
fathers had lives characterised by transiency and chaos and this often impacted upon their ability to maintain their self-determination over time.

These three findings chapters are brought together in the case studies presented in chapter eight and the discussion in chapter nine. Chapter eight provides two longitudinal (or indeed ‘shortitudinal’ (Sniehotta, 2009), as the maximum follow up period was 15 months) case studies to illustrate that all the issues described in the previous chapters are interlinked. Jay provides an example of someone who is doing well on release from prison and Howard provides an example of someone whose post prison experience has been characterised by successes and failures.

The final chapter, chapter nine is the discussion chapter. This brings together all of the main findings and considers what this thesis offers to academic knowledge in the area of young imprisoned fathers. This chapter also outlines the practical and policy implications of this research and areas for further research. It makes suggestions of ways in which the criminal justice agencies could maximise the potential of fatherhood to lead to sustained change in the young fathers.
Chapter Two: Being a Father in Prison

2.1 Introduction
The research question focuses on young men as fathers, and as prisoners. Therefore it is essential to consider the literature focusing on fatherhood and the more specific literature that looks at young fathers in prison. The literature on fatherhood provides a context of how fathers are expected to act in modern society and how fatherhood identity shapes behaviour. The literature on young fathers in prison gives us background on what is already known about their experiences in prison and how prison impacts on fatherhood. The hopes and realities element of the research question addresses the men’s potential to change, and therefore the desistance (or change) literature also needs to be considered. This literature presents the debates about the potential importance of fatherhood in the process of change away from an offending lifestyle.

Taken together, this literature provides the context to this PhD’s story of a unique group of individuals with a distinctive and specific set of contextual factors which are important for, and impact upon, change: their incarceration, and being, or becoming, a father. This context informs the construction of men’s identities and provides possible prewritten scripts for the enactment of identity.

Chapter One showed how the current work fits in with, and adds to, existing research. This chapter will summarise the literature on the experiences that young men have being a father in prison. This is important in setting the context under which these fathers consider and experience change, and to understanding the situation they may be trying to change. The following chapter will then show how this context is relevant to the process of change.
This chapter will start by discussing the prison environment and how men respond to this. Part of the support offered by the Prison Service is contact with children and families and the men’s experiences of this will be considered in the second part of this section. Literature around the support men receive while in prison from friends and family will be reviewed. Finally, this chapter will consider the contextual factors of returning to the community. It will be shown that each of these areas provide elements to make the experience of being a father in prison more positive yet at the same time can include elements to make the experience negative. If fatherhood has a role in change, as this thesis is investigating, then it is necessary to consider what the previous literature has said about how formal criminal justice agencies have supported this role. This section considers research on all fathers in prison but highlights findings on young offenders (YOs).

**2.1.1 Characteristics common in young prisoners**

As well as being fathers, men in prison also commonly have many other characteristics and it is important that these are acknowledged and considered as they indicate an additional layer of issues to the context of young fathers in prison. Characteristics common in prisoners include: previous unemployment, early school leaving age/ exclusion, high levels of truancy, having no qualifications, having alcohol and drug problems, low self-esteem, having health (including mental health) problems and accommodation problems (Mair and May, 1997; Fletcher et al, 1998; SEU, 2002; Home Office, DFES and DWP, 2005). HMCIP (2006) found substance use and mental health problems to be very much an issue for young adult offenders. More specifically to the focus of this research, imprisoned young offenders and young people who are fathers tend to be concentrated in disadvantaged groups coming from deprived backgrounds and having experienced adverse early family relationships (SEU, 2002; Tan and Quinlivan, 2006). For these reasons, Meek (2007b) states that young fathers in prison are a particularly vulnerable group. All of these issues may compound to mean men in prison often have both negative backgrounds and negative current situations. They are vulnerable in that their social and human capital is low (Bourdieu, 1986). This is
important because it may mean that young imprisoned fathers may have increased need of social support.

Not only do such issues impact on being a father, they are also issues which, in themselves, often need an intervention. Prison and community sentences commonly attempt to address some of these issues for example, through the provision of education, offending behaviour programmes, and drug and alcohol treatment (NOMS 2005; HMPS 2006; Home Office, 2006; NOMS, 2006; National Probation Service, 2006; Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011). Although the ability to address issues during a short term prison sentence has been widely questioned (National Audit Office, 2010; The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2011) and about 15 per cent of young adult males are serving a prison sentence of 12 months or less (Berman and Dar, 2013). Hairston (2002) argues that father related policies need to be considered in the context of, and feed into, these other issues and interventions.

The issues that many men in prison face can make fatherhood difficult. A potential consequence of a lack of education and employment means men in prison, including young fathers in prison, have few opportunities to earn money legally. This is of particular importance in terms of provision for children. The complexity, and range, of problems the men may have including drug, alcohol and mental health problems may impact on a man’s ability to parent, or even prohibit the men from fathering. This may especially be the case if a father faces multiple problems. Yet, in addition to these difficulties fathers in prison face the additional hurdle of imprisonment.

2.2 Experiences of the Prison Environment
This chapter will now move on to consider the ways in which literature has identified the prison experience as a potential hurdle for young fathers. It will also consider the ways in which the experience of prison can be helpful, notwithstanding
interventions for education, employment, offence related, and addiction issues mentioned in section 2.1.1 above.

2.2.1 Inter-personal relationships
During a prison sentence the main people that prisoners will have contact with are fellow prisoners and officers: these people are a potential source of support for fatherhood and the relationships and support (or lack of it) contribute to the environment within which fathers may consider change. Consequently, it is important to look at the literature on how supportive these relationships are in practice. This section will now do this, starting with relationships between officers and prisoners.

2.2.1.1 Relationships with officers
As Liebling et al (2011a) state, “staff-prisoner relationships matter” (83). Liebling et al (1999) argue it is relationships between prisoners and prison officers that are critical in maintaining a safe, respectful, decent and fair environment as these relationships “frame, inform, constrain and facilitate staff and prisoner behaviour” (Liebling et al, 1999:72). Therefore they are central to the way prisoners experience their time in prison. Studies that have considered staff-prisoner relationships have tended to do this as part of consideration of something else e.g. order, regime and justice (Ditchfield, 1990; Home Office, 1991; Home Office, 1995; Sparks et al, 1996).

Furthermore, staff-prisoner relationships are important because they provide a mechanism through which formal social support may be provided (Liebling et al, 2011a). Through the existence of a relationship, prisoners and prison officers become individualised to each other (something which is important to prisoners) and as a consequence officers learn about the lives of prisoners they interact with (Liebling et al, 2011a). This creates the possibility for officers to offer empathy and support to prisoners dealing with personal problems (Liebling et al, 2011a). There has been limited research on what the ‘right’ relationships should look like (but see
Liebling et al, 2011a), and indeed on the social support element of the relationships.

The provision of social support is only a possibility because the relationships between prison officers and prisoners are characterised by unequal power dynamics and are essentially coercive, with the constant threat of force (Haney et al 1973; Liebling et al 1999; Crewe, 2009; Liebling et al, 2011a). and focus on security (Home Office, 1995). While the tension coercion creates is ever present (Carrabine, 2005), physical demonstrations of this are rare:

“This power is ‘held in reserve’ most of the time, so the relationship takes place without specific reference to it, but both staff and prisoners are aware of who has how much power” (Liebling et al, 1999:72)

Crewe (2009) and Carrabine (2005) discuss how prisons often use a mixture of coercion, inducement and habit to ensure order. Officers can threaten to withdraw inducements as a form of coercion and so incentives have “facilitated new forms of punishment” for prisoners (Crewe, 2009: 105). The prison in which the current research is based has a large system of incentives through home leaves and town visits. Such incentives mean that officers have quite high levels of discretion over who receives them, leaving the potential for abuse of power, as it is these officers on the ground who translate policy into practice (Crewe, 2009; Liebling et al, 2011a).

The discussion on relationships between prisoners and officers thus far has showed that they are not compatible with “warmth and affinity” (Hobbs and Dear, 2000: 135). While, prison officers can demonstrate emotional support by listening to, or trying to understand a prisoner (Liebling and Karup, 1993), achieving this in reality is complex. There are limits to the relationships other than the focus on security and order, for example, prisoners not wanting to get too close to officers out of fear they become known as a ‘grass’ (informer) (Corley, 2001; Crewe, 2009;
Liebling et al, 2011a) and officers may fear opening themselves up to accusations of corruption (Corley, 2001).

There have been a small number of studies that have looked specifically at the aspect of social support provided by prison officers to prisoners (Biggam and Power, 1997; Hobbs and Dear, 2000; Dear et al, 2002). From this small set of literature some themes emerge. Firstly, there is the idea that certain prisoners do seem to want and value support from prison officers (Biggam and Power, 1997; Liebling et al, 2011a) and respect officers who provide it (Liebling et al, 2011a). Similarly, Crewe (2009) talks of a “softening of attitudes” (392) by prisoners towards officers and speaking to officers in prisons now incurs “little stigma or suspicion” (105).

A second concern in the literature on social support offered by prison officers is about who approaches who for this support. Hobbs and Dear’s (2000) Australian research states that one way for prisoners to access social support is when officers approach them. This is interesting when applied to the recent national benchmark of UK prisons which balances performance against costs and makes it likely many prisons will have their budget cut (Ministry of Justice, 2013b). One possible, but likely outcome, of this is that there will be lower staffing levels, reduced prison officer specialism, and less consistency in staffing, which is potentially detrimental to prison officer-prisoner relationships (Liebling, 2004). Bottomley (1994) highlights the importance of staff continuity to good staff-prisoner relationships. Fewer staff may mean that the staff working have less time to spend building relationships with prisoners and lead to a reduction in their pastoral role and an increase in their turn-key role (Tait, 2008).

Hobbs and Dear (2000) and Dear et al (2002) discuss the idea of prisoners approaching officers for social support (the latter from the point of view of officers) and found that in some circumstances this does occur. Prisoners approach would generally only be to a select few ‘good’ officers (Haslewood-Pocsik et al, 2006;
A potential problem of this is that the ‘good’ officers become overworked (Bottomley, 1994) possibly preventing the provision of social support.

These discussions lead to a further theme around the type of support prisoners would approach officers about. Like the prisoners in the Hobbs and Dear (2000) study officers in Dear et al’s (2002) study felt prisoners were more likely to approach for practical support than emotional support, however they differed from the prisoner view in that they thought prisoners were more likely to approach for support than prisoners stated. Prisoners in the Hobbs and Dear (2000) study stated that they would almost never approach officers about family problems. Interestingly, officers felt there was a correlation between competency and role legitimacy over an issue and the likelihood of prisoners approaching them about this; they felt less competent and did not feel they were the right person for the job in relation to family problems and emotional support than other forms of support (Dear et al, 2002), perhaps indicating a need for more training. Similarly, Liebling et al (2011b) found that relationships between officers and prisoners are becoming increasingly distant with officers having less confidence in building relationships; especially they were less sure about how to build relationships with Muslim prisoners. HMCIP (2006) in their thematic report on young adult offenders found that in some establishments staff interaction with young adult prisoners was considered to be relatively poor but, that on this issue, dedicated YOIs (as in the current study) perform better than when young adult prisons were in local prisons with adults.

A further issue to emerge from this small set of literature is around the prisoners who do not want to receive support from officers and the implications of this. It may be that prisoners receive sufficient support from elsewhere and there is no problem to address (Hobbs and Dear, 2000). However an alternative reason may be that the entrenched “them and us” mentality prevents prisoners accepting social
support from officers (Sykes, 1958; Sykes and Messinger, 1960; Hobbs and Dear, 2000). In this case it becomes important that the prison service provides another source of support (Hobbs and Dear, 2000; Dear et al, 2002). In prisons in England and Wales, it could be argued that this alternative support is offered through civilian staff and partnership agencies. Unlike the prisons in the Hobbs and Dear (2000) and Dear et al (2002) studies, prisoners can access forms of support e.g. Shelter for housing support, without going through an officer, they can put an application in to see such organisations. A further way that supportive relationships may be developed in English and Welsh prisons is through the Personal Officer Scheme. The personal officer acts as a focal point for the prisoner and provides a personal relationship with the person who has input into matters such as sentence planning (Liebling et al, 2011a). They also have a role in getting to know the prisoners to understand their personal issues, and may become involved in family matters (Liebling et al, 2011a). However, HMCIP (2006) discuss their concerns over the lack of engagement between personal officers and young adult offenders.

2.2.1.2 Relationships with other prisoners
There are also relationships with other prisoners that need to be negotiated in the prison environment. These relationships can provide a form of informal support. Authors have described how prison can promote and inhibit friendship. The former due to gaining access to material resources, loneliness and safety (Crewe, 2009; Wulf-Ludden, 2013) and the latter due to the hostile environment, the masculine environment (see below), fear, risks of intimacy and the transitory nature of imprisonment (Corley, 2001; Crewe, 2009; Karp, 2010; Liebling and Arnold, 2012). Liebling and Arnold (2012) add to this saying a new inhibitor to prison friendships is the Incentives and Earned Privilege Scheme which negates the need for solidarity and increases an individualistic approach to prison sentences.

In prisons “the role of drugs [...] would be hard to overstate” (Crewe, 2009; 370). This, as well as other forms of informal trade, has a huge impact on prison culture and on relationships between prisoners, acting as both a promoter and inhibitor of
friendships, depending on one’s place in this trade. Informal trade is an influential factor in the hierarchy of prisoners and integration into social networks (Crewe, 2009; Liebling and Arnold, 2012). To further complicate, the complex hierarchies in prison, Liebling et al (2011b) found that there is an increasing amount of oppositional street culture coming in to prisons from outside.

Trust is an overarching theme in the discussions of the relationships between prisoners and between prisoners and prison officers (Corley, 2001; Crewe, 2009; Karp, 2010; Liebling et al, 2011a; Liebling et al, 2011b; Liebling and Arnold, 2012). Trust is a foundation of all relationships. However, Bronson (2008) argues prison relationships differ from those in the outside in that outside the prison environment people become friends and then trust develops over time, but in prison trust comes before friendship. Liebling et al (2011b) and Liebling and Arnold (2012) argue that in the high security estate trust in prison relationships is lower than it has been in previous years. In officer-prisoner relationships this is because of an increasing focus on security, fear of conditioning and lack of interaction (Liebling and Arnold, 2012). In prisoner-prisoner relationships this is because of the unknowns among the prisoner population e.g. offence committed, nationality, religion especially in relation to extremism (Liebling and Arnold, 2012).

Shrivastava (1973) found that 83 per cent of prisoners form some kind of relationship in prison. However, the quality of these relationships can vary and Crewe (2009) details how friendships between men in prison can be categorised in three ways. Firstly, prisoners can have ‘mates’, who they generally knew before prison and have loyalty towards. These tend to be small in number and are relationships characterised by high levels of trust (Shrivastava, 1973; Bronson, 2008; Crewe, 2009). Prisoners can also have ‘prison friendships’. These are very much situational and although the men care about each other and may talk about problems, there is also limited trust (Crewe, 2009). Finally prisoners have ‘associates’. Many studies have found evidence of ‘associates’ with such findings
suggesting a lack of close friendships between prisoners (Hart, 1995; Hobbs and Dear, 2000; Corley, 2001; Philips, 2001; Crewe, 2009). Some authors (See for example Phillips (2001) have suggested that associates are the only type of friendship that exist in prison. It is the relationships that have higher levels of trust which also have emotional bonds and in which personal discussions take place (Bronson, 2008). It is therefore these relationships, which the literature suggests are not common in prison, that offer the potential for social support. Wuld-Ludden (2013) found that every prisoner has at least one relationship where the men have emotional bonds, where they can be listened to and advised.

While Liebling and Arnold (2012) argue that solidarity has declined in the high security estate, according to Nurse (2002) inmate solidarity does occur in certain circumstances, such as fatherhood. Some fathers may receive group support from other fathers in prison meaning they can talk about their issues and encourage each other to be active participants (Nurse, 2002). Similarly, many authors have suggested that having something in common is often critical in forming friendships in prison, as it often is outside of prison (Shrivastava, 1973; Bronson, 2008; Crewe, 2009; Kerley and Copes, 2009). While Kerley and Copes (2009) talk about this in relation to religion, other literature has suggested that the geographical area a prisoner is from is important common ground (Haslewood-Pocsik et al, 2006; Bronson, 2008; Crewe, 2009).

Some authors have acknowledged the potential positives associated with prisoner-prisoner relationships. The potential for social support, the focus of this research, has been acknowledged in previous research (Bronson, 2008; Kerley and Copes, 2009; Wulf-Ludden, 2013). Gottlieb (1994) suggests prisoner-prisoner relationships are important because they provide the important function of providing feedback about the performance of daily social roles. Kerley and Copes (2009) state the need for people to have positive interactions.
One problem with the research on inter-personal relationships in the prison is the
dearth of previous research looking at staff-prisoner or prisoner-prisoner
relationships, and the social support element of these, in Young Offender
Institutions and in lower security prisons, in England and Wales. It also needs to be
acknowledged that the experience of prison varies from prisoner to prisoner as too
must the relationships that these individual prisoners form.

2.2.2 Prison Culture
All of these relationships are carried out with a backdrop of a prison culture typified
by the pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958; Irwin and Owen, 2005; Crewe, 2011).
Crewe (2011) indicates that current prison policies and practices mean that there
are new burdens and frustrations from the time when Sykes was writing and that in
many ways these 'new' pains are more psychological:

“In some respects, then, the prison experience is considerably less heavy
than in the past. Power is exercised more softly, in a way that is less
authoritarian. Yet in other ways, the prison experience has become ‘deeper’
and more burdensome. Movements are more restricted, security has been
tightened, and risk has become the trump-card of the system. Prisons are
materially more comfortable, but they remain psychologically damaging: in
the words of one prisoner, ‘it’s cushier, but it hurts you in other ways’”
(Crewe, 2011: 524)

As indicated above these pains of imprisonment influence the relationships between
those living and working in prison and furthermore create a need for social support.
As well as influencing relationships, prison culture also provides the context under
which the men may think about and begin to change.

It can be argued that psychological pains also impact on fatherhood (especially
attitude to fatherhood). For example, Harvey (2005) talks about the pain of
uncertainty which characterises all aspects of prison life but includes uncertainty
about families, especially worry over “their families’ ability to cope with the
situation the prisoner had created” (241). The loss of autonomy created by
imprisonment (Sykes, 1958; Irwin and Owen, 2005) also has implications for
fathers, as it has been argued this loss of agency may “corrode their ability” (Irwin
and Owen, 2005; 99) and this includes abilities to parent without the prescriptive
instructions that men become reliant on in prison. One important pain of imprisonment is the boredom of prison (Sykes, 1958). Liebling (1994) argues that young men find aspects of the prison experience and regime tough, especially boredom and inactivity. This boredom provides time to think about the lives of their families in the community; which is largely outside of their control. However, this also has the potential for positives in terms of fatherhood as Roy and Dyson (2005) and Nurse (2002) found that the isolating effect of prison life could lead to soul searching and reflection and as a consequence a desire to not be in this position again. Therefore the context may lead to young fathers thinking about change.

Prisons can also be said to be hyper-masculine environments (Karp, 2010) and therefore the notion of masculinity needs some attention. While it is acknowledged that there are several different ways to be masculine, it has been argued that in Western societies many men aspire to ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Connell, 1987; Connell, 1995; De Visser and Smith, 2007; Evans and Wallace, 2008; Karp, 2010). Key features that characterise this dominant form of masculinity include: power; ambivalence toward femininity; predatory heterosexuality; domination and objectification of nature and the psyche; risk taking; being a breadwinner; and physical and emotional toughness (Connell, 1987; Sykes and Cullen, 1992; Connell, 1995; Garde, 2003; De Visser and Smith, 2007; Evans and Wallace, 2008). Additionally De Visser and Smith (2007) argue that masculine competencies can be traded. Evans and Wallace (2008) discuss how men who embody hegemonic masculinity receive the most social approval and it can offer men great power. For young working class men acting in this way offers instant access to power often denied to them by their socioeconomic status (Comstock, 1991; Evans and Wallace, 2008). In relation to offenders, committing crime can also provide men a way to show that they are a distinct type of masculine, particularly when other masculine resources are unavailable (Messerschmidt, 2001; Sabo, 2001). Sabo (2001) uses the example of a father stealing in order to enact the masculine provider role.
Authors have argued that “prison culture reifies hyper-masculinity” (Karp, 2010: 63). Prisons embody the masculine ideal of toughness, and male prisoners believe they must put on a public façade and outside presentation of hegemonic masculinity (Sabo, 2001; Evans and Wallace, 2008; Karp, 2010). Sykes and Cullen (1992) describe such behaviour in prison:

"somewhat aloof, seldom complaining, enduring the rigours of imprisonment with dignity, ready to fight if necessary but not aggressive, loyal to other inmates and willing to share whatever he may have – the real man is a respected figure accorded the deference that flows to those who match a group's ideals“ (457)

Scarce (2002) and Karp (2010) describe an additional element whereby inmates should not show any vulnerability and as a consequence should keep their personal problems to themselves. Appearing weak or unable to cope with prison has been found to be looked down upon (Crewe, 2009). This is important as being a father in prison can be assumed to be emotive and having to conform to certain behaviours may affect fatherhood and coping. At the same time as being hyper-masculine, prisons also present specific challenges to masculinity (Karp, 2010; Ugelvik, 2014a). There may be some variance to the degree of hyper-masculinity between prisons as Crewe (2009) argued that the degree to which men have to adhere to ‘emotional fortitude’ depends on the atmosphere of the prison and the attitude of prison staff. It is behind this hardened exterior that other forms of masculinity exist (Sabo, 2001; Evans and Wallace, 2008). Messerschmidt (2001) discusses how men can enact their varieties of masculinity through specific social interactions that allow them.

Evans and Wallace (2008), in their qualitative study of masculinity, in a Category B prison in the UK, found three narratives of masculinity. Some men accepted and internalised the normative codes of hegemonic masculinity. Others grew up with masculine codes but transformed through key life turning points to something softer and gentler. And a final group defined themselves outside of hegemonic
masculinity (Evans and Wallace, 2008). Despite the fact men do not always conform to hegemonic masculinity, in prison they have to present as if they do:

“Those who have come to feel it is permissible to show and feel emotion are still careful in judging how, when, and to whom these feelings are displayed” (Evans and Wallace, 2008: 498).

Therefore Evans and Wallace (2008) found that the “traditional mind-set still holds when men group together” (502). The men in their study had a strong fear that their maleness would be judged as inadequate and so in prison keep emotions and their inner self secret (Evans and Wallace, 2008).

While, it could be said that talking about the emotions associated with being a father who has been separated from his children may be said to be in conflict with hegemonic masculinity, it may be that being a father provides an alternative masculinity (De Visser and Smith, 2007; Meek, 2011). Connell (1995) argues that there are many ways to be masculine. Meek (2011) found that while in prison fatherhood was a key emphasis for the young men in her sample and argued that the previous offender identity (which may have been the man’s only way to express hegemonic masculinity) can be replaced by “a more positive but equally desirable parent identity” (945), that encompasses masculinity. There is more on this in chapter three when identity is discussed in more detail.

As previously mentioned, one feature of hegemonic masculinity is that men act as though they are superior to, and dominant of, women. This is important as women are often the gatekeepers to fathers seeing their children (see below). Crewe (2009) found that men spoke of women as being sexual objects and at the same time untrustworthy sexual agents. Some men could differentiate their own partners from these other women and expressed sentimentality towards wives and girlfriends.
This section has shown the experience of prison can be negative towards fatherhood in that the environment is not conducive to: emotions (and fatherhood is arguable emotive, especially being an absent father); positive relationships with women who remain in the community (who hold the power when it comes to contact with children); and positive relationships with prisoners and officer on the inside (who could provide often much needed support). At the same time there are some indicators that the prison environment may have a positive influence on fatherhood because men can find opportunities to remove the façade of hegemonic masculinity and to interact with ‘good’ officers and fellow prisoners they can trust in order to receive social support. Ugelvik (2014b) links two notions discussed in this section: pains of imprisonment and masculinity saying that there are prison specific masculinity challenges, especially the replacing of agency and decision-making with being treated like a child and being made passive.

2.3 Experiences of Father-child contact
A major part of the prison experience for fathers in prison is the ability to see their children and the quality of these interactions, and therefore it is important to consider the literature that considers father-child contact. The overriding consensus in the literature is that contact between imprisoned fathers and their children is constructive and beneficial for both the fathers in prison and their children (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Nurse, 2002). The reasons suggested in the literature for this are: children change and their fathers should be able to see these changes (Boswell and Wedge, 2002); offenders are capable of high levels of consistent and positive involvement (Nurse, 2002); to overcome the negatives associated with father absence for children (as mentioned in chapter one); the fact that family contact is associated with reduced levels of self-harm (Liebling, 1992; Harvey, 2005); and, perhaps most importantly for the current research, because of the links between positive relationships and desistance from crime (Western et al, 2004; Losel et al, 2012). There are exceptions to contact being beneficial, especially where the child is known to have been damaged in some way by their parent (Boswell and Wedge,
There are also potential negatives to the most intense form of contact - visits, mainly related to the prison’s focus on security and ease of access (these are discussed further in section 2.3.2). Therefore it has to be a family’s individual decision whether visits are considered a positive.

Prison can disrupt these often positive relationships with families and children and so strategies for maintaining family ties are important (Losel et al, 2012). Children and Families are now a pathway in the reducing reoffending delivery plan acknowledging that offenders with challenging lifestyles require additional help in maintaining their family ties (NOMS, 2006). However, provision for contact is not consistent across the prison estate and is heavily dependent on voluntary organisations (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; HMCIP, 2007). The HMCIP annual report 2006/07 said:

“Overall, this pathway lacks central drive and championing. It is not enough merely to facilitate contact. It requires resources and commitment to work with other organisations to develop parenting skills, repair relationships, involve families in the interventions that are meant to change prisoners’ lives, and support the family unit after the prisoner’s release” (HMCIP, 2007)

Prisons encourage (and sometimes discourage) visits, phone-calls and letters between fathers and their children, depending on institutional rules and how these operate in practice. Pugh (2004) argues that different ways of keeping in contact suit different families so it is “important to have choices to meet the varying needs of different age groups and families in different situations” (47).

### 2.3.1 Regularity of contact

The prison guidance on visits sets minimum entitlements but individual prisons are given quite a lot of discretion (Ministry of Justice, 2011a). One visit per fortnight is the minimum entitlement for convicted prisoners. The Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) Scheme in prison allows inmates to receive extra visits for good behaviour (Ministry of Justice, 2011a). At any one visit up to three children and any accompanying adult are allowed but the Ministry of Justice (2011a) encourages
prisons to be flexible to ensure that all children who wish to visit their parent in prison can.

According to Ministry of Justice (2011b) a convicted prisoner can send out one free letter every week but as many as they like at their own expense. There is no limit on the number they can receive. In terms of telephone calls these are now done through a pin system where a prisoner buys credit and on making calls the costs are automatically deducted from their pin account (Ministry of Justice, 2011b).

For young imprisoned fathers between 33 and 50 per cent (Nurse (2002) and Boswell and Wedge (2002) respectively) receive no visits from their children. Among the Nurse (2002) sample: 22 per cent saw their child weekly. Phone calls and letters between imprisoned young fathers and their children seem to be fairly common and more likely than not to occur both in the UK and America by adult and young fathers (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Nurse, 2002).

2.3.2 Factors affecting regularity of contact
There are a number of reasons discussed in the literature for a lack of visits and the majority are institutional factors. Firstly, the location of prisons and their distance from families has been heavily criticised by authors in the UK and in the USA for making it difficult for families to visit fathers in prison (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Hairston, 2002; Nurse, 2002; Edin et al, 2004; Arditti et al, 2005; Clarke et al, 2005; Visher, 2013). On average sentenced men in the UK are imprisoned 53 miles from their home (SEU, 2002). Hansard (7 January 2010, col.548W) showed this figure to be 49 miles for young adult males. Given the relatively low number of Young Offender Institutes in England and Wales (37), especially when broken down into Prison Service area the figures on distance from home are not surprising. It has to be remembered that these are average figures and there are examples in previous research of very long distances, for example 200 miles (Bowell and Wedge, 2002; Haslewood-Pocsik et al, 2007).
Long distances mean difficult journeys, especially with children, and when using public transport (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Nurse, 2002; Bahr et al, 2005; Dyer, 2005). It also makes it an expensive process both in terms of public transport and/or fuel (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Nurse, 2002; Arditti et al, 2005; Visher, 2013). This is especially an issue when we consider that many prisoners and their families come from disadvantaged backgrounds (SEU, 2002). To help with this, HM Prison Service in England and Wales runs an assisted prison visit scheme contributing to the cost of prison visits by close relatives and partners who are in receipt of a low income (Ministry of Justice, 2009). Cost also limits the frequency and length of phone calls in England and in the USA (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Clarke et al, 2005; Day et al, 2005).

A further reason for the low number of visits is that the men have to rely on someone to bring their child (Hairston, 2002). Age may be a barrier, as under 18s usually need to be accompanied by an adult (Ministry of Justice, 2011a). This is especially an issue when the father is in conflict with the child’s carer (Bahr et al, 2005). There are further personal reasons for a lack of visits. Hairston (2002) found that in some cases the mother did not want their child visiting a prison. Similarly, many authors have found that the men actually refuse visits from their children due to feelings of shame (Nurse, 2002). For some this is because they do not want the child exposed to the prison environment (Arditti et al, 2005; Bahr et al, 2005; Clarke et al, 2005), but for others the reason is that the men distance themselves from the outside world as a coping mechanism (Edin et al, 2004). Hairston (2002) and Boswell and Wedge (2002) found that it was rare for the reason for no visits to be because the child did not want to visit.

2.3.3. The experience of contact
To a large extent the experience of the visit depends on the actual prison. For example, staff dedication and helpfulness and prison security status have both been found to affect the experiences of fathers in prison and their families who are visiting them (Pugh, 2004; Clarke et al, 2005; Jones, ND). Furthermore, the
experience of visits at individual prisons may change over time, depending for example, which staff are on duty, the level of involvement of voluntary organisations, or whether the Governor sees family links as a priority for the prison. The following discussions must be read bearing this in mind.

Overall Clarke et al (2005) found that all forms of contact were viewed positively by fathers in England because they allowed for direct emotional connection and expression between fathers and their children. Visits allowed the fathers to know what the family had been doing and how children were changing and developing and gave fathers opportunities to get to know their children (Clarke et al, 2005). Pugh (2004) found that some children (especially older children) preferred letters to visits because they were more private and so they could express emotions in letters.

The experience of the visit is not always positive for those involved. Much of the negativity is because of the focus on security in prisons: institutional rules that provide this security are often incompatible with supporting links with families (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Hairston, 2002). Nurse (2002) found that there were occasions when visitors had been denied entry (for not having correct identification, for dressing inappropriately, or due to lockdowns) which put them off trying again. Hairston (2002) also found discretion led to officers introducing their own rules of entry. Children (and family members) have also been found to be intimidated by searches (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Pugh, 2004). The officer presence at visits also contributes to a daunting experience for children (Bowell and Wedge, 2002), especially when such officers are disrespectful (Arditti et al, 2005).

Despite enjoying the visits, the experience of visits seems seldom constructive in terms of fatherhood roles. One major issue is boredom (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Nurse, 2002; Pugh, 2004) as children have to sit in one place with no toys or chance to play with their fathers. Among young children especially, visits can be
confusing as they do not understand why they cannot have physical contact with their father (Pugh, 2004). If children can go to a play area their fathers cannot join them. In Earle’s (2012) observation of visits he found the children gravitated towards the play area and children were “unspecific in terms of relationships to any particular prisoner” (6).

Visits take place in a false environment because they involve an “intensive condensed family interaction” which is unlike the pre prison family routine (Clarke et al, 2005: 231). There are few opportunities for normal interaction (Nurse, 2002). As visits tend to be relatively long families can exhaust what they have to say meaning there are awkward silences (Clarke et al, 2005). Because children have to be accompanied by an adult, any tensions between the accompanying adult and the prisoner will be overheard by children which may cause upset (Shaw, 1987). This also means that visits between fathers and their children are not private (Pugh, 2004). Arditti et al (2005) point to the demanding nature of visits and that it is common for the men and their children to get upset. Despite this, when Meek (2007b) asked young fathers in English prisons what parenting support they needed the majority of answers focused upon visits. The men wanted longer, more frequent and more private visits.

The negatives associated with phone calls that have been cited in previous research were (again linked to physical restrictions of prison life (Clarke et al, 2005)): the frustration of having to wait for others to finish; the lack of privacy during conversations; the fact men cannot receive incoming calls; and the restricted times that prisoners are allowed to use phones which might not fit with their families’ availability (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Pugh, 2004; Clarke et al, 2005).
2.4 Experiences of other family initiatives in prisons
Since 1991 all day/extended prison visits from children have been possible but only in very recent years have these been more widely introduced (Pugh, 2004). Again there is inconsistency across the prison estate: some prisons do not have family days and for those that do frequency and available places vary. Historically provision was very dependent upon an enthusiastic and determined member of staff, but is increasingly becoming more mainstream (Boswell and Wedge, 2002). Still family days are very dependent on outside funding as prison based support alone is not enough (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Pugh, 2004). They also rely on the fathers and their families to volunteer and this can depend on publicity and sentence planning targets (Boswell and Wedge, 2002).

Findings from the research literature seem positive about family days making prison visiting easier on the children and allowing for opportunities for interaction (Pugh, 2004). Haslewood-Pocsik et al (2008) found that family days did seem to help improve offenders’ relationships with their families and help families see that the young men could change. Boswell and Wedge (2002) found that a disadvantage of extended visits is that children can experience renewed feelings of loss and separation.

A further scheme is where fathers in prison read to/make up stories for their child on tape, DVD or CD. This goes by different names in different prisons, such as ‘Storybook Dads’ or ‘Men Behaving Dadly’. As Jones (ND) says this gives men in prison enhanced self-esteem through the rare chance to express themselves as fathers. This is important in a space where many opportunities to express themselves as fathers are taken away.

Prison Service Order 4950 (HM Prison Service, 2000) requires all young offender institutes to run parenting classes but young men do not have to be fathers to go
on these courses. Interestingly this is not a requirement of adult prisons (Jarvis et al., 2004). Meek (2007a) says classes are necessary as these are a group of men who are more likely to have experienced negative parenting and have other issues to deal with as well as fatherhood. Research has shown that these parenting courses have positive effects on the young men who participate and therefore supports the argument for providing such courses (Dennison and Lyon, 2001; Jarvis et al., 2004; Meek, 2007b).

This section on father-child contact has shown an increasingly encouraging stance by the Prison Service towards fatherhood. Fathers in many prisons now have access to family days and parenting courses which provide them with chances to see and understand their children. Yet this contact is not without negatives. Provision is inconsistent and so not all men have access to it. At the same time while men place a high value on visits these take place in a false environment.

2.5 Experiences of Informal Support
Part of the context of being a father in prison is the informal form of support that the young men receive from their family. This support impacts upon the contact with the children discussed above and therefore ultimately their experience of fathering in prison. It was decided that informal support was a more useful concept to look at rather than social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). While they have their similarities, especially in that they both recognise the value of social networks, a focus on social capital may help understanding but it is difficult to create policies that generate social capital; it is difficult to use the knowledge that is gained to make an impact. However, the similar concept of informal support (used by Maruna et al., 2004a) is something policies can be created around to potentially make a positive difference, e.g. policies that provide mechanisms of support to those informally supporting fathers in prison. Each of the groups of people that have been found in the literature to offer support to fathers in prison will now be considered, starting with the mothers of their children.
It is important to acknowledge that not everyone has informal supporters available to them (Dear et al., 2002). In these cases that the formal support discussed in section 2.2.1 may become more important.

### 2.5.1 Reliance on the child’s mother

In the literature on adult, and young, imprisoned fathers’ relationships with the mother(s) of their children are often characterised as complex (Hairston, 2002; Nurse, 2002; Clarke et al., 2005; Roy and Dyson, 2005; Walker, 2010). These relationships have long histories and often extend beyond break up and overlap, and as such are characterised by informality and cycles of hope and distrust (Clarke et al., 2005; Roy and Dyson, 2005). Many men, especially adults in prison tend to have more than one child by more than one mother (Shaw, 1987; Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Hairston, 2002; Arditti et al., 2005; Clarke et al., 2005) leading to multiple partnering and parenting relationships (Roy and Dyson, 2005).

Nurse (2002) talks of the weak and antagonistic parental relationships that are common between young offenders and the mothers of their children, caused by the fact they usually do not know each other very well before they have a child together. It is also often the case that young men are no longer in a relationship with the mothers of their children. Speak et al. (1997) in the UK found that young fathers in the general population tend to have casual and short-term relationships with the mothers of their children.

The complex relationships are further exacerbated by the fact that many of the mothers have the same problems as the fathers in prison, for example, drug and alcohol dependence, criminal involvement, low education, mental health problems (Johnson and Waldfogel, 2004; Roy and Dyson, 2005).

These complex, dynamic relationships between imprisoned young men and the mothers of their children impact on the ability of the men to maintain relationships
with their children. Many studies into fatherhood in prison have commented on the ‘gate-keeping’ role of the child’s mother (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Hairston, 2002; Arditti et al, 2005; Walker, 2010) or ‘babymama drama’ (Roy and Dyson, 2005). There is a clear relationship from the literature between contact with children while in prison and the men’s current relationship with the mother of the child (Hairston, 2002; Arditti et al, 2005; Clarke et al, 2005). Marriage and previous residence with the child are important factors in increasing the likelihood of continued contact (Hairston, 2002; Clarke et al, 2005). Arditti et al (2005) and Clarke et al (2005) assert that contact is often more complicated than the couple’s status and is about the quality of the relationships.

Previous studies have shown mother’s discouragement of the involvement of incarcerated men in their children’s lives, for example Edin et al (2004) found that many women used incarceration as justification for prohibiting father-child contact and to ‘talk trash’ to the child about their father. But Roy and Dyson (2005) found that while half described such discouragement, more (74 per cent) described encouragement of involvement and one in four had experienced discouragement and encouragement from the same mother. Emotional support from mothers was very important to the men as they reported that it encouraged them to be better people and fathers (Roy and Dyson, 2005).

Despite this crucial role that mothers play in ensuring father-child contact during a prison sentence, prison can, and often does, have a negative impact on, the often already complex, relationships with the mothers, in the most extreme cases causing them to end (Hairston, 2002; Edin et al, 2004; Western et al, 2004; Crewe, 2009), especially with repeat jail terms (Roy and Dyson, 2005). The process of making damaged relationships work from prison was seen as hard and arduous by the men in Roy and Dyson’s (2005) research. Exertion of masculinity and the distrust of women discussed above are also features of prison life which lead to
break ups with partners and therefore impact on contact with their children (Nurse, 2002).

Apart from the physical separation, other factors seemed to contribute to the demise of positive father-mother relationships. The fact that the mothers change as a result of men going to prison can cause rifts between parents (King, 1993; Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Nurse, 2002; Roy and Dyson, 2005). Many women appear to become more independent and self-sufficient (Nurse, 2002; Roy and Dyson, 2005). The men in the Roy and Dyson (2005) study interpreted this newfound independence of the mothers as failure to take responsibility for the children, and they were also envious. King (1993) acknowledged that women take on new roles as provider and decision-maker which may lead to the men losing control and trust. Boswell and Wedge (2002), Roy and Dyson (2005) and King (1993) point out that the prison sentence is difficult for women, they find it difficult to cope and often do not have the resources (time, money, energy) to focus on their relationship and visitation. They experience instability and stress from living in poverty (Roy and Dyson, 2005) and depression, loneliness and frustration (King, 1993).

Relationships and therefore involvement tend to be affected if either parent forms a new relationship (Roy and Dyson, 2005). Fathers in the Roy and Dyson (2005) research who had fathered children to more than one mother faced a bigger challenge in keeping the relationships with the mothers positive, the main issue here being jealousy. Jealousy also appears to be an issue among young fathers (Nurse, 2002).

On a more positive note, some research found reports of empathy between adult fathers in prison and the mothers of their children (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Clarke et al, 2005; Roy and Dyson, 2005). Roy and Dyson (2005) found evidence that some men understood that the mothers had a difficult time during the period
of imprisonment and there was mutual frustration about limited visits. Most women in the Roy and Dyson (2005) study took a ‘wait and see approach’ and rewarded productive changes and so always left open the possibility of a second chance.

Similar themes were found in the general fatherhood literature. This literature also points to the quality of the relationship with the mother of the child being significant for involvement with the child and mothers viewing fathers as important (Ihinger-Tallman et al, 1995; Marsiglio, 1995a; Fagan and Barnett, 2003; Devault et al, 2008). Emotional dependence on wives has also been found in the literature (Lewis, 1986; Lupton and Barclay, 1997).

2.5.2 Influence of grandparents
It is also apparent in some literature that maternal and paternal grandparents play an important role in young imprisoned fathers’ relationships with their children (Nurse, 2002; Walker, 2010). While this literature tends to concentrate on the support that grandparents offer the child (Poe, 1995; Johnson and Waldfogel, 2002; Barnardo’s, 2013) Nurse (2002) considers the ways grandparents can support the young father in prison. Nurse (2002) says that the paternal grandmother often plays a pivotal role in ensuring that there is contact between the imprisoned father and child by taking the ultimate decision about the level of responsibility and through providing care and support and bringing the child into the paternal family network. The maternal grandparents also seem to influence the relationship. If they are hostile then the father often senses this and so is less inclined to have contact with their child in a self-fulfilling prophecy (Nurse, 2002). Former positive relationships with the maternal family often become strained by prison and former negative feelings about the father are strengthened by a prison sentence (Nurse, 2002).

2.6 Experiences of reintegration
The process of change continues into the community and so it is important to consider the literature on experiences of reintegration into the community as the
continuing context for change. Again this is often characterised by difficulties. Reoffending rates are high. 73 per cent of young people reoffend within a year of release from prison (MOJ, 2013a). Multiple obstacles to reintegration exist: lack of education/literacy; health concerns especially mental health; drug and alcohol problems; and other offending behaviour issues e.g. anger (Mair and May, 1997; Uggen, 1999; SEU, 2002; Petersilia, 2003; Visher, 2013). Further the stigma of prison record affects men’s ability to find housing and employment (Petersilia, 2003; Visher, 2013). Furthermore, prison may have contributed to creating people that are less equipped to deal with the multitude of difficulties (Irwin and Owen, 2005). Currently people are also released into an environment of increasingly punitive public attitudes (Petersilia, 2003).

As well as this there are emotional difficulties of returning home to families that men have been away from and a lack of family support. Nurse (2002) found issues over new partners: contact with new boyfriends was fraught with tension and jealousy from both sides. The boyfriend might not want the father to have any contact or the father may feel ashamed his level of involvement does not match the boyfriend’s and so distances himself. These problems are further enhanced if the mother met her boyfriend while the father was in prison and they came home to their child calling someone else ‘daddy’ (Nurse, 2002).

The support networks literature has shown the importance of pro-social support networks through family and friends in aiding successful reintegration (Visher and Travis, 2003). Surprisingly given this, only eight per cent of Meek’s (2007b) sample felt they needed informal support from friends and family (Meek, 2007b). Meek (2007b) found an interesting contrast between a great willingness by young fathers to engage with support inside prison and reluctance to engage post release.
2.7 Conclusion
This chapter has shown that fathers in prison are in an institutional context whereby they are reliant on the Prison Service for contact with their children yet in many ways the environment’s power dynamics, focus on security and focus on masculinity works against both fatherhood and easy access to social support.

Fathers in prison are also reliant on the mothers of their children for contact but their age and prison can result in complex and tense relationships. Any contact men have with their children is set against this backdrop and leads to, in many ways, false experiences when they do spend time together.

At the same time there are ways in which the prison environment can act in an encouraging way towards fathers in prison. Men may look forward to family contact and it is an opportunity for them to get to know their children. The family days and parenting classes prisons provided are well received. Prisons also help with other issues that although are not directly connected to fatherhood do impact on it. For example, drug support, so there are examples of positive formal support for young prisoners from prisons. One aim of prisons is rehabilitation leading to change. The change literature will be considered in detail in chapter three. Furthermore, it seems that most prisoners will have access to at least one person with who they can receive social support about emotional and personal issues.

This chapter has shown that young fathers in prison are a unique group facing many issues, one of which is being away from their children. Their social and personal contexts are often messy and complex both in terms of their relationships with others and other issues e.g. their lack of employment and/or drug taking. The context in which they are trying to undertake change is difficult especially when we consider the additional element of the prison environment where masculine behaviour is the norm.
This chapter is important because it outlines the context the fathers in prison may want to change and further outlines the situations and experiences that might make them think about changing. The context the men are in, and their experience of this context, may impact upon their subjective understanding of offending and of being a father and start the subjective processes described in chapter three. These are factors shown in chapter three, and the findings chapters, to be a key part of the change process.

In looking at the prison context, we have begun to see how the environments may impact upon identity. Firstly, we have notions of hegemonic masculinity and these feed into the fatherhood identity that will be discussed in detail in chapter three, especially the idea of being a provider. Also, discussions of relationships in prison (both with officers, other prisoners and informal supporters) are also important. It is these people who give young fathers feedback on how they are performing certain roles, and it will be seen in chapter three how important feedback is to identity.
Chapter Three: Desistance and Desistance through Fatherhood

3.1 Introduction
Chapter Two provided an overview of previous literature on the experience of being a father in prison. This chapter will now move on to consider how these experiences, and the context of fathering from prison, are relevant and important to change and desistance from crime. This is important as this thesis applies this desistance literature to young fathers and develops existing work that has been conducted on fatherhood and desistance. This chapter outlines elements of desistance theory and elements of identity theory in order to apply these to young imprisoned fathers and in doing so provides the main theoretical framework of the thesis.

This chapter will begin by discussing literature on how change occurs. The desistance literature considers the role of structural factors (for example, becoming a father) and agentic factors (for example, cognitive self-transformation) in the process of achieving sustained change. Part of cognitive self-transformation is a change in identity. Identity theory is drawn upon by both fatherhood and desistance writers and therefore is reviewed in this chapter. This chapter will finally consider the roles and scripts that the young men use to construct their fatherhood identity before, during and after prison, focusing on how the men experience change in relation to their identity. Throughout, reference will be made to literature that considers the relationship between fatherhood and desistance which has generally been inconclusive on the nature of this relationship.

3.2 The Process of Desistance
This section examines the literature on the process of achieving lasting personal change, focusing on the desistance literature. It examines how change occurs and
how offenders might use contextual factors, such as those discussed in chapter two, to facilitate change. Desistance and change are not synonymous; change can happen in areas other than crime commission.

Many have defined desistance as the voluntary termination of offending (see for example: Barnett et al, 1987; Shover, 1996), suggesting desistance is a moment after which there is permanent change. Some call this moment primary desistance (Maruna and Farrall, 2004; Maruna et al, 2004a) while Laub and Sampson (2003) see it as a termination point. This definition has been heavily criticised as the permanence of this is difficult to measure (Piquero, 2004) and can only be determined retrospectively, with most certainty at death (Maruna, 2001). Further, criminal offending is often sporadic and cyclical and so offenders have many termination points (Matza, 1964; Glaser, 1969; Petersilia 1980; Sampson and Laub, 1993; Maruna, 2001).

Consequently, academics have argued that desistance is a process that supports the termination of offending and maintains the continued state of non-offending (Le Blanc and Loeber, 1998; Laub and Sampson, 2001; Maruna, 2001; Maruna et al, 2004a; Moloney et al, 2009; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009). Maruna et al (2004a) see this process as secondary desistance.

This is not a desistance study because not all of the participants were followed up into the community nor followed up for a long enough period to know whether they had actually changed (although we know that some had persisted in offending). The idea, however, of a process of change is relevant, as the current work focuses on the process young fathers go through in prison and back in the community when considering change (in relation to offending and fatherhood) and implementing change.
One set of desistance theory focuses on sociogenic factors and argues that informal social control is critical for change. This theory followed on from maturation studies that argued that people ‘grow out of’ crime (Glueck and Glueck, 1940; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990) but were criticised for offering little explanation as to process and mechanism (Maruna, 1997). Age-graded social control theory attempts to bridge this gap by saying that as people grow older, they are likely to experience key life transitions (or ‘turning points’) such as employment and marriage which provide people with greater informal social control (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Laub and Sampson, 2003) and therefore more to ‘lose’ by further offending. This can be linked to the context considered in chapter two as the contextual factors of fatherhood and imprisonment can be considered ‘turning points’.

One group of generally UK-based authors have used narrative theories to look at the importance of cognitive changes in individuals going through the process of change (Farrall and Bowling, 1999; Maruna, 2001; Giordano et al, 2002; Gadd and Farrall, 2004). The cognitive transformations that these authors say need to occur are a reformulation of identity and autobiography (Maruna, 2001; Giordano et al, 2002; Rumgay, 2004; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009; King, 2012). This is a critical time for identity for the young men in the study as they are at an age where they are experimenting with various ‘possible’ selves (Maruna, 1999) and searching for their own identity (Canter, 1994; Maruna, 1999).

Most theorists agree that the process of change is multifaceted and encompasses elements of human agency, subjective change and structural change, but disagree as to which is the most important factor in sustaining change and how agency and structure interact. Laub and Sampson (2003) suggest there is no need to take on the identity of a changed person if structures enable desistance without doing so. Advocates of the importance of cognitive change would argue that people differ in response to similar life events. Laub and Sampson (2003) argue that ‘turning points’ are catalysts for sustaining long-term change whereas Giordano et al (2002)
focus on readiness for change and similarly Cusson and Pinsonneault (1986), Burnett (1992), Farrall (2002) and Gideon (2009) argue that the decision to stop offending is crucial. Thus, human agency becomes central for these authors. A further argument is that it is a subjective change in identity that is most important for long term change and the altered scripts that accompany this change (Maruna, 2001; Giordano et al., 2002; Rumgay, 2004). Again there is disagreement whether agency is needed for identity transformation with Giordano et al. (2002) arguing the influence of social processes on cognitive transformations, and Maruna (2001) and Paternoster and Bushway (2009) arguing that shifts in identity are intentional. Additionally there is the argument that people need to have positive social and personal contexts in order to change (Farrall, 2002). Therefore, the path to desistance is very complex.

The structural, agentic and subjective desistance theories will now be considered in more detail. These are the theories that the thesis applies to the young fathers in the sample. It is therefore important to consider how they are all currently applied to the general offending population. Firstly, structural desistance theories will be outlined.

3.2.1 Age-graded social control
Sampson and Laub (1993) in their life-course research used a rich archival dataset to develop the idea of ‘turning points’ which are key life events which start people on a gradual path to desistance (Laub et al., 1998). Abbott (1997) believes turning points refer to two points in time at once and says that “what makes a turning point a turning point rather than a minor ripple is the passage of sufficient time ‘on a new course’ such that it becomes clear that direction has indeed been changed” (89). Therefore, ‘turning points’ can only be determined in hindsight.

The turning points that Sampson and Laub (1993) see as important are marriage, employment and military service. These key life events create new situations which provide social control through the supervision and monitoring, for example by wives
and employers. These key events also: foster social capital through the establishment of new networks of people; give people routine; and help develop a changing sense of self/ opportunities for identity transformation. The new situations allow people to ‘knife off’ their past from the present (Laub and Sampson, 2003), that is, distance themselves from causes and physical criminal environments (Maruna and Roy, 2007). There is a spectrum of social situations and total institutions, such as the military, have more potential for ‘knifing off’ than less dramatic life changes like marriage. The age graded element of the theory suggests that the life events of marriage and employment have more of an effect on those over 26 than younger offenders (Ouimet and LeBlanc, 1996; Farrall and Bowling, 1999; Uggen, 2000).

It is not just the presence of employment and marriage and other social attachments that affect desistance but the strength, quality and interdependence of these interactions (Cusson and Pinsonneault, 1986; Sampson and Laub, 1993; Mischkowitz, 1994; Rutter, 1996). Shover (1996) noted that a “mutually satisfying relationship” or “acquisition of a satisfying job” (126: emphasis added), offer secure social niches, a reason to change, social capital, routine, and strengthens pro social identities. Shover (1996) saw these as part of the desistance process but highlighted that in reality many criminal men are unsuccessful at securing employment or creating close ties with conventional others.

Sampson and Laub (1993) have been criticised for their cohort specific findings (Giordano et al, 2002; Savolainen, 2009). The “likelihood, stability, and meaning of marriage” (Giordano et al, 2002: 1013) has changed since the 1940s. The same is true of employment. For ex-offenders now it is a time of high unemployment, and criminal records limit employment opportunities even further (Shover, 1996; Mair and May, 1997; Rolfe, 2001; SEU, 2002). This may be why human agency factors are considered important by authors studying desistance in more recent times, as
this thesis argues resilience against setbacks and self-determination were critical in the process of change for the young fathers being studied.

There has been debate over Sampson’s and Laub’s (1993) idea of turning points because people change without life events and others experience life events and do not change. Giordano et al (2002) state:

“The individual’s subjective stance is especially important during the early stages of the change process. At a basic level, one must resonate with, move toward, or select the various catalysts for change” (1000)

Therefore Giordano et al (2002) prefer the terms “potential pro-social features of the environment” (1000), or ‘hooks for change’ in order to emphasise the individual’s agency and “own role in latching on to opportunities” (1000). ‘Hooks for change’ make change possible but not certain. In the life stories of their sample Giordano et al (2002) found that most respondents had some positive resources and environments with pro-social elements but individuals have to choose to take advantage of these. Moloney et al (2009) also prefer ‘hook for change’ due to the emphasis on agency. Turning points were recast by Laub et al (1998) as ‘triggering events’ which can cause a person to question their direction but that these can still be “independent of an individual’s cognitive restructuring” (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 40).

Some have argued that there may be other, or even co-existing, explanations than social control for the effect of life events on desistance, even though the outcome may be the same. Warr (1998) stresses the importance of peers and found evidence, in his quantitative analysis of the USA National Youth Survey, that “marriage does in fact create pressure on spouses to limit or curtail relations with friends. Warr (1998) admits that Sampson and Laub could be “partially correct” as:

“Life transitions like marriage may simultaneously reduce exposure to delinquent associated while increasing stakes in conformity and attachment to conventional others” (211)
This relationship between life events and peers may be particularly important for young fathers. Carlsson (2012) highlights the usefulness of ‘turning points’ as a theoretical concept but says these affect change indirectly, not directly, as they bring about changes in social control, routine and self-image and it is these things that lead to change. This idea of self-image can be linked to identity theories.

3.2.1.2 Applying age-graded control theory to offending fathers

When considering the potential importance of fatherhood on desistance the literature has tended to focus on fatherhood as a turning point. While most studies of turning points have concentrated on marriage and employment, there have been some that have discussed the potential of fatherhood. These studies have mainly considered parenthood (differentiating findings between men and women) but a small number have looked only at men. It is important to consider fatherhood separately from marriage as people, especially young delinquent men, increasingly often become fathers before getting married (Monsbakken et al, 2013).

It has been suggested from the support networks literature that has started to emerge out of the reintegration literature, that close ties with family and friends in prison improves the chances of completing licence conditions (Holt and Miller, 1972; Farrall, 2000; Petersilia, 2003; Visher and Travis, 2003; Davis et al, 2013). Davis et al (2013) highlight the importance of support and encouragement from families. However, this set of literature does not separate out fatherhood, and therefore will not be considered in further detail.

Ganem and Agnew (2007), Moloney et al (2009) and Monsbakken et al (2013) highlight the fact that evidence on whether parenthood shapes offending is mixed and conflicting, especially quantitative research.

Some have found parenthood has no effect on desistance (see for example Rand, 1987). This seems especially the case among those who have looked at gender differences in relation to the impact of parenthood on desistance. These have
generally found that for young women, more than men, a decision to desist is based on becoming a parent (Graham and Bowling, 1995; Jamieson et al, 1999; McIvor et al, 2004). For men, decisions to desist are more likely to be about personal choice and agency (McIvor et al, 2004). Warr (1998) found that having children added “little or nothing to the effect of marriage itself” (206) on time spent with delinquent peer (linked by Warr (1998) to desistance). Similarly, Blokland and Nieuwbeerta (2005) who considered fatherhood in their quantitative analysis of Dutch offenders concluded:

“During marriage offenders seem maximally inhibited; no other life circumstances equal the effect of marriage” (p. 1228)

A further group of literature has found that fatherhood can actually increase criminal activity (Graham and Bowling, 1995; Stouthamer-Loeber and Wei, 1998; Thornberry et al, 2000). Graham and Bowling (1995) and Thornberry et al (2000), referring to adults and teenagers respectively, found parenthood increased criminal involvement due to increased stress levels caused by the pressure of responsibilities.

Many, mainly qualitative, studies have found evidence that fatherhood has been a reason for change (Burnett, 1992; Leibrich, 1993; Hughes, 1998; Maruna, 2001; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Edin et al, 2004; Shannon and Abrams, 2007; Moloney et al, 2009; Giordano et al, 2011). Monsbakken et al (2013) argue that fatherhood has the possibility of changing offending over the life course because it “activates many of the same desistance promoting mechanisms that are associated with marriage” (131). Therefore, it provides people with a routine (Horney et al, 1995; Laub and Sampson, 2003) and provides informal social control (Laub and Sampson, 2003) and leads to less time with peers (Giordano et al, 2011). Further, with parenthood more is at stake than with marriage (Edin et al, 2004). As with other turning points the importance of context cannot be overstated, especially in terms of the relationship with the child’s mother.
Edin et al (2004) assert that fatherhood can act as a turning point away from crime because it alters how men perceive the risk and rewards of criminal activity. The men in this US study knew that criminal activity was likely to lead to victimisation (attacks, death) or incarceration and after they became fathers they did not want to risk separation from their child. The men structured the accounts of their lives into ‘before’ and ‘after’ children and the salvation theme was strong in their discussion of life after children (Edin et al, 2004).

Parenthood played a role in Burnett’s (1992) group of desisters she named the ‘converts’. A common example of a new all-preoccupying interests was children, which were “attainments that they were not prepared to jeopardize or which overrode any interest in or need for property crime” (14).

**Importance of context**
Authors have argued that it is the quality of parent-child relationships that are important for desistance due to the social support this provides (Bahr et al, 2005), having a stake in conformity (Ganem and Agnew, 2007) and attachment (Visher, 2013).

Other studies have highlighted the fact that the effect of parenthood is contingent on the new parent’s relationship status with being separated, unmarried or not living with the child increasing reoffending rates (Farrington and West, 1995; Giordano et al, 2002; Blokland and Nieuwbeerta, 2005). In Norway, Monsbakken et al (2013) found the opposite (although they acknowledge issues over causality), that when fatherhood takes place outside the context of a relationship with the child’s mother then fatherhood may be a turning point. In other situations (i.e. with co-habiting and married men) Monsbakken et al (2013) found a reduction in offending in the lead up to the birth of a child.

A further issue is geographically different social-structural contexts. Savolainen (2009) in a study in Finland found strong support for fatherhood and desistance but
the author did recognise that this may be because “the conditions of parenting are radically different in Finland where the government offers universal and relatively generous benefits for families with young children” (300).

3.3.2 Human agency and cognitive transformation
From early writers such as Lofland (1969) to more recent desistance-focused literature (Shover, 1996; Maruna, 1999; Maruna, 2001; Giordano et al, 2002; Maruna et al, 2004a; McNeill, 2006; Maruna and Roy, 2007; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009; King, 2012) it has been argued that cognitive self-transformation and change in internal self-identity are critical to desisting. Laub and Sampson (2003) do see a change in identity as sometimes being a part of the process of change. They acknowledge that some offenders will ‘make good’ (Maruna, 2001) and ‘engage in up front work’ (Giordano et al, 2002), but turning points are most important for sustained change. Giordano et al (2002) argue that their findings support the need for cognitive transformations in the process of change and that “there is a central place for agency in the change process” (999).

3.3.2.1 A decision to change
Sampson and Laub (1993) have been criticised for not taking into account “the wholeness and agentic subjectivity of the individual” (Maruna, 1997; 5). Laub and Sampson acknowledged this in 2003 and revisited their work. They found that human agency was striking in the life narratives but:

“one thus sees strong evidence for both will/ human agency and “commitment by default” (Becker, 1960), often in the same man’s life. In other words, there is no escaping the tension surrounding conscious action and unconscious action generated by default” (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 281).

Human agency is about being “active players in their destiny” (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 56) and therefore includes will, individual motivations and decisions (including to stop offending). But further human agency is also about decisions and actions that indirectly lead to desistance.

Many authors have argued the importance of an internal motivation to change for desistance (Cusson and Pinsonneault, 1986; Burnett, 1992; Farrall, 2002; Giordano
et al, 2002; Healy and O’Donnell, 2008; Gideon, 2009; Davis et al, 2013). The internal and subjective element of this shows human agency. Giordano et al (2002) found shifts in openness to change were important. Giordano et al (2002) say this readiness to change may be more important in their contemporary sample, as compared with Sampson and Laub’s (1993) sample, due to being more enmeshed in deviant lifestyles and removed from respectable alternatives:

“given these realities it seems unlikely that many respondents will begin the process of desistance without a heightened awareness of what it is they are undertaking and absent a strong desire to begin such a conversion effect” (1032).

This openness.desire to change has been found in many studies (80 per cent of property offenders in Burnett’s (1992) study and 95 per cent in Farrall’s (2002) and Healy and O’Donnell’s (2008) study wanted to change). Reasons for such motivations found in the literature have tended to be prison focused (Cusson and Pinsonneault, 1986; Davis et al, 2013) or due to family and friends (including children) (Davis et al, 2013). Despite this desire, fewer believed they could change (Burnett, 1992; Farrall, 2002). Burnett (1992) found predictions to be fairly accurate leading Burnett and Maruna (2004) to consider the role of ‘hope’ (defined as not just wishing something would happen but also having the perceived ability and means to achieve the outcome) in desistance. Hope did correlate with desistance and further that “hope may actually condition the effect of social problems” (Burnett and Maruna, 2004: 398): those that had high hopes for release were more able to cope with problems they encountered on release and so these social issues were less likely to lead to reconviction. The impact of hope shrinks as the number of problems rises and “a person’s attitudes and internal motivation may be overwhelmed by reality” (Burnett and Maruna, 2004: 399). These findings have lessons for the Prison Service which Burnett and Maruna (2004) state “breeds fatalism and a sense of despondency” (401) and may stop them having hope; something that is central to the research questions in this current study.
Farrall and Bowling (1999), Maruna (2001) and Shapland and Bottoms (2011) have acknowledged that “deciding to desist and actually desisting are two very different things” (Maruna, 2001: 23). This is where external social forces and situational contexts become important (LeBel et al, 2008; Shapland and Bottoms, 2011). ‘Position-practice’, or behaviours normally expected of a social identity, are important here, as people can choose to take on a position-practice rather than choose to stop offending and then it is the structures associated with this that lead to desistance (Farrall and Bowling, 1999). Similarly Shapland and Bottoms (2011) discuss the importance of acquiring new routines relevant to non-offending. McNeill and Whyte (2007) believe that for desistance social and subjective factors both need to be moving in the same way.

Farrall and Bowling (1999) discussed how within the literature on desistance there is an agency-structure divide: authors either concentrate on individual decision making or on aspects of social structures, people are “super-agents” or “super-dupes” (261). Using Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory, Farrall and Bowling (1999) argued that desistance from crime can be explained with reference to individual decision-making and to life changes. This combined subjective-social model has since become more accepted (McNeill and Whyte, 2007; LeBel et al, 2008; Carlsson, 2012; King, 2012). Carlsson (2012) says:

“Another important dimension is social stratification [...] it is rare that processes of change in offending are dependent on only individual agency. Rather they emerge in an interplay between the individual and wider, social community and society” (13).

Maruna et al (2004a) discuss the difference between desistance and rehabilitation; desistance is more about self-change whereas rehabilitation is concerned with change through intervention. Maruna et al (2004a) assert that there is no reason why the two should be seen as in opposition to each other and that the lines between the two are blurring; people who change in treatment are still to some extent self-changers as only a small amount of their time is spent in rehabilitation.
and those who self-change do receive some input especially from friends and family. Therefore rehabilitation can be seen as part of the desistance process.

Following this Maruna et al (2004a) argue that people do not change simply because they decide to or because they enrol in a programme. Instead, “behavioural change follows a multi-level rather than a single, track” (Maruna et al, 2004a; 13). They identified three factors that are crucial for desistance: the often unacknowledged informal help, social support and social control from family, friends and significant others; more formal professional intervention from statutory and voluntary organisations; and self-determination (Maruna et al, 2004a). These three elements tie in with the main elements in the research as the formal support and interventions will be looked at in relation to prison and probation, informal support networks will be considered in relation to fatherhood, and the impact of fatherhood on attitudes to offending (self-determination) will be studied.

3.3.2.2 Identity transformation
While one form of human agency is deciding to change, a further form is envisioning an alternative future identity (Maruna, 2001; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009; King, 2012). Giordano et al (2002) also argue the importance of identity transformation but they recognise the importance of social processes on these cognitive transformations.

Research on identity and the internalised self has tended to use narrative theory (Maruna, 2001; Giordano et al, 2002) as this method allows understanding of the way people see themselves. Maruna explains:

“People construct stories to account for what they do and why they did it. These narratives impose an order on people’s actions and explain people’s behaviour with a sequence of events that connect up explanatory goals, motivations and feelings. These self-narratives then act to shape and guide future behaviour, as people act in ways that agree with the stories or myths they have created about themselves (McAdams, 1985)” (Maruna, 2001: 40).

Similarly Giddens (1991) says that a person’s identity is best found in the “capacity to keep a particular narrative going” (54). For example, Giordano et al (2002)
found a progressive narrative was not universally embraced in their sample. Some men said they could imagine changing but there was no depth and definition to the narratives and they spoke in the present tense which indicated an incomplete process of change or could not sustain the progressive narrative throughout the interview (they contained “a hedge or break in the storyline” (1031)). The desisters tended to use the past tense flawlessly (Giordano et al, 2002).

Gadd and Farrall (2004) endorse Maruna’s subjective approach to narrative theory but in contrast to the cognitive approach favoured by Maruna (2001) prefer an interpretive approach to narrative material that is sensitive to unconscious motivations as they argue these better explain contradictions in the data.

Maruna’s (2001) study is extremely important in understanding the subjective process of change. Maruna (2001) compared the narrative scripts of matched persisters and desisters in the UK. Scripts are used to enact an identity. Maruna (2001) stresses the importance of considering people’s pasts and therefore their whole life narratives when looking at desistance. For desistance to take place people need a coherent and resolved ‘self’ and to have made sense of their lives (Maruna, 2001). Desisters used a ‘redemption script’ (Maruna, 2001). Maruna (2001) contends that desisters do not reject their old self, as this would lead to shame, but find connections between the past and the present in a way that the “present good becomes an almost inevitable outcome” (87): the ‘new’ me is the ‘true’ me and ‘good’ elements have always been there. Therefore in going through the process of change they have to ‘make good’ their past in order to be what they want to be in the future (Maruna, 2001). By “selectively and creatively reinterpreting past events to suit future aspirations” (Rotenberg, 1987: 50 in Maruna, 2001) people can justify their past and not be shamed by it (Maruna, 2001). Maruna (2001) found that to ‘make good’ desisters presented a distorted picture of reality and “the highly positive accounts bore almost no resemblance to the ugly realities of the ex-offenders’ lives” (9). For desistance to take place people
have to discover agency and move from a passive to an active voice and this is usually through the role of significant others (Maruna, 2001). In summary for Maruna (2001) the process of change is about “wilful, cognitive distortions” (9) to make good the past and in doing this people experience subjective changes in their sense of self and identity and become “reconstituted” (10).

In contrast, persisters may use a ‘condemnation script’. These are characterised by helplessness and people seeing their life scripts as being written for them a long time ago. Persisters characteristically have no enthusiasm for offending but feel they have no choice due to low education, low skills and high prejudice and therefore a theme of these scripts is being a victim of society. Condemnation scripts lack a language of agency as these people have a weak sense of personal control. Maruna (2001) states that these persisters “might be right” (83) in their unhappy narratives, as like depressed people they may be “sadder but wiser” and more realistic about their future prospects.

In relation to Laub and Sampson’s (2003) concept of ‘knifing off’, Maruna and Roy (2007) argue that ‘knifing off’ is not a necessity for change and it is more common for people to find “a way to work with the past rather than knife it off or deny it altogether” (117), therefore they reconstruct their past rather than amputate it. Paternoster and Bushway (2009) differ from Maruna (2001) in that they see a break from one’s past as important but similarly they see change as being intentional.

Giordano et al (2002) undertook a mixed methods longitudinal study, including qualitative life history narratives, in the USA with a focus on women and the desistance process but including a comparable male sample of offenders. Giordano et al (2002) claim their ideas are not incompatible with Sampson and Laub (1993) but “provide more specificity about mechanisms of change” (1004). Giordano et al (2002) criticise Sampson and Laub (1993) for not providing a complete account as
they bracket of ‘up front work’ done by offenders as they “make initial moves toward, help to craft, and work to sustain a different way of life” (992). Therefore life events do not always just happen to people but people have agency and have a role in “creatively and appropriating elements in the environment” (992).

Giordano et al (2002) identify four types of cognitive transformations (which all relate to each other and inspire and direct behaviour). The first we have seen in section 3.3.2.1: openness to change. The second type is a person’s attitude towards ‘hooks for change’. This focuses on the “reciprocal relationship between actor and environment” and how the new environment situation must be viewed as a positive development and “as fundamentally incompatible with continued deviation” (Giordano et al, 2002: 1001). Therefore they must “actively embrace” (Giordano et al, 2002: 1043) the new situation. There was considerable difference in Giordano et al’s (2002) sample in the use people made of ‘hooks for change’ and in the timing of effects. Similarly, in discussing opportunities to reform Rumgay (2004) says opportunities have to be perceived as such subjectively by the individual going through change. Rumgay says:

“ the offender must recognise it [available opportunity] as such, perceive it to be accessible – that is within practical reach, bearing in mind previous experiences of failure – and value it as a desirable alternative to her present condition” (408).

The third type of cognitive transformation is the ability to envision, and begin to fashion, an appealing and conventional replacement self. People need to see the potential for identity transformation that hooks for change can present (Giordano et al, 2002). It is argued by Rumgay (2004) that a major outcome of opportunities to reform is in claiming an alternative, conventional personal identity. Rumgay (2004) although discussing women’s processes of change⁴ makes an interesting argument that common identities, such as mother, give people a script by which to enact a conventional role, yet these are ’skeleton scripts’. Because offenders often have not

⁴ This is still relevant to men as Giordano et al (2002) found commonalities in the processes of change between male and female offenders.
had full access to conventional roles, due to their backgrounds and previous experiences, their knowledge of scripts is only a “fraction of the situations and interactions in which the role must be performed and which may be highly idealised versions of ‘messy, real-world’ mundanity (Abelson, 1976)” (Rumgay, 2004: 409). Therefore performing the script is not easy: creativity, flexibility, and perhaps most importantly, resilience, are needed to succeed (Rumgay, 2004).

Fourth there must be a change in the way offenders view deviant behaviour, a need to no longer see criminal behaviour as “positive, viable or even personally relevant” (Giordano et al, 2002: 1002).

Paternoster and Bushway (2009) and King (2012) consider identity change and social structural contexts. Paternoster and Bushway (2009) identified another form of human agency here: that people change their preferences, after they have changed their identity, to choose social networks appropriate to their new identity thereby strengthening their affiliation with pro-social others. King (2012) see this as fundamentally different from Rumgay (2004) who placed more emphasis on structural forces already present leading to identity change. King (2012) concluded that setbacks to new identities occur due to structural barriers in the immediate social context leading to people reverting back to old identities.

3.3.2.3 Other contributing factors
Maruna et al (2004b) argue that, as another dimension to the process of change, there is a need for the recognition of reformed identities by others which acts as a form of prosocial labelling. This may especially be the case when it comes from official sources rather than family and friends (Maruna et al, 2004b). Furthermore, individuals are active participants in the labelling process and self-conceptions are built on the experiences of the self as a causal agent as well as reactions from others (Maruna et al, 2004b). Meek (2011) applies this idea to fatherhood saying, “These findings suggest that fatherhood can indeed give the lives of young offenders a ‘normal’ purpose and meaning, through a process of achieving the prosocial label of parent” (947).
Farrall (2002) notes the importance of social and personal contexts and of social capital in assisting desistance. For the probationers in the Farrall (2002) study those who had good social contexts (especially employment and relationships) were more likely to overcome obstacles. Further those who experienced positive changes in social and personal contexts were associated with positive changes in behaviour (Farrall, 2002). Drug taking was also a crucial factor in these men’s ability to change. King (2012) also argues that change (and the ability for new identities to remain salient) is highly structured around the individual’s social, cultural and material resources.

Gadd (2006) states that:

“neither Maruna nor Farrall make clear how this ‘personal identity’ or ‘sense of self’ gets internalized. Nor do they explain how this internalized self relates to the social identities […] desisters and persisters presumably carry around with them” (181).

Gadd (2006) considers identification as important in the assumption of identities and in the process of change. Using Benjamin (1990; 1998) Gadd argues that “identification facilitates change when people feel adequately recognised by another person whom they themselves are able to recognise as an external, sovereign other” (182). Gadd (2006) highlights how continuity and change characterise most people’s lives but identification and recognition show how change can come about in periods of social continuity i.e. with no turning points.

3.3.2.4 Applying cognitive transformations to offending fathers
Parenthood has been considered important in the desistance process because it may give a person the new and more conventional identity that Giordano et al (2002), Rumgay (2004), Paternoster and Bushway (2009) and King (2012) refer to. Earle (2012) discusses how Walker (2010) and Maruna (2001) see that for men to change they need a story to take them from one sense of self to another and fatherhood offers such a script (Plummer, 1994).
Moloney *et al* (2009) set out to research whether fatherhood resulted in constraining effects (similar to Laub and Sampson’s (2003) turning points) or changes in identity, self and subjectivity. Their findings were that fatherhood among gang members led to important subjective and affective transformations and changes in outlook, priorities and future orientation. But for fatherhood to impact on desistance there also needed to be two features: a change in the amount of time spent on the streets; and the ability to support the family with legal income from a “high quality” job that gave them dignity. In relation to leaving the streets, Moloney *et al* (2009) found that this was sometimes a conscious decision but for others it was a drift. Leaving the gang created issues in terms of loneliness and for many the gang had been the only positive in their lives, those that were more successful had alternative sources of respect and identity. Fatherhood according to Moloney *et al* (2009) can enable desistance though this is not guaranteed and is often not direct.

Moloney *et al* (2009) also comment that the beginning of the turning point varied amongst the men in their sample. For some it was finding out they were going to be a father, for others it was birth, for others it came later, for some it was subsequent children as they attempted to make up for earlier mistakes.

In the quantitative data from their 2002 study Giordano *et al* (2002) found that attachment to children was not a strong predictor of desistance but is an

“Illustration of our central argument- that when we focus on contemporary serious offenders, mere exposure to a given stimulus/ catalyst is often not a sufficient bridge to conformity and sustained behaviour change” (1038)

They felt that positive themes about parenting in narratives were a stronger base on which to build a replacement self, as were those who had a deeper “commitment to the everyday challenges and rewards of the parenting role” (Giordano *et al*, 2002: 1042).
Giordano et al (2011) found that parenthood may influence desistance for those from more advantaged backgrounds. The qualitative results of this study showed “parenthood-has-changed-me narratives” (Giordano et al, 2011:412) to be common, especially among men, however these narratives did not accord with actual ‘complete desistance’. Giordano et al (2011) discuss how encouragement from others is important in shifts in perspectives especially as children themselves cannot offer direct social control.

Giordano et al (2011) discuss the impact of the relative youthfulness of their sample and it may be that births that occur later in life are more likely to exert a positive influence.

Giordano et al (2011) conclude:

“The arrival of a new child may provide an initial impetus for the development of a “replacement self” or new identity that is less accepting of deviant lifestyles and more concerned with economic responsibilities (e.g. Graham & Bowling, 1996; Healy, 2010) […] Sustaining this new self may prove difficult for young adults who are struggling to maintain a stable and monogamous relationship with a member of the opposite sex, coping with effects of economic marginality, or who are imbedded in networks which do not fully support the individual's change in lifestyle.” (Giordano et al, 2011: 414)

**Generative fathering**

Generativity is concerned with giving back to the community and society at large (Dowd, 2000) and this can most commonly be achieved through having a child (Maruna and Roy, 2007). The “generative fathering model emphasises adult development and social benefit” (Dowd, 2000: 44). While much of the fatherhood literature concentrates on the impact of fathers on child development this generative focus looks at the advantages to the development of the father (an area of concern for this research). Generative fathering sees the work fathers do in terms of caring for and contributing to life in the next generation (Erikson, 1982; Hawkins et al, 1995; Marsiglio, 1995b).

Erikson (1982) discusses how generativity is essential to adults *individual* psychosocial development and that learning to care for others is the primary
development tension of adulthood, especially in learning to be less self-centred and
developing the need to be needed by others (Marsiglio, 1995b). Hawkins et al (1995) say that during the transition to parenthood people’s inner psyche and external behaviours change and whereas this often happens quickly for women, the process is more variable for men as they are generally less involved with the children. Men are more likely to feel uncomfortable and ambivalent about the changes they are going through for a time (Hawkins et al, 1995). Hawkins et al (1995) also acknowledge that social factors may not always support the opportunity for active parenting.

Maruna (2001) identifies the theme of generativity in redemption scripts. Generativity allow desisters to experience fulfilment, exoneration, legitimacy and therapy (Maruna, 2001; 118). This has the advantage of shifting from “backward-looking anger and guilt about the past to a forward-looking focus on the future” (Maruna and Ramsden, 2004; 142). Maruna’s (2001) desisters in ‘making good’ their redemption narratives were not just getting by but if they were fathers, they were now super-fathers. Exoneration may be important for fathers in prison who may feel guilt over previously letting their children down and generative fathering allows them to move on from past mistakes (Maruna, 2001).

Walker (2010) relates generativity to fathers in prison. These men were fathering from a distance but still it “created an inner resource, a source of focus and strength, arguably a source of generativity” (Walker, 2010: 1412). She found generativity took on three interconnected dimensions: ‘Keeping me going’ or ‘feeling generative’ (children helped the men through their sentences); ‘Keeping me straight’ or ‘being generative’ (children provided meaning and purpose): and ‘Engaging and being there’ or ‘tools of generativity’ (hands on caring for, being interested in and supporting children) (Walker, 2010). However, the men interviewed in the Walker (2010) study “recognised that the ‘tools of generativity’ required constancy and confidence that was challenging in the context of personal,
social and economic uncertainty” (1414). Similarly, McNeil and Maruna (2007) claim that generativity is hard work.

In conclusion, authors agree that cognitive transformation is part of the process of change but disagree over its importance and necessity for sustained change. Part of cognitive transformation, especially for Giordano et al (2002) and Rumgay (2004) is a change in identity. Therefore it is important to now consider identity in more detail as for fathers it is potentially key to their sustained change.

3.4 Identity
The change literature has noted the importance of intentional shifts in identity and their part in how people experience change (especially Maruna, 2001; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009; King, 2012). Consequently, it is important to look at the identity literature in more detail. Ideas around identity and change are especially applicable to fathers who have this identity available to them but, especially in the case of offenders, this may be in competition with other identities. It is important, and relevant, to consider the specificities of men’s fatherhood identity, in more detail. This section starts by detailing the general identity literature before moving on to consider fatherhood identity specifically, before, during and after prison, considering whether it is a possible replacement self (Giordano et al, 2002) and whether men can use fatherhood as a ‘skeleton script’ (Rumgay, 2004).

3.4.1 Identity theory and fatherhood
The ‘self’ is made up of a number of statuses (for example, father, son) and the identities associated with these. People may hold many statuses, according to the groups of people with which they interact (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Identity is the self-meanings, cognitions and expectations attached to a particular status and incorporated into the self (Burke and Tully, 1977). Burke and Tully (1977) suggest that each identity is associated with particular interactional settings. There are also concomitant roles with each status (e.g breadwinner, nurturer) and self-meanings are attached to these.
Two key concepts to identity theory are salience and commitment. Identity salience is concerned with the probability that an identity will be activated in a situation (Stryker, 1968; Stryker and Serpe, 1982; Stets and Burke, 2000). According to Stets and Burke (2000) this is often discussed in a relative way and discussions focus on a salience hierarchy of which identity people will enact when there is more than one appropriate; they can be in competition with each other.

Commitment has been defined in many ways. According to Stryker and Serpe (1982) there are two aspects to commitment. The first of these refers to the number of people to whom one is tied to through an identity or “the greater the embeddedness of the identity in the social structure” (Stets and Burke, 2000: 230). The second aspect refers to the relative strength or depth of the ties to these people (Stets and Burke, 2000). This is about commitment to a network of relationships (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1995). For Burke and Reitzes (1991) people are expected to enact behaviour that is congruent to their identity and commitment is about the reflected appraisals they receive from others. The strength of response to any misalignment between perceptions of self and perceptions of other’s responses indicates the degree of commitment (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1995). High levels of commitment therefore result in a “strong force towards congruity” (Burke and Reitzes, 1991: 245) and results in behaviour that supports identity.

The importance of identity in the context of change is that it affects behaviour (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009) and therefore father involvement (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1995). Identity is the source of motivation for action (Burke and Reitzes, 1991). Salience and commitment (whatever its definition) are linked to motivation by Stets and Burke (2000) in that the more committed a person is to an identity and the higher the saliency of that identity, the more effort people will put into enacting that identity. Stets and Burke (2000) state:
"Stryker also goes beyond the immediate situation by hypothesising that people will seek out opportunities to enact a highly salient identity” (231).

This is also true of fatherhood (Ihinger-Tallman, 1995; Marsiglio, 1995a). When the father identity is higher in the salience hierarchy, men will be more likely to activate their fatherhood identity over other statuses and roles “in specific situations appropriate to those behaviours or across situations” (Ihinger-Tallman, 1995: 62). Ihinger-Tallman et al (1995) discuss that those who place fatherhood at the extreme ends of the salience hierarchy are less likely to change their identity over time as they have invested more in it. For others Ihinger-Tallman et al (1995) hypothesise that “father parenting role identity will gain or lose salience depending on events, specific circumstances, and the influence of significant others” (68). The relationship with the mother of the child, and the mother’s view on their role as a father, plays a large part in salience and commitment to fatherhood identity (Ihinger-Tallman et al, 1995; Marsiglio, 1995a). This is important to the current work which included those who the fathers identified as supportive of them.

Ihinger-Tallman et al (1995) using the notion that people are expected to enact specific role behaviours that are congruent with their identity (Burke and Reitzes, 1991) argue that men will behave towards their children in a way that reflects “(a) the value they place on fatherhood and (b) their interpretation of what a good father does and/or is” (67). This means that not all fathers will act the same as there is variation in what a good father means depending on which father roles people value more highly. Men will be more committed to the types of father roles the child’s mother wants them to be if they value that relationship (Marsiglio, 1995a).

The general identity theory literature argues that identities are shaped by the social world in which people live (Giddens, 1991); self-meanings come from shared social meanings (Burke and Reitzes, 1991; Stets and Burke, 2000). Identity is also
developed, maintained, confirmed and experienced through interactions with others (Stryker, 1968; Burke and Tully, 1977; Stryker and Sepe, 1982).

There are a number of relevant principles behind identity theory. First, Schwartz and Stryker (1970) argue that people seek to create and maintain stable, coherent identities and further that they prefer to evaluate their identities positively. Also people establish their aspiration levels (including identity aspirations) in a way that is designed to maximise self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1986).

The roles that form fatherhood identity will now be considered.

### 3.4.2 Fatherhood Images and ‘good’ father roles

It appears that all men want to be ‘good’ fathers and Kimmel (1995) states that this desire cuts across race, class, ethnicity and religion. This section examines what it is to be a ‘good’ father as this sets the aspirations and identity standard to which the fathers in the study may want to act in congruence with.

Cultural images provide an important background to fatherhood. These provide the norms, values and beliefs surrounding the social status of father and its associated roles that are shared by the general public (Marsiglio, 1995a). Images are affected by socio-historic context, culture and social background (perhaps most importantly race and social class) (Marsiglio, 1995a). Images are most apparent in the media.

Marsiglio (1995a) and Lupton and Barclay (1997) maintain that images of fathers are polarised and either show a ‘good’ or bad (non-resident) father. The predominant characteristics of a ‘good’ father have changed over time from the moral teacher, to breadwinner (post industrialisation), to the sex-role model (a role model of how each sex should act), to the ‘new nurturant’ father (from the 1970s) (Lamb, 1986; Marsiglio, 1995a; Dowd, 2000). Lamb (1986) discusses how while the predominant characteristic of a ‘good’ father may have changed, other characteristics (especially breadwinner) remain important. Authors have however
pointed out that fathers are not one homogenous group and fathering is complex and multidimensional with class, ethnicity, personal and environmental factors all playing a part in what people see as a ‘good’ father (Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Doherty et al, 1998; Dermott, 2008; Miller, 2011).

Marsiglio (1995a) argues that fathers may develop a more positive perception of self if they think they are more involved than the ‘deadbeat’ dad image and conversely if men base their evaluation of self on the ‘new nurturant’ image they find themselves lacking. Further Burgess (1997) states:

“Whatever any father does is measured against images which simultaneously amplify and dwarf the process of human fathering” (61-62).

In contemporary society there has been a shifting landscape of fatherhood. A number of social cultural changes have occurred. More women are working (without an accompanying increase in men’s unpaid labour in the home) but at the same time there has been an increase in ‘no earner’ families (Lewis, 2002). There has also been a decline in the institution of marriage (Burghes et al, 1997; Hobson and Morgan, 2002; Lewis, 2002; Henwood and Proctor, 2003). This has resulted in increased extra-marital births, increased divorce rates, more single parent families and more non-resident fathers (Burghes et al, 1997). As Lewis (2002) claims there has been a trend towards both increased caring and more distant parenting.

Due to such changes in society fatherhood roles are not so clearly defined now as they were historically (Burghes et al, 1997), leading to confusion among men themselves (Lewis, 1986), especially in relation to non-resident fathers (Marsiglio, 1995b). Griswold (1993) speaking of America said fatherhood is “fraught with ambiguity and confusion” (244). Lewis (1986) says that men find their own role confusing. The main roles connected with being a ‘good’ father will now be discussed.
3.4.2.1 Nurturing Role

The fatherhood literature is very clear in the message that men are capable of taking on a nurturing role (Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Dowd, 2000). Lupton and Barclay (1997) assert that expressing and engaging in fatherly love is “championed as masculine behaviour in the late twentieth century” (145) and so a level of emotional engagement under this identity is appropriate and in keeping with masculinity. It was suggested by first-time fathers in the Henwood and Proctor (2003) qualitative UK based study that:

“A man might most perform or display masculinity (be big and macho) through caring for his child. The caring father might emerge as, in fact, the bigger bloke” (344,).

Lamb (1986) defines the ‘new’ father as an “active, involved, nurturant participant in all aspects of child care and child rearing” (3). Henwood and Proctor (2003) found that men had clarity and no insecurities over what it meant to be a ‘good’ father and this is about “presence, involvement, putting children’s needs first, approachability, nurturing and caring” (350) and also about participation in domestic life. ‘Being there’ is seen as the key to being a ‘good’ father by men in fatherhood studies (White, 1994; Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Speak et al, 1997; Henwood and Proctor, 2003; Miller, 2011).

The Australian men in Lupton and Barclay’s (1997) longitudinal, qualitative study saw ‘being there’ as about “developing a close and loving relationship with their child through shared activities” (122) and for some men part of this was not going out as much as before having a child. Miller (2011) found that much of men’s caring for their children was undertaken outside of the home as they “must use the restricted time and spaces they have available to actively do and make visible their fathering” and distinguish the role from maternal spaces of the home (Miller, 2011: 119). The men in this study were positive about caring responsibilities outside of the home as the visibility lead to increased pride (Miller, 2011).
Despite men wanting to be a ‘new’ father and ‘be there’ for children the literature has also concluded that engaging as an involved father is very difficult to achieve in practice (Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Henwood and Proctor, 2003; Miller, 2011). Transferring hopes to a reality is an important consideration of the current research. There were a number of reasons for the tension between expectations and practice discussed in the literature, centring on the competing demands of fatherhood especially as men in these studies tended to return to work as the main breadwinner in the family (Lamb; 1986; Burghes et al, 1997; Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Henwood and Proctor, 2003; Miller, 2011). As Miller (2011) argues, paid work limits the time and space available to them to father which leads to activity-based parenting. The men in the Lupton and Barclay (1997) study had unrealistic expectations over the time and energy required to develop the skills required to care for, and become familiar with, a child.

Miller (2011) found it was also important for the men to have a recognisable identity outside of the home. Similarly, Henwood and Proctor (2003) identified valuing selflessness and autonomy (the appeal of other areas of their lives especially free time and leisure) as affecting achieving the expectation of ‘being there’. A further barrier to ‘being there’ for many young fathers is the fact that many do not reside with their children. This is often a consequence of no longer being in a relationship with the mother of their children (Speak et al, 1997).

Caring and nurturing one’s child in the UK is inextricably linked to providing and this distinction is hard for fathers: they see financial support as an essential part of the caring they do (Burghes et al, 1997). Therefore it is timely to discuss the provider role of fatherhood which is often the background to all discussions of fathers in the literature (Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Miller, 2011).

### 3.4.2.2 Providing Role

Lewis (2002) provides a good discussion on fatherhood policies in the UK saying that policy has been focused on money and has only been concerned with fathers
as carers insofar as it can help secure their obligation to maintain (Hobson and Morgan, 2002; Lewis, 2002). The Child Support Act (CSA) was introduced in 1991 and arguably reinforced the breadwinner role of fathers and encouraged the link in father’s minds between cash support and care (Lewis, 2002). Since the time of Lewis’ writing policies have become more care focused (Miller, 2011). Davis et al (1998) found men in their sample preferred giving gifts to their children to CSA as this allowed them some control and recognition.

An issue with the provider role is the high unemployment rates of the 1980s, 1990s and currently. This is especially the issue for young fathers and young offenders (Burghes et al, 1997; Speak et al, 1997). Burghes et al (1997) discuss how this is problematic as young men with no employment have limited means to prove their masculinity. There is a divide in the literature, some found that being a provider was not overly important to fathers (Speak et al, 1997) but was necessary (Henwood and Proctor, 2003) whereas others found men viewed money as more important than time (Bradshaw et al, 1999). For the men in the Speak et al (1997) study two factors influenced their decision to work: CSA payments and their strategy of seeing children during the day time when the mother might have other commitments (Speak et al, 1997). Furthermore, temporary or part-time jobs did little to improve the self-esteem, identity, or practicalities of fatherhood for these young men (Speak et al, 1997).

### 3.4.3 Fatherhood roles in prison
This section discusses how the context of prison may or may not impact upon men’s identity as a father. Identity is fluid; it shifts in response to life events (Marsiglio, 1995a; Henwood and Proctor, 2002; Miller, 2011) and further, Lupton and Barclay (1997) argue that there is oscillation within the identity even throughout a single day. McAdams (1994) and Miller (2011) assert that identity is constantly restructured as a result of new experiences, relationships and information. With identity being fluid there is diversity of statuses and roles over
time. Fathers will experience transitions in parental identity over adult years. Therefore, imprisonment will impact upon fatherhood identity.

Being a father in prison is counter to the image of responsible fathering (Arditti et al, 2005). Men in many studies have spoken about how incarceration is seen to be a dormant period in terms of fatherhood and fathering is something which happens ‘on the outside’ and they are powerless and helpless towards, especially in terms of financial assistance (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Hairston, 2002; Arditti et al, 2005; Clarke et al, 2005; Walker, 2010). For young fathers in prison in Meek’s (2007a) study the present parenting selves were mainly negative and many saw themselves as poor parents. There were instances in Arditti et al’s (2005) study of men going from being called ‘daddy’ to their name which they saw as a shift “to an ambiguous role with no definition” (7). Men’s involvement with their children from prison was mainly cognitive (thinking about them), they could not display affection or carry out other fathering functions such as protection, support, guidance or discipline and felt generally ‘out of the loop’ (Arditti et al, 2005). However, Boswell and Wedge (2002) found that a large percentage of respondents did still see themselves as the ‘ideal father’ because they loved their children which they suggest shows the men were not using their time in prison to reflect upon their own deficits.

Hairston (2002) speaks about social and emotional support that men can enact from prison but also acknowledges that few fathers in prison are aware of these mechanisms. These ‘subtle elements of parenting’ which have been shown to be important are actions such as education encouragement, telling children to listen to their mothers and telling children that they are loved (Hairston, 2002). Arditti et al (2005) also found evidence of some men who tried to do the best that they could while in prison with efforts to stay involved through phone calls and letters.
When men cannot enact the fatherhood identity they are more likely to experience a shift in their salience hierarchy (Marisiglio, 1995b). Identity theory requires a confirmation process whereby when men enact a role to their ‘identity standard’ they receive appraisal from others (direct feedback or implied in the behaviour of others) (Burke, 1991). If this appraisal (or input) does not match the internal standard (self-meanings attached to the identity), people modify their behaviour (output) which changes the situation and alters the input (Burke, 1991). The identity process can be interrupted when a person cannot change their output behaviours and enact roles meaningful to their identity as a father in order to ensure congruence between identity standard and reflected appraisals from others (Burke, 1991; Dyer, 2005). It can also be interrupted if they cannot gain the reflected appraisals of others (Burke, 1991). Both elements occur in prison.

Consequently, the only way to avoid any discrepancy between the two is to change the identity standard or to abandon the identity completely (Dyer, 2005). When there is a prolonged discrepancy between the behaviour and the identity standard there is more chance of identity abandonment (Dyer, 2005). However this will not be the outcome for all fathers who enter prison as Dyer (2005) goes on to discuss factors which moderate the degree to which incarceration limits the identity confirmation process.

First, only if behaviours that are meaningful to the identity are affected - for example, hugs - does this affect the balance between behaviours and identity standard. Second, it is subjective, and the reactions to the stress over discrepancies vary, some men will not find it as daunting as others and will be more motivated to their paternal identity. The reactions also depend on salience and commitment and relationships with their children (Edin et al, 2004; Dyer, 2005).

Evidence suggests that responses are varied. For some men prison leads to severing of paternal bonds and removal of their fatherhood identity (Edin et al, 2004; Clarke et al, 2005). Nurse (2002) refers to ‘hard-timing’ whereby when men
find it difficult to cope in prison they sever ties with their families as they cannot manage the difficulties of prison life and hearing about the difficulties in the outside world. This is exacerbated by their guilt over not being able to support their families and by the inflexible nature of prison life. Secondly, prisoners learn from the prison officers that control is achieved through ‘flashing’ (fear, monitoring and punishment) and they transfer that learned behaviour onto their dealings with children (Nurse, 2002). Conversely, Nurse (2002) also describes how prison can, through parenting classes for example, teach positive strategies and alternatives to old behaviour.

For some men, prison can reaffirm their paternal identity. There is evidence in the literature that fathers (both young and adult) often reflect during incarceration on being away from their children and see their release as an opportunity to start again with their children which led to renewed levels of commitment to fatherhood (Dennison and Lyon, 2001; Nurse, 2002; Edin et al, 2004; Jarvis et al, 2004; Arditti et al, 2005; Clarke et al, 2005; Roy and Dyson, 2005; Meek 2007a). Dennison and Lyon (2001) and Jarvis et al (2004) point to the important of parenting classes in leading to reflection. Meek (2007a; 2011) provides support for this argument as her research found evidence of salient parenting identities among young fathers in prison despite absence from children. Ugelvik (2014b) argues that fathers in prison can use their fatherhood identity to resist an unwanted prisoner status.

Meek (2007a) asked young imprisoned fathers what their hopes and fears were in terms of parenting. With regard to their hoped for parenting ‘possible selves’, 40 per cent wanted to be a ‘good’ dad. Other hopes by imprisoned young fathers were that: they could provide for their child; they had parenting alliance; they would spend time with their child; they would have good attachment to their child; and hopes for the child’s future (Meek, 2007a). The fears centred on letting their children down through non-specific negative parenting, substance misuse and
separation (Meek, 2007a). Young men therefore had high hopes in prison and wanted to be there for their children on release.

In 2011, Meek added to this work by considering young men’s parenting possible selves in the context of other possible selves. Meek (2011) found that parenthood was a key component of the present and future identities of young fathers in prison. In this study, despite being in prison, men’s “positive but equally desirable” fatherhood identities were salient and often replaced the “previously valued offender identity” (Meek, 2011: 945).

The literature also suggests that men are optimistic about their futures as fathers (Roy and Dyson, 2005). Roy and Dyson (2005) found the men in their study suffered from the ‘Halo effect’ of imminent release as they had very high expectations for family involvement. They also commented that while encouragement from mothers gave men hope some men struggled to keep their expectations for involvement in check (Roy and Dyson, 2005). The young fathers in the Meek (2011) study were also optimistic about being a father on release from prison, evidenced by parenting featuring prominently in their expected selves.

The young men while in prison in the Dennison and Lyon (2001) sample identified a number of factors that would help them realise their hope of being a good father on release: self-determination, structural factors (job/accommodation), changing habits (staying away from crime), involvement with their child, positive relationships with others, and parenting skills learnt on courses. Jarvis et al (2004) comment that whether hopes become a reality depends on many factors which may be out of the control of young fathers, such as their relationship with their partner, support given to the family, and employment (Jarvis et al, 2004).

Role conflict or role strain occurs when there is a negative connection between two identities (Burke, 1991). This means that for one identity to be maintained this will
interrupt the maintenance of the other (Burke, 1991). The masculine culture within prisons also plays a crucial part in fathers’ identity transformations in prison. When in prison men adopt meanings from their new social context and Dyer (2005) states that masculinity as the norm in prison “lead the incarcerated fathers away from an identity that supports children’s positive development” (10). Furthermore Arditti et al (2005) show how fathering identities in prison are overshadowed by the status of ’prisoner’; this becomes the most salient identity. According to Arditti et al (2005) identity work in the liminal space of prison is relentless.

Earle (2012) discusses the double life of ideas about fathers in prison referring to the official concern to engage young men as fathers versus troubled and difficult reality of being a father in prison. He asserts that parenting classes give men an instrumental conception of fatherhood and a ready-made identity. However, this “offers a rhetoric of fatherhood for young men to buy into at the very moment when they are most effectively removed from the possibility of acting on its potentials in terms of financial resources, physical and emotional labour (Earle, 2012: 11).

This creates for Earle (2012) an “unnerving paradox of the punitive denial of the conventional pillars of masculine identity; work, authority in the family and heterosexual relations, while asserting the centrality of masculinity, by way of fatherhood, to their redemption” (11).

The young men in the Boswell and Wedge (2002) study did not feel that the prison had any responsibility for fathering, it was the individual’s responsibility.

3.4.4 Fatherhood identity on release
Nurse’s (2002) research highlighted the difficulties young men returning home to the community after prison face, as they often leave prison with very high expectations (having been built up through having lots of time to think in prison) for relationships with their children and for themselves and find that in reality lots has changed in their absence making it hard for these expectations to be fulfilled. Looking at relationships with their children many of the young men in the study came home to children who didn’t recognise them, acted fearful around them or did
not obey them. Despite this the young men seemed to have continuing good intentions for involvement with their children. Hairston (2002) similarly concludes the “belief that fathers can return from prison and pick up where they left off is truly wishful thinking” (131).

In Nurse’s (2002) study 49 per cent of fathers saw their children every week following release and at the other end of the spectrum 15 per cent never saw their children. In terms of the quality of the visitation, a substantial minority of fathers did not see their children alone. The main form of interaction was through play/days out whereas only a small proportion engaged in routine tasks associated with child rearing e.g. nappy changing. Unsurprisingly, fathers who lived with their children had higher levels of all forms of interaction (formal child support, informal/non-monetary support and visitation) (Nurse, 2002).

Losel et al’s (2012) study is one of the few to have followed up imprisoned adult fathers into the community and also to have interviewed their children and their children’s mothers. Their findings showed that finding a job was the most common expected, and experienced, difficulty post release (Losel et al, 2012). They also found that mothers’ expectations of the difficulties fathers would face in the community were more realistic than that of the men themselves (Losel et al, 2012). The men in the study experienced substantial variation with regards to adaptation both to prison and to reintegration, but Losel et al (2012) did find evidence of protective factors for positive adaption for families, for example, the quality of the parents’ relationship, frequency of contact during imprisonment, and the parents’ material circumstances.

As seen in chapter two, in the reintegration section, many men are released into difficult environments. Walker (2010) discusses the impact of these environments on fathers:
“The social and economic context in which these men were parenting was complex and fragmented and the nature of their relationships and family life was often very fluid, transient and constantly changing. They faced competing demands and expectations. The terrain in which they were fathering/parenting was inconsistent and unpredictable and, for the most part, economically impoverished. The base from which they were attempting to parent was, for some, very fragile” (1408).

The young men in Nurse’s (2002) study also found it hard to live up to the expectations they had for their own lives as they found it hard to find/keep employment. Boswell and Wedge (2002) added to this as they found that the main area the men wanted help with after release was employment.

No longer being in relationships with the mothers of their children also affected fatherhood post prison, especially when either parent found new partners (Nurse, 2002). Hairston (2002) also believes that ongoing sanctions in the community threaten responsible fathering. Dyer (2005) attributes the failure of fathers to reconnect with families to their own personal attitudes and behaviours.

Uggen et al (2004) using a symbolic interactionist theory of role transitions discuss how offenders in prison have a sincere desire to assume idealised roles and take on these idealised roles in conversations but “trying on a conformist identity in prison, as a purely cognitive process, is much easier than establishing the role commitments that will elevate the salience of this identity and guide behaviour upon release” (265). Further they argue that “such expressions are more than fantasy” and an “imaginative rehearsal for release” (Uggen et al, 2004: 265). However on release they face stigma and personal and social deficits that can undermine commitment to pro-social roles. Work, family and the community inhibit or promote crime by changing the ways offenders think about themselves as citizens. However, many men lack the resources and social relationships necessary to establish role commitments and solidify new identities.
3.5 Conclusion
This chapter has considered the various approaches that have explained desistance. These are the theories that young fatherhood is applied to in this thesis. This chapter has shown the ways fatherhood has already been applied to these theories and that previous work has focuses on the idea of fatherhood as a ‘turning point’ but has been inconclusive.

This chapter has shown that in many ways the different theories of desistance are compatible and add to the knowledge of each other by explaining further the process of change. It has been seen that the change process is very complex and entails many elements, such as turning points that provide social control, and human agency in the form of a desire to change and identity transformation. Fatherhood can be seen as both a turning point and a chance for men to have a conformist identity. Identity and cognitive change are important but need to be accompanied by a change in lifestyle (Giordano et al, 2002; Moloney et al, 2009; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009). Therefore positive social and personal contexts are important, but as has been shown young fathers in prison often do not have these and therefore it is important to consider what formal agencies and informal supporters do to help men achieve positive contexts in which to change. Identity theory shows how the place of fatherhood in the salience hierarchy and a person’s commitment to it affects behaviour. Many of these ideas are linked together by Maruna et al (2004a) in their three track process of change which provides the structure for the findings chapters.

The literature creates many pertinent questions around how this previous work and theorising applies to young fathers. The thesis considers how and whether the young fathers would change upon release and the reasons for this. For the men in the study is fatherhood a ‘turning point’ or an opportunity for identity transformation, or indeed something else. Further, this thesis is trying to discover how men see their fatherhood identity now (especially what the ‘being there’
discussed in the literature is like in the prison setting when fathers cannot always be physically there) and in the future. Because of the idiosyncratic nature of these questions a research methodology was needed that captures the viewpoint of the men being researched. The methods used are reflected upon in chapter four.
Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction
This chapter will outline the data collection methods used to answer the research question. The literature reviewed in chapters two and three helped to inform the development of the methods and the development of the interview schedule. To investigate this subject a number of methods were used, the combination of which make the methods used unique in young imprisoned father research. First, a quantitative snap shot of young fathers in prison was carried out to examine the number, and characteristics, of the fathers in prison; something the literature review showed the Prison Service does not routinely collect. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with young fathers in prison and on their return to the community. This follow-up element has been something that has been highlighted as a need in research on young fathers (see for example Meek, 2007a) and is also essential for meeting the research aim of examining the reality of hopes and fears on release. Key people who had supported the young fathers were interviewed, where possible. Such supporters are cited as being important to the process of change, and to identity, in the literature but their perspectives are often overlooked in the change literature (Jardine, 2013). The research methods also included interviews with selected criminal justice professionals, and, finally, non-participant observation in the prison setting.

This chapter will describe the research strategy and design and justify the methods chosen before moving on to consider the research in action including access issues, data collection, and analysis. This chapter will also provide some reflexivity over the process. It is within this chapter that the characteristics of the sample will be described.
4.1.1 Sensitive and Ethical Research
This research topic is sensitive in nature. Deakin and Spencer (2011) acknowledge that much criminological research is sensitive because “the topics may be difficult for respondents to discuss, can cause distress and may elicit information that can be damaging to the respondent [...]”, their communities, and on occasions, the researcher” (141). Sensitive research is research in areas of social life surrounded by taboo (Lee, 1993). A parent being away from their children is arguably seen as taboo. A further definition, which Lee (1993) prefers, is that sensitive research poses a level of threat or risk to those being studied beyond the incidental or onerous. One aspect of this threat is intrusion (Lee, 1993): intrusive threat can be when the research intrudes the private sphere (which fatherhood research does) or when it involves an emotionally charged subject (which being a parent away from a child generally is). Being aware of the sensitivities impacts on the whole research process as there are many areas to consider “including those of a more specifically technical and methodological kind” (Lee, 1993: 3).

The sensitive dimension of this research and the difficult population it seeks to investigate add to the importance of an ethical approach to this work. Ethical considerations steered the whole research project. The research was approved by The University of Manchester Committee on the Ethics of Research on Human Beings in May 2010. The Ethics Committee and the prison psychology department advised a number of changes. The research design also followed guidance from the British Society of Criminology (BSC) Code of Ethics (February, 2006) and the Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association (BSA) (March, 2002). The centrality of ethics to this research and the fact ethics were of constant attention throughout the fieldwork is reflected in the presentations of ethical considerations throughout this chapter alongside discussions of each stage of the research.
4.2 Research Strategy, Design and Method

An interpretivist epistemology aimed to be taken because it is the subjective meaning of the social world by the people in it that is central to the research question: it is their viewpoint that is seen as “acceptable knowledge” (Bryman, 2008: 13). There is a belief in a phenomenology philosophy. The research questions focus on the young men’s experiences of and their hopes and therefore the social actions need to be interpreted from the actors’ point of view. A constructionist ontology was also aimed for as it sees that:

“Social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision” (Bryman, 2008: 19).

Therefore, social entities are not independent of social actors and if it were not for the social actors, in this case the prisoners, then they would not exist. Self-determination, part of the underlying theoretical approach to the research (Maruna et al, 2004a) is seen as very much subjective and the product of how men see themselves and their social world. This underpins the constructionist approach.

However, in reality this work did not follow pure interpretivist epistemology and constructionist ontology. This was because the men did not define their world but the researcher’s definitions were, to some extent, imposed upon them (reflecting the social world as something external to social actors and an objective ontology) and the research was not entirely unstructured, allowing for theories to be tested, reflecting a more positivist epistemology.

The methodological approach was largely rooted in naturalism where the primary aim according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) should be to “describe what happens in the setting, how the people involved see their own actions and those of others, and the contexts in which the action takes place” (6). The in-depth understanding of thoughts, decision-making and behaviour and the factors that
influenced these from the respondent's own point of view, that was required to answer the research questions, suited a naturalistic, qualitative approach.

A single site case study research design was used: Brocklebank Prison. The researcher undertook an intensive examination of a bounded system (young fathers in one particular prison) over time through detailed in depth data with multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2007; Bryman, 2008). As part of the larger case study design a further approach was to carry out case studies of individuals.

A single prison site was used as the research was interested in the availability of formal support and how such support impacted upon the fathers’ ability to achieve their hopes, it was deemed better to look at a group of young men who had access to the same types of formal support. Brocklebank Prison, in comparison to other prisons, also had quite a wide variety of formal support for fathers available. Men in Brocklebank Prison had access to Family Days, Parenting Classes and Storybook Dads while in this prison (see chapter two for more information on these). If we take support in its wider sense (as including provision of access to other means of support) then some men (dependent on their risk) also had more opportunities to spend time with their families outside of prison through the availability of Town Visits and Home Leaves under Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL).

The qualitative work was longitudinal in that the respondents were interviewed on more than one occasion. Bryman (2001) asserts that research “warrants being dubbed longitudinal when there is a concern to map change” (55). The longitudinal approach lends itself to this research because it is concerned with change in attitudes as a result of being an imprisoned father. Researchers in psychology argue that such research on behaviour change is in fact ‘shortitudinal’ as it relies on short follow up periods and self-report data (Sniehotta, 2009). Chapters one, two and three highlight the lack of longitudinal studies on fathers in prison and
identified a need for more follow-up research in the area of released fathers returning to the family home (Nurse, 2002; Day et al, 2005; Meek, 2007a).

4.2.1 Quantitative Aspects
The first part of the research was quantitative and analysed administrative data collected by the prison to try and gain some perspective on the prevalence of young men serving prison sentences who are fathers, and their characteristics. The characteristics of the young fathers were also compared to some basic data on the whole prison population to see whether fathers differ or are similar to the main population. This was needed because of how little is known about young fathers in prison, even basic things such as how many there are. Quantitative data is important here to provide a context and background to any subsequent findings.

Furthermore the quantitative part was undertaken to help inform the sampling frame for the qualitative research. The identification of fathers was used to create a list of potential respondents. The quantitative snapshot informing the selection for interview helped to ensure that the qualitative participants best fitted the phenomena of interest (Morse, 1991).

4.2.2 Qualitative Aspects
It follows from the naturalistic position that qualitative methods are needed to explore, understand, and try to explain, behaviour and experiences from the meanings respondents attribute to their own actions. The research is looking at social reality in its own terms (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997; Bryman, 2001). A qualitative approach is important in this research as it focusses on the experiences of these men and their interpretations and descriptions of events and people; hence the young offenders are the “meaning makers” (Weiss and Fine, 2004; Arditti et al, 2005: 3). Qualitative techniques arguably better capture the individual’s perspectives than quantitative methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) and mean that the findings will be in the voice of the people being researched. Bryman (2001) lists one of the main preoccupations of qualitative research as committing to viewing
events and the social world through the eyes of the people being studied. Qualitative methods generate information that is very detailed and provide rich descriptions of the social world (Geertz, 1973; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Bryman, 2001). These rich descriptions also allow for an emphasis on context (Bryman, 2001).

Qualitative methods are also good for investigating complex and sensitive issues, like fatherhood, as they are flexible and lack a rigid structure (Bryman, 2001) thus the interviewer is allowed to veer off script, offer empathy and probe further into areas. A final preoccupation of qualitative work which is evident in the current work is an emphasis on social processes over time (Bryman, 2001; Babbie, 2004).

This study lends itself to empirical work in the setting being studied because attitudes and behaviours are best understood in their natural setting and also because it focuses on roles and relationships (Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Babbie, 2004).

There are a number of qualitative approaches that could be used with the young fathers but it was decided to use face to face semi-structured interviews. The presence of an interviewer arguably helps with rapport (Oakley, 1981) and encourages respondents to feel relaxed and consequently be more forthcoming (Lee, 1993). Even so being face to face is not without its problems and the interviewer can influence the interviewee.

Structured interviews were discounted because whilst they elicit rational responses they overlook or inadequately assess the emotional dimension (Fontana and Frey, 2000). It was important this research looked at the emotions of the imprisoned fathers otherwise it would not fully answer the research question. It was also decided that the interviews did need some structure as unstructured interviews, through having no prior categorisation, place no limits on the field of enquiry.
(Fontana and Frey, 2000) and consequently the research question may not get answered as the respondents may talk about other things entirely. As Davies (2000) said semi-structured interviews maintain “respect for the narratives of the individual [...] as far as possible” (85) whilst at the same time steering the interviews in the direction of the topic (Semmens, 2011).

Observations were planned to be carried out where possible within the prison (of parenting classes and family days) to provide further information and data. The impact of formal support on the young men realising their fatherhood aspirations is a key area of interest. Interviews with key professionals in prison and in the community were important because they work with a number of young imprisoned fathers and to see if they perceive events differently.

Interviews were also carried out, where possible, with key people connected to the young imprisoned fathers and their children. This helped check for response bias, to get a true reflection of these men’s experiences and views of fatherhood (Dobash et al, 1998; Day et al, 2005). King and Liebling (2008) say that when doing prison research you should not “be ‘taken in’ but take all accounts seriously [...] remember that the same events can be perceived differently and that perceptions may explain actions” (444).

Speaking to the offender’s informal and formal support networks was also important because of the key role that others tend to play when a father is in prison, for example in childcare and gate-keepers to access (Nurse, 2002; Clarke et al, 2005; Roy and Dyson, 2005). This makes it important to look at the perspectives of these other key people and the dynamics of the relationships (Nurse, 2002). Further, as noted in chapter one, while the importance of their role in the process of change is acknowledged in the literature, those who provide informal support are rarely given a voice (Jardine, 2013). The mothers’ of the men’s children are also important given the influence they may have on a man’s
fatherhood identity, making it more salient and the man more committed to it (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1995; Marsiglio, 1995a).

The main purpose of this research is to explore (as this is a relatively understudied research area) although it also aims to describe the experiences of young men in prison and explain (why do fathers in prison change their perceptions) (Babbie, 2004). The findings from this research will not be generalisable to all prisons or all young fathers in prison. That is not the aim of this research. As Janesick (2000) states in qualitative research the “individual is the backbone of the study” (394). She discusses how this is the important contribution of qualitative work and that we need to move away from quantitative terminology such as generalisability and further that replicability is pointless where the value of the work is its uniqueness.

It has also been discussed in the methods literature that when evaluating qualitative work the measures of reliability and validity are redundant and authors have argued that other measures should be applied (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Kirk and Miller, 1986; Hammersley, 1992; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Bryman, 2001). These authors tend to sit on a spectrum of realism to anti-realism. This work, as most work does, falls in the middle of these extremes and will represent “one of a number of possible representations rather than a definitive version of social reality” (Bryman, 2001: 276).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) introduce the ideas of authenticity and trustworthiness as criteria for evaluating qualitative research. Hammersley (1992) reformulates validity to mean that work should be plausible and credible and should consider the amount and kind of evidence used to create the representation of the current world. Hammersley (1992) also thinks relevance is an important criterion. It is these criteria that will be used to evaluate the qualitative work throughout this chapter.
This chapter will now move on to consider how the research design was implemented in practice, firstly looking at access.

### 4.3 Research in Action: Negotiating Access

This section will consider how access was negotiated to the relatively closed worlds of prison and probation.

#### 4.3.1 Access to the Prison

At the time of application for access, Prison Service Order (PSO) 7035[^1] (HM Prison Service, 2004) contained the guidance and rules for gaining research access to prison establishments.

Davies (2011) asserts that gaining access to prisons continues to be a considerable undertaking for most. Nevertheless, similarly to Davies’ (2011) experience gaining access for this piece of research in prison was fairly straightforward. This was most probably aided by a number of factors, many of them related to the choice of prison. The fact that the research was only conducted in one prison streamlined the process as this meant that the research request could go straight to the prison Governor, as directed by the PSO. The low security level of the prison also helped access as Liebling (1992) also found: “working in prisons with the fewest operational problems cleared the way for research” (in Noaks and Wincup, 2004: 60).

Having previously carried out research in the prison, the prison staff knew the researcher and knew that low levels of researcher supervision would be needed; thus ‘local disruption’ (Martin, 2000; 221) would be minimised. This was more important given the fact the research took place in a period of economic decline where cuts had been made in the department that was best placed to assist with the research. The staff in the psychology department were extremely helpful which

[^1]: This has since been replaced with Prison Service Instrument 41/ 2010 on research applications (from September 2010) (HM Prison Service, 2010)
was also critical to the success of the fieldwork. Davies (2011) too acknowledges the importance of co-operative staff.

Having had previous personal experience of gaining access to, and carrying out research in, a number of prison establishments aided judgment of what was and what was not possible in a prison setting and so a ‘feasible’ and ‘plausible’ study was presented to the prison which Burgess (1984) and Martin (2000) state eases the access process. The research proposed to the prison was also honest about the demands on the prison, prison staff and prisoners which Noaks and Wincup (2004) recommend.

Martin (2000) maintains that research which results in practical and policy implications for establishments, or is of interest to the Governor, is more likely to be given the go ahead. The research focus on formal support made it likely there would be practical and policy implications for the prison research site. Noaks and Wincup (2004) suggest that researchers give something back to the gatekeepers to create a relationship of mutual support and this was a technique used here: as part of the proposal it was said that a report of the findings would be provided to the prison. The fact that this was Ph.D. research may also have aided ease of access as King and Liebling (2007) note that prisons often see this as less threatening and Ph.D. researchers as providing “a useful - and cheap – resource to undertake exploratory studies of various issues” (436).

Access for the main part of the research in the prison was relatively quick. The research request was posted to the prison at the end of June 2010 and negotiations with the psychology department started in July 2010. Fieldwork began in October 2010.

4.3.2 Access in the community
Negotiating access in the community through probation however was not as straightforward. The young men were released into seven different probation
trusts. The first step towards access was, out of courtesy, to write to the Chief Officers of the seven different areas informing them about the research and stressing that the impact on each area would be minimal (the highest number of men released to one area was four). Different procedures were then followed in all of the areas (see appendix one for details). Following the initial letter (posted in April 2011), negotiations were still taking place in some areas to access the Offender Managers (OMs) in August 2011.

From this point, of being able to contact OMs there was still a lot of persistence and time needed to access the respondents through OMs, demonstrated by the fact the final community interview took place in March 2012 (this is highlighted in appendix two). The OMs had to check that the young men were still willing to participate in the research and while in some cases this was carried out with relative ease in other cases it was a very long drawn out process due to a variety of reasons: the OM was on annual leave; OM staff turnover; they forgot; or the men would only report once a month, which would delay things. Similarly, although Davies (2011) found it relatively easy to get access at the senior level, the move to other levels was more time-consuming and required patience.

4.4 Research in Action: Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

Firstly, data was collected in order to identify the young fathers in Brocklebank Prison. This was done by accessing a C-NOMIS (Custodial National Offender Management Information System) report on all the men in the prison on that day (15th October 2010). This was a total of 294 men.

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6 C-NOMIS contains information on all the men in the prison, including demographic information and data on their activities within the prison.
The Offender Assessment System\(^7\) (OASys) is the main instrument that records an inmate’s fatherhood status under section six – ‘relationships’. The OASys assessments for all the men in prison on 15\(^{th}\) October 2010 were accessed and section six was reviewed to see whether they were a father, step-father or expectant father. Similar issues were found to Howard (2006), Haslewood-Pocsik \textit{et al} (2007) and Morton (2009) with missing or incomplete OASys assessments, assessments that were not up to date and inconsistent completion of the relationships section. One example of this was found in Section 6 of the OASys which contains a check box named ‘parental responsibilities’. Often this was not an accurate reflection of parental responsibilities, and the text evidence box had to be read to gather the full picture. The amount of detail in this text box varied considerably.

A further consideration of OASys data is its accuracy\(^8\). OASys completion relies on self-reporting by offenders and on the skill of the staff member collecting the information. PSO 2205 (HM Prison Service, 2005) does caution against the reliance on self-reporting, advising assessors to check information with other prison records and reports and if there are discrepancies to draw conclusions from the most reliable source. This not only recognises the problems of self-reporting, but adds an extra onus on the staff member collecting it. At the same time it has been argued that staff skill and ownership of assessments are being reduced by the focus of OASys being on data input. This focus has taken away from building up relationships with clients, meaning the processes which increase understanding of people’s circumstances may not be happening, which in turn may impact upon accuracy, especially of the descriptive data (Fitzgibbon and Green, 2006; Whitehead, 2007).

\(^7\) The OASys was introduced into the Prison Service between 2001 and 2004 to assess offending needs, the likelihood of reconviction and the risk of serious harm with a view to enable the effective management of offenders and target interventions designed to reduce reconviction (Howard, 2006).

\(^8\) One man whose OASys record said he was a father was invited to take part in the research. At this point it was discovered he did not have any children.
Some of the problems with the OASys data can be seen in Table One. Where men did not have an OASys assessment or information was missing, C-NOMIS was checked. C-NOMIS contains a space for entering the number of children the prisoner has, however this was often missing. Table One shows that the majority of men had OASys assessments completed in 2010 (75 per cent) but for some this meant they were 9 months out of date, whereas for some men their latest OASys was from 2009. This is problematic because babies born and pregnancies since then were not recorded.

**Table One: Source of fatherhood status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of fatherhood status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Number of fathers indicated by data source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OASys assessment 2010</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OASys assessment 2009</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No OASys but C-NOMIS shows number of children = 0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OASys states not father but C-NOMIS shows number of children = 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatherhood status unknown (No OASys and no C-NOMIS)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>294</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70 (24%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the problems in accessing the information (and while acknowledging its limitations), table one shows that 24 per cent of the prisoners were known fathers. The majority of these (63) were biological fathers to children already born (3 were step-fathers and 4 were expectant fathers). This figure may be slightly higher because data on fatherhood status was missing for 25 men and out of date for others. While using the OASys was the best way of finding out who the fathers in prison are, it is by no means considered to be a perfect method. This left a sample of 70 young men from which to draw the respondents for the qualitative stage of the research.
4.4.1 Analysis

Aggregate data was collected from C-NOMIS on the whole prison population on their ethnicity, age, offence type, home area and sentence length so that this could be compared to the father sample.

For the 70 fathers, individual data was gathered from their OASys assessments and C-NOMIS over a three week period in October and November 2010 using a pro forma (see appendix four). This was used initially to make comparisons with the general prison population.

In Brocklebank Prison, for the demographic data available, the fathers were found to be a group of men not notably different from the general Brocklebank Prison population (see appendix three). While all the age groups within the prison were represented by the fathers, the fathers did tend to be older (40 per cent of fathers were 23 or over, compared with 17 per cent of the general prison population). It is interesting that there is nothing unusual about fathers in terms of ethnicity, main offence and sentence length. Apart from age to some extent, in this sample, there are no key predictors of being a father. It would have been interesting to carry out bivariate analysis comparing fathers with non-fathers against a wider range of variables but the limited data on non-fathers and the aggregated form made this difficult.

The quantitative data on fathers was entered into, and analysed using, IBM’s SPSS (version 16) statistical analysis software. The quantitative data is intended to present a snapshot of the fathers at one point in time and is not a complex quantitative analysis. This snapshot of the young fathers in the prison is intended to be descriptive and present information that has been collected on individuals but has not been collated by the Prison Service. It provides a clear and useful descriptor of the sample population. Detailed statistical analysis of the young fathers in the prison was not possible given the small numbers involved, especially
as many variables had numerous categories or missing data (again due to variations in quality of OASys content).

As previously mentioned, the quantitative aspect of the study also provided a sampling frame for the qualitative part of the research so the identification of fathers was used to create a list of respondents to potentially invite to take part in the qualitative aspect.

4.4.2 Ethics
Data storage is one of the main ethical issues around the quantitative aspects of the research (BSA, 2002). At the point of data collection on fathers the information did not contain names but respondent identities (IDs) (to maintain privacy and confidentiality (Noaks and Wincup, 2004)) and ethically it was vital to ensure that this data was not stored near to the list linking IDs to names. This was made easy by the prison which would not allow anything containing prisoner names to be removed from the prison. However for the men who took part in later stages and therefore signed consent forms which contained their names and respondent IDs the storage of data was very important and these two sets of information were kept in separate locked drawers. The individual data was entered into SPSS to allow for aggregation and the original data was destroyed as soon as it was entered. All computer files have been encrypted to ensure confidentiality following guidance from Aldridge et al (2010).

For access to the men’s fatherhood status a major ethical issue was the fact that case files were accessed without consent from the men themselves. This can be justified to some extent by the fact that this was the only way to identify the fathers in prison and at first only fatherhood status information was accessed. The gathering of further information on the fathers without express consent can be justified by the fact that only aggregate data will ever be presented in the thesis and no individual prisoners will be identifiable. The prison authorities were aware of, and happy for, this information to be collected.
4.5 Research in Action: Qualitative Prison Interviews
A major part of the research was the interviews conducted with young fathers in prison. This section will detail and critically assess the qualitative work that was carried out in the prison.

4.5.1 Selection of respondents
This study used a purposive sampling approach. This is because the sample was selected on the basis of knowledge of a population (Babbie, 2004) with a specific set of criteria in mind. The figure below shows the inclusion criteria and process that was undertaken in the prison to get from the 70 fathers in the prison to the 19 who were interviewed.
Figure one: Inclusion criteria and selection process

Inclusion criteria:
Actual Release Date (ADR) – less than 6 months left to serve
Sentence Expiry Date (SED) – under probation for 3 months

70 Fathers

27 men diverted out

43 Fit the criteria

6 men diverted out

37 Eligible

13 men diverted out

24 Attended Presentation

5 men diverted out

19 Interviewed

Released on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) = 7
Transferred Out = 4
Did not attend = 1
Not a Father = 1

Did not want to participate = 3
Released on HDC = 1
Transferred out = 1

Public Protection and Safeguarding Officer – 6 men not suitable (negative attitudes to women)
This diagram shows that the main reason why eligible men were not asked to take part in the research was because they got their HDC. Presentations were given to the potential respondents in small groups giving them all the information and asking them to consent to take part. These presentations were organised as soon as possible after identifying the men, however some were transferred out of the prison in the intervening period.

The diagram also shows that the men who were asked to participate were generally quite willing to take part in the research. Sixteen of the men agreed to participate in all stages of the research. Only one man refused completely and one man only wanted to take part in the prison interview. Martin (2000) has pointed out men in prison are a captive audience in an "excruciatingly boring" (228) setting. However, Martin (2000) also says that prisoners will not agree to participate unless they benefit in some way: the research bargain. For many the inducement will be wanting to take part in something that breaks the monotony of prison life or "the prisoner wanting to talk to someone different about almost anything other than their immediate surroundings" (Martin, 2000; 228). Added to this the men knew that they were going to be asked about their children and the chance to speak about people who they are proud of may have been added incentive to participate, certainly during the interviews the men did seem to light up when asked to describe their children.

It was observed that the men who were asked in groups to participate did tend to look at what the others had agreed to and on a number of occasions there were young men who did not immediately agree to all parts of the study who changed their minds upon noticing that others had agreed.

4.5.2 The sample
The characteristics of the interviewee sample will now be described and it will be shown that the 19 men interviewed were a varied group and reflected the range of
men that were fathers. Further data on the fathers and interviewees can be found in appendix six. Appendixes thirteen and fourteen provide a breakdown, by individual research participant, of fatherhood data and offending data respectively.

The interviewees were all aged between 19 and 25. There were only two Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) prisoners in the interviewee sample: one was Black Other and one was Mixed Other. Whilst, there were only 12 BME fathers in the prison, this represents 17 per cent of Brocklebank Prison’s fathers\(^9\) and reflects the over representation of BME young adults in prison (Ministry of Justice, 2008). It would have been interesting to speak to an Asian father because they may face additional issues to non-Asian fathers: during the file reading it was noted that for some Asian men no one in their families knew they were fathers.

The three main offence categories (Acquisitive, Drug and Violent offences) were all represented by the interviewee sample with eight of the interviewees having committed a violent offence. Reflecting Boswell and Wedge (2002) and Nurse (2002) the fathers in general and the interviewees tended to be serving fairly long sentences (14 were serving a sentence over 2 years). Five were serving a short sentence of under 12 months.

The interviewees lived a mean average of around 51 miles from the prison\(^{10}\) with a range of 21 to 90 miles. There was a father in the prison who lived 116 miles away but he was not part of the interviewed sample. This has implications for visits as seen in chapter two.

\(^9\) 19.2 per cent of the men in Brocklebank Prison were from a BME background, as compared with 17 per cent of the fathers in the prison and 11 per cent of the interviewee sample.

\(^{10}\) Distance between the prison and the young men’s home town was calculated by measuring the distance between the prison’s postcode and the central point of the home town listed on OASys assessments.
Interview data showed that for the majority of the interviewed men (11) this sentence was their first custodial sentence. Two young interviewees had five or more previous custodial sentences. Table two shows the offending histories of fathers and interviewees by considering the age of their first conviction, the number of previous convictions and previous violence scores. This table shows that some of the interviewees were criminally inexperienced with no previous convictions. Some of the interviewees had criminal histories that started when they were very young (age 12) and offending histories that were extensive (reflected by the high number of previous convictions) and with a history of violence (they had high previous violence scores). Those interviewed reflected the range of offending histories of fathers in general in Brocklebank Prison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>12-23</td>
<td>12-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Previous convictions under 18</strong></td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-24</td>
<td>0-14</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Previous convictions over 18</strong></td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>0-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous Violence score</strong></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-15</td>
<td>0-15</td>
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According to OASys scores the fathers in Brocklebank Prison were all considered to be at low to medium risk of reoffending; none fell within the high risk of reconviction category even after 24 months. The majority were of medium risk of reoffending (70.6 per cent at 12 months and 76.5 per cent at 24 months).

As with previous research (SEU, 2002) on young men in prison, the young fathers in Brocklebank Prison lacked educational (many had been expelled and had low literacy and numeracy levels) and employment experience (see appendix six). At the same time there were fathers in the prison who had always worked and who

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11 Previous violent incidents are calculated by the sum of previous convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings that include violence. A low score indicates a lack of violence in previous contact with the CJS.
had gained qualifications in school or later in prison or college. The range of these circumstances was represented by interviewees.

Drug and alcohol dependency was also common in the fathers and interviewees. Eleven of the interviewees had current dependency on drugs and 10 had current alcohol dependency. There were also interviewees that did not have dependency issues, those that were dependent on both alcohol and drugs, and one interviewee had overcome their dependency issues.

**4.5.2.1 Father related information**

While the fathers in the prison are similar demographically to the men in Brocklebank Prison in general, they are different in being separated from their children. This section now considers the father specific characteristics, again more information can be seen in appendix six.

Eighty-six children were affected by having a father in Brocklebank Prison at the time of the research. All of the interviewee sample were fathers (or expectant fathers (n=2)) of their biological children. No step-fathers were interviewed. Similarly to Boswell and Wedge (2002) the majority of the interviewees and young fathers in the prison only had one child (74 per cent and 78 per cent respectively). Four men who were interviewed had two children and one young man had four children. The age when the interviewees first became fathers ranged from 14 to 22 with a mean age of 19. The ages of the interviewees’ children ranged from four months to nine years and included all ages in between. The number of very young children can be explained in part by the fact some men had become fathers while serving their current custodial sentence. The wide age range of the interviewees created variability within the sample as it increased the likelihood that the men were at different stages of fatherhood, and therefore included parents of older children and men who have recently become fathers.
Only one of the interviewees had children to more than one female. Eleven of the men were still in a relationship with the mothers of their children. Eight were no longer in relationships with the mother of their children: of these five were single and three had new relationships.

There was data for 14 of the interviewees on how long the relationships with the mothers of their children had been. These tended to be fairly long term relationships ranging from two to nine years. In contrast to Nurse (2002) only two men said that their girlfriends got pregnant soon after they started dating. For the remaining 12 the length ranged from one year to five years that they had been with their girlfriend before she became pregnant.

The young men had a wide range of living arrangements (see appendix six). A common living arrangement for fathers and interviewees pre, and planned for post, custody was living with their partner and child as a family unit. The interviewees reflected the range of living arrangements of fathers and included those that lived with parents, siblings, and other family members, and also their child’s mother’s family members.

4.5.3 Design of the interview schedule
The interview schedule was informed by previous research in the area and relevant theories. For example, in relation to theory, questions were posed in relation to personal motivation to desist, and informal and formal support, to test out Maruna et al’s (2004a) theory in relation to young imprisoned fathers. There were also questions following up issues raised in the literature review. These aspects represented a deductive approach to the research wanting to confirm theory. However there were also elements of an inductive approach in the interview schedule with open questions and opportunities for the interviewees to talk about what was important to them.
Following a traditional approach the interview started with a “safe, unthreatening question in the interest of developing rapport” (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; 30). The question used was an open question asking the offender to say a little about themselves. It was hoped that this would make the interviewees feel comfortable as firstly, they would be able to answer it and secondly because they would see that they had control about how much information about themselves they gave to the interviewer. The order of questions was crafted to leave respondents in a positive frame of mind (Gallagher et al, 2002) with questions about the future and release from prison at the end.

The questions were open to let the men drive the agenda. This approach grows out of feminist ideas of empowerment and being appreciative of the respondent’s position (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Young men who are fathers in prison are in a powerless position especially in their role as a father and so as Oakley (1981) discusses, it was important to try and minimise interview power differentials. The naturalistic style of the interview schedule also included prompts and probes for situations where the open nature of the questions did not work (Robson, 1993). The main probes used were to ask, “can you tell me more about ...?” or “how did that make you feel?”, giving participants opportunities to elaborate further (Davies, 2000). Following Hollway and Jefferson’s (2000) guidance, ‘why’ questions were used sparingly since they may force interviewees to revert to publicly held discourses and socially desirable answers. The order of questions was fluid to allow the interview to feel more naturalistic and conversational.

The issue of fatherhood is highly vulnerable to response bias whereby the interviewees may want to give answers in order to maintain a socially desirable image to the researcher. For example, it is unlikely that any father would admit to wanting nothing to do with their child and not supporting them financially or in any other way. Nurse (2002) recognised this but found that asking about incarceration alongside fatherhood made it less susceptible to response bias: the interviewees
felt it was the prison system, not themselves, that was being scrutinised. Therefore questions on father-child contact focused on what the prison did and there were questions on the prison regime and formal support provided by the prison throughout.

When asking people about their hopes and fears for the future it was useful to draw on the ‘possible selves’ literature (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Cross and Markus, 1991; Hooker et al, 1996; Meek, 2007a; 2011). In this work people are asked to list their most important ‘hoped for’ and ‘feared selves’ and given examples to reassure them that they can say anything. This approach only formed a part of the interview schedule.

The interview schedule can be seen in appendix five. The prison interview focused on the following research aims and objectives:

- Investigate the experiences of being a young father in prison
- Consider what the young fathers hope for on release in terms of fatherhood and offending and examine what has led to these hopes.

The interview schedule was adapted during each individual interview in two ways. Firstly, the order of questions was not rigid and so if an interviewee began to talk about something before he was asked e.g. his plans for release, he was not prevented from doing this but was instead asked any other corresponding questions at that time, and therefore out of order. Secondly, the wording of questions and the prompts asked were altered according to the level of understanding and personality of the interviewee (Hannabuss, 1996). This can be justified by the fact the research is qualitative and therefore the exact same questions do not need to be asked of all respondents and the schedule allows for prompts and extra questions. Extra prompts were added to the interview schedule in order to enhance it. An example is ‘how did that make you feel?’ which it began to feel natural to ask in order to show empathy and concern (Hannabuss, 1996). The basic format of the questions, especially the prompts, worked well and so this was not modified.
4.5.4 The interviews
The 19 interviews with young fathers in prison took place between 5\textsuperscript{th} November and 22\textsuperscript{nd} December 2010. There is an example transcript of an interview in appendix 15.

Martin (2000) highlights the importance of flexibility when conducting prison research. This was evident in the current research as there were a number of times that men did not turn up for interviews due to other commitments (e.g. healthcare appointments/ work placements) and so flexibility and persistence were definitely required.

Due to security reasons a digital recorder was not allowed in the prison (because of USB connectivity) so the interviews were all recorded (with the men’s consent) on a tape recorder. The quality of the recordings (and therefore transcriptions) was negatively affected by this.

Some of the interviews were carried out a matter of days (some just one day) before the men were released whereas other men had about three months left of their sentence to serve. Some of the interviews were also extremely close to Christmas which added an extra dynamic to the interviews depending upon whether the interviewee was getting home leave or not for the Christmas period.

Similarly to Evans and Wallace (2008), the young father’s interview content contained “emotional power” but “emotional and verbal fluency” (493) was often missing. Some were more talkative than others and revealed lots of personal information and there were a small number who mainly gave short answers who obviously struggled presenting themselves verbally. For this reason letting the men drive the agenda with a large number of open questions did not always work well in practice and the researcher, at times, had to ask a lot of questions. This meant
that the researcher’s own definitions of the social world were often reflected in the interview.

Semmens (2011) advises to take care to avoid leading questions and using more than one idea in questions. Having a semi-structured interview schedule that allows for diversion from the order and wording of questions, and trying to make the interview conversational, meant that a few times these rules of interview conduct were broken. This was more so when men were not very talkative. This is recognised as a flaw in the research.

The hopes and fears section did not always work well in practice as the men only listed one or two hopes and fears, and could not separate between hopes and fears in relation to fatherhood and in relation to other areas of their lives. The men also at times found it difficult to answer time based questions and spoke about the present when asked about the past and vice versa. Evans and Wallace (2008) had a similar experience as they found the prisoners in their study did not tell their life stories in a neat linear fashion. Although Arditti et al (2005) were asking the men in their study about their experiences of being a father in prison many instead answered in terms of what they hoped to do on release. The researchers were not surprised by this “predominance of a futuristic time orientation” (7) as the men in their sample were nearing release and because fathering only made sense to them in terms of being out of prison.

One of the young men - Andrew - asked whether his offender manager would be able to hear the interview because “it might look good”. The integrity of what he was saying may be questioned as he may have wanted to look like he was being cooperative.

4.5.4.1 Reflexivity
Reflexivity, the implications of method and interviewer values and biases on the knowledge generated (Bryman, 2001), was considered an important process in this
research. Throughout, the researcher tried to have “thoughtful, conscious, self-awareness” (Finlay, 2002: 532) and to “turn back on oneself” (Aull Davies, 1999: 4). In considering reflexivity there is an acknowledgement that the researcher’s appearance, expectations and attitudes may have “influenced not only how [I] see it [the field] but what [I] see” (Turnbull, 1973: 13). Reflexivity can help to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity is important because we do not have direct access to experiences, only representations of these experiences (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). Hollway and Jefferson (2000) think it is acceptable for researchers to interpret these representations “to do justice to the complexity of our subjects” (3) as long as the researcher is also being theorised, that the ways the researcher affects the research are recognised, and they are not seen as neutral:

“This research subject cannot be known except through another subject; in this case, the researcher. The name we give to such subjects is pychosocial” (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000: 4)

Fontana and Frey (2000) state that ‘confessions’ of possible influences of the researcher “are very valuable, as they make the readers aware of the complex and cumbersome nature of interviewing people in their natural setting and lend a tone of realism and veracity to studies” (661). This is a constructivist perspective as data is viewed and acknowledged as the product of the interviewee-interviewer relationship (Finlay, 2002). In acknowledging this, trying to minimise the effects of the interviewer becomes less important.

It was felt that the men were honest. They spoke about things they were not asked about, for example their offending and drug use which have negative connotations. As Davies (2000) said of the females in their study, the fact that the women had “been labelled dishonest by the police and courts, there is no reason to suggest that their stories and narrative accounts were fabricated” (93).
Gender dynamics in interviews
Byrne (2004) and Phillips and Earle (2010) note that the key demographics e.g. gender, age, race and class, of the interviewer and interviewee are an important consideration in reflexivity, especially their impact on data collection. Finlay (2002) suggests that the researcher’s personal experiences as well as literature they have read may also impact on the interview. Age, may have been an issue as there was 10 years between the interviewees and interviewers, but it is difficult to be conclusive on the impact of the age difference.

The gender difference may have affected some, or all, interviews either negatively or positively. Martin (2000) discusses that although it could be argued that male prisoners may be more willing to talk to a female researcher in reality it is unlikely there are any differences in recruitment rates between male and female researchers. Instead it is the skill of the researcher and their ability to come across as credible that is the crucial factor (Martin, 2000). In the male prison setting gender arguably becomes more central as this environment is infused with issues of sexism (Genders and Player, 1995) and is a ‘man’s world’ (Cowburn, 1998).

During the presentations to the groups of young men there were a couple of comments made about the fact the interviewer was female, such as, “yeah I’ll definitely take part if it is you who is interviewing us”. These comments reflected the men focusing on the stereotypes of gender (Phillips and Earle, 2010) over the professional. During the interviews, without the camaraderie of other young men, no such comments were made and the men treated the researcher with respect. However, anxiety defences of the researcher will have been raised by such comments, above that those that were already at play by entering the difficult prison world (Phillips and Earle, 2010). Like Phillips and Earle (2010), these anxieties were only recognised with hindsight.
When it comes to the subject of fatherhood, being a female may have been important as Nurse (2002) proposes that women illicit more honest answers from imprisoned fathers than male interviewers because men are less accustomed to talking about intimate topics with men. It is hard to make a conclusion about the impact of gender, as there were examples of men who were reticent and others who were extremely open. There were also lots of other factors in play such as their age and emotional immaturity. Like Phillips and Earle (2010) the researcher found this intimate sharing of life experiences among some of the men hard to hear, sad and often upsetting. Bosworth (1999) refers to this as the “tyranny of intimacy” (73).

The men were told before the interviews started that they would not be judged on what they said and to be honest. This was to try to eliminate effects of the men giving socially desirable answers that they feel the researcher wants to hear. This is important in such an emotional topic area. However, being a female who, due to her own upbringing, believes the fatherhood role to be very important the researcher may have phrased questions about relationships with children, or asked them in a particular tone, that made the men feel they had to give a positive/socially acceptable response. An example is that it was expected from the literature and from the researcher’s values that wanting to change for their children would be a theme in the interviews – and it was. Could this have been because of the hopeful way the questions were asked? Could the men have been pressed further on this topic? Were answers too readily accepted?

**Power Dynamics in interviews**
By the very nature of prison research there are unequal power relations between the interviewer and interviewee: the interviewer is able to leave the prison and is not subject to oversight by prison officers. Added to this it is likely the interviewer’s status as a university researcher means they are “educated, employed and middle class”, immediately differentiating them from the majority of the prison population (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000: 84). However Hollway and Jefferson (2000) argue
that this is not always a bad thing and power differences can be seen in a positive way as participants may be positively affected by having someone they see as knowledgeable “understand, sympathise and recognise their dilemmas” (84).

Walkerdine et al (2001) say that thoughts and feelings about research participants should not be suppressed as they provide a lens through which to understand the data. Interviews with one man especially, Michael, the researcher found particularly difficult. His lack of emotion towards his children, at times, and his focus on money in a boastful way seemed to be a way to exert power over the interviewer and in some ways the “power dynamics of the interview were upturned” (Phillips and Earle, 2010: 366). This may have influenced the coding of his interviews.

4.5.5 Transcription and analysis

One dilemma in analysis is always the interpretation of other people’s stories, experiences and thoughts. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) say that participants are the people that know best about their own lives and to disagree, modify, select and interpret what they tell us shows the power we have as researchers over them. There are always multiple ways of interpreting data and under other perspectives different interpretations may be made. It is important to remain as faithful to respondents’ accounts as possible to restore power differentials (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). Under the constructivist approach it is recognised that there are multiple social realities and so it is important to aim for an interpretive analysis of meaning (Charmaz, 2003).

All of the interviews undertaken were transcribed in full and verbatim. These transcripts were then analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke (2006). This was deemed the most appropriate method due to its flexibility and its applicability to both constructionist and realist theoretical frameworks (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As described in section 4.2, this work ended up sitting between the constructionist and realist frameworks and Braun and Clarke (2006) advocate the use of thematic
analysis which “works both to reflect reality, and to unpick or unravel the surface of 'reality’” (9).

The analytic process was facilitated by using the qualitative data analysis software N-Vivo. N-Vivo was considered good for a thematic analytical approach because of its highly structured code system (Weitzman, 2000). Nvivo helped provide the analysis with consistency and speed and consolidated all analysis and thinking in one place but it did not do the analysis (Weitzman, 2000). Interpretative activity by the researcher using the structure of Nvivo was the major part of the analysis.

The approach taken was to code the data at three levels. Firstly, broad categories were highlighted and then these were refined and narrowed down to become more specific (Bazeley, 2007). These became the second level (sub themes) and third level (codes) respectively, as the final stage was to broaden these sub themes into overarching themes.

The thematic analysis used both a deductive and inductive approach. Before starting the analysis the researcher had ideas about a theory to test, especially as this theory had helped inform the development of the interview schedule. This was clearly a top down, or deductive, approach to the development of themes (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). Examples are the themes of ‘support from girlfriends’ and ‘formal support’ which have direct links to Maruna et al’s (2004a) theory. At the same time during the process of analysis ideas formed, around identity (with codes such as ‘caring father role’), which were more in line with a bottom up, or inductive, approach to data analysis. This development of codes and themes during the process of data analysis ensured that areas that lie outside of the existing literature were taken into account and to ensure a voice is given to the prisoners (Arditti et al, 2005). The focus did change during the analysis and became less about experiences and more about the impact of these experiences on identity.
The themes that were developed were at a mixture of the semantic and the latent level. The more deductive themes were at the semantic level whereby the themes are identified within the explicit surface meaning of the data and interpreted to look for broader meanings and implications (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Examples of these themes occur most commonly in chapter six on formal support. Other themes were at the latent level, these are mainly the themes discussed in chapter five around identity whereby the themes started to examine the ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations that were informing the content of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

There was a lot of data gathered to make sense of, and coding seemed a good way to be able to compare, contrast and analyse large amounts of data. One critique of coding (and relevant to thematic analysis) is the effect of chunking and categorising data is data fragmentation and loss of context and rich detail (Charmaz, 2003; Bryman, 2008). Because of this some narrative analysis in the form of case studies was undertaken. This was again thematic, looking at what is said rather than how it was said, but concentrated on how people made sense of what had happened to them (Bryman, 2008). Reissman (2004) discusses how this form of analysis can arise out of materials not gathered for this purpose.

The analysis was cross-sectional and, to some extent, longitudinal (Thomson and Holland, 2003). Cross-sectional analysis consists of examining different interviewees’ responses within emergent themes. The longitudinal element examines how responses under some, relevant themes change over the course of the study. This longitudinal analysis allowed the process of change to be considered. The analysis presented in chapters four to six is cross-sectional but it is highlighted in those chapters whether themes have changed in the second interview meaning a longitudinal element is included. Chapter seven presents a longitudinal analysis exploring the themes from the previous chapters in case studies. The
analysis in all the chapters is contextualised within the theories and literature from chapters two and three.

4.5.6 Ethics of consent and confidentiality
An important ethical issue in the qualitative work was informed consent (Beauchamp and Childress, 2001; BSA, 2002; Noaks and Wincup, 2004; BSC, 2006; Wahidin and Moore, 2011). Informed consent is concerned with the responsibility of the researcher to explain the research fully with regard to what it is about, who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being done and what will be done with the findings (BSC, 2006).

The young fathers were told verbally about the research during group presentations. Being told verbally helps ensure that the men understand all the issues (Noaks and Wincup, 2004) and it is in terms meaningful to participants (BSC, 2006). Giving all the information verbally avoids problems with low literacy levels which are common among the general prison population (SEU, 2002). Presentations allowed interaction with the researcher so the men asked questions if they did not understand something. These presentations were a couple of days (or in some cases weeks) before the actual interview. Noaks and Wincup (2004) state that in the prison setting it is important to gain consent ahead of the interview as if a researcher simply turns up to carry out the interview prisoners can get confused over why they are there.

The men were firstly told during the presentation that participation was voluntary (BSC, 2006). Martin (2000) argues that prisoners are a vulnerable and powerless group of people which makes the need to stress that participation is voluntary, more important. They were reminded of this fact before the actual interview.

The men were then told why the research was taking place and what it was looking at. This was done in a fairly general way which Hollway and Jefferson (2000) argue means that the topic is not constrained by defining it too narrowly and to ensure
that people did not tailor the information to what they thought the researcher wanted to hear. The presentation went on to tell the young men what their participation would involve (and that they could choose which parts they would participate in).

The potential respondents were also told that they would not be identifiable in any research reports and that data would be destroyed or stored securely. The men were informed that they could leave the research at any time (BSA, 2002; BSC, 2006) and did not have to answer any questions they did not want to and that this or a decision not to take part would not impact on their treatment in prison nor affect their progression. The prison expressed concern that the young fathers might see the researcher as able to help them gain access to their children or as a counsellor. Therefore it was made clear to the men in the presentation that this would not happen but as Crow and Semmens (2008) suggest if they wanted this the researcher could point them in the right direction to suitable agencies. The independence of the research was made clear to the prisoners.

The potential respondents at this stage were promised qualified confidentiality (BSC, 2006). Crow and Semmens (2008) discuss the common conflict in criminology between the two ethical principles of confidentiality and avoidance of harm to the respondent and others. The BSA (2002) advise that researchers stress the limits of confidentiality. In this project the young men were told that everything they said would be confidential but that there were certain things the researcher had a duty to tell the prison service. These were if they revealed acts that were against prison rules or that threatened the security of the prison, future offences they planned to commit, or any behaviour that may be harmful to themselves or others\(^\text{12}\). Martin (2000) agrees that respondents should be given a candid account of what information the researcher cannot hold in confidence and

\(^{12}\) The prison saw this as an advantage as men who they were not aware of self-harming might be brought to their attention.

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this adds to an informed choice on their decision to share information. Also it is important to have this caveat in the confidentiality clause due to possible serious consequences resulting from actions against the security of the prison (Martin, 2000).

The young imprisoned fathers were not promised anonymity. Anonymity is hard to achieve in the prison context due to the nature of prison meaning officers need to know where prisoners are. This is to some extent alleviated in an open prison as the men are to a degree allowed to come and go by themselves. The young men were promised that transcripts would be anonymised and that they would not be identifiable in any outputs from the research. Following recommendations by Noaks and Wincup (2004) pseudonyms have been used in the write-up, and further there is details that could give away who the offender is have been removed.

After the presentation the men were given an information sheet outlining the above (See appendix seven) and asked to fill in the first consent form (see appendix eight) which asked whether they understood everything they had been told and whether they were willing to take part and which aspects of the research they were willing to take part in. Two men asked for help in completing this. Immediately before the interviews the men were reminded about the aims of the research and about the exceptions to confidentiality.

Data storage of interview recordings and interview transcripts is also important. Recordings were destroyed upon completion of transcripts and transcripts were anonymised and encrypted. Transcripts were stored on a password protected laptop.

4.5.7 Ensuring the physical, social and psychological well-being of those participating
Researchers have a duty to ensure that people are not harmed by participation (Beauchamp and Childress, 2001; BSA, 2002, BSC, 2006). In this research
therefore participants were informed in advance that they would be discussing issues which might upset them. On the advice of the University of Manchester Committee on the Ethics of Research on Human Beings, the men were informed immediately prior to the interview that if they became upset the appropriate person in the prison would be notified (but not be told the reasons that they had become upset). It was at this stage that the second consent form was completed (see appendix nine). A two staged consent was used so the complicated aspects of the research could be explained again to the young men on a one-on-one basis, enhancing informed consent.

One concern of the prison staff was that the prison may not have the resources needed – due to staff cutbacks - to adequately support the young fathers if a large number of men became upset during or after the interview. While the prison saw the research as important, they rightly saw the welfare of the prisoners’ well-being as more important. This is why the list of eligible respondents was checked by the Public Protection and Safeguarding Officer as those who were known to the prison to self-harm or attempt suicide would be excluded from the research. The main concern was that many men within the prison who self-harm do so due to family problems.

Before fieldwork started it was debated how interviewees who became upset during the interviews would be treated. It was decided that stopping an interview was not always desired. During the interviews one respondent, Stuart, became upset. During this interview (as in all others) Hollway and Jefferson’s (2000) principles of sympathy and respect towards respondents were followed. This respondent was asked whether he wanted to stop the interview a number of times but he was adamant he wanted to continue. This method of letting Stuart decide whether to stop the interview gave him some power back. The appropriate prison staff were informed about this and they took a number of measures to check on his welfare. Becoming upset during an interview may not always be a bad thing; Hollway and
Jefferson (2000) argue that “it can be reassuring and therapeutic to talk about an upsetting even in a safe context” (87). At the end of the interview this young man showed me a photograph of his family which to some extent showed a level of trust and that he wanted to talk about them.

Rather than the interviewees that get upset, it may be those that do not show their emotions that present a larger ethical dilemma. Is it ethical to go into an interview, open up lots of potentially distressing emotions, and then leave the environment? As Lee (1993) considers interviewees tend to maintain the appropriate demeanour, in our society “remaining composed is socially prized” (6). Those who did not show their emotions but were perhaps left upset after the interview would not have had staff support in the way Stuart did.

Further, because of the potential for upset the young men were offered a leaflet at the end of the interview detailing relevant voluntary organisations who might be able to offer them and their families support (BSC, 2006). Some of the men did not take this leaflet.

How to access people who had supported the prisoners proved to be quite an ethical dilemma. Following discussion with the ethics committee and the prison the final version for consent can be seen in appendix nine. This asks the men to contact those they identified as being supportive, tell them about the research and ask permission for the prisoner to pass the researcher their contact details if they are happy to take part in an interview.

4.5.8 Researcher safety
The interviews took place in a small interview room and there was usually an officer on the corridor outside. The room was not fitted with a panic button as Martin (2000) advises as there were none in this prison. At an early point in the fieldwork an officer had to remind the researcher to sit on the chair nearest the door. Past research experience in this and other prison had led to feeling overly comfortable in
the setting and perhaps complacency. This does however provide evidence that the officers were aware of a research presence (Davies, 2011).

The fact that the six men with negative attitudes to women were excluded also added to researcher safety. These men may have contributed some interesting data but there has to be a balancing act in research and here researcher safety had to win over ‘interesting data’ considerations (Noaks and Wincup, 2004). This was on the advice of the prison, and as Liebling (1992) states there is often possible bias towards getting research done smoothly by agreeing with gatekeepers and compromising on data, rather than abandoning the study.

The emotional effect of the research on the researcher is a further ethical issue, especially if it is a sensitive topic. Liebling (1999) and Davies (2011) acknowledge that prison interviewing is emotionally and physically draining and Davies (2011) recommends talking about the interviews without disclosing confidences. PhD supervision was therefore regular throughout the fieldwork and debriefing was considered an important part of coping with the often emotionally upsetting accounts of some young men.

4.6 Research in Action: Qualitative Observations in Prison

Before carrying out observations a pro forma was designed. This included, on the advice of Babbie (2004), what areas to observe with a column for what was actually observed and a column to write about observer interpretations of events.

It was envisaged that observation of parenting classes and the prison’s Family Day would be undertaken. These were considered to be important because formal support is one element of Maruna et al’s (2004a) desistance theory. Both family days and parenting classes give the men the chance to focus purely on their fatherhood role (something which is rare in prison) and opportunities to reflect. In
reality observations of parenting classes were not undertaken due to staff illness in the research period and hence them not running. One family day was observed in March 2011. The researcher was allowed full access to this day and spoke to the men, their visitors and the staff. This data forms part of the findings.

It could be argued that the proximity of interviews to participation in parenting focused activities could impact on the responses of those interviewed. The fact that parenting classes were not running at the time of the research could have led to more negativity around these, especially the ability to access them, which it did. The discussions about family days were generally very positive and this may have been because there were held fairly regularly by the prison and so it is likely that men who did speak about them had recently experienced them.

4.7 Research in Action: Qualitative data collection in the community

Follow-up interviews with the young men after release into the community formed an important part of this research. It was essential to find out how the young men’s expectations while in prison worked out in practice.

There are numerous issues with following respondents over time and from prison to the community. As Miller and Wright (1995) acknowledge people move on, people die and people no longer wish to participate in the research. An additional issue with offenders is that people reoffend and are sent back to prison. Farrington (2006) points to the importance of using methods to minimise attrition and a number of strategies were used. First, the men were offered £25 worth of high street vouchers as an incentive for taking part in the second interview. Second, the men were accessed in the community through their probation officer and on probation office premises; this had the advantages, respectively, of being an indirect but certain avenue of contact and also offered a safe and suitable
interviewing space. Follow-up through probation is also a technique that has been used in previous research in this prison with a follow-up rate of 59 per cent (Haslewood-Pocsik et al., 2008). Farrington (2006) states that attrition will increase with the length of follow-up and therefore a fairly short time period between the first and second interview was proposed. In reality this was often longer, yet still relatively short compared to other longitudinal studies.

It would have been an improvement to the research design if those who had been sent back to prison were able to be followed up and re-interviewed. This was not possible due to the logistics of access.

After the prison interview, the men who had agreed to community interviews were asked again whether they were happy for this to happen and if so to give the names of their probation office and officer. They were told that they would be contacted through probation.

Of the 19 prison interviewees, two did not agree to be followed up into the community and two were not eligible to be followed up because they were not released under probation supervision. This left 15 men who were tracked into the community.

4.7.1 The community interviews
In total six young men were interviewed again in the community between June 2011 and March 2012. Contact through probation (as described in section 4.3.2) was attempted with all of the fifteen men willing and eligible to be followed in to the community. Interviews were conducted with all of the men where contact was successful and they were still willing to participate, making the follow-up sample in many ways self-selecting. The reasons for a lack of success were unwillingness on the part of the men to take part or men being back in custody. Some people

13 Some of the difficulties faced in contacting the men in the community via probation are highlighted in appendix two.
were not seen again due to positive factors, for example, they had successfully completed their licence period.

The six men who were interviewed for a second time reflected the range of interviewees. They were fathers to differing numbers of children, they were different ages, had varying relationship statuses (and included some whose relationship status had changed) and they had committed a range of offences. The interviewees also included those that were doing well in the community and those who were struggling. Furthermore, there was a range in the length of time these six men had been back in the community before being followed up, with the shortest being six weeks and the longest being 15 months.

This interview asked the young men about how they had been getting on since release. It asked about employment and education and relationships before moving on to ask the men about being a father in the community. This was important in meeting the research aim of finding out their experiences of being a father in the community. The men were also asked to reflect on what they had said had been their hopes and fears for release in relation to fatherhood and in general when they had been in prison. In many interviews this section focused on the ease of staying away from negative peers/ not offending. It was important to the research aims and objectives to find out what factors had helped/ hindered their achievement of their hopes and informal and formal support were asked about specifically. A copy of this interview schedule can be found in appendix ten. There is an example of a transcript with a prisoner interviewed after returning to the community in appendix 16.

4.7.2 Reflexivity
At the time of the community interviews the researcher was visibly pregnant.

Asking about parenthood and children by someone who is expecting a child could impact on their responses. Reich (2003) found that being pregnant whilst researching parents whose children had been removed by Child Protection Services
found that her pregnancy facilitated access and led to information she would otherwise not have got. She concluded that pregnancy provided a level of credibility to her field and research topic (Reich, 2003).

In the present research there was little evidence that pregnancy had an influence either on what the young men revealed. This was mainly because few men seemed to notice the pregnancy. A couple of times the researcher was already seated behind a desk before the men entered the room so the pregnancy was not visible. But of the young men who could see the pregnancy only one commented. It seemed that it was not something that affected them, or at least, something they did not often overtly acknowledge.

4.7.3 Ongoing consent and payment

It is well established that informed consent should be ongoing (BSA, 2002; Noaks and Wincup, 2004; BSC, 2006). Therefore before community interviews took place the young men were reminded what the research was about and about confidentiality. Again researcher safety was an issue in the community. Because of this all community interviews were arranged with probation and interviews took place in probation offices.

The men were told that as an incentive they would be given £25 in High Street vouchers as a thank you at the time of the community interview. Discussions in the literature over the appropriateness of payment for participation in qualitative research focus on power differentials between the interviewer and interviewee (especially those from less powerful groups which arguably young fathers in prison are) and bias. In relation to power, one view is that payment can highlight power differentials. In this research, similar to others (Thompson, 1996; Hollway and Jefferson, 2002) the view was taken take that payment is one way of addressing and beginning to equalise power relationships. The respondents tended to be unemployed and so payment for their time was important and acted as a mark of
respect for their participation. In the community, more incentive to take part needed to be offered because the men had other pressures on their time.

In relation to bias Thompson (1996) states:

“It is often assumed that payments will result in bias. The conventional view is that the only valuable respondent is one who is willing to engage in the prescribed hierarchical relationship, which necessarily includes the donation of time for the benefit of the social sciences” (1).

On the other hand, payment shows that a value is placed on the experiences and opinions of those being interviewed (Thompson, 1996) which was considered important in this research of men who are rarely asked about being a father. A small amount of money is not usually considered coercive and as Patton (2002) argues research participants are being paid for their time, not their response. As the men were interviewed during probation appointments, which they had to attend, the payment was not coercive. The fact some men chose not to take part in the community interviews is further evidence the amount was not coercive. While payment may have increased the likelihood of socially desirable answers it does not seem that this was the case in the current research. As noted in section 4.5.4.1 the men spoke about behaviours that are not considered socially desirable. Furthermore, although they were told they would be paid if they participated in two interviews before they took part in an interview in prison, they were not reminded about payment until after the second interview so many men had forgotten and it was a welcome surprise.

Noaks and Wincup (2004) argue that cash should be given as an incentive rather than vouchers because “moral judgements should not influence a decision that in essence concerns the payment of a suitable fee for a service” (150). A common argument is that cash may be used for drugs but Noaks and Wincup (2004) argue that vouchers can easily be converted into cash. Vouchers were however chosen due to funding restrictions and because the shops, included on the voucher, could be used to buy things for their children.
4.8 Interviews with the men’s family and friends
This research included interviews with those identified by the men as being supportive to understand their experiences of supporting a young father in prison. As this research aimed to give some power to the men it was deemed important that the young men drive this aspect of the research, both by identifying who had supported them and by putting the researcher in contact with these people.

During the community interview the young fathers who had previously agreed to this aspect were asked whether they had asked the people who had supported them whether they would be willing to participate and where the answer was yes, gave the researcher the contact details. Those identified as supportive were then contacted and invited to take part in an interview.

The six men that were followed up in to the community, between them identified 12 people who had supported them, that they were happy to be asked to be interviewed. While there was potential for 12 case study interviews, only two interviews were conducted: the mother of Jason’s children and Howard’s mother. The reasons for this attrition are discussed further in chapter eight. The two interviews were both long, frank and interesting interviews. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in appendix eleven.

4.8.1 Ethical considerations around interviewing those identified as supportive
The men had passed contact details of their supporters but it was not certain whether these people had actually agreed to take part. When contact was made it was important to tell them all about the research and check they were happy to participate.

There are always issues when interviewing separate parties about the same things. It was crucial that during interviews with the supportive people nothing was given away that the men had said. This was important from a confidentiality perspective.
but also so that their supporters did not get upset that the men had been talking about personal issues or told the researcher something that they did not know. From a harm perspective, inadvertently giving something away could cause arguments or break up relationships. This was managed by starting the interview as if nothing was known, so for example asking about the children again.

Due to researcher safety and ensuring a non “alien and strange” (Lee, 1993; Davis, 2011: 89) environment for participants these interviews were conducted over the telephone. Considering the work of Hertz (1995) interviews with family members took place separately and without the presence of the young men. Telephone interviews give control to the respondent over when is convenient. This is important in this research as this means they can ensure that the man is not within earshot. A common criticism of telephone interviews is that it is harder to build up rapport between the interviewer and respondent. Johnson and Sacco (1995) in their study concluded that telephone interviewing did not prevent the interviewer forming a bond of trust with respondents.

An added advantage to telephone interview is that they avoid potential issues associated with being visibly pregnant and a young woman. The mothers may have felt jealous if they assumed that the researcher had a supportive boyfriend or threatened that the researcher had met the fathers of their children. As Lee (1993) argues, when an interviewer is not present respondents are less likely to feel threatened by questions about sensitive topics. This contradicts with the rationale for face to face interviews with the men in prison but Sykes and Hoinville (1985) cited in Lee (1993) discuss “two contradictory hypothesis concerning how the physical presence of an interviewer might affect reporting on sensitive topics” (98).
4.9 Interviews with professionals
It was also considered important to speak to key criminal justice professionals in the prison and in the community who have a stake in the issue of young imprisoned fathers to get an overall view of the topic.

Within the prison, three officers were contacted on advice from the psychology department and these agreed to an interview (after checking with their POA union rep and residential manager that it was acceptable). The Safer Custody officer also agreed to be interviewed. However the Chaplaincy department and the Counselling Assessment Referral Advice and Throughcare (CARATS) drug team never replied to requests for an interview. The appropriate member of education staff was on sick leave. Secondary levels of access to other departments in the prison were therefore harder to gain than initial access.

In the community two offender managers were interviewed. These were arranged by contacting the Head of Research for the local probation service and asking whether they would recommend anyone to be interviewed, which they did. A number of voluntary organisations who work with young offending fathers were contacted by phone and email. One of these was happy to be contacted and two interviews were conducted with representatives from this organisation. Further, an offender manager put the researcher in contact with another voluntary worker who agreed to be interviewed. These interviews took place between March and May 2012 and meant that nine professionals in total were interviewed. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in appendix twelve.

4.10 Summary and conclusions
This chapter has highlighted the sensitive nature of the research and how the research in action was developed to be ethical. This was especially the case in relation to vulnerable and emotional prisoners where a number of systems were put
in place to enhance their protection. The ethical good practice adds to the credibility and trustworthiness of the research.

To reflect on access, there were some elements that worked well and some which it would be recommended are done differently in the future. Access to the prison was a smooth process mainly because of only proposing to research in one prison and due to previous work carried out in this establishment. There were issues with probation due to having to negotiate access with multiple probation areas who all had different approaches. Overall in terms of negotiating access to prison and probation there is a need to follow procedures (and therefore time built into research design to be able to do this). It is also vital that researchers are persistent and flexible (Davies, 2000; Noaks and Wincup, 2004) and sensitive to power dynamics within organisations. It was clear from this work that local gatekeepers were much more willing to cooperate if they had been told by their seniors to do so. The research request must also be feasible, honest and not too taxing on the prison and probation staff (Noaks and Wincup, 2004).

The approach for gaining access to people who had been supportive to the young men may have been the most ethical option but did not work, especially relying on people answering the phone to strangers. A better strategy might have been to try and access these people at prison visits. Comparing this access to accessing the men through probation, it can be concluded that although there were issues, probation is still perhaps the best route to follow up the men. Speaking to the people that supported the young fathers and to key professionals working in the area increases the fairness element of authenticity.

The observation data is recognised as limited and with hindsight this is an area that could have been improved. Tying in with the previous point it would have been interesting to observe prison visits and other areas that the men spoke about in the
The next chapter begins the presentation of the qualitative research findings. It will be seen in the findings chapters that the methods used were successful in providing rich and highly nuanced data that gives an insight into the complex lives of the sample, and into their contemplations of lifestyle and identity. The benefits of
exploring qualitatively what being a father in prison means to these men, and the impact of this on change and identity, are shown in chapters five to eight.
Chapter Five: Human Agency in the Process of Change

5.1 Introduction
The review of the literature on desistance from crime presented in chapters two and three showed that most theorists agree that the process of change is multifaceted and encompasses elements of human agency and subjective change, as well as structural change, but disagree as to which is the most important factor in sustaining change, as well as how the elements interact (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Maruna, 2001; Giordano et al, 2002; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Rumgay, 2004; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009; King, 2012). This chapter highlights the potential importance of fatherhood to the young men in the sample as they contemplate, and put into practice, changing. As will be shown in this chapter, the respondents are trying to change from absent fathers in prison (and in some cases before prison), to ‘good’ fathers who can ‘be there’ for their children and from offenders to non-offenders. It will be shown that the two are inextricably linked, for example, offending runs the risk of being imprisoned and not being able to ‘be there’ for children.

This chapter focuses on the first of Maruna et al’s (2004a) three tracks that they argue are necessary for desistance: self-determination. This chapter will argue the importance of intentional and purposeful human behaviour (Maruna, 1999), or human agency, in the process of change. There are two aspects of this: a decision to change including being self-determined and open to possibilities of self-transformation (Cusson and Pinsonneault, 1986; Farrall, 2002; Giordano et al, 2002; Maruna et al, 2004a); and a subjective change in identity (Maruna, 2001; Giordano et al, 2002; Rumgay, 2004). These two aspects of human agency are interlinked as Giordano et al (2002) explain and this interrelation is a focus of this chapter.
This chapter starts by discussing the “up front work” (Giordano et al, 2002: 992) that the young men do to make moves towards change and argues that the men that were interviewed did have that desire, self-determination and openness to change. Part of this is developing a positive attitude towards fatherhood, especially in seeing it as a more salient identity than their offending one. This chapter will then move on to argue that as they have begun to see fatherhood as increasingly salient in their identity hierarchy, they begin to see this as an alternative conventional identity. This part of the chapter will discuss evidence that the men seem to be testing out the script of fatherhood in prison in order to enact the identity on release. Further, this section argues that when the men are in prison they are ‘making good’ (Maruna, 2001) their possible past bad behaviour as a father, and their current absence, in preparation for fatherhood in the community. The result of this was a group of young men who had high hopes of being a ‘good’ father on release which for them meant providing and ‘being there’. It will be shown that the men are clearly envisioning and beginning to fashion themselves (Giordano et al, 2002) with a highly salient fatherhood identity.

5.2 Self-determination
Many authors argue the importance of wanting to stop offending in the process of change (Cusson and Pinsonneault, 1986; Burnett, 1992; Farrall, 2002; Giordano et al, 2002; Maruna et al, 2004a). Giordano et al (2002) believe that openness to change or “up front work” is a critical factor in the process of change: it is “necessary but by itself insufficient” (1001) for change.

This section will consider the young men’s attitudes to offending and fatherhood (and therefore their sense of agency or self-determination) during their prison sentence. This section addresses men’s individual decisions about continuing with their old lifestyle (including their will or openness to change) and their motivations for these decisions.
5.2.1 “That is not what I want anymore, my previous life. It is not worth it” (Phil): A Desire to Change

At the time of being interviewed, shortly before release, the young fathers in prison expressed a desire to change, especially in relation to their offending. The men often spoke about their desire to change without being asked. Some of the men expressed this desire to change as wanting to stop offending whereas for others it was articulated in terms of never wanting to come back to prison. The men spoke with determination about their desire to change:

“Well I won’t offend again no matter how bad things get” (Duncan)

“You won’t see me back in prison, never, ever, ever again” (David)

“I don’t want to come back in here again; it makes you realise doesn’t it?” (Jason)

“I don’t ever want to come back” (Pat)

This attitude was almost universal. All but one of the young men said that they wanted to change. The one exception, Glen, said he would like to change but admitted that if he could not provide for his child legitimately he may commit crime again.

The young men’s desire to stop offending was also a theme in the interviews with key professionals:

“I think their attitude is that they don’t want to [offend] [...] they are a little bit stuck or pulled both ways really that they know they want to move out of it but find it quite difficult to move out of that lifestyle” (Offender Manager 1)

A further theme in the key professional interviews was that they believed the young men when they said they wanted to stop offending adding support to the researcher’s belief that their new attitudes were (at that time) genuine.

“I think you genuinely do [want to change] when you are in it don’t you. You must have done something in your life where you have thought that was so bad and now I am suffering the consequences I am never going to do it again

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14 Quotes from the young men come from prison interviews unless otherwise stated.
and then you are in the position where you do it again” (Voluntary Organisation 2)

5.2.2 “I've got too much out there to come back to places like this” (John): Reasons the young men want to change

A number of reasons were given by the young men for why they wanted to change and, in line with Shover’s (1996) findings, it was often a combination of factors influencing their desire to change. It was common for the men to say that becoming a father had made them want to change.

“I’ve got a daughter to bring up and I’ve got to start thinking about her not about myself” (John)

For the key professionals, becoming a father was the most important element in influencing openness to change. This is because they felt that having a child was the first thing that happens in these men’s lives that they can pinpoint as a way to separate themselves from crime and peers. These men, according to professionals, tend not to have transitional experiences such as university or careers as means to separate themselves and so fatherhood becomes very important.

Part of this change in attitude, for the men in the sample, was experiencing fatherhood within the confinement of prison, rather than merely being a father, that made them rethink their previous lifestyle.

“It probably was when I went to jail and realised [...] I can’t see them when I want to and that, my family, that is what made me realise that I can’t be messing about with all my mates and that” (Jason)

Caroline, Jason’s partner, agreed with this in her reflections of Jason’s experience of prison:

“I think being in prison because Jason likes his own privacy and having to share like cells [...] he didn’t like the way you know because of the toilet and stuff like that erm so I was think it was jail but I think it was being away from the kids because he said, because he like missed a lot with them like being born, 2 Christmases, both their birthdays, like 2 birthdays each and his Nana, like he was very close to his Nana, he lived with his Nana and she sort of brought him up and she died while he was in jail and one of his Grandads dies while he was in jail so it was like everything that could happen happened while he was in jail sort of thing”
This quote demonstrates well the difficulty of establishing causality for decisions to change at the individual level, and shows that it is often a combination of factors as many of these young men have turbulent lives, commonly experiencing death and new life, as well as the pains of imprisonment.

During interviews the men spoke about their experiences of being away from their children and not seeing them every day and others spoke more specifically about missing key milestones as reasons for wanting to change. Having, and realising they have, “too much to lose” was a fairly common theme in the interviews. This quote shows the key theme of missing out on their children’s lives often leads the fathers to reflect:

“when you get out, the little things you appreciate more because in prison they take everything off you, you’ve got set times when you’re seeing your family […] It makes you realise what you’ve got. Before you didn’t realise what you had till it’s gone. It makes you think a lot more and makes you not want to come back […] I’ve lost too much of his life already I don’t want to be away from him another minute” (Andrew)

This missing of key milestones is exacerbated when the men have older children. Some men seemed to think it was the fact that their children were older now that made them want to change. The men with older children described missing out on taking their children to school, and missing their achievements.

“When you sit there for 2 years and you think, I am getting pictures sent in of my little girl in her school uniform […] I am thinking I am missing a lot here, this is not just minor stuff. You are never getting these days back, and my lad is mad for football and I have not seen him play a football game yet […], stuff that you want to see and you want to remember. I’m only getting phone calls about it and photos, so you start picking up on what you are missing out” (Michael)

An additional concern of the young men, as their children grew older, centred on the child’s awareness of their prison sentence and wanting to be a good “father figure” (John).

“She’s three years old now and if I got locked up again she’s going to know that Daddy’s in jail and that’s not a very good role model, I don’t want my daughter coming to jail to see me” (Glen)
Age of children and change was also a theme in some of the key professional interviews when they spoke of the interaction with children being the thing that changes them. An offender manager said that when the men’s children are babies, being a father is more about a label (which prison does not change), whereas when children get older and they can interact with them more, being a father is more about a lifestyle which they then miss. This connecting with older children has also been found in the desistance and fatherhood literature (Moloney et al, 2009; Miller, 2011). It was apparent for some of the men in the sample that as children get older and are able to do more, fathers find it easier to connect with their children.

For those that currently have no contact they feared they would never have contact if they came back to prison.

During the file reading for collection of quantitative data, further noteworthy evidence was observed. Even though there was no explicit question about family and children as a motivator to change on the OASys forms, some offender managers chose to comment on this when completing the OASys assessments for the fathers in prison. It would be interesting to know more about why some offender managers included this information while others did not, and how they gathered this information. Twenty OASys assessments directly said that the young man’s family (child and girlfriend) was a motivator to change. Similarly to interview data, such comments signalling a motivation to change focused on: the men being away from their child/ren and so realising what they were missing and having time to think. Here are some quotes taken from the OASys assessments about motivations to change:

“Experience of prison in terms of being away from daughter made him consider consequences of offending - doesn’t want to return to custody”

“Saw picture of son and didn’t recognise him - this devastated him - realised what missing, loves son and upset missing him growing up”
Similar to the men in Farrall’s (2002) study, the men’s families of formation\(^{15}\) gave the men something they “could lose” if they reoffended and came to prison again. By relating their desire to change to parenthood these men are engaging in a ‘fatherhood-has-changed-me’ narrative (Giordano et al, 2011) or a generative script (Maruna, 2001). Wanting to change for one’s children is seen by Walker (2010) as an example of children providing meaning and purpose to lives which is part of her ‘keeping me straight’ form of generativity. Wanting to change for their children can also be seen as the men increasingly viewing fatherhood more positively. Their attitude towards the ‘hook for change’ has become positive (Giordano et al, 2002).

The language the men use (with phrases such as 'start thinking' and 'makes you think') and their descriptions of wanting to change suggest that change and fatherhood itself are both processes. Change does not come about in a moment; it is a process (Maruna, 2001; Laub and Sampson, 2003). Giordano et al (2002) asserted that the use of present tense among their interviewees indicated an incomplete process of change which is unsurprising in the case of the young men in the present study who are at the beginning of this process by virtue of the fact they are still in prison. Interestingly, some of the men had been in prison before, and been fathers in prison before, indicating change to be a process which may have setbacks.

The data suggests that, for many of the men, events are a catalyst to a rethinking of futures. When these men are experiencing the significant life events such as fatherhood and imprisonment these are acting as 'hooks for change' (Giordano et al, 2002) or 'triggering events' (Laub et al, 1998), as they are certainly thinking about change. This adds support to the notion that the relationship between self-determination and structural events is a two way process. Here is evidence that

\(^{15}\) Families of formation are families that the young men have “formed via marriage, partnership and child-rearing” (Farrall, 2002: 154)
self-determination is often brought on by life events such as imprisonment and fatherhood. There is also evidence in this chapter that self-determination gives meaning to such events.

For some men, often in addition to issues around fatherhood, the desire to change was focused around other significant factors: the effect of their sentence on their partner or other family members; a longer sentence length meant that they had more time away to think; and that they had grown up during the sentence and matured (Glueck and Glueck, 1940).

“My partner as well, I know her, if I get arrested and I come back to jail or come back on recall, I can’t expect them to wait around can I?” (Duncan)

“My head was kind of in the same place because I was only in jail for like 3 months, but this feels weird, this is a long sentence” (Phil)

“Well I was only twenty at the time and now I’ve grown up a bit but at the time I just thought, don’t really know, I just want to be there for him for the downfalls [...] I now realise that I’ve got to step up to my role and be there” (Matthew)

These comments again highlight the complexity of decisions to change: they are multi-faceted.

5.2.3 “I just love my kids” (Jay)

The men spoke about their children with affection and pride and it was very clear in the interviews how much all of the men loved their children. Despite other shortcomings, especially their offending, it is important to emphasise this. Jarvis et al (2004) also found evidence that children are important to young fathers. This love definitely was an influential factor in making the men think about change while they were in prison. This is evident in the discussions above about wanting to change for their children.

Matthew is a good example of this. He presented throughout the interview as a shy, emotionally immature young man but then when speaking about phone calls with
his son from prison he lit up and discussed how he pretends that he watches all the same TV programmes as his son and:

“He asks me if I’ve got all the stuff, I’ve told him that I’ve got Power Rangers pyjamas!”.

When the men were asked to describe their children the majority had something to say but this was not much, usually just a short sentence or a list of a couple of the child’s interests and this was often after further probing:

“She’s just started school, she’s doing ballet classes, she’s great I love her” (Phil)

“Respondent: He’s four and he’s called X
Interviewer: Can you tell me a little bit about him, what’s he in to, what’s he like?
Respondent: Football, Ben 10” (Thomas)

There were exceptions to this and a couple of the young men spoke at length about their children:

“She likes her Barbie’s and Dora, as kids do and that, I don’t know any kids of her age that like rides, you know like Alton Towers and that? She likes all the rides and that [...] she loves it she’s pretty tall as well, she’s up to my hip so she’s going to be a tall girl when she gets older I’m not exactly tall and my Mrs isn’t [...] I’ve read one of the [nursery] report things that they get every month, I read one and she’s doing alright she’s interacting with different people, meeting them and talking and all that” (Max)

It seemed talking about their children was not something the majority of these young men were used to, especially in prison, a fact generally agreed with by key professionals. However, one member of prison staff discussed how there were men who spoke quite powerfully about their emotions although these tended to be mentors and so considered the most confident of the men in prison. Many of the young men said that no one really asks them about their children in prison. One respondent said after the interview that this was the first time in prison he had spoken about his child (and he was about to be released after serving a seven month sentence). They obviously enjoyed talking about their children although seemed to find specific incidents easier to talk about than their children at a general level. Despite a desire to talk about emotions, like the men in the Evans and Wallace (2008) study, talking about emotions for these young fathers is alien and
not a huge part of their cultural milieu and their children are a very emotive subject.

While presentations of hegemonic masculinity, especially the avoidance of emotion, are the norm in prison, as discussed in chapter two, following Evans and Wallace (2008) it seemed that discussions of fatherhood, especially with an outsider, are an area under which they have judged it acceptable to show their emotions. As Pollack (1995) discusses, taking part in research may have been an opportunity for the men in their study to “drop the mask of emotional bravado which leaves them isolated” (67: cited in Evans and Wallace, 2008). The men certainly did discuss their problems and show emotion and this appeared to be a cathartic and positive experience for some of them (see especially the example of Stuart in chapter four).

Importantly, for the men in this study, this love and the sentiments portrayed in the interviews highlighted the emotive power of fatherhood as a basic motivator to change.

5.2.4 “I’ve never wanted to offend” (Pat): A lack of awareness of lifestyle
A small number of men spoke about how offending was never their intention and that instead they offended as a result of going out and getting drunk and into fights.

“Respondent: Well the thing is with me yeah, especially in the past, you don’t think oh I’m going to do that and get arrested do you?
Interviewer: So it’s never planned?
Respondent: No, no I end up scrapping and stuff and I don’t blame anyone for anything it’s all my fault that I’m here but if I go out tomorrow and punch someone’s lights out [interruption] you just don’t know the situation, you know what I mean like if your mates start a fight, imagine if you’re in a pub with ten of your mates and your mate whacks someone and all of your mates are out the back door, and they’re all there fighting and someone starts, you’re not going to stand there and get a kicking are you? Its natural instinct to fight back isn’t it? Like I say it’s all your fault, but I won’t fight when I get out at all, guaranteed” (Duncan)

“Respondent: I went out for one night and because I’d had a load of fucking, a lot of gang fights years down the line it gets worse, I got out of all that had me own place, kids, a job, went out some lad tried to throw a bottle at me, he
gets thrown out of the club his mate come round the corner and I just lost my head
Interviewer: So it wasn’t like you went out and you meant to offend?
Respondent: Obviously I didn’t mean to, if I hadn’t of gone to that club I would probably still be out there now but you can’t not go out because certain people might fucking start” (Pat)

For these men, offending was a spur of the moment decision that involved no rationalisation. Therefore decisions to stop offending would not have helped them, without a recognition that they also need to change their lifestyle. Such circumstances reflect a lack of awareness of the relationship between their lifestyle and offending and raises questions about the process of change when there is limited awareness about the situations and context behind offending which may “not enable them to live up to” decisions (Farrall and Bowling, 1999: 260). As Farrall and Bowling (1999) argue decisions can be “constrained in ways of which the subjects themselves are unaware” (260). The inter-linked nature of offending and ‘going out’ is highlighted by Shover (1996) in his ‘life as party’ discussions.

While some men did recognise the links between ‘going out’ and offending, for others crime was not committed rationally. Shapland and Bottoms (2011) discuss how certain situations, especially “getting caught up in the excitement of the moment” (271), can override good intentions. This relates to Gadd and Farrall’s (2004) discussions of the role of contingency in the process of change. This is because challenges arise (which could possibly be expected) (such as threats on nights out in the cases above) and people do not have time to think about the consequences of their actions to weigh up the costs and benefits. A recognition that they need to change their lifestyle is needed alongside wanting to stop offending.

5.3 Fatherhood as an identity
This chapter has provided evidence to support Giordano et al’s (2002) argument that “up front work” is important: the men in this sample had made the individual cognitive decision to change and were determined to do so. This decision to change, in the sample, had clearly been influenced by life events (Laub and
Sampson, 2003), especially prison and fatherhood. At the same time as these structural changes affected openness to change, in wanting to change for their children the men had developed a more positive attitude towards the structural change of fatherhood (Giordano et al, 2002).

Giordano et al (2002) suggest that a further important type of cognitive transformation is the ability to envision and begin to fashion an appealing and conventional replacement self. This section will show that the men, in beginning to have a more positive outlook on the ‘hook for change’ of fatherhood are “actively embracing it” (Giordano et al, 2002: 1043), and starting to see themselves as having, and acting upon, a conventional identity of father.

In wanting to change, the men have begun to see deviant behaviour as negative (a further type of change according to Giordano et al (2002)) and consequently need a new alternative identity. Fatherhood is discussed in the literature as a possible new identity. Plummer (1994) and Rumgay (2004) both argue that parenthood, being a common identity that most people have access to having been parented, can provide a script, or way of enacting a conventional identity. Similarly, for Maruna (2001) for desistance to take place people need a coherent and resolved ‘self’ and to have restructured their understanding of themselves in order to make sense of their lives/ have a story to take them from one sense of self to another. Earle (2012) using Plummer (1994) argues that parenthood can provide that resolved script or restructured understanding. As will be seen in this section many of the men in this study felt their fatherhood identity acutely as they left prison.

A theme in the key professional interviews was the importance of how the men see themselves as fathers: their fatherhood identity. This quote is a good demonstration of what the professionals said about this:

“and that thing about identity, about them stepping away from themselves, quite a few of the lads haven’t got that clear an identity about where they want to be and then becoming a father becomes quite a strong identity […] I
think also it is a bit of a clean slate for some of them to try and prove yourself in a different way” (Young Father’s Worker)

Using fatherhood identity or a fatherhood script as an alternative conventional self is not without its problems for men in prison and on return to the community. Earle (2012) has suggested caution about concentrating on their fatherhood identity when men are in prison because they are effectively removed from the possibility of acting on it there. Further, Rumgay (2004) asserts that parental scripts that offenders have available to them are only ‘skeleton scripts’ because these people typically have not full access to conventional roles and so creativity, flexibility and resilience are needed to enact the script and fully embrace new identities. For Giordano et al (2002) and Rumgay (2004) taking advantage of a pro social identity is linked to periods when people are open to change and so it is important people have the self-determination and desire to change discussed above.

This section will discuss the fatherhood identity of the young men in the sample. This will start by looking at their interpretations of their fathering before their current prison sentence. This section then goes on to consider how it was difficult for the men to enact their fatherhood identity in prison yet, despite this, prison actually seemed to make fatherhood more salient to the young men. These discussions will concentrate on whether there have been changes in the salience of the fatherhood identity and commitment to this identity. Throughout there will be discussions of which roles, within the fatherhood identity, the men see as being more important.

5.3.1 Presentations of the Ideal Father

The men often portrayed themselves as idealised fathers, especially when talking about the past. However there were occasional explicit and many implicit inferences to them not being this perfect father. These presentations/ imaginings of the ideal father formed the script to enact the fatherhood identity, this is what they wanted
to be; they were envisioning a conventional replacement self (Giordano et al., 2002).

Maruna (2001) discusses how when people are going through the process of change (he is talking about desistance but does argue that his research could be applicable across the social world to people who are going through any type of change) they have to ‘make good’ their past in order to be what they want to be in the future. Therefore by “selectively and creatively reinterpreting past events to suit future aspirations” (Rotenberg, 1987: 50) people can justify their past and not be shamed by it (Maruna, 2001). The current data offers support to this notion as it will be argued that these men are ‘making good’ their past actions as fathers to try and be the ‘good fathers’ that they say they want to be in the future. Maruna (2001) found that, to ‘make good’, desisters presented a distorted picture of reality and “the highly positive accounts bore almost no resemblance to the ugly realities of the ex-offenders’ lives” (9) whereas the opposite was found in the accounts of those still actively offending. The contradictions and inferences that these men were not the perfect father might actually better reflect the reality of the situation.

This sub-section will first discuss these presentations of themselves as ideal fathers and then try and look at in what ways these men ‘make good’.

5.3.1.1 “Over the moon” at becoming a father

When the young fathers were asked how they felt when they first found out they were going to be a dad a clear majority were extremely pleased at the idea. They reported being “over the moon”, “excited”, “buzzing”, and “happy”. The rest of the sample that were initially shocked, scared or unhappy at the news of their partner’s pregnancy said that they quickly became attuned to the idea and were soon excited by the prospect of fatherhood:

“It was a shock at first because she was on the pill but then we both agreed we wanted to keep it and from then we’ve always wanted him” (Andrew)
There was no real pattern between how the men felt and the age they were when they became a father for the first time. Two men did however put it down to their age as to why they were scared at first:

“Scared, I really was, I was fourteen when she got pregnant, I’d just turned fifteen when she gave birth and I was like ‘wow I’ve got to grow up!’” (Max)

The young men’s answers do have to be taken with some caution as Nelson (2004) states:

“It is certainly problematic to read backwards from a young man’s reactions after the fact to his intentions beforehand (particularly when that reaction is solicited after the child is born)” (Nelson, 2004: 433)

Therefore while on the surface the men did seem to welcome the idea of fatherhood, the ambivalent and slightly negative reactions of seven of the men were perhaps the more considered reactions. The men who said that they were completely happy may have been offering what they thought was a socially acceptable response to the question or remembering the events with nostalgia (both of these issues are discussed below). There is a certain naivety to those men who admitted to no anxiety both around what becoming a parent means, and also in the fact that they may think admitting to being worried about having a child made them a bad parent.

The literature on men’s discovery of imminent fatherhood (Lewis, 1986; Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Miller, 2011) suggests that during this time men typically go through a range of emotions and apprehension is common before a child is born. This challenge of emotions was to some extent also shown by the interviewees. However one of the key professionals felt that for young offenders it is simple, they wholly welcome the idea of fatherhood, it comes very naturally to them:

“they seem much more to embrace parenthood earlier than say a comparative group of people who have say gone through higher education for example [...] the fear of becoming a dad they don’t have it, the one good thing about them is that they love the idea of being dads, they absolutely totally ascribe to that role, that idea of a dad and a young dad” (OM1).
This professional said that they sometimes took on the role “a little bit too much” referring to the many men they worked with who started relationships and immediately took on a step-father role to the children of their girlfriend.

Nelson (2004) speaks about this and concludes from his literature review on low-income fathers that this group place a higher value on children and fatherhood. While this work looks at low-income fathers it is comparable to young imprisoned fathers because we know that the later tend to be unemployed and consequently on a low income (SEU, 2002).

**5.3.1.2 “Everything good” during early experiences of fatherhood**

When discussing their experiences of actually fathering their children before prison, the men’s responses were still on the whole understandably nostalgic. When speaking about being a dad before prison the men spoke with an ‘everything good, no bad bits’ attitude. The men were asked what the best and worst bits were about being a dad in the community before prison. All of the men said that there were positives and for five of the men being a father before prison was all positive and there were no negatives. The positives that the men stated were around bringing a life into the world, showing them off, watching them grow up, their ‘firsts’ (steps, words, first time they call you ‘dad’), being able to shape someone’s future, spending time together and doing normal family things, the fact it helped them grow up and just that they loved them.

“I don’t know just having the responsibility over someone else you get to shape the way they’re going to go point them in the right direction” (Thomas)

“Good things? Everything is good about being a Dad but it’s just there, when I play with my daughter and see that she smiles and it makes you happy, as long as my daughter’s happy and she’s got what she needs, as long as she’s happy” (Glen)

“Watching her grow up and watching her first walk catching her first word, everything, everything that you’ve supposed to do with your child when you’re a Dad [...] her first scribble, she’s dead funny” (Phil)

This last quote especially sounds particularly idealised and fits in with the soap media portrayal of the perfect father that Lupton and Barclay (1997) discuss.
Further evidence that this is an idealised and nostalgic view, rather than a true reflection of what happened is that it did not encourage the men to desist from offending. There is further discussion of this in section 5.3.1.5.

When asked about any negatives of being a father much of what was discussed showed a caring and nurturing attitude rather than true negatives. For example they discussed money worries (and not being able to provide for their child), and the worry when their children were poorly:

“When your child gets poorly you worry, don’t you? I’m only young me, when you’re young yourself sometimes you don’t understand things isn’t it? But you still start to worry it’s like when I used to do things and my Mum used to worry you think oh she’s just being boring but now I’ve got my own daughter I worry my head off all the time” (Duncan)

Andrew described a negative of having to put on a brave face when his mother died so as to not upset his child.

This caring and nurturing side shown by the above examples and the recognition by some that having a child contributed to maturity are examples of generativity (Maruna, 2001; Walker, 2010). The young men learning to care for others and being less self-centred is part of their development into adults (Erikson, 1982; Hawkins et al, 1995; Marsiglio, 1995b).

5.3.1.3 “Did everything”: The men’s role as fathers before prison
The men were asked to describe what they did with their children before prison to try and understand what type of father they had been. The most common response to this question was that they did ‘everything’. Elaborating on this the young men mainly spoke about taking their children out to places, for example the park, amusements, swimming and playing with them.

“I used to take him on his little bike because he was only young so I used to strap him in, take him on his little bike, used to take him to X park because he likes lights and everything and there used to be lights flashing and stuff like that so I’d take him to R Country Park he likes feeding the ducks, he loves animals so used to take him to places like that” (Andrew)

“I just take her to some Wacky Warehouse things, places like that give her a day out obviously I can’t take my son he’s not old enough yet but when he
gets old enough he’ll be able to come in and that, I take her to the football and that [...] on a Saturday or Sunday she knows the games on, she knows the days of the week she puts it on and she’s like ‘come on Dad we’re going football’ and I’m like that ‘are we? It’s not today, its tomorrow’ and she’s like ‘oh’” (Max)

One key professional spoke about the advantage of this tendency to father outside of the home being that it ensures interaction between the fathers and their children, whereas at home they may be sat in the same room but doing completely different things. These are similar findings to research on fathers in the general population that has concluded that much fathering takes place outside the home and is activity based, due to balancing work and fatherhood and the fact the home is often a female domain (Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Miller, 2011). Further, in relation to what men do with their children Lamb (1986) discusses as a proportion of total amount of father-child interaction the major part is play.

It was only when they were asked specifically that they mentioned nurturing aspects such as being involved in feeds and nappy changing. A couple of the young men said that they would not change nappies, but the majority were involved:

“Interviewer: What sort of things did you do with her, what was your role as a father?
Respondent: Just sitting down and reading to her, read to her, play with her dolls and [...] take her to the swimming baths [...] Interviewer: What about the other things like changing her nappy and feeding her?
Respondent: Oh yeah at the start I was a bit scared to do things like bath her but then I had to get into it, change the nappies and all that sort of thing, it was hard at the start” (Glen)

It was unclear in the data whether the young fathers had problems talking about the more intimate tasks or whether they did not do them. The latter shows a more traditional and gendered view of parenting. Burgess (1997) discussed the idea that images of fathers in the carer role are often negative. Lupton and Barclay (1997) found that men are capable of taking on a nurturing role and in reality experience satisfaction when they succeed with a care task.
There were a few exceptions to this and a couple of interviewees did speak about being involved in the ‘care’ role without prompting. Furthermore, one of the men, Thomas, was the main carer to his child as their mother had left when the child was three months old. Two of the men (Michael and Max) mentioned that they provided a lot of the childcare as their girlfriends worked. ‘Being there’ for these young men was clearly about spending time with their children, particularly doing fun things, more so that nurturing them. This ‘fun’ form of ‘being there’ was clearly at the top of the fatherhood roles salience hierarchy for many of the interviewed young men.

Jason felt he had been very involved with his son before coming to prison. He said that he was with him every day and involved in all aspects of his care and they did ‘normal things’ for example going to the park. He said that he had always enjoyed spending time with him. Caroline, Jason’s girlfriend and the only child’s mother that was interviewed described Jason’s fathering before prison and painted a different picture to the men above:

“When he was in he would take notice of him and have a little play with him or whatever but not really that much because he was too busy out with his mates and stuff so he didn’t really see like a whole lot of him […] he wouldn’t really take him out anywhere unless like he would probably take him to his mums and then leave him at his mums or something daft like that” (Caroline)

Jason did admit to this when he was interviewed in the community.

Throughout his interviews Michael spoke about how much he was there for his children, spending lots of time with his son, especially supporting his football career and taking his son and daughter out regularly. Yet there were contradictions throughout Michael’s interviews making comments such as:

“like if I leave it three days [without seeing daughter] when I do see her[daughter] she is over the moon, you know what I mean, but then if I see her every day it is normal […] it is just like we are plodding along. So I like the gap” (Michael – Community)

He also didn’t tell his son that he would be at football matches instead:
“I will just pull up and I will be on the sideline and I won’t even shout him and then he looks round and he sees me and then he puts his head on, he tries and gets even further” (Michael – Community)

It appeared for Michael ‘being there’ was about the benefits of this to him rather than to his children. Michael indicates a somewhat shallow and selfish father-child relationship in some regards. However Michael was the exception within the data rather than the norm.

Some men expressly admitted that they struggled to be the ideal father before prison and did not have much of a role with their child. David split up with his child’s mother when the child was 16 months old and she would not allow contact after this. He had been involved for the baby’s first three months and had prioritised going out with his friends over being a father and now regretted this. He still sent money to the mother of the child.

"Respondent: yeah like I said its, I didn't really see her because of my going out all the time and all the stuff like that, it is hard to explain it, she was there but I was never there
Interviewer: So she was living with you
Respondent: yeah but I was never there if you know what I mean, I was doing other stuff" (David)

A second man, Jay, admitted that he was selfish and was more about himself than his children and so was not very active in their lives before prison. Two men, Matthew and John, stated that their children were only babies before prison so there was not much they could do with them. This felt slightly like the men were trying to offer excuses for not being fully involved. However the literature supports the notion that it is difficult for fathers in general to achieve their fathering expectations with babies. The activity-based parenting that many fathers do means they are not as involved with babies as much as with toddlers (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). Stuart, said he did not see his child much because he was at work six days a week and the child was in bed by the time he got home but did take him to the park on Sundays and “loved taking him out”.

Others while not directly admitting their faults as parents did admit that in the future they needed to stay away from peers, therefore admitting their flaws indirectly. This shows the conflict that often exists with other identities, for example friend.

5.3.1.4 “I want my daughter to have what she needs” (Glen): Providing for their children

Only six of the men mentioned that they had provided financially for their children prior to prison. All of these six either sold drugs or committed acquisitive crimes.

Three of these men linked this financial provision for their child to their offending:

“I wanted her to have everything she wanted so I was getting her it by grafting if I can say that if you know what I mean by that? [...] I was going out selling drugs, anything to get money so that I could look after them give her whatever she needed [...] You only got it through selling drugs and I always thought that was natural “ (Max)

While it could be argued that the other three did offend to provide, as they did not say so it suggests this was not the case. Instead it appeared that the offending was more integrated into their lifestyles, especially their spending time with peers.

For a small minority of the young fathers it appeared that providing was at the top of the role salience hierarchy perhaps even more so than ‘being there’ as they are risking ‘not being there’ by providing using illegal means. Of the remaining nine who did not mention the ‘provider’ role, the majority (seven) were in prison for violent crimes. Only two mentioned that they worked legally and did not link this to providing for their children. Therefore for the majority of the interviewees providing was not mentioned in their description of life before prison. The provider role was not near the top of the role salience hierarchy within their fatherhood identity, other roles were more important unlike discussions in the literature on non-offending fathers (Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Miller, 2011). As media images are characterised by the providing father (Lupton and Barclay, 1997), men who did not work had less obvious scripts or images to compare themselves to.
Michael provides a good example of a father who could and did provide for his children, and saw this as a very important role. Throughout his interviews there were many references to how much he had earned through crime and hidden away:

“So I said look [to my partner], ‘there’s the house, there is enough money to look after yourself for 6 months, do you know what I mean, you need any more tell me and I will get my brother to go and dig it back up”

There were also many references to using this money to provide for his children and whole family. Michael’s offending was very much entrenched and a part of him. For Glen providing was about appearances rather than the welfare of his daughter:

“Even though people say money’s not everything [...] I like to look good and with my daughter I want to make sure she looks good” (Glen)

Despite these findings, the norm in the data seemed to be that prior to prison providing was not a key fatherhood role for the young men.

5.3.1.5 Presentation as ideal father: Discussion

The men covered the whole spectrum of involvement from none to being their child’s main carer. There did seem to be more focus on the role of being the ‘fun’ parent and taking the child out and, for a minority, being the provider. This reflected a more traditional and gendered view of parenting. What was apparent was that the men did seem to want to have a role in their children’s lives. There were contradictions in the data as while the men painted a picture of involvement, there was also data (and often from the same men) that showed that what the men did as fathers before prison was quite distant and disengaged. This discussion section will now consider the possible reasons for such contradictions.

This idealised view of themselves as fathers, and clichés in their narratives, before prison might be because they wanted to give socially desirable answers in the interview. Most people will try and present idealised images of self to strangers. However, the admission of non-desirable traits elsewhere in the interviews (such as
discussion of their crimes) and how the men presented in the interviews seems to suggest that this is not the case. The use of clichés could also show a lack of insight into fatherhood.

As they were speaking of a time before prison they were speaking with nostalgia, people may remember things more perfectly when they are removed from the situation or when referring to something they no longer have. One reason that interviews were planned with their children’s mothers and other supportive people was to explore alternative views on the reality of the situation and in such circumstances it would have been interesting to see if their partners supported the data. Unfortunately only two such interviews were carried out. These on the whole did support what the men said but there were a couple of discrepancies that have been highlighted. The main focus of the research was on how the men see themselves and their social world.

In line with Maruna’s (2001) discussion of ‘making good’ for desistance, one interpretation is that these young men really wanted to believe that they had been good fathers before prison because this is what they wanted to be on release. Therefore, these men may have distorted the past or selected only those events that support being a good father. Maruna (2001) argues people find positive qualities even in negative experiences to show that the ‘new’ me is the ‘true’ me and ‘good’ elements have always been there. The men’s descriptions show how their goal of a ‘good father’ identity is what they were all along. There is no evidence that these men had changed permanently but there is evidence that they were thinking about it and had a positive outlook.

However, in addition to this there are added issues over guilt. Some of their presentations as an ideal father may be due to the guilt that they are currently not able to fully participate in this role. Being an ideal father is contradicted by the prisoner status.
These presentations of the ideal father also reflect what they see as a father identity and which roles they see as more salient (Ihinger-Tallman et al, 1995). Their imaginings of life before prison as a father send the message that what they saw as important is being very involved, loving and nurturing. This was their script for enacting their identity.

Scripts for enacting identity are also important in these descriptions of fatherhood. As mentioned in chapter three scripts provide people with socially recognised behavioural routines that are triggered by interpersonal or environmental cues (Abelson, 1976; Rumgay, 2004). These scripts are connected to identities. Rumgay (2004) argues that some people have ‘skeleton’ scripts and therefore are missing some situations and interactions. It could be argued that the contradictions in the men’s accounts of being fathers are due to only having skeleton scripts. This may be because they did not have a father who provided them with the scripts. As is discussed in chapter seven, considerations of their own fathers by the men, in comparison with their mothers, was limited. It may be that the men want to present as ideal, and ‘make good’ but do not have a complete picture of what ideal is and so this leads to contradictions. Or it may be that the men carry out a role with their children but they do not have the language to describe it. As it appears they are learning about being a father as they go along, this is a possible reason that desistance is not an immediate reaction to becoming a father.

5.4 Fatherhood: Increase in Salience
This section provides data to show that it could be expected that men’s fatherhood identity may decrease in salience in prison (Marsiglio, 1995b; Dyer, 2005). For the men in the sample the data suggests reactions are mixed and the opposite can happen whereby prison reaffirms men’s fatherhood identity.
The concept of identity salience means that people behave in different ways depending on which identity is more salient to them. Identity theorists emphasise the idea that if fatherhood is high in a person’s identity salience, and people are committed to this identity, then this affects their choice of roles (when there is more than one to enact) and choosing productive and responsible roles associated with fatherhood will increase the likelihood of desistance and reduce the negative influence of peers (Ihinger-Tallman et al, 1995; Marsiglio, 1995a; Uggen et al, 2004; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009).

Clarke et al (2005) and Dyer (2005) discuss how, in prison, men are unable to enact the fatherhood identity and the identity confirmation process is interrupted. As such, there is incongruence between behaviour and the identity standard and it may be expected that fatherhood identity salience will reduce, or disappear in prison, or that people will lower their identity standards and so behaviour less associated with being a good father becomes acceptable. Dyer (2005) does say that reactions are dependent on what fatherhood behaviours are affected, men’s ability to cope with stress and the extensiveness of the identity. Clarke et al (2005) say for some men prison can increase the salience of the fatherhood identity.

Firstly this section will discuss why it is possible men’s fatherhood identity would become less salient or even non-existent in prison before moving on to discuss the reality of the situation for the men in this study.

5.4.1 “You can’t really do anything, can you?” (Andrew): An Inability to ‘be there’

The men on the whole expressed helplessness, worry and upset when discussing fathering from prison mainly because prison acted as a barrier to ‘being there’ for their children and to their fatherhood identity. As with Meek’s (2007a) and Walker’s (2010) studies, descriptions were characterised by negativity, loss and failure.
Young men with families finding prison hard came across during the fieldwork and in interviews with the key professionals. When starting the fieldwork the prison staff were concerned over self-harm among fathers in the establishment as a means to cope with not having accessing to children and the breakdown of relationships with their children’s mothers (as discussed in chapter four). A member of prison staff spoke about this issue further, saying self-harm over child non-contact was not common but there have been incidents. Liebling’s (1992) study on suicides among young prisoners offers further support to this.

The young men admitted to finding being a father in prison “tough”, “difficult”, “horrible” and “hard”. The main reasons for the young men finding it so hard were that they felt helpless (that they should be there supporting their families and they are not able to be), that they were missing out on things (mainly key moments and events in their children’s lives) and just generally not being able to spend every day with their children.

“It’s difficult; it’s not nice it’s horrible [...] like you wanting to do more for them want to be there [...] The only thing you can do is tell them that you love them really and just try to spend as much time as you can with them on town visits or whatever. Other than that you can’t really do anything so it’s horrible, it’s horrible to be in prison and be a Dad because it’s the first thing you think of when you wake up and the last thing you think about before you go to sleep is your son, your family” (Andrew)

“Horrible [...] You miss, it’s not like kids can wait for things to happen. It’s like my son I missed his first ever step, man and my daughter’s first day at nursery and stuff like that it’s not very nice. If I could do anything I wouldn’t be in prison right now [...] I rung her [daughter] up and she said ‘how come you don’t take me nursery like the other Dads?’ I was like oh, it wounded me it did I was wounded I didn’t know what to do or say. I said ‘it won’t be long now’” (Max)

This data shows the difficulties (discussed further in chapter three) men have enacting their father identity in prison. The use of words like ‘wounded’ further highlights the depth of emotion that these young fathers often felt for their children. The key professionals also agreed that young fathers find the experience of being a dad in prison hard:

“The ones I have worked with have been sent down after the babies are born. They haven’t said loads about it but I don’t think it has been the most
pleasant. And then there has been stuff like, I remember a lad he was sent down and the baby was born while he was sent down and then the prison officers sort of then coincidentally losing the photos of the baby and things like that and I think there is probably an element of stirring goes on” (YFW)

Worry and helplessness was especially used when discussing their children being ill.

This presentation of anxiety in prison and admissions of distress and guilt over being away from their children seems to suggest that the experience of prison for these men reaffirms their fatherhood identity (Clarke et al, 2005). There were a lot of ‘should be’ phrases showing the guilt and helplessness they feel about being in prison and not a ‘good’ father by their family’s side. They seemed frustrated at not being able to enact the ‘being there’ role of their fatherhood identity.

A number of the young men felt that being in prison meant that they were not qualified to say much about their children as they had missed out on so much of their lives.

“I don’t know, I haven’t really seen him have I because I have been locked up” (Thomas)

“really I haven’t had a lot of time with my little girl. She knows who I am, she comes up and visits me and has photos and all that so she remembers me, but I haven’t had time to bond properly with her you know so I couldn’t say really what she is all about” (Michael)

“He doesn’t really do much. He’s just starting to talk at the minute, he’s not really talking properly, I can’t really tell you what he likes and what he doesn’t because I’ve been in prison haven’t I? I know he likes chips and that, like all kids do!” (Max)

5.4.3 “I missed my son’s birth”

Five of the interviewees had had children born while they were in prison and a further interviewee whose girlfriend was pregnant was facing the prospect of his child being born while he was in prison. This experience seemed to add to their feelings of guilt and helplessness as they were unable to provide support to their girlfriends.
“I didn’t know what to do with myself I really didn’t I was just devastated I missed my son’s birth and everyone in [previous prison], like it’s all set out in blocks and everyone who was on the blocks was proper supportive of me [...] they were like don’t get yourself mad they’ll come and see you soon, it won’t be long and then it was like, I think the thirteenth night I was in there, and an officer came to my door and he opened the door and said come to the office X and I was like why? I’ve got to tell you something and I went to the office and he said pick the phone up. I picked the phone up and it was my girlfriend on the other side I was like no way! They let her ring up and that, I was happy then because I said to her listen what’s his fucking date of birth because I wasn’t too sure if he had been born that day or the day before, she told me all that” (Max)

“Respondent:  I was angry, upset
Interviewer:  How did you find out that he’d been born?
Respondent: On social I phoned my girlfriend and she said I think I’m going into labour I phoned her in the morning again and she said I’ve had the baby on my own!” (Peter)

Jason’s second child, a daughter, was born while he was in prison on remand. He was told by an officer the morning after she was born and then was given a phone call later that day. Jason felt annoyed and ‘bad’ for his girlfriend and baby that he was not there at the birth. Caroline, his partner, said of this phone call:

“I had all these emotions and then when I rang him it didn’t feel real, it was just dead weird. I think I was okay sat on the phone to him and then when I got off the phone it was weird because I just wanted him to see her and be there and see her, like I described her to him and stuff, it was just weird” (Caroline)

Caroline felt the prison could not really have done any more to make the process easier as they let Jason stay on the phone as long as he wanted and did not make him use his credit for the phone call.

Jason said he met his daughter when she was two weeks old. However Caroline said she was six weeks old because Caroline felt the baby was too small to be taken into a prison at first so waited till she was a bit bigger. Caroline felt that such visits could maybe be separate from the visits hall because she felt Jason was awkward meeting his baby for the first time in front of everyone else:

“he looked awkward when he had hold of them because it was like he felt that they were just watching him constant, proper like what are you doing and watching him how he was and because he is not really proper outgoing as it is really Jason anyway he can be quite shy sometimes so I think like when he seen [daughter], he only held her for a second really and then he put her
back down. I think he just felt I don’t know like he was awkward I don’t know [...] yeah and I think when he seen [daughter] for the first time I could see it in his eyes that he just wanted to burst into tears, but he was proper like just you know because he wasn’t really saying anything. So yeah I think they should change like that, you know they could try and do something with that part of the thing” (Caroline)

This quote demonstrates difficulties expressing and confronting emotion in public and the importance of prison supporting emotionally immature men in fatherhood.

Max, in contrast, found the first meeting with his child to be a positive experience:

“She [girlfriend] brought him down for a visit [...] It was the fastest hour of my life! It really was it felt like I’d only been sat there for a minute [...] I was relieved if you know what I mean, stress had been lifted. I was just worried about if anything goes wrong and I can’t be there but no it was alright, my girlfriend and my son were alright [...] I was surprised the first time I ever held my son. I was surprised that he took to me because it’s a new voice isn’t it and he was sat there and he just knew straight away and he started giggling and moving trying to get comfy and that he took to me straight away, my daughter didn’t even take to me like that, must be a father son thing” (Max)

The above quotes also show that different prisons deal with this issue in varied ways. Some seemed to support the men through it and bend the rules and make sure they know the minute the child is born whereas others relied on normal contact procedures.

Mark, an expectant father, has experienced much guilt during his prison sentence over not being there for his heavily pregnant girlfriend and not being able to watch ‘the bump’ grow. He was due to be released 3 days before baby was due:

“Respondent: Yeah but obviously for the last three months I haven’t I can’t be there to help her and that in the late stages and that’s the most important part isn’t it? [...] Interviewer: Obviously there was a time when you wouldn’t have been out for the birth how did that make you feel Respondent: Horrible, every father wants to be there for their baby don’t they when its born that’s why I was counting on my tag I had to be good and hoping that I’d get it and now I’m happy” (Mark)

One key professional spoke about the importance of watching one’s child being born. They described this as a pivotal moment in desistance as it is a key moment of change. Therefore if they miss this, they miss out on this opportunity for change.
This section again represents the depth of emotion involved in fatherhood for these young men. This emotion is something which contributed to them reassessing their lifestyles. A further implication of these findings is the fact that the prison system is limited in supporting some aspects of new fatherhood. It does not make allowances for men to be present at the birth of their children. There are potentially some important learning points for the prison here as missing the birth of their children seemed a key, defining moment for these men and the prison could have taken more advantage of this.

5.5 “I just want to be a father to my lad” (Howard): A Desire to be a ‘Good’ Father on release
For many of the men in the sample the combination of wanting to change and wanting to do so for their child mainly because of their experiences in prison, culminated in their envisioning and beginning to fashion an appealing and conventional self (Giordano et al, 2002). This is evidenced by the way they spoke about their hopes for release in terms of fatherhood. Similarly to Meek’s (2007a) findings, they wanted to be ‘good’ fathers to their children which for the men in this sample, as will be shown, meant being in employment and ‘being there’ for their children, both physically and emotionally. Like Shapland and Bottoms (2011) the men had quite realistic hopes with limited aspirations.

While becoming a father literally encompasses an event, understanding the role and taking on the mind-set of being a father takes time and is a process (Giordano et al, 2002; Miller, 2011). As Giordano et al (2002) state: “the internalisation of this new status [of parent] is far from automatic” (1040). Within the sample there were clear examples of the men beginning to fashion (Giordano et al, 2002) an alternative identity of a father.
5.5.1 “In a job providing for him” (Andrew): Employment

When asked what they hoped for in terms of fatherhood, the vast majority of the young men’s replies centred on employment. They saw providing for their children as a main factor in their role on return to the community. Employment was a major hope for these men and was a core element of being a ‘good’ father. This is perhaps not surprising given the ‘breadwinner’ focus has consistently been the predominant characteristic of a ‘good’ father (Marsilio, 1995a; Lamb, 1986; Dowd, 2000). However, what is surprising is that ‘providing’ was not a feature of their life as a father for the majority when the men discussed fatherhood before, or whilst in, prison. The apparent change in the importance of providing signifies a change in the role salience hierarchy for many of these men.

Even though few had worked before prison the men were hopeful about gaining employment upon release; some recognised it might be difficult but many were quite naïve and thought they would gain employment easily. The prison added to the hopefulness as some thought they would gain employment using the vocational qualifications they had gained in prison. Andrew was unemployed prior to prison and said that it is “not easy” getting a job but felt that he now had a good chance due to the qualifications he had got in prison and was not going to give up:

“Yeah I’ve been doing X course, [name] helped me in [prison] so I think I’ve got a good chance of getting a job. If that doesn’t work out I’ve passed my PTS and my railway course, NVQ level 2 for the railway and [name] helped me with that and he’ll give me some contacts to go out so I’ll try there as well, if that doesn’t work I’ll try X, I’ll just keep trying, just keep trying till I get a job” (Andrew)

Jay had also been unemployed prior to prison but thought due to the qualifications he had gained in prison “it will be alright” finding employment. This was similar to Thomas who had previously had “the occasional bit of work now and again” and now thought he would be “okay” gaining employment as he “come in here with practically nothing and now I’ve got my level one in maths and level one in English
plus I’ve got car valeting and a couple of others” and again said he would keep trying. Max was unemployed before prison but said,

“My Dad’s got me a job lined up and then I’ve found myself two jobs applying just off reading papers and ringing them up and that I’m hoping to do. One of them is a scaffolding job which is hard graft but it pays good money and then one of them is working as a mechanic in a shop, garage and my Dad’s got me one driving fork lifts” (Max).

Phil, who had never worked, had a job lined up for release with his sister. This theme of family members finding the men work came up numerous times and so like Farrall (2004) asserts families represent a form of social capital. Those who had worked before prison and had jobs lined up for release tended to work with family members or friends of family members. This touches on the important role on informal support which will be a major focus of chapter seven. Self-belief around employment was surprisingly high.

There were men that recognised that as they had not worked before (or some where they had worked previously) finding a job on release would be “not easy”, “hard” and “awkward”.

“I’m hoping and I’m going to try my best to see if that happens but like I say it’s hard getting a job. It’s hard for a lot of people so it’s going to be even harder for myself” (Glen).

There appeared to be a lack of recognition of the fact that a criminal record and prison sentence can make it harder for people to find employment (Fletcher et al, 2001; Rolfe, 2001).

5.5.2 “Just being there with him” (Stuart)

These men also wanted to 'be there' for their children as this was part of being a 'good' father, thereby reflecting a more modern approach to fatherhood (Miller, 2011). When asked what they hope for in terms of fatherhood, replies focused on spending time with their children:

“Doing things with her like taking her to school, taking her to her ballet classes, just doing everything” (Phil)
"Respondent: Just be a good father figure
Interviewer: What do you think that means?
Respondent: Supporting her, making her happy, taking her nice places things like that, making her future better" (John)

The men who were not in contact with their children were going to try and gain access upon released. Jonathan, is an interesting case in this respect. Before prison, Jonathan believed he was a father. While he had been in prison he found out that another man had done a DNA test which tested positive for the child he had thought was his. Before prison, Jonathan also knew that his ex-partner was pregnant. He then found out, during his sentence, through Facebook (as they were on such bad terms) that this ex-partner had given birth to his daughter. Even Jonathan wanted a fatherhood identity on release despite the difficulties he had experienced and had enrolled on the parenting course.

There were exceptions to this and examples of men who perhaps had not yet fully seen the development of fatherhood as a good thing and almost certainly had not seen “the new state of affairs as fundamentally incompatible with continued deviation” (Giordano et al, 2002: 1001). Adam, an expectant father, while envisioning a “happy loving” relationship with his “little angel” also admitted that he wanted this during the week but at the weekend was going to be himself and go out with his friends.

When assessing the impact of their imprisonment on their relationships with their children the men believed nothing has changed and that they are still close to their children. They thought it would be easy to re-establish relationships upon their return to the community. The majority of the men who spoke about whether they thought prison had affected their relationship with their children thought it definitely had not. The remainder admitted prison may have had a small impact on relationships but maintained they were still close to their children. The reasons they put forward for this were: their girlfriend’s efforts in maintaining contact and an
awareness of who ‘daddy’ is; the town and home visits from the prison; and the age of the children:

“I don’t think it has [affected our relationship], me and X have always coped and when he comes and sees me it’s still the same” (Thomas)

“I don’t know, I was worried she wouldn’t remember me at all but my Mrs has made sure that she hasn’t so I’ve been lucky really. She’s always showing her pictures of me and all that, spoke to me on the phone and stuff so I’ve been lucky. She’s not been affected too much” (Duncan)

“No it won’t have [impacted on our relationship] because she knows who I am and it will just go straight back to what it was before just interactive and do everything that we did before” (Max)

“I thought that we weren’t going to be as close when I got out but like not back to normal but we are close” (Glen – speaking about home visits)

Similarly, the men most commonly thought it would be ‘easy’ to re-establish relationships with their children upon their return to the community:

“Easy [...] because I’m speaking to them all the way through my sentence” (Jason)

“I’m already close to him as it is but I’ll be even closer when I get out because I’ll be able to do a lot more things with him see him every day and everything because we just click together even on my town visits and my home leave. He enjoys it he can’t wait for me to get out and I can’t wait to get out to him either” (Andrew)

When asked about worries that they had in terms of being a father on release the majority of the young men said they had no worries:

“I am not worried about anything because I am going back to my family” (Stuart)

“I’m just worried about my Mrs really, I know I’ll be able to look after the baby really” (Adam – expectant father)

This finding is in contrast to Meek’s (2007a) research on young fathers in prison where more than a third feared being a bad or horrible father. Again, in general, the men’s self-efficacy was also high around being a ‘good’ father: they believed that it would happen and they were capable of producing this desired result. The worries the men did express were more general about reintegration.
5.6 Discussion
This chapter has set out a number of key arguments. First, this chapter has argued that self-determination (or deciding to change) is important to the change process. Both the data and the desistance literature suggest that young fathers and people in prison often decide they want to change in a number of ways, and in general people do not want to remain offenders (Burnett, 1992; Farrall, 2002; Giordano et al, 2002). These men had the potential to change because motivation, an openness to change and self-determination were present as they were about to leave prison (Giordano et al, 2002; Maruna et al, 2004a). This can be likened to ideas of primary desistance because this should result in a “lull or crime free gap” (Maruna et al, 2004a: 19), however short. In fact all of the men went a period of time upon release without getting arrested for an offence.

A desire to change is often because of ‘life events’ such as fatherhood and imprisonment away from children. By virtue of being in prison the men have had cognitive reflections. This is a form of generativity as the men’s children are providing purpose and helping them to develop into mature men (Maruna, 2001; Giordano et al, 2002; Walker, 2010). The young fathers had experienced “a period of re-evaluation” (Farrall and Bowling, 1999: 260).

Wanting to change for their children reflects a more positive attitude towards fatherhood (Giordano et al, 2002). Again prison contributed to this. The inability of fathers to ‘be there’ for their children and missing key moments, especially, for some the births of their children, appears to, for many men, have the effect of increasing their openness to change. This in turn gives a new meaning to the life event of fatherhood, even though some of them have been fathers for a number of years, and increases the salience of their fatherhood identity. The men want to be ‘good’ fathers on release from prison.
The data shows that two of Giordano et al’s (2002) types of cognitive transformations (openness to change and attitude towards ‘hooks for change’) are very much interlinked and reciprocal. The men’s attitude towards fatherhood makes them more open to change and being open to change gives them a more positive attitude towards fatherhood. This shows that an openness to change is needed for taking advantage of pro-social identities.

Enacting a further dimension of generativity: hands on caring for, being interested in and supporting children – what might be termed ‘tools of generativity’ (Walker, 2010) - is challenging in the prison setting. Authors have argued that when there is a misalignment between reflected appraisals of behaviour and identity standard this often results in a change in the identity standard (Burke, 1991; Dyer, 2005). In prison the men cannot receive appraisals as they are not fathering and they also cannot change their output behaviours to change reflected appraisals (Burke, 1991). Consequently, some men will abandon their fatherhood identity (Dyer, 2005). However like some of the men in the Dyer (2005) study and in the Clarke et al (2005) study, prison for the men in this sample seemed to largely reaffirm their fatherhood identity. The data presented above showed that for many men they used their time in prison to reflect on their fatherhood identity and for many it reinforced this identity as they ‘realised’ what they had missed out on by being in prison. This seemed to be the case for these men because they had used their time in prison to reflect and clearly saw their release as a new start and were measuring their identity standard against what they planned to do. The men’s attitude reflects a high level of commitment to their fatherhood identity as they are not letting themselves be affected by the incongruence (Ihinger-Tallman et al, 1995).

Fatherhood status for them had moved to the top of the salience hierarchy of identities due to cognitive reflections during imprisonment and this also helped

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16 This was admittedly when talking to the researcher about being a father, thus taking part in the research may have evoked a particular facet of their identity.
ensure a positive reaction to the incongruence (Ihinger-Tallman et al, 1995; Dyer, 2005).

The men have therefore developed an appealing alternative identity and are clearly envisioning and beginning to fashion this replacement identity (Giordano et al, 2002).

The men have begun scripting and have developed a consistent storyline that they have been ‘good’ or ‘super-fathers’ all along (Maruna, 2001). Their discussions also show what they see as a ‘good’ father, they see providing and ‘being there’ physically and emotionally as the two most salient roles under this identity. It is while they have been in prison that they have realised the importance of providing and employment to fatherhood.

Becoming a ‘good’ father appeared to be the main aim of many of these men and part of this was stopping offending, stopping seeing their peers. Therefore it could be argued that desistance is incidental to other aims. Laub and Sampson (2003) discuss desistance by default. Some of the men in their study were so invested in marriage or work that they do not wish to risk losing that investment. Therefore they make the commitment to stop offending without realising it. Laub and Sampson (2003) underplay any cognitive transformations as part of this, yet the data presented in this chapter shows that cognitive transformations play a major role in this. The men have to actively decide that it is the fatherhood role that is important to them for them to invest in this.

In conclusion, fatherhood can provide the men with an alternative conventional identity, but as Giordano et al (2002) and Rungay (2004) argue people need to want to change and be willing to embrace this identity. The young men in the sample certainly planned on enacting their fatherhood identity on release. This chapter has argued that human agency and cognitive shifts play a large part in the
process of change. Structural events, such as fatherhood and imprisonment, affect openness to change and openness to change gives meaning to structural events.

For Laub and Sampson (2003) change can happen after a structural turning point without the person having agency. This chapter has provided evidence to show that, for the young fathers in the sample agency, and self-determination was a central element in thinking about and starting the process of change. Fatherhood for many of the men in the sample is not a ‘turning point’, however that is not to say that it is not important. Fatherhood did influence the young men’s desire and decision to change and it is also very important in giving the young men a focus and way of changing. Fatherhood for these men was an “inner resource” (Walker, 2010: 1412) and therefore generative. Therefore this potential is something which the criminal justice system could take advantage of. It is an opportunity where more could be done. The next chapter looks at the nature of the interventions that can be an opportunity for the criminal justice system to build upon human agentic elements of self-determination and identity transformation.
Chapter Six: The Nature and Adequacy of Formal Support

6.1 Introduction
The previous chapter showed the central importance of human agency in initiating the process of change: provoking a conscious decision to change, provoking identity transformation, and suggesting how these two aspects of human agency reinforce one another. As these fathers are in prison, it is important to look at the impact of prison in acknowledging and promoting human agency. In chapter five it was shown the ways the prison can work against the enactment of fatherhood identity. Chapter five also touched upon how the punishment focus of prison indirectly impacts on self-determination and identity, for example through the effects of separation from families. This chapter will consider the more proactive measures that the criminal justice process takes to intervene and help the process of change through support, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration, and consequently, focuses on Maruna et al’s (2004a) second necessary condition for change: high quality formal support. It will be seen that these active measures often have direct, but also sometimes indirect consequences, for self-determination and identity. This chapter will add to an understanding of how structure and agency interact in the process of change in the context of young fathers in prison.

This chapter will explore how the criminal justice system shapes what fathers say and how they feel about their children, and how it offers support to the men as fathers and in relation to father related issues. It will focus on the nature and adequacy of formal support, considering how this impacts on willingness to change and identity. The chapter presents the opportunities the system has to build upon self-determination and identity transformations and how it does and does not take advantage of these.
Maruna (2000) discusses the ‘black box syndrome’ whereby the outcomes of different criminal justice sanctions are known with regard to subsequent offending, but the sequences of events and processes are not (Farrall, 2002). This chapter adds to the knowledge of processes involved.

Building upon discussions in chapter five, this chapter examines the role of prison in helping to establish/ maintain self-determination and a salient fatherhood identity. Following Dyer’s (2005) discussions of the relevance of identity theory to incarcerated fathers it could be suggested that the more that prisons do to support fathers’ identity confirmation, through encouraging links with their children, the more likely the fatherhood identity is committed to.

This chapter starts by considering contact with families during imprisonment and argues how, even during opportunities to enact their father identity, the practical considerations, for example, security, adds to the false environment Clarke et al (2005) describe, whereby the young fathers often find it difficult to enact all the roles of a father, especially play. Despite this, all contact is positive and very valuable to the men and to change, as it often results in periods of reflection. It will then move on to consider the fundamentally cohesive prison setting (Crewe, 2009) and how issues of bureaucracy, control and masculinity impact on prisoner-staff relationships which in turn impacts on the level of support staff can offer and the men are willing to accept. Rehabilitation work which focuses on a specific area such as employment or drugs is supplied by the prison service and taken on by the young men and this often indirectly affects self-determination and identity. Finally this chapter will consider the role of probation and the opportunities in the community to build upon self-determination and identity.

**6.2 Contact with children in prison**

Allowing contact between imprisoned men and their families, including children, is arguably the primary way that prison directly supports the fostering of family links
and fatherhood identity, giving the men physical opportunities to enact their father identity and roles.

6.2.1 Visits, phone calls and letters
All the men that had contact with their children had regular contact with them while they were in prison through, some or all of, phone calls, letters, visits, town visits and home leaves. As with previous research (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Nurse, 2002) instances of phone calls and letters were high both in relation to the number of men who received these forms of contact and in relation to the regularity of this contact. All of the men with contact had experience of prison visits, which is high compared to previous research (Boswell and Wedge, 2002). A couple of the men had not received visits in their previous establishment because they felt that the security level of those prisons made them unsuitable environments for children. Others had not received, or stopped receiving, visits in the current prison because they felt there was no need for them once they started being allowed town visits and home leaves.

Similarly to Earle’s (2012) observation prison visits seemed to encourage limited interaction between fathers and their children, especially in the case of toddlers. This could negatively impact on the men’s fatherhood identity as, even when they have a chance to, it is difficult for them to enact their fatherhood identity. The men described not being able to move due to prison rules while at the same time spoke about the children running around and spending time where the toys were. Despite being frustrated by this, some of the men did show a level of understanding of the prison’s predicament of having to focus on security. Some men also saw the positive in this as it meant their children were not bored.

"Respondent: It was two hours long they’d come in, there’s toys and things for him to play with. He used to bring toys to the table to me, play with him, talk to him [partner] used to tell me how he was getting on with everything. You can get food, drinks so just basically you can play with them and talk to them but you’re not allowed to move from the spot
Interviewer: How did you find that?
Respondent: Horrible because he was pulling me away all the time saying come on, come on wanting to show me things but I couldn’t move off my spot
so I didn’t know how to tell him I can’t get up playing like he wanted me to do so yeah it was horrible” (Andrew)

“You just have to sit where you are sat don’t you really because you could have got drugs and all that on you and all that so they do run it right. I don’t hear a lot of people complaining about visits myself because your kids can go and have a nice time. You can talk to your missus, and then they come back and they eat chocolates, whatever, play more games and then you sit them down for 10, 15 minutes, instead of nagging them, going on at them, asking what they’ve been up to, you can see their eyes itching to go back over there” (Michael)

“When he got a bit bigger he would always run off. I’d never see him because I’m not allowed to get out of my seat so my Mum used to have to go and get him because he was running round […] its security issues isn’t it? […] It’s not nice on my little boy to go over to the play area and I’m not allowed to go over and play with him, I just used to sit there while he’s playing” (Matthew)

One of the voluntary organisations interviewed believed that not having children sat with their parents all of the time may be a positive:

“I think the play area gives mum and dad a real opportunity to talk and any issues that are occurring even around the child’s behaviour can be discussed without being in front of the child and that is really important I think if there are things that need to be said. You know little ears are delicate aren’t they and they should be able to have that space without the child there” (Voluntary organisation 2)

This also enables opportunities for the men to receive feedback on their fathering which in turn starts the identity confirmation process described in chapter three (Dyer, 2005).

In contrast to the outside world (see for example Miller, 2011) interactions seemed much higher for the men with small babies:

“I get her out of the car seat and just sit her on my knee […] Just smile at each other and stuff like that” (John)

“Just holding him and that just playing with him a little bit whatever he’s got in his carrycot, one of them just stick something in and play with him and that” (Max)

Despite the negativity surrounding discussions of visits the majority of men did find them overall a positive experience describing them as the “best bit of being a father in prison”.

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Similarly to Clarke et al. (2005) visits, and contact in general, were seen as positive because they allowed the fathers to know what the family were doing and how they were changing and developing and gave fathers opportunities to get to know their children and feel part of the family.

“Respondent: Just keeps me in contact with normality, just keeps me on the edge a bit, [...] there’s two different languages if you understand what I mean? It’s in here and out there. I speak to my bird sometimes and she’s like it’s me! [...] Interviewer: So it’s important that you have contact with the outside world? Respondent: Yeah just to keep yourself on the scene of what’s going on Interviewer: Is it important that you’re kept in the loop of what’s happening with your children? Respondent: If it weren’t then it would be pointless me being a Dad, if you know what I mean?” (Max)

“Respondent: She used to send me one [letter] every day at first the start of my sentence. Six or seven months she used to write me one every single night and then she kind of like, I told her to send me one a week because it was too much. I had a big box full of letters and I had nowhere to put them I had a big bag and a big box of letters Interviewer: How important were the letters to you? Respondent: Yeah it makes you happy when you get a letter from them. They always used to put nice things talking about when you’re going to get out and be a proper family again and do family things, even little things like making you realise little things in life that you miss and things like that” (Andrew)

“They keep you going yeah you feel isolated, it is something to look forward to. You come back from education or whatever and you come back at half four and they say there’s a letter tucked under your door or chucked on your bed, something to look forward to” (Duncan)

Visits do give men the opportunity to enact their fatherhood identity but there are limitations to this and perhaps there could be more guidance on how they can still enact other roles e.g. how they can still be the ‘fun’ parent while staying sat in their chairs.

Part of the experience of fathering from prison that led to men wanting to change, seen in chapter five, was the men having time to think. An important indirect aspect of contact is that it is after father-child contact that men are at their most reflective and have most to think about. The men found contact emotional as it made them realise they were missing out on their children growing up and made them feel guilty. All contact (letters, phone calls, visits and home leaves) often had
the effect of upsetting the men leading them to reflect and contemplate. Reflection was higher after the more intense forms of contact, especially home leave of five days. While there were many examples within the data, the following quotes provide some idea of what the men were generally saying about phone calls, then visits, and finally home leave.

“Before them, you’re just kind of anxious aren’t you but then you get in to don’t you and then you get the feeling of happiness but then you get the feeling of guilt because you know that you’ve got to put the phone down sooner or later” (Thomas)

“You’ve been there with your daughter and you see them walk out that door knowing that they’re going back out into the world to do whatever they want and you’re stuck on the tables. You start thinking that you could do a lot more with your kid and that” (Glen)

“Home leaves are lethal because you stay at home for a few days but then you feel distraught coming back [...] It’s horrible, it’s horrible I can’t handle it coming back, cry me eyes out when I come back it hurts [...] I don’t sleep at all for two nights. Wake up on Wednesday morning and think oh I’ve got to go back; them five days are just ruthless!” (Duncan)

Reflection is important to the process of change because it helps encourage self-determination. It appeared to make most of the men realise they do not want to be in a situation again where they have to say ‘goodbye’ to their children and miss out on things and so want to change. This is a key opportunity for the prison to build upon self-determination, of which it could take more advantage, by working with the young men at this time, when they are in the right frame of mind, to look at realistic expectations and steps to achieve these.

6.2.2 Family days
Family days were the most intense form of contact. Family days took place nine times a year in the prison for approximately 12 young men each time. These days allow five hours of interactive time where unlike conventional visits the imprisoned men are not confined to their visit room chairs. Family days were organised and run by the prison Chaplaincy team with the help of other departments, for example the library, and numerous voluntary organisations. The only criticism from men about family days was that they should be more regular to ensure more men had access to them.
A few respondents had deliberately not participated in family days because they were receiving town visits and so did not see a need for extended visits in the prison setting. Others did not participate because their girlfriends worked on weekdays when family visits were held or did not have the resources to travel to the prison. Michael however said,

“To tell you the truth I couldn’t sit on a visit for six hours because you can’t, you’ve nowt to talk about”.

This shows that for Michael, the ‘being there’ and ‘fun’ roles of fatherhood were not high in the role saliency hierarchy and perhaps his fatherhood identity was not that important to him. Equally, it may have been that institutionalisation meant he did not have anything to talk about.

This section will now detail interpretations from an observation of one such family day from March 2011. This family day was attended by 11 young men (different men from those who were interviewed for this research) and 15 children, who were brought by their mothers in all but one case (this child was brought by their grandparent). Judging from the displays of affection, these women were also the partners of the men they came to see. The children were of various ages (from ten years to very small babies) and while the majority of men only had one child (eight), two families had two children and one had three children.

There were numerous activities arranged throughout the day: general play, story time, percussion, crafts, farm visit, and lunch. All those present were told to help themselves to refreshments throughout the day. Some activities were more age specific than others and so not particularly relevant to all children, for example some were too old or young for story time.
6.2.2.1 Ways in which Prison staff and the Family Day Setting supported men in ‘being there’ for their children

The room was set up very differently than for visits with a play mat in the middle and chairs around the edges and tables and chairs at the other side of the room. It did not look like a prison. The young men came in one at a time after they had been searched by an officer. They looked around for their families and went over often looking quite emotional when they first saw their children. The men had different reactions to their children: some went up and grabbed their children, others went and sat with their partners and waited for their child to come to them, and some waved at their children, again waiting for the children to initiate the approach. This shows different types of relationships between fathers and their children, different confidence levels and different levels of awareness of children’s feelings, especially over seeing someone they do not see regularly. When one young man came in his family were not yet there, he looked around for quite a while and then sat out of the way. The prison officer overseeing the morning went over and sat with him, showing that some officers do take up opportunities to offer support to young fathers in prison.

The day was definitely a chance for the men to get to know their children better. The mothers regularly used this day to share with their dad new things about their children. For example, one mother told the father that their son now liked custard, one mother told her partner that the child now knew all the words to a certain song; the Nana told funny stories about how the child now liked to direct his mother when she was driving and did so in a bossy manner but knew where he was going.

The day was an opportunity to parent for the young men and enact their fatherhood identity. One example from the day of the observation was an incident where two children were fighting over a toy. The two fathers dealt with this and handled the situation well.
Similarly to Pugh’s (2004) findings, family days appeared to be clearly about encouraging the men to interact with their children. There were many examples throughout the day of staff encouraging the men to enact their fatherhood identities over other identities, such as their identity as a partner/boyfriend and as a prisoner.

Early in the day one of the chaplain staff told a student volunteer not to play with the children too much as they were taking that opportunity away from the fathers. A second example came when one of the young men was sat talking and kissing his girlfriend while their daughter was painting. The chaplain came over and told him this was not a day to catch up with his girlfriend but a day for time with his child. The chaplain said that this happened regularly. Information packs were given out by the chaplain and a voluntary organisation which centred on ‘interacting with your child’. Throughout the day staff regularly told the children to “get your dad to help” to encourage interaction.

On the whole, the family day seemed to transcend the prison and this was in part due to its informal nature. There were no formal introductions to the staff or to the day. Families were also not forced to take part in activities and there were varied levels of interest for different activities from two families to all families. The most popular activity was the farm visit. This had also been mentioned by many men in the interviews.

The young men who had participated in family days spoke very positively about them with comments focusing on the fact it was a whole day, it was a friendlier atmosphere than normal visits, they could move around, and on the range of activities organised, especially the farm visits:

“I think I have had three, and they were good, good to have […] They [family] come and obviously play with the kid for a bit, then you do nursery
rhymes and stuff like that, have dinner together, and just bond, that’s what you do” (John)

The observation was an opportunity for the researcher to witness first-hand the upset all the interviewees talked about experiencing when they had to leave their children and partners. Towards the end of the family day there were 5 and 10 minute warnings (the only example of any time keeping in the whole day) and lots of kissing of children and partners in this time. When their families had gone the men all sat back down on their own and many looked very upset. The librarian who ran story time at the family day said that she always left before the end because the men get quite emotional. Because she has contact with many of them she does not want them to be embarrassed when they next see her that they have cried.

6.2.2.2 Ways in which Prison staff and the Family Day Setting is unsupportive of the men ‘being there’
There were also examples of times when prison staff and the setting of the day did not support the ‘being there’ and nurturing aspects of fatherhood. At lunch time, one of the children needed changing and the mother went to change him. The father and his friend who was also on the family day were joking around that they did not change nappies. The Chaplain then came over and said to the dad that he should have done it and next time he would. When the chaplain left, the dad explained that he had tried at a previous family visit to change the baby and the child had got really upset because he was not used to him and that was the real reason he did not volunteer. This suggests that the joking around was a pretence to cover up deeper issues. Similarly, some of the young men did appear annoyed when told to do something differently or to concentrate on their children.

A theme in the key professional interviews was the inability of some men to know how to interact with children:

“it is quite a bit about peer learning which is quite informal. So seeing how other lads interact with their kids in different settings and unconsciously or maybe consciously learning and seeing how to do things in different ways and also being part of a group in terms of ´we are all out as dads together´ so sort of celebrating the fact that they are dads and celebrating the fact that they can go out and have a chuckle with their children” (Young Father’s Worker)
A member of prison management who was interviewed as part of the key professional interviews, discussed how the issue of men not getting involved with their children on family days had been brought to her attention and the men had reported to her that the reason for this was they feel “acutely embarrassed and uncomfortable about relating to children”. This is especially the case when there are other people present. The family day did not appear to deal with these issues. Therefore there is an identified need for interventions to help men overcome this self-consciousness on visits and family days, and allowing for more opportunities for more natural interactions with children, for example, town visits. This was also seen in chapter five in Caroline’s observation of Jason meeting his child for the first time.

There were exceptions to this being an informal day and at times there were reminders that the family day was taking place inside a prison. A sniffer dog came round early in the day escorted by one officer. None of the mothers or children seemed upset by this and the officer was good at putting them at ease asking the children questions about their own pets.

At lunch time families and staff had to mix due to the size of the tables, although some families did still keep themselves to themselves. Half way through eating lunch the chaplain came over and gave real cutlery to staff rather than the plastic ones everyone else was using. The chaplain gave repeated reminders to return the cutlery to him and to not let it out of sight. These reminders were not given in a subtle way. One of the fathers explained to his girlfriend that they were not allowed metal cutlery as they could take it back to their rooms and use it as a weapon. This highlighting of differences between prisoners and their families and staff seemed quite insensitive to the purpose of the day, especially considering, many the children will not have known they were in a prison.
There was also an officer present throughout the day. The officer in the afternoon said that he did not like supervising family days as he was not sure of the appropriateness of having officer presence on a day like that, especially in uniform. He kept his fleece zipped up to draw less attention to his status. The supervising officer in the morning was the gym officer so was in gym clothing. As the officer was present only in case of trouble, he said he purposefully sat on the periphery so he did not get in the way. The officer said that he does not talk to the young men on family days or visits as they can talk to him anytime but do not get much time with their families. This is in contrast to other officers as the following quote demonstrates:

“You have visits with them and sometimes the officers from the unit are on visiting duty as well walking round the visits room and they pull a chair up some of them and just sit with us! They do and say ‘oh I’ve just come to say hello’, madheads!” (Max)

### 6.3 Other forms of Formal Support

This section will focus on the support that young offenders get from the formal criminal justice agencies (especially prison and probation) to facilitate change. None of the young men reported engagement with voluntary organisations as the young men felt that they did not need them. This section shows that formal support had a limited impact upon the young men as fathers (although they did not want much from these channels) and the support these agencies offered was often practical, especially around employment and treatment.

The professionals interviewed said that in general they do not know who the fathers in prison are. Officers would talk to the men they were Personal Officers\(^\text{17}\) to and would discuss fatherhood status with them and would find out informally about other men on the unit through room inspections and/or overhearing conversations. The member of prison management made it clear that if there were issues over

\(^{17}\) At the time of the research a Personal Officer was allocated to every prisoner to be their first point of contact with any issues. Personal Officers should have been aware of the needs of the men they are allocated.
fatherhood in an OASys assessment (for example mental health implications or social services involvement) then the prison would act upon this. But it was clearly not on the prison’s agenda to establish and act upon father status for all fathers. Many of the young fathers said that they did not think the officers knew their fatherhood status and further they did not want the officers to know and were not likely to tell them. The odd few were more receptive to the idea of officer’s knowing this information:

“Yeah obviously I’ve been in here forty odd weeks now and that’s a long time in a place like this and you get to know the officers if they’ve got kids and they get to know us obviously. They come and do room checks every day because they have to do room inspections and that, so they look at your pictures and that and say who’s that?”(Max)

6.3.1 Inter-personal Relationships
The literature suggests that inter-personal relationships between criminal justice staff and offenders are critical to maintaining a positive environment in prison (Liebling et al, 1999) and to helping offenders change (Rex, 1999). A key implication of Meek’s (2007a) study is the need for professionals to be aware of the anxieties that young fathers have in prison regarding maintaining their relationships with their children.

The data collected for this research suggests that some prison officers want to help offenders change by understanding why they offended and their circumstances and talking to them about these issues. One officer felt strongly that, because it is the officers that are around the prisoners all the time, they should be involved in discussions over their personal lives as they can then use this in conversation and in helping them to change. There were also officers who did not see this more supportive role as part of their duties: their role was merely security/punishment and there should be a clear role division between the officers and those with a role involving talking to the offenders (i.e. chaplain). Despite these conflicting opinions, in reality, according to all officers interviewed, other demands prevented them from having anything but a security focus. They spend the majority of their time dealing
with behavioural issues and administration ("computers are the bane of my life" (Prison Officer One)) and so had limited time for the more pastoral aspects.

The young men in prison suggested that issues of inter-personal relationships were more systemic than described by the officers and, as the literature suggests (Crewe, 2009), primarily about prison regime and culture. There were men who would not speak to any officers at all and there were others that would speak to ‘some’ officers but not about personal issues.

6.3.1.1 Prison Regime
This prison regime relied on a system of incentives and this affected inter-personal relationships with officers. As it was an open prison, there were significant rewards and inducements on offer such as town visits and home leave and thus higher consequences for bad behaviour as these could be taken away. The officers used the withdrawal of inducements as a threat which was clearly an example of “inducement bleeding into coercion” (Crewe, 2009: 85). This also meant that the officers had quite high levels of discretion.

Crewe (2009) examines how prisoners react differently to forms of social power. Within the sample of young fathers in the current study, there were different reactions to the system of inducements. Some of the young men saw this system as positive and although they had “got to be good” this meant they had more responsibility as “you can mess things up for yourself” (Andrew) and more opportunities than they would have had in a closed establishment.

However there were men that felt that the officers used this system to their advantage to wind the men up and take things away from them without good reason, thus creating negative attitudes towards ‘some’ prison staff.

“You are not allowed to say what you think you know what I mean. You are walking on egg shells just so you can get townies and go home [...] like there is one officer, I am not going to say no names, but we don’t get on and that is why I have not had townies or stuff like that” (Michael)
“I think the way they punish you, like I got my first home leave took off me [...] for popping my head out of the door at quiet time. It was pathetic, someone shouted me so I put my head out of the door and they gave me an extra comment on my report in my file which stopped me from getting home leave which I had been looking forward to and the baby had been looking forward to. That was actually a hard time because I was really, really angry and upset you know what I mean because he was upset which made me even more angry [...] Basically they don’t give a shit about our family outside, they just, I think they like feeling the power” (Howard)

Legitimacy of discretionary decisions is what is important here (Crewe, 2009).

Some thought that the decisions of officers were not legitimate whereas others thought they were. This use of inducements and the subsequent discretion did, for some, affect inter-personal relationships within the prison.

6.3.1.2 Prison Culture

Prison culture is one dominated by masculinity and as Evans and Wallace (2008) conclude the “social policing of masculine codes is sufficiently strong” (502) so men keep emotions and their inner self secret.

Crewe (2009) talks of speaking to officers in modern prisons as incurring “little stigma or suspicion” (105). The young fathers in the present study had or would speak to prison and probation officers about practical issues such as arranging Home Detention Curfew (HDC) or about arranging accommodations/ employment in the community. They did not report that they had spoken to them about their children and emotions. A small number of men commented on receiving advice not to get angry as they would risk losing visits. This could be further evidence of coercing good behaviour or examples of officers genuinely caring about their charges.

“Some of the officers do like if you’re having a bad day and that they will sit you down and say ‘listen, don’t lose your head because you’ve got things to think about. You’ve got things to lose, kids to keep’ say like if you got extra days they'll be waiting longer and I don’t want that” (Max)

“Respondent: Yeah I talk to a couple of them
Interviewer: Do they know you’re a Dad?
Respondent: Yeah
Interviewer: Do they take an interest in that; do they ask you how your son is?
Respondent: Not really if I’ve got a problem I’ll ask them or have a chat with them
Interviewer: What kind of things would you talk to them about then do you think?
Respondent: Like the other week I sent out a visiting order and the piece of paper that I have to fill out to send them, the jail sent them so I couldn’t get a visit so I was pissed off so I spoke to the officer about that because I couldn’t see my son for another week so I got another one sent off
Interviewer: What did the officer do?
Respondent: Just said there’s nothing I can do but if you kick off you’re going to end up on Unit X […] Yeah he just told me to think about it and focus on something good” (Peter)

The officers in the sample also confirmed this overly practical rather than emotional climate to conversations. As can be seen from the above examples, where there was a willingness to speak to officers this was not aimed at all officers but at select ‘good’ officers. This echoes the findings of others (see for example Haslewood-Pocsik et al, 2006; Crewe, 2009).

Much conversation between officers and prisoners is banter according to the key professionals. One of the offender manager’s interviewed felt it was this way because “opening up old wounds” through emotional conversations may not be the best way to manage a prison whose focus is primarily security.

Some men would not speak to officers about personal issues because they wanted a separation between prison and family life:

“You always have bad days, you just get on with it, you don’t talk to the officers. They probably would speak to you but you just don’t feel comfortable speaking to them […] Because they don’t really know me do they, they don’t need to talk to me about my kids” (Jason)

“I don’t want them to know about my life” (Phil)

“You don’t get support you just do it yourself don’t you? Especially in jail you don’t want people knowing your business because it’s not nice” (Duncan)

For some unwillingness to speak to officers about anything was due to a general complete distrust of criminal justice staff:

“like the officers just laugh at you here. If you go to one of the officers and say ‘listen I am bit depressed’, they just say ‘well don’t string yourself, don’t do anything stupid’, that is all, that is the way it is. Sometimes there is a decent officer who will help you, who will ring like resettlement, or ‘do you want to see a counsellor, I can arrange that for you’” (David)
“Not really no [need probation], probation just set you up to fail [...] Because you get out they put you in a fucking shared house and you get there and they take all your stuff out of your fridge because you share all the kitchen and everything and you just end up losing your head!” (Pat)

This shows that inter-personal relationships are really important to communication and that these young men would only speak to the officers and people within the prison they felt comfortable with and, as Evans and Wallace (2008) suggest, consider safe to reveal their inner-selves to. A fact highlighted by Pat and the key professional interviews:

“Sometimes I might want a little chat about it yeah but say if there’s three officers here and you want to speak to one of them you can’t approach them, you can’t speak to them” (Pat)

“Yes if they feel they can relate to that member of staff and they trust them, I mean what I find with prisoners is that they all choose who they can talk to, who they relate to and who they feel will be supportive of them and their situation” (Prison manager)

The imbalance by prison staff towards assisting with practical issues over emotional issues suggested by the data is still important to the process of change. This is because the practical assistance can help lead to positive social contexts. While the prison did not provide emotional support, especially from officers, the men were happy with that situation and did not want anything more from the prison.

In terms of asking for help, the key professionals felt that many young men do not have the social skills and self-confidence to know who to approach and how to approach people for help. Furthermore, asking for help could be perceived to work against the concept of masculinity according to one key professional. This is especially the case with fatherhood issues according to the Young Father’s Worker as:

“imagine if you go into prison, particularly if you haven’t been in before, understanding how things work and who you can speak to and who you can’t speak to, because you are quite vulnerable really and you want to be careful about being vulnerable, yeah and you want to keep your eyes about you all the time” (Young Father’s Worker)
Whilst the men admitted they needed help and support when asked about friends and family, when asked in the criminal justice context they rarely admitted to needing support and instead often said that they only relied on themselves ("It’s not down to anyone else but me is it" (Max)). Boswell and Wedge (2002) also found young men did not feel prison had any responsibility over fathering, that it was their individual responsibility.

If prison officers are aware of the fathers in prison then they can encourage the fatherhood identity and help men to reflect leading to self-determination. However, it may be enough that most men had at least one ‘good’ officer that they would talk to making it more likely that they will respect their opinions.

Formal support can be important but there are micro-structural limitations from punishment- as opposed to welfare-oriented prison staff; this is, however, a continuum, with some staff evoking greater general confidence, and being able to discuss fatherhood in particular. Likewise, men seem to be differentially receptive to discussing their families with staff or other inmates, due largely to the hyper-masculine culture of the prison.

6.3.2 Treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration
Meek (2007a) highlighted how fathers in prison often have additional issues to fathers in the community, especially substance misuse. The men in the sample who received treatment (a form of formal support) for their issues, or attended fatherhood courses, tended to have good relationships with those running the courses.

The few men who had had relatively involved discussions with people in the prison about their children had done so with non-officer staff, citing their Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice, and Through care (CARATs) drug worker and Family Links teacher:
“The only one that I would probably talk to is my teacher from family links [...] She would come round us and ask us are you feeling alright today. I might say I’m feeling this, thinking about my daughter has made me feel upset and she would try to encourage you to just generally, when you get out you have to make it up to your girlfriend and try and be a better Dad or you might ask if you can make something like I had a chalk thing, like a monkey I made and I sent it out from the class” (Glen)

This shows that this treatment often has indirect implications for self-determination and identity and is a valued source of support among some men. This is perhaps an opportunity the prison could take more advantage of if there were more courses and time after or before sessions for informal interaction with those running the programmes.

6.4 Work in the Community
There is innovative work being done in the community by probation and voluntary organisations, for example, the Intensive Alternatives to Custody (IAC) trial by the probation service. This seeks to divert young men from short custodial sentences and instead promote responsibility through a community sentence where men will also be able to access help to deal with many of their issues such as employment, housing, family matters. There is also a Young Father’s Worker who supports young men with fatherhood specific issues. Much of this work, however, is not available for everyone and is not in all areas of the country.

A prominent theme in the interviews with key professionals was the importance of young men learning how to have successful relationships. Many felt that the difficult backgrounds many young imprisoned men have, especially those who had been in care, means they do not know how to behave appropriately in key relationships. A major part of this is the men being able to see other people’s points of view.

“A lot of the young people I work with haven’t got brilliant communication skills, so that ability to be able to negotiate and compromise and come to some sort of agreement about things can often be a sticking point [...] Communication skills then knock on to how you speak to the other person as well in different settings and how you ask them things and I do stuff with lads and girls about that ability to speak to their partners respectfully, asking their partners to do things and vice versa and expectations within the house” (Young Father’s Worker)
A major element of the work of probation according to the key professionals was about talking to young fathers about fatherhood. The probation officers did go into the men’s lives in detail and, as their foremost thought was often being a father, this did form a major part of the work they did with them. The young father’s worker felt that voluntary organisations and probation officers are in the unique position where they can easily challenge the young men in order to get the best out of them as parents. The probation officers that were interviewed said that this was a large area of the work they did with their supervisees that were fathers but one did feel that they cannot be there for some young men as much as they need to be, and in these cases mentors would be useful:

“I think there needs to be more of a focus on [reintegration] really because you just see [...] too many failings I think and I think there needs to be some sort of system whereby they can get that continuous support from in custody to outside and although they do have the offender manager I can’t be like that person’s mentor because I have got a million other things to do. I think they need [...] somebody who can go into prison and sort of befriend them, help them, put those plans in place and support them, when they are released, [...] you have got somebody on the end of the phone to ring and say ‘aah it is all going a bit wrong’ who can go round and see them 2 or 3 times a week and say ‘how are you doing, what do we need to do this week’” (Offender Manager 2)

A further benefit of probation according to key professionals was that it helps to give the men structure, places and times to be somewhere.

The men’s attitudes to probation support fell into a number of categories. One group of men held very negative views of probation. These men had had previous negative experiences and often their current sentence was a recall. These men said they did not get on with their offender managers, again demonstrating the importance of inter-personal relationships in formal support. They also thought that offender managers had limited power and so weren’t very helpful. Some men also expressed a belief that probation “set you up to fail”, for example, by housing people in hostels where they were likely to “lose their head”.
A second group of men were willing to engage with probation but only because they thought that would benefit from this, for example, have their licence conditions changed or they knew if they did not they would be recalled to custody.

A final group of men did were willing to, and did engage with, probation, especially in helping to find employment and accommodation. Jason for example was receiving help writing his curriculum vitae.

6.5 Discussion
This chapter has shown that the case study prison seems to want to foster family links and fatherhood identity. However, there are structural, subcultural and systemic limitations to supporting fatherhood. People are currently trying to be supportive in a fundamentally coercive setting that has many practical and security focused limitations. This contradiction is a by-product of the problem of balancing welfare and rehabilitative aims of imprisonment with retributive aims.

Further to this, there also remains important variability in the general receptivity of prisoners to support. This system had many negative connotations for the young men it is trying to help. Receiving direct support and talking to staff from the criminal justice system is very reliant on personalities and the development of inter-personal relationships. The men do receive formal support from individuals within the CJS and from policies and practices within it. But much of the time the men do not want, or recognise that they are receiving, support and have a limited willingness to engage with certain things. This may be because of the masculine culture of the prison world. There are also practical limitations, in an increasingly bureaucratic system, to prison officers being able to provide support to prisoners as fathers. There is also variation in the sensitivity of staff.

There are clear opportunities to build upon self-determination and fatherhood identity in the CJS, for example, visits, contact, conversations with ‘good’ staff. Yet
there are also opportunities that the CJS does not take advantage of, for example, everyone having opportunities for family days, focusing interventions when the men are at their more reflective. There are also very critical issues over the men not wanting to engage with CJS staff due to general distrust and sometimes stronger feelings. By talking to staff these men could access an extra level of support, and staff could build upon self-determination and identity. When the men received direct help e.g. with drug problems, accommodation they did recognise it, but this support tended to come from non-uniformed staff such as drugs workers and family workers. The men therefore appeared more amenable to non-uniform staff and this is perhaps an opportunity the CJS is not taking full advantage of.

Fatherhood, is an under exploited area for the criminal justice system to target in supporting men to change. More could be done to build upon the self-determination and identity transformation discussed in chapter five. Considering findings from chapter five perhaps new fatherhood in prison is a sensitive period and good opportunity to promote change.

Farrall (2002) concluded that help in the change process from criminal justice agencies (in his case probation) is limited and change is more related to self-determination (motivations) and social and personal contexts. Therefore a further explanation for the lack of awareness of support they are receiving may be because the support offered by prison and probation is often indirect, allowing support systems and positive contexts to remain in place. The support systems and social and personal contexts of the young fathers will now be considered.
7.1 Introduction
Chapter four argued for the importance of human agency, both in the sense of deciding to change, developing a positive attitude towards fatherhood, and seeing fatherhood as a highly salient identity. However it is apparent in the literature that agency alone is not enough (Giordano et al., 2002; King, 2012). Chapter five argued that formal support provides opportunities to enact fatherhood identities, to reflect on fatherhood, and some opportunities for direct support, especially from non-officer staff in relation to practical problems. While formal support is important for those opportunities to enact fatherhood identities, it is also important in that it helps men in prison remain in contact with their informal support networks. This chapter will consider why those informal support networks are important.

In doing so, this chapter also considers Maruna et al’s (2004a) third track necessary for secondary desistance. Informal support can help people to develop emotional engagement and the ability to talk through their problems and develop relationships. Informal support can also be practical help with employment, accommodation and money. The important role, and value, of others has been highlighted in the literature, in many different forms, especially in the social capital literature (Putnam, 2000). Informal support, and relationships with others, are highlighted as being important to the salience of, and commitment to, fatherhood identity (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1995; Marsiglio, 1995a; Uggen et al., 2004). Informal support is also important for desistance and staying away from peers and for social control (Trasler, 1980; Rutter, 1996; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Visher and Travis, 2003; Davis et al., 2013).
One further important element of informal support is that it helps provide men with positive social and personal contexts. Drawing on the work of Farrall (2002), Burnett and Maruna (2004) and Walker (2010) this chapter will consider further the impact of the young father’s social and personal contexts on the process of change. It considers the circumstances of the men in the sample. These are the contexts under which the men put their self-determination into practice and enact their fatherhood (and other) identity.

In summary, chapter five showed that the men in this study tended to leave prison confident and optimistic about their futures. Farrall and Bowling (1999) state:

“The main problem with the evidence concerning human agency is that while people may make decisions, the circumstances in which they do so may not enable them to live up to these decisions” (260)

This chapter will present data to support Walker (2010) when she discusses that men newly released from prison are trying to parent in difficult social and economic circumstances and where relationships are transient. For the probationers in the Farrall (2002) study, those who had good social contexts were more likely to overcome obstacles and those who experienced positive changes in social and personal contexts were associated with positive changes in behaviour.

This chapter will firstly consider the men’s informal support networks, before, during, and after, prison. The young men were not asked directly about their supporters but defined their own boundaries of discussion. The men were given the opportunity to acknowledge those who had supported them and who they hoped would influence them when they returned to the community. This inductive approach to the research (discussed more thoroughly in chapter four) allowed the men to control the theme and topics of discussion producing narratives structured by their own experiences.
The chapter will then move on to discuss the impact of these support networks on the men’s personal and social contexts. This section will argue that positive situations enable the men to stay self-determined and maintain their resolve and become resilient against failure. Positive contexts generally enabled the young men to overcome obstacles and supports Farrall (2002) and Burnett and Maruna (2004). This is not to say that all the men had positive contexts upon release and it will be shown that many of the men had transient and chaotic lives.

7.2 Informal Support
This section examines the nature and quality of the informal support available to the men. Support from friends and family can be both positive (and support the change process) or negative (and act as a barrier to change). This section focuses mainly on the informal support the men received in relation to their children as this was the focus of the interviews. The men spoke about support from their parents (mainly their mothers), the mothers of their children (and in the event of no longer being with them, new girlfriends), and their peers, both in prison and the community.

This section will demonstrate that informal support is important to the process of change because it helps the young men maintain their self-determination, provides them with practical support, helps them develop their emotional engagement, and also contributes to providing positive social and personal contexts. It will be shown that parents, especially mothers, mainly (but not solely) provided practical help such as accommodation, employment, money, and parenting tips. These are important for the social capital of the men and helped to provide positive social contexts. The men’s girlfriends, for some, provided emotional support and a positive context, whereas for others, provided a very negative context in which to change.
7.2.1 Parents

The key professionals highlighted how those with difficult backgrounds, especially coming from care or with absent parents, had more difficult contexts and this also means that the parenting scripts available to them are even more of a skeleton (Rumgay, 2004). None of the men in this study were looked after children and so all had parents. However a number of respondents had experienced the death of one of their parents (Jonathan and Andrew’s mothers had died and Phil and Jason’s fathers had died) and others were not in contact with both parents (usually their fathers).

The majority of the men felt that their mum had been supportive to them both before and during their prison sentence, especially in their role as a father, and, for those interviewed in the community, after release. The one prisoner’s mother who was interviewed said:

“Well I tried my best to help them financially erm I bought the baby his cot and clothes and obvious things like that and I helped them with the bills and if he was ill I would run him round to the hospital or the doctors or whatever. Sometimes he would ring me and say ‘well this is wrong with him, what do you think and what shall we do with this’, just general advice on parenting, you know. Hewould ring up and ask and I would help and support as much as I could” (Howard’s mother)

This response seemed to be typical of what the majority of men said about the support from their mothers. There was an emphasis on practical support such as help with money and childcare and fairly basic advice on parenting such as nappies and feeds.

“They just helped me you know like because obviously they’d been through it all and had kids and that just showing me, when my daughter was first born, how to change a nappy and all this it was just new experiences for me and they were like I’ll show you, I’ll show you how to make a bottle as well just little things like that” (Max)

“Help[ed] me nappy change and bottle feed I didn’t even know how to change a nappy when he was first born” (Thomas)

“She used to help when he was only a baby, help change him and stuff like that” (Jason)
As mentioned in chapter five, those who had previously worked or had work lined up for release had gained this through a family member (mainly fathers) or a family friend. Parents (and also extended family) seemed key to the men's human capital, especially employment. Similarly, when asked about accommodation for release many planned to live with their parents.

This was also evident in the literature, with Farrall (2004) noting the key role parents play in helping probationers find employment and Walker (2010) and key professionals noting the importance of financial help in prison and post release from families:

“They hadn’t got paid Friday and this was Monday morning and they didn’t have any money for milk so he was belling [phoning] up his mum and his mum was like ‘no I haven’t got the money for you’ and she has got no one because she has come through care and that thing about ‘oh is there anyone who can lend us a tenner to sort the baby milk till the money comes through’ and I think if you haven’t got those wider support stuff it just makes life a lot harder, you can do it but it is just a graft” (Young Father’s Worker)

There were others in the sample who took this further and clearly had very close relationships with their mothers and spoke about emotional support.

“Respondent: My Mum, talk to her if I’m feeling down
Interviewer: What does she do?
Respondent: Messes about on the phone and makes me laugh” (Peter)

The mother’s not only looked after the men but also often their girlfriends.

Emotional support was often in the form of encouragement to be a good dad:

“She’d change his nappy and that […] but then she’d say you’re doing it this time and say get it done” (Matthew)

“My mother just tries, with [name of daughter] because she’s around a lot of kids, because she’s always around a lot of kids. She tells me things that I can do like you don’t always have to spend money to bond with [name of daughter], you can do things and make things and that. My Mother always tries to help me […] Yeah my family supports me but in a different way like giving me money and things but my Mum helps me the most I think” (Glen)

Similarly to Nurse’s (2002) findings, for those who were no longer with the mothers of their children, paternal and maternal grandparents were crucial in ensuring contact, both when they were in and out of prison.
“Probably her mother supported me a little bit because if we weren’t seeing eye to eye with my ex- she would drop my little boy off because I’m not allowed to pick him up from her house and she’s always nice to me when I go in and that” (Matthew)

The key professional interviewees also discussed their key role of parents but did feel that often the girlfriend’s mothers could be a negative influence:

“I think with the mums yeah the Grans can be quite a positive factor but they can also be quite negative, if there is kind of conflict between them and the partner because then the young woman particularly has got a bit of a who do I go with the lads or, who do I listen to the lad or my mum” (Young Father’s Worker)

Descriptions of mothers often showed a great deal of love, gratefulness and acknowledgement of how much they had done for them. In stark contrast to this notably less was said about their fathers supporting them and their fathers in general. When their fathers are mentioned as supportive this is often in passing (“my mum and dad”) or not seen as positive or even recognised (again in contrast to how they spoke about their mother’s support):

“I’ll be working with my Dad, I don’t really want to work for my Dad but I’m just going for the money till I find something more permanent [...] I’ve worked for my Dad before I came to jail, family and business don’t mix” (Duncan)

“yeah my dad runs a football team, under 16s and under 8s so I help train them and also the other, the under 10s I think it is, so I do that every Wednesday, Thursday night for an hour [...] so they [the Prison and the Prince’s Trust] put me on that course and I have just been enjoying football so that is why I decided to help my dad out as well” (Glen)

Two men, Jonathan and David, who because of death and divorce respectively, lived only with their fathers. Interestingly, these were the only two men in the sample that did not have contact with their children.

“Respondent: My Dad a bit he’ll take me to court he’ll do that with me
Interviewer: So you think your Dad is going to be there for you when you get out?
Respondent: Yeah
Interviewer: Have you spoken to him about it while you’ve been inside?
Respondent: Yeah he’s just said wait till you get out one of my mates is with my ex bird (inaudible) he’s got one of my kids names tattooed on his arm and stuff, I said ‘wait until I get out’, he’s gonna keep me away from all that and go to the court way of dealing with it [...] He made me realise if I do go out and punch his head in and I do go to court it’s going to bring that up, been to jail, assaulted him, smashed his car up I’m never gonna get near
Interviewer: Would you say that you’re quite close to your Dad?
Respondent: Yeah
Interviewer: Have you always been?
Respondent: Not always but since I’ve been in jail I have” (Jonathan)

“I have lived with my dad all my life and he is strict but I have never had anybody to like to talk to or anything like that or like phone and say ‘listen I need a bit of time to chill out can I come’, I have never had anything like that, it has always been me dealing with things [...] I do talk to him, it is one of them relationships where I don’t listen to him and he doesn’t listen to me, it is one of them, it is like he is there for me and everything and I will speak to him but it is not one of those relationships where I can like sit down and say ‘right dad I need help with this’” (David)

Although these father-son relationships had some issues (not always having been close and an inability to ask for help) there were demonstrations of feelings and some closeness to their fathers in their descriptions.

Three interviewees reported very negative relationships with their fathers and no longer had anything to do with them.

“I don’t have anything to do with my Dad - we’ve never really got on much - so I’d do the opposite and I’d never want [name of child] to hate me the way that I hate my Dad. So that’s why, he was a role model to me, my Dad, but I thought I don’t want to turn out like him. I want to do the best with him and I suppose that’s why I am the way I am with him” (Andrew)

“you see my mum and dad split up when I was like say 3 and I’ve got a step-dad now and see my real dad I don’t see him a lot and when you do see him you are not arsed about him and I don’t want my kids to feel like that” (Michael)

“It is not right I watched my dad knocking my mum around and it is not right. It scars you physically and emotionally [...] I don’t want him [own son] growing up like that, it is not fair on him” (Howard)

It was apparent that experiences as a son influence their own ideas about fatherhood, especially learning what not to do, and to do more than their own fathers. This shows how one identity influences intentions and sometimes actions under another identity. This has been the case in other research on young men in prison (Boswell and Wedge, 2002; Meek, 2007a), and also in research on fathers in general (Daly, 1993; White, 1994; Miller, 2011) (here the researched fathers’ fathers had more of a presence in their son’s lives). However, at the same time these men seem to be following a similar path as their own fathers because, at least temporarily, they are currently absent fathers. So they seem to want to be different but struggle to carry this out. Boswell and Wedge (2002) found that the
men were keen that negative experiences should not be repeated but this led to a negative self-image as they were now in prison and so unable to father their own children in the way they desired.

The lack of discussion of fathers in the interviews contrasts with the men’s willingness to discuss, unprompted, their relationship with their mothers. The language used to describe their mothers was in general more positive and emotional than when talking about their fathers. However, it was clear that many of the young men’s parents helped provide positive social contexts providing practical support such as money and accommodation.

The life course criminology literature (Laub and Sampson, 2003) would lead to an expectation of fractured relationships between young men in prison and their parents. In the sample where there were fractures this led to a dichotomy of becoming one’s father and defining one against one’s father. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) is also relevant as men who do not have a father figure to emulate may be unable to carry this role out. But literature in the area has suggested that it is not just their own fathers that men use to construct their fatherhood identity (Losh-Hesselbart, 1987; Daly, 1993). The positives the young men here took from their relationships with their mothers will also be important to how they view fatherhood.

Daly’s (1993) belief that men emulate desirable fatherhood behaviours from many was also found in the young men in this study as they often highlighted the importance of other people for example, their girlfriend’s families and sometimes grandparents:

“Her Mum and Dad, I’m closer to her family more than my family” (Adam)

“Just looked out for me and that, stood by me while I’ve been in prison as well, more than what my own family has” (Duncan)

“My nana used to just give me money all the time, she helped me as well bathing him and stuff” (Jason)
7.2.2 Mothers of the men’s children
Both the fatherhood and the desistance literature point to the quality of the relationship with the mother of the child being significant for involvement with the child, seeing their identity as a father (and certain roles within this) as important and more salient, and for stopping offending (Trasler, 1980; Sampson and Laub, 1993; Ihinger-Tallman et al, 1995; Marsiglio, 1995a; Rutter, 1996; Fagan and Barnett, 2003; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Devault et al, 2008). This is discussed in depth in chapter four.

Consequently, it is important to consider the young men’s relationship with the mother of their child. Because it is the quality of the relationship that is important these relationships are going to be considered through the dichotomy of conflicting and positive relationships. Within the sample, there were clear examples of problematic relationships and clear examples of supportive relationships (even when they were no longer together) and there were some that captured elements of both.

One detail that was clear from the data, and will be seen throughout, was that many of these men were in familial situations that were dynamic and messy and often the antithesis of a nuclear family. Even within the relatively short fieldwork period, there were break-ups, new relationships and new pregnancies. These men had transient lifestyles characterised by 'change' in their personal circumstances.

There were demonstrations of empathy towards the mothers of their children from both those that had conflicting and those that had positive relationships with them. Some of those who were no longer in relationships, and had conflict, recognised what they had put their ex-partners through. For example David’s ex-partner had left him, and Max’s ex had moved away but they expressed an understanding as to why:
“I had another fight in the town centre and everything and got on tag [...] and she just had enough of it, you know things like silly little things so she just said ‘right that is it, I am leaving you’, I don’t blame her” (David)

“but that is where her life is if you know what I mean, that is where her parents are and all her family is so I don’t blame her for moving there because she was here on her own with me, you know what I mean so I don’t blame her for going back, it has just made it awkward for me to randomly drop in and knock at the door and ask to take them out for a bit like, it is just different” (Max)

The others who showed empathy were still with their children’s mothers and showed a recognition of how much their girlfriends had done for them before and during prison and how hard it was/is on the mothers while they were in prison:

“it was my girlfriend she had the hard time because they were both dead young trying to keep control of both of them [...] they are both little terrors (laughs), my lad doesn’t do anything that he is told, she is having a hard time” (Jay)

Empathy for those around them is a form of remorse and this is a theme that runs throughout the interviews. Remorse can be linked to redemption which Maruna (2001) sees as important for change.

7.2.2.1 Conflicting relationships
All of the men who were experiencing very negative relationships with the mother of their child were no longer romantically involved with them. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the men discussed in this section received no support from their children’s mothers.

The complexity of their situations and the involvement of others such as new boyfriends/step-fathers (the fear that somebody else might take their father role), grandparents and other family members, and new girlfriends often added an additional layer to the conflict. For example, with David there is conflict not just with his ex but with some of his and her family members who still have access to the child and jealousy over new potential step-fathers.

“No but the thing that is winding me up is that she is best mates with my auntie, my mum’s sister, and she sees her all the time [...] so she is close still to my family but I am not close to my daughter [...] I always send money all the time and even when I am here now I am sending money out. I don’t know what she is doing with it, I don’t know if it is going on [daughter] but she is just a party head as well. She goes out every other night so that is why I don’t really give her the money, I give it her mum and dad, but her
mum and dad are probably just giving it her [...] Obviously my ex might be with somebody and that is another thing she does, she rings, when I do speak to her she says ‘oh I’ve got a boyfriend, he is a better dad than you are”’ (David)

The children’s mothers were often the vehicles for access to their children, therefore positive relationships were needed. Although some men did still have contact with their children despite a conflicting relationship with the child’s mother and the mother allowed their child to visit them in prison. In these cases the child was brought by a new girlfriend or the man’s parents. There was some recognition that this must be difficult for the mothers of the children but not in all cases. This led to a situation where the women often had all the power and the men spoke about inconsistencies in contact and that they always had to be on their best behaviour to ensure contact was not removed:

“Interviewer: Has she always let X come to prison or has she been funny about that?
Respondent: I suppose yeah but sometimes it’s been a bit awkward when she doesn’t answer the phone and she thinks that I don’t know because if the wire’s in it will go straight to answer phone but if it’s not in it just keeps ringing and ringing and ringing so I know when she’s unplugged it, say I’ve said I’m going to phone her at a certain time and it will just ring out and out so she’s just being awkward really
Interviewer: So how do you find it, how do you cope with the fact that she can be awkward at times?
Respondent: To be honest with you I don’t give her ammunition, I don’t even argue with her I just don’t bite because that would wind her up even more I think so I just don’t say anything I bite my tongue” (Matthew)

A conflicting relationship that was different to others in the data was Thomas. Thomas was in a unique situation in the sample being his child’s main carer after the child’s mother had left when the child was three months old. They had since had no contact or therefore relationship. This meant that Thomas did not have to rely on his ex-partner for access.

7.2.2.2 Supportive Relationships
Many of the men had supportive relationships with the mothers of their children.

For one participant, Andrew, it was the realisation that he had the “love of a good woman” (Maruna, 2001: 30; emphasis added) that seemed pivotal rather than merely the existence of a good relationship (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Rutter,
1996). From what Andrew said his girlfriend had always been supportive and there for him but it was prison that made him realise this:

“so she’s always been there for my Mum and me and when my Mum passed away I went through a bad patch, you know, things went a bit bad but then when I’ve been locked up I’ve realised all that and how stupid I was and everything and its brung us closer. We miss each other more because we’re not around each other. I’ve finally realised what I’ve got and all good thing to go back to because she’s been there through all my sentence. She’s waited two years so I owe her everything really” (Andrew)

Therefore, for some it is more complex than the existence of a high quality relationship, knowing and realising was important.

The fact that the mother of their child was now an ‘ex’ did not automatically result in a problematic relationship and there were examples within the data of couples that remained on good terms. This seemed to be something to do with recognition by one of both parties that it was the child who remained the most important person:

“she speaks to me for the kids like you know what I mean. Obviously things have changed like, she knows I will always love her for bringing my kids into the world like but that is as far as it goes now” (Max - community)

“I was upset but obviously I’m thinking about my daughter and if that means me and my girlfriend not together she can just concentrate on [daughter], whatever’s best for my daughter really” (Glen)

The main element of these positive relationships was the amount of support that the mothers of their children and new girlfriends gave them both in their role as a father but also to them as people. It was clear that often this support went beyond the practical support they received from others and provided emotional support as well both before and during prison.

“I’ve not really spoken to anyone apart from my girlfriend about how I feel about stuff like my Mum so I don’t really talk to anyone about how I’m feeling only X and I tell her on the phone what I’m feeling, she’s the first person I’ve ever spoken to about how I’m feeling with everything really. She’s the first one and she always helps me out with everything so I’ve always spoken to her about things. I talk to her about everything if I’ve got any problems I’ll talk to her on the phone or anything” (Andrew)

“She’s just there emotionally I mean she’s a shoulder to cry on basically” (Thomas about new girlfriend)
“Come and seen me regularly, wrote to me, sent me money, made sure I’ve got everything that I need, never let me down. I’ve been in prison twenty-eight months that’s two years and I’m not joking now, I must have easy, with my girlfriend I must have easy over a thousand letters, honestly all in my pad in a box, never once, she’s wrote every week without fail or she’ll get me money to ring her, made sure I’ve sent her a V.O. so she can come and visit me she’s always got someone to pick me up on a town visit, you know what I mean? Everything, never once let me down and I don’t think she ever would either” (Duncan)

“She was there, she cared about the relationship she’s a good girl” (Pat)

The women did also encourage the men to be good fathers.

One feature of these positive relationships was the belief these men had that their girlfriends had really stood by them. This often resulted in comments such as ‘I owe her’.

“when I first come prison I got a letter off her and the letter basically said listen I don’t care what you’ve done, fucking I’ll always be here for you and I thought yeah that’s nice that she’s just waiting for me” (Max)

“When I was looking at 8 years and I told her to leave me she was like ‘no you are not going to get 8 years’, this that and the other” (Michael)

“Just looked out for me and that, stood by me while I’ve been in prison as well, more than what my own family has.” (Duncan)

Within the narratives the men did admit that while their relationship were quite supportive their girlfriends did not approve of their lifestyle which led to tensions:

“We were together but just had a few arguments because when she had [daughter] she wanted me to be around but I was always out selling drugs because that’s what I’m in for and that caused arguments and things and I wasn’t there but...” (Glen)

There were examples of jealousy within otherwise quite supportive relationships:

“I find it hard because I can’t handle it sometimes in here [...] She goes out with her mates and dressing up, I always think the worst that’s why I’m always thinking there’s something going on. I try and sort my head out but I can’t help thinking it” (Adam)

The importance of girlfriends in the process of change is highlighted in the key professional interviews:

“Ultimately I reckon that the amount of influence that I have compared to what their girlfriend has is like (laughs) I have got like 10% and their girlfriend has got like 90%” (Offender Manager 1)
The professionals also felt strongly that there should be support for these supporters of the young men in order for them to provide higher quality informal support (the importance of which will be seen below). This is being carried out through voluntary organisations such as Partners of Prisoners (POPS).

This data shows that girlfriends could be a major source of emotional support, and in many cases it was them that provided men with a positive personal context in which to undertake the process of change. Yet there were also cases where bad relationships with ex-girlfriends led to negative contexts.

7.2.3 Peers
Peers are often associated with youthful offending (Warr, 2002) and therefore negative social contexts. This section discusses peer support and also peer influence. The men spoke about peers in prison and peers in the community, each of which will now be considered. The data presented here suggests that all peers offer support but peers in the community may pose more of an influence and part of the process of change is recognising negative influences and separating from these.

7.2.3.1 Within Prison
Crewe (2009) stated that the basis of relationships was often home area (also found by Haslewood-Pocsik et al, 2006), race, or the fact men have something in common (Bronson, 2008; Kerley and Copes, 2009). Some of the men here spoke about it being important that their friends in prison had children so they “were in the same boat” (Andrew). For others having children in common was not as important as considering them as ‘mates’.

Pat and Max would only speak to people in prison that they knew from the community, thus very much echoing the ‘mates’ of the Crewe (2009) study:

“I’d talk to one of my mates on the unit that I know from the outside just talk to them and that” (Max)
Having this type of friendships did seem to discourage these young men from talking to other young men in prison.

“I don’t speak to anybody else I just speak to my mates” (Pat)

As Crewe (2009) found:

“Local loyalties trumped most other affiliations [...] in the event of an existing friend entering an establishment, this relationship would displace a friendship formed only while inside” (324)

The majority of the descriptions of friendships fell into Crewe’s (2009) ‘prison friendships’ category. The majority of men spoke about having friends in prison but usually they referred to either one particular man or to a small number of men.

They clearly saw prison friends as temporary and as in Crewe’s (2009) study spoke about friends in prison in the past tense as if they had little intention of seeing them on the outside and that once they moved on friendships were over:

“I used to speak to one of the lads X, I used to speak to him and that because he was a father in here as well so I used to talk to him quite a bit” (Thomas)

Crewe (2009) found that in ‘prison friendships’ the emotional element was limited but was present. As in Crewe’s (2009) work the men here revealed warmth, attachment, intimacy and laughter in their prison friendships. They spoke to each other about feelings as well as what they had done with their children, kept each other positive and generally looked out for each other. Again similarly to Crewe (2009) these relationships especially had an emotional dimension when there was a connection such as being ‘padmates’.

“I used to have my pad mate he had a daughter so he was the main person I talked to really [...] talked about everything to him [...] he would tell me his things and I would tell him. It helped, it did help, so it is probably easier if you’ve got someone to talk to” (Andrew)

“I was still eating my scran [food] and this kid came over and said ‘are you alright, have you had some bad news or something, you are frowning a lot’. I said ‘I’m alright’ but because I weren’t chatting or being loud and all that they all thought there was something up with me” (Michael)

“Yeah they know I’ve got a kid and they ask about my daughter and I say “I want to spend more time with my daughter” and they say “if you’re with [ex-partner] and you’re together it’s better for [daughter]” and I said “I’ll try” and then they start joking” (Glen)

“If they knew yeah, if they knew I was upset they’d come and see why I was upset” (Jason)
The men’s discussions of their prison friendships showed, like Crewe (2009), that these were supportive relationships and often had an emotional element to them. The young men, and particularly young fathers, in prison were there for each other and supported each other through the difficulties of being in prison and especially in the difficulties of being away from loved ones. They helped each other stay positive and look to the future thereby influencing their self-determination to change. While there may have been elements of negative influence, they mainly provided a positive influence on each other, and as Warr (2002) describes, they were important for providing emotional support and for “the development of social competence and the ability to empathise and share intimacy” (24). While the young men in the sample were reflecting and undergoing cognitive transformations friends within prison provided a positive and supportive context in which to do so.

7.2.3.2 Outside Prison
Friends are also important in the community and similarly to Moloney et al’s (2009) findings on adult gang members who are fathers; friends can either be supportive or discourage child involvement depending upon whether they are fathers themselves. There were examples of positive relationships in the community in which peers encouraged fatherhood and were a source of practical and emotional support:

“My best mate, he’s actually family he’s my cousin but I’m with him all the time on the out and my cousin he used to always say to me ‘just do right by your kid and that’ you know what I mean?” (Duncan)

“When they [school] ring up [about children], ‘can you come here’ I can say ‘yeah 5 minutes I’ll be there’, and get one of the lads to come and pick me up because I am not allowed to drive” (Michael – community)

“He started hanging round with university students, he started going to the same bars through a friend of his that he met in a hostel [...] he started dressing differently I noticed like quite modish quite studentish and then he started going ‘yeah I have been to this place [...] it is alright in there, you don’t get into fights and stuff’ and he started aligning himself with this kind of aspiring working class middle class sort of thing and these people were like ‘oooh drug dealers urgh’” (Offender Manager 1)
For the majority, however, when peers in the community were mentioned in this research it was usually in relation to going out and getting drunk and, to some extent, to committing crime:

“But all my other mates were like ‘oh come out, come and get wrecked and that, come to a party, do this, do that’, but you realise who your mates are when you come to jail don’t you?” (Duncan)

“[Mates] take me out if I’m feeling low, just do something” (Jonathan)

“I was just hanging round with the wrong people; it’s easy to get involved isn’t it?” (Adam)

And this often led to arguments with their girlfriends:

“Because that was one of the main things we argued about like me not being there” (Jason community)

This was mainly in relation to prior to this prison sentence but there were examples of peers still having a negative influence after release, for example, Howard (see chapter eight).

For some of those interviewed in the community there was a realisation that to change their lifestyle they had to stop ‘going out’ and stop seeing negative peers and focus on their children. Therefore, similarly to Warr (2002) peers seemed key to the process of change.

“Before I went to prison my daughter wasn’t, I didn’t really have a lot of time for her, I was out there on the streets doing a lot of things but now my daughter comes first if I’m out with my lads I make sure I leave in plenty of time to go and pick her up from nursery and that is, the time I pick her up till the time she goes to sleep that is our time then after, when she has gone to bed then I can do what I want really” (Glen – community)

These comments suggest that the men could concentrate on either their peers or their children implicitly suggesting the two are not compatible. This offers support to previous research that suggests family life reduces time spent with peers. Trying to reduce links with negative peers is not an easy experience for these young men:

“not mixing with the old mates who I used to like, it is just saying no to them, it is hard that is really considering, I didn’t think it would be but it is, because obviously I have known them all my life and that, so it is different isn’t it, something I am doing different that I have not done before so it is going to be hard isn’t it” (Max – community)
For Warr (1998), it was marriage that was important in leading to the weakening or severing of ties to peers. This data supports this as none of the men were married and before prison many clearly had strong ties to their friends, despite having partners and children. Peer relationships outside of prison tended to have more negatives within them and were to a large extent characterised by drinking, drugs, crime and arguments with the mothers of their children.

Upon release from prison, the men did seem to change and begin to prioritise their families. Like Paternoster and Bushway (2009) theorise, they were now choosing to associate with pro-social people to support new identities. This was not something that happened to them but trying to reduce ties with peers was a conscious decision showing agency which was also a difficult thing to do. Also this demonstrated the ability to be able to break change down into smaller manageable compartments.

One of the offender managers discussed how it is easier for a man to avoid peers when they have the justification for doing so and fatherhood offers this justification: it is a legitimate excuse accepted by peers. Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1984) similarly argue that the fatherhood identity gives people strength and “older adolescents have strong enough identity to resist the pressures of friends” (108). The key professionals had certainly seen men using fatherhood as a “get out clause” (Offender Manager 1) to avoid contact with negative peers.

“If they go ‘because I think it is bad and wrong’ people don’t get that but if they go ‘I have to be there for my kids’ you know what I mean then they get left alone a little bit so I think they start to say it, start to think it a bit more and use it in prison as a way of being able to separate themselves from other people” (Offender Manager 1)

“I think they want to be working legitimately more than not legitimately so they want to be providing although there are not a lot of opportunities out there, erm, and so that gives them a strong thing for themselves and for their peers to go ‘no I am going to have a child so no I am not going to go and do this with you, I am not going to go and do that with you, I am not going to go and do that tonight, I am going to kind of look for a job or try and provide money legally’” (Young Father’s Worker)
7.3 Realities on release
This section considers how the self-determination, that was apparent in chapter five, lasts over time after the men are released from prison. Many had made the individual decision to change, both in terms of offending and becoming a 'good' father. There was also, given their circumstance, a surprisingly high level of self-efficacy among the men: they believed they could change, they could get jobs, stop offending, and have good relationships with their children. Farrall (2002) found that the probationers in his study had limited recognition of the obstacles to desistance they faced and that were identified by their probation officers. Upon release the men saw their informal support networks on a day to day basis and therefore their social and personal contexts are the context in which they were trying to carry out their self-determination. This section will show that for self-determination to be maintained over time, in the community after prison, it requires an element of resolve (staying determined over time) and resilience (staying determined when things go wrong) and also the self-efficacy (a belief in the ability to change) that was apparent chapter five. Similarly to Nurse (2002) in reality going back into the community was more difficult for the men than they imagined.

Firstly, relationships were affected by prison both with children and with their partners. In contrast to the discussion that took place in prison, when in the community, the men admitted that prison had affected their relationships with their children. It may have been that they had not wanted to admit this while in prison or it may have been that they had not previously realised the depth of the impact of being away from home. It took time for their children to ‘get used’ to them. Glen acknowledged that it took a while to rebuild his relationship with his daughter and at first his brother also needed to be there to make his daughter comfortable:

“It took a bit of time for her to get back used to me. She might not have played much games with me or she might have been playing games with me but she wanted one of my brothers or my mum to play it as well but now we just play games alone and when I take her to nursery in the morning, because my brother doesn’t work my brother always took her to nursery,
bring her to nursery as well with her or to pick her up but now she asks if Daddy can come alone to pick her up” (Glen- community)

For some men, home leave had helped ensure that children were comfortable with their fathers on release, and is an example of prison policies easing reintegration. For Jason, home leaves (which had at times been ‘weird’) meant his relationships with his children were "like he had never been gone" on release. According to both Jason, and his partner Caroline, emotional engagement and practical support to Caroline were instrumental in ensuring positive relationships with his children in the community. Caroline said,

“I think now he has surprised me and even like my mum and my friends just say ‘I can’t believe how he is’, what he is like with the kids because he is proper, does everything with them like even like say if I am not feeling well he will take them to the park or take [son] for a bike ride. He is proper like really like really interacting with them and really wants to though, yeah he is close to the kids now, they are very close […] He does a lot, loads more now with them […] like say he will bath them and I’ll put them in bed or I will bath them and he will dry them […] just take turns in doing stuff”.

Max said that with his youngest child it had taken a while to rebuild a relationship and that even ten months after release they were “still bonding”:

“He weren’t looking at me like ‘you are a stranger what are you doing holding me’, he weren’t like that, he was like ‘I know who you are but we haven’t had the connection me and mum have’ like, because obviously she has been there hasn’t she so, he is speaking and that now like, he will call me dad and that which is a bonus isn’t it […], just have to work on it” (Max- community)

Michael, who in prison was expecting establishing a relationship with his daughter to be difficult “because she doesn’t even know me properly”, found the reality easier:

“It weren’t that bad when I got out […]I thought I would have to go out and start buying things,[…] just to get, but nah as soon as I got there it was alright” (Michael- community)

The men on the whole did not appear to react negatively when they were not measuring up to their hopes in terms of fatherhood. They remained motivated and persisted. The difficulties of being a father on release from prison was a theme in the key professional interviews, especially as on release the men are fathering
children who will have changed and grown up in their absence. This can act as a barrier to ‘being there’ physically and emotionally.

There were also changes in relationships with girlfriends, some for the positive and some for the negative. Caroline described her and Jason’s relationship before prison as “not real” as they did not spend much time together and argued a lot.

“But now it is like we can be grown up about things and so can he like we can get on and come to mutual agreements on stuff or whatever, I don’t know we just get along so much better now”

In prison Max acknowledged how supportive his girlfriend (and the mother of his two children) had been and because of their high levels of communication was not worried about their future. Max split up with his girlfriend about four months after release, saying:

“because I was away for so long, it probably just drifted us apart like, do you know what I mean, we just got nothing in common no more, lost everything that we had in common, just lost it” (Max - community)

Michael also split up from the mother of his two children on release for the similar reason of growing apart, but also adding that they were arguing and he did not want the children to witness that:

“it was just like say you grow apart and you come out different people, do you know what I mean like. I have come out a different person with a different attitude, different things to life and she is, it is a routine and if you don’t fit in that routine then you can’t be there and you are getting stressed out because of the situation that everyone is in [...] because we were arguing and all that and I don’t like arguing. If she started arguing I would just get up and walk out, you know no bother, so I didn’t want any of that to happen and then my kids see it and then they think ‘oh it is his fault’ or ‘it is her fault’. We just end it and then it is no one’s fault is it, so then we are all on good terms aren’t we” (Michael- community)

In prison Michael said that he could never see him and his girlfriend breaking up and that they “will always be together”, speaking in depth about her and how they had met.

For many of those interviewed in the community there was a realisation that to change their lifestyle and be ‘good’ fathers they had to stop ‘going out’ and
spending time with peers (discussed above in the section on peers). Therefore in the community the men had taken time to readjust to their life after prison and had reconnected with the children and were trying to stay away from peers. They were enacting their fatherhood identity.

As discussed in chapter five, gaining employment on release was a major hope for release and linked to the process of change and ‘being there’ financially. At the time of the community interviews none of the six men interviewed were in employment. As we have seen, especially in relation to employment, but also with relationships with others back in the community, young men, when they are still in prison often do not have a realistic view of their futures. As a key professional said:

“yeah they come out of prison with an idea of what they want but it is not as realistic in you know to achieve overnight [...] They need to have more of a realistic idea of how long it is going to take and it is not a quick process changing all that [...]I just don’t think they are very realistic about how they are going to achieve that and I will say to them ‘how realistic is that given that before you were in prison you had got all these bad influences in your life, you weren’t interested in doing anything except going out getting drunk and having a good time’. I think once you are in prison and you have got all that time to reflect on it, it is very easy to mean it and be confident but actually having a proper plan in place is a whole different ball game I think and I don’t think they understand that until they do come out again and they’ve got all those pressures that they don’t have whilst they are in prison” (Offender Manager 2)

It is not merely being in prison that exacerbates an unrealistic view but also the education, training and offender behaviour programmes they receive while in prison. These courses undoubtedly add to the potential for change yet they seem to come with issues over managing the men’s expectations. Uggen et al (2004) suggest that in prison offenders envision themselves in idealised roles but in the community goals are tempered by recent experiences and people say they “don’t want to put myself that high” (287).

It is important to look at the possible effects of not living up to the high hopes they had in prison about being a ‘provider’ when the men are back in the community. The men could either live up to the idea of a ‘good’ father in other ways and carry
on being there for their children, or they could concentrate on providing and so turn
to crime (and face the possibility of not being there), or they could mix legitimate
and illegitimate.

The men in the sample showed mixed responses and some did go back to their pre-
prison lifestyle. It was known for 13 of the original 19 how they were getting on in
the community after release. Four of the sample were in, or had been back to,
prison. Not all offending post release was acquisitive and so there were other
reasons for offending than not being able to provide for their children. This meant
that there were other surrounding issues in not living up to their own hopes, such
as around masculine anxieties and post release stress. One good example of this is
Howard (see chapter eight). Three of the men were still on licence but had chaotic
lifestyles and were considered problematic by their offender managers. Duncan and
Andrew had both split up with their girlfriends post release and this was causing
them to “play up” and their lifestyle to become increasingly chaotic. Despite this,
these men had so far resisted persistence with their old lifestyle. On a more
positive note five men were still on licence but were doing well and one had
completed their licence successfully.

Like Burnett (1992) who found that men who are going through the process of
change have a breaking point where they give up, it appeared in the current
sample that self-determination can reduce for these young men as time goes on.
It seemed though the men in the current sample all had different social and
personal contexts in which they were experiencing change in the community and
this, alongside achieving, or not achieving, desires meant that everyone has a
different breaking point. Like Farrall (2002), those who had good social and
personal contexts were more likely to overcome obstacles. Of those that were not
doing so well with probation or who were back in prison many had experienced
upheaval in their lives, especially the splitting up of a relationship.
The key professionals interviewed agreed that young lads not fulfilling their hope of gaining employment often eventually led to them giving up and returning to previous life choices:

“Interviewer: so what happens when they don’t get that work then? Respondent: erm, a few of them keep trying (laughs) really keep trying bless them, they do. A lot of them are really focused on doing that for a long period of time but eventually the boredom sets in, the frustration sets in and they might revert back to drinking, or spending more time with their mates rather than being at home with their partner and their child and things start to break down again I have noticed [...] The most recent one I can think of is this guy [...] he came out of prison, wanted to stop offending and was doing really, really well, got back with his partner and was trying, trying and trying to get work, did get work for about 4 months and then that was a temporary contract, didn’t work after that and then he fell back into going out with his mates and was just fed up with being bored and not getting anywhere and frustrated with the system I think, he wanted to make these changes but he couldn’t so I think he sort of gave up a little bit and has committed 3 offences in the last 2 or 3 weeks and has been recalled and it is just so frustrating” (Offender Manager 2)

7.3.1 Self-determination over time

This section illustrates the important factors in maintaining self-determination over time. It shows the importance of feeling in control of situations, resilience, and support. It also shows the interplay between decision making and social structures (Farrall, 2002). This chapter provides further evidence of the importance of social and personal contexts in which people make their decisions and operate their self-determination.

A further element that is highlighted here is the importance of being able to break change down into its components. Change is a big concept and the men who maintained their self-determination were able to concentrate on changing one aspect of their lives which then impacted on others. Agency was important in being able to recognise an area they needed to change and the result was feeling even more in control. This is about human agency in the sense of making decisions that indirectly lead to bigger change, and reflects Paternoster and Bushway’s (2009) theory that after a change in identity, desisters strengthen their affiliations with pro-social others.
7.3.1.1 Resilience
One important element of maintaining self-determination seen in the follow up interviews was being resilient to disappointment. Losel et al (2012) define resilience as “the process of effective adaptation to risk or adversity to achieve positive outcomes” (16). Losel et al (2012) found reasonably high levels of resilience among the fathers in their study18.

Glen had been released for about eight months when he was re-interviewed in the community. Glen had been employed but had recently lost his job due to the company needing to make redundancies and as the newest employee he was the first to go. He spoke without any bitterness about this fact. Glen was carrying out voluntary work, helping his dad coach children’s football (using his FA coaching qualification from prison). After these eight months he was still positive and was currently going through a disclosure check for another job. He had remained resilient in applying for other jobs. It seemed that his hopes had been kept alive by the fact he had actually had a job. Farrall (2004) also discusses how if people have found employment previously it gives them the self-confidence to continue looking, especially when the reason for losing the job is not due to their own failures.

7.3.1.2 Agency in decision-making leading to conscious changes in circumstances
There were examples of men maintaining their self-determination by using agency to recognise why they had offended and making changes not only to their identity but to their social and personal circumstances to reflect that identity’s place in the salience hierarchy (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009). As seen above, Glen had something to do with his days and Glen had made a conscious decision to keep busy;

“If I don't keep busy then I will probably end up in the same trap and being back on the streets selling drugs again and I don't want to end up back in jail” (Glen – community)

18 They measured resilience using aspects of active coping, stress resistance and social resources (Losel et al, 2012).
He was also very aware about what he thought had led him to offend (although there may have been other influences that he had not recognised): boredom and his peers. He was currently in the process of moving to an area away from negative peers.

Max’s situation is an example of the importance of feeling in control over situations and on choosing his fatherhood identity and concentrating on the ‘being there’ role within this. After ten months in the community Max also still had his self-determination. Max had two children to his long-term girlfriend. Max had found employment fairly quickly upon release but had chosen to terminate working in order to develop his relationship with his son first; work prevented him spending time with him. Max put a lot of his current mind-set down to the fact he was drug free and even said “you get more of a buzz when you see your kids than you do when you are on drugs”. He spoke with agency about becoming drug free: according to him, it wasn’t something that happened to him, he had made the choice:

“Respondent: I gave myself a choice like, drugs or them and obviously I chose them
Interviewer: when was that?
Respondent: when I first come out of prison, because it would have been easy for me to get straight out of prison, start taking drugs and go straight back again but that wouldn’t get me anywhere would it because I have done that for years you know what I mean. It was doing me nothing so I thought ‘I have had enough of it, I want to change’ [...] I don’t want them [children] looking up to me thinking that is right, I want them growing up to have a job and to have a career in the future not doing what I did, having drugs and getting into crime and trouble, it is not right is it?” (Max – community)

Max therefore had achieved something since release and had also changed his circumstances (both in relation to employment and drugs) in order to fulfil his fatherhood identity (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009). He seemed very proud of the fact he had not committed any further crime.

In contrast, Michael is an example of someone who continued to offend and therefore his self-determination did not last long. While he maintained that he
wanted to change when in prison the evidence both in prison and in the community was that he was not taking this seriously. ‘Dodgy business’ was implicit throughout both interviews with sentences such as “I have to go out and move about” (Michael - Community). He had been back to prison two months after release but was released without charge but he admitted that he was expecting to be arrested imminently. His decision had been to continue with crime. Michael was very different from the rest of the sample in that he was older and his criminal career was fairly entrenched. Michael spoke regularly about how much money he had and spent (“like this morning I have spent like £100 already) and how generous he was with this. Generosity with money was a feature of condemnation scripts for those who carried on offending in Maruna’s (2001) study.

7.3.1.3 The value of support
This whole chapter has focused on informal support but it was clear in the community interviews why support was so important to the men; it helped them stay determined and increased their resilience when setbacks occurred. As Losel et al (2012) found, resilience was increased if men had high quality relationships with the mother of their children, contact during imprisonment and if the men were involved with their child’s upbringing. Glen’s mother was very supportive and this had helped him accept that he was no longer in a relationship with his child’s mother. His self-determination was still high. Max split up with his girlfriend soon after returning to the community and she then moved some distance away with his two children (although he did remain in contact). This was a difficult time for Max but at the time of the community interview he had a new girlfriend and a new baby on the way. The support of this new girlfriend, in particular the effort she put into ensuring he had a relationship with his two children, was influential in Max staying self-determined to change.
7.4 Discussion
This chapter has highlighted the transiency of the men’s lives in this study. Men, within quite a short time period, split up with partners, and so became parents who lived apart from their children, and developed new relationships. They also became parents again very quickly following prison to the same or new partner. This transiency shows the often chaotic personal context that these men were trying to achieve change in and showed that informal support is not a constant.

This chapter has shown evidence to support Giordano et al (2002) and Moloney et al (2009) when they say that identity and cognitive change are important but need to be accompanied by a change in lifestyle. To do well on release, the young men need to have positive contexts. If not, their commitment to self-determination and to pro-social identities was likely to be undermined by stigma and negative social and personal contexts (Farrall, 2002; Uggen et al, 2004; Walker, 2010).

Often these men had negative personal, social and economic circumstances (Farrall, 2002; Walker, 2010). They commonly had difficult personal circumstances (readjusting to the children, their partners, and society) and were released into a world of limited employment opportunities. For sustained change people need self-efficacy, persistence and resilience as well as self-determination. The data presented above on gaining employment in the community clearly showed that when people are unable to meet their own desires it becomes important that they are resilient against rejection, persistent and believe they can do it. The men in this study all had different time periods before their self-determination began to diminish depending upon their social and personal contexts and their attitude and reaction to their situations.

This section has demonstrated the difference between hopes and reality, thoughts and behaviour and the “disjuncture between wishing to desist and getting there”
(Shapland and Bottoms, 2011: 271). Change is a process and, as one of the key professionals said, the issue is maintaining the change:

“It is just kind of maintaining that when they come out you know like seeing them actually really, really change, I find that it is difficult” (Offender Manager 1)

Authors have noted that the more social difficulties people face, the more attitudes and motivations become overwhelmed by reality and self-efficacy vanishes (Burnett and Maruna, 2004) and that structural problems on release can cause reoffending not choice (Richards and Jones, 2004). Farrall (2002) found that men’s desire and ability to desist were relatively stable but changes in motivation were accounted for by changes in personal and social circumstances and drug and alcohol usage. The data shown above supports this as we have seen that social and personal contexts impact upon self-determination both in positive and negative ways. The data here suggest people seemingly have a breaking point both away from the process of change and towards it and what ‘breaks’ people, and the time it takes, varies from person to person.

Informal support is a key requirement for positive and sustained behavioural change. The value of this cannot be overstated yet prison can degrade the informal ties that provide this support. Prison can also cause attachment problems, clearly evident among the men returning home to their children. Informal support was shown to be important in a number of senses. First, it helped the young men stay motivated and encouraged self-determination. Second, informal support provided practical support. Third, the men were able to share their problems and so informal support provided emotional support and a chance for men to develop their emotional engagement. Finally, informal support influenced the men’s personal and social contexts supporting Farrall’s (2002) argument.

The value of informal support to the change process, and the barriers to accessing this that prison creates (seen across chapters five to seven), have clear implications
for policy and practice. While, as was seen in chapter six, the prison does make some effort to try and maintain access to informal support, more could be done. There is also a need to ensure that those who provide informal support to men are supported themselves in the important role that they do.

In relation to informal support, families of origin mainly provided practical support such as money and accommodation and therefore structural support to the men. Families of formation in general added to the self-determination of these young men by giving them motivation as they were “something which could be lost” (Farrall, 2002: 156). They also provided emotional support. There were cases where these families of formation acted as a barrier to change leading to additional conflict and consequently a chaotic personal context. Peers tended to be a negative influence upon the men and recognising this and distancing oneself from it was a part of the process of change.

Wanting to change may be associated with primary desistance (Maruna and Farrall, 2004): all of the men avoided offending for a period of time. Sustaining change, however, is associated with more than having the desire to change but also the self-efficacy and self-belief, determination and, maybe most importantly, the resilience to do it. As well as these human agency factors, societal factors are also important. The themes discussed in this chapter about maintaining self-determination are demonstrated in more detail in chapter eight.
Chapter Eight: Case Studies

This chapter will present data at the individual level through two case studies: Jay and Howard. This chapter contains a longitudinal aspect that chapters five to seven do not fully represent. These case studies are included so as not to lose sight of the fact that the themes and findings discussed thus far come from individual men presenting *their* stories and experiences. What are presented here are not whole life case studies but case studies about a certain time and aspect of the young men’s lives. They are intended to provide more information about the issue of fathering from prison and the desistance potential of this. The change process is individual and while there may be themes that cut across different people it is important to look at the case studies of individuals.

Importantly, these case studies show that the factors that have been found to be important in the process of change for young fathers presented in chapters five to seven also apply at the individual level. As with research on offenders in general these factors are self-determination, formal support, informal support, positive social and personal contexts and identity transformation (Maruna, 2001; Farrall, 2002; Giordano *et al*, 2002; Maruna *et al*, 2004a). These are shown in the following diagram and the two case studies are structured around these:
Furthermore, these case studies clearly highlight the extra dimension that fatherhood adds to these factors that are needed for sustained change, and show how connected the factors are to one another. The case studies also allow the agency-structure divide to be considered in real terms.

This chapter will begin by explaining why Jay and Howard were chosen as case studies over other possible participants. This will look at why they were chosen in terms of what they reveal. As part of this discussion there will be a critical account of accessing respondents, and the people that had supported them, in the community. This is because to be longitudinal it was important to select case studies from those young fathers who were followed up in the community, and to include a case study where a supporter’s view could also be represented. This chapter will then outline the analytical approach used in the specific analysis of the case studies. Following from this will be the case studies of Jay, and then Howard.
8.1 Rationale for including Jay and Howard as the case studies
The two case studies are not representative case studies, but at the same time they are not atypical cases. These two were chosen because they embody, and represent in an interesting way, the themes that have been discussed so far. Jay and Howard were chosen above the other 17 fathers participating in the research, mainly because the men who had been followed up into the community are the only ones that truly contain a longitudinal aspect. This left six men from which to choose. It was also deemed important to include at least one man for whom a person they had identified as being supportive had been interviewed, as it was this aspect of the research that made the methods unique. The fact that the number of follow-up interviews with the young fathers and the number of interviews with people the fathers identified as being supportive of them were both lower than anticipated will now be considered.

It was difficult to access men in the community. It was decided, both in terms of researcher safety and logistics that the most appropriate way to re-contact men in the community was through probation. In chapter four there is discussion of the difficulties of access through probation, especially the time associated with both the need to respect the hierarchical structures of the probation service and in making contact with busy offender managers (OMs). The delays in time to make contact with the OMs and then, through them, the men themselves meant that some men had completed their licence or were back in prison by the time this contact occurred. Negotiations with probation needed to start much earlier (although this may be problematic given that the multiple probation areas needing to be accessed will not be known in advance) and the approach worked best when a face-to-face meeting was arranged with someone from the probation area. Further attrition was due to one man no longer wanting to take part in the research. This man was experiencing difficulties in the community and so had other priorities than taking part in research. He was no longer a captive audience.
Despite these difficulties the six men that were followed up reflected a range of fathers. The six follow-up interviews generally had a higher level of depth than the prison interviews (apart from Howard which is one of the reasons for his inclusion as a case study). The original proposal for this research was to access a different set of men in the community however this would not have met the need for research following young fathers from prison into the community that has been identified in previous research on young fathers (Nurse, 2002; Bahr et al, 2005; Day et al, 2005; Meek, 2007a).

The interviews with people that the fathers identified as supportive of them gathered insightful and interesting data; where this individual case study approach happened, it worked well. However, only two such interviews were carried out. One reason for this was that the people who supported the men were accessed through the community follow-up interviews with the young fathers. The attrition of men, discussed above, meant that only those who had supported the six men who were followed up were available. Yet while the six men between them identified twelve people who had supported them only two case study interviews were carried out. This second level of attrition was because: some men were no longer with the mothers of their children and thus they felt that an interview was no longer appropriate; two young fathers said their mothers were interested but gave out incorrect phone numbers; in one case, a girlfriend agreed and a time was arranged but she never answered the phone; and of those who had identified people working with formal agencies one never returned emails and phone calls and one was on sick leave for the duration of the research. These difficulties

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19 The procedure for contacting people who had been supportive of the young fathers (discussed in section 4.5.7) was decided on for ethical reasons of researcher safety and the disadvantages of this procedure are that it relies on the researcher and those identified as supportive communicating via the young father.

20 It is not known whether these wrong numbers were given out on purpose or by accident but it is interesting that it happened twice.

21 This happened more than once in this case.
themselves reflect the transiency of the men’s lives and the pressures on the people who are formally employed to support them.

An alternative method may have been to consider Jardine’s (2013) approach. When researching prisoner’s families, Jardine (2013) found the families of the prisoners first through prison visits centres and then contacted the prisoner. This approach would not have fitted comfortably with the focus of this research; the men. It was important that the men were given the control and power and speaking to their visitors first takes the control away from them.

It was also considered valuable to include one participant who was doing well on release and another who was struggling. The reason for this being to highlight that the factors needed for change that have thus far been discussed separately are inter-linked. Two of the six who were interviewed twice were experiencing difficulties on release: Michael and Howard. It was decided not to include Michael because, as noted in chapters five to seven, he was very much atypical of the young fathers and was entrenched in an offending lifestyle. This left Howard. There were four men who were doing well on licence and Jay was chosen because he was no longer in a relationship with the mother of his two youngest children, was expecting a fifth child with his new partner, was out of work, and, therefore he was doing well despite potential adversity.

A further reason for Jay being chosen was the fact that both him and Howard were starting the process of change from similar positions. They were both in prison for the same offence. They both wanted to desist from offending and never come back to prison because they were finding it hard being in prison away from their children. They had similar levels of self-determination which in both cases included agency and self-efficacy. They also both had children with ex-partners, and their relationships with their ex-partners both changed after release, one for the better and one for the worse. Furthermore, Howard and Jay had similar issues that they
needed to change to not offend; both cases involve men whose offending is not entrenched but instead is an integrated issue related to their lifestyle, especially peer groups and drug use. It can be argued that to change one’s whole lifestyle, including friends and addictive or habitual activities, requires very high levels of resolve and resilience. The two cases can be compared on what is needed to maintain self-determination over time and potential barriers. Jay shows how maintaining self-determination is connected to an alternative identity, high levels of support and positive social and personal contexts. Howard, alternatively reveals the opposite; that an inability to maintain self-determination is connected to negative social and personal contexts, alternative identities becoming less salient and support being reduced.

Besides self-determination, both Howard and Jay’s cases reveal the inter-connectedness of other factors needed for change. Jay was chosen because he shows the link between support and social and personal contexts. Howard reveals the inter-connectedness of support and identity. These two cases are also particularly poignant, especially Howard, whose self-efficacy and social and personal contexts are strong while he is in prison and things slowly unravel when he is back in the community.

8.1.2 Case study analysis
The data for these case studies was analysed using interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith, 1996; 2004). This was chosen because it allows an idiographic focus, thus allowing a detailed insight into what the phenomenon of fatherhood means to a particular person in a given context and how that person makes sense of their experiences as a father and as a prisoner (Smith, 2004). Smith (1996) stresses the dual nature of this approach to analysing data; it explores the participant’s view of the world (phenomenological), and it recognises that the research exercise is a dynamic process and meanings can only be obtained through a process of interpretation. During analysis then it was crucial to make sense of the interviewee’s attempts to make sense of their own experience of being a father
(Smith, 1996) and this is reflected in the discussions below. This fits with the epistemology of the research that is concerned with understanding how the research subjects view the world.

Analysis was done bottom up, by generating codes, and later themes, from the data through an inductive approach. Like the thematic analysis that was a feature of chapters five to seven the approach was iterative. It is important to acknowledge that the analysis presented below is a detailed account of what fatherhood meant to Jay and Howard at the time of the two interviews: like Smith (1996) says, other fathers might have different perceptions and Howard and Jay may view fatherhood, prison and offending differently at different times. This latter point further emphasises the importance of following fathers from prison to the community.

8.2 Jay: A Case Study
Jay is an example of a young father doing well on release from prison. For Jay all the important factors for change have come together at the same time. Jay’s case illustrates that fatherhood moving to the top of the identity salience hierarchy, and replacing identities associated with peers and drug taking, is an important part of the change process, and resulted in him prioritising his children over himself and his peers. For Jay, a salient fatherhood identity was not an immediate response to becoming a father; instead an openness to change was needed as a result of reflection which in turn increased his self-determination. This led to a more positive view of fatherhood. Jay also provides further demonstration of the importance of informal support and positive personal contexts and shows that with this support, self-determination can be maintained, even when potential barriers arise, such as the absence of employment.

Jay was interviewed when he was 24, a couple of days before he was released from prison (having been in prison for 31 months of a 62 month sentence) and again
when he had been back in the community eight months. Jay, had two previous convictions, but was serving his first prison sentence for supplying drugs.

Jay is a father of four. Jay, has a daughter, Holly and son, Harrison (aged seven and five respectively at the time of the first interview) with his previous partner, Kirsty. He then met Hayley and has a son, Ed (three), and daughter, Isabel (two) with her. Hayley was also seven months pregnant at the time Jay was interviewed in the community.

8.2.1 Self-determination
Jay's discussions in prison reflected an openness to change. He seemed keen not to reoffend mentioning it a number of times without being asked explicitly. His reasoning for not wanting to offend again was linked to his children. In the community he was doing well: he had not committed any further crimes and was staying away from negative peers. He had been tempted to reoffend, but as he planned when in prison, he had reminded himself how he had found the experience of prison:

“Respondent: you get the odd time where you have got no money and think ‘aw I could make money’ but then I just keep thinking back to missing out on my daughter when she was born and then keep me away from everything. I just don’t want nothing to do with it all, I don’t associate with none of the old mates I used to associate with no more so I am doing good at the minute [...] I always have it [going back to prison] stuck in my head, I’ll go back and just, if I do anything else again. I am getting a long time do you know what I mean and I don’t want to miss out on my kids’ lives through that so it sort of pops in my head all the time” (Community)

Therefore he was managing to maintain his self-determination over time. Similarly to Giordano et al’s (2002) theory there was a clear relationship between his openness to change and his increasing recognition of the importance of his children (his changing attitude towards the hook for change of fatherhood). Jay differs slightly from Giordano et al’s (2002) theory in that the structural change of being a father and being in prison had contributed to the agentic factor of openness to change. Thus agency and structure are reciprocal and both important. As with many of the men in the study, Jay’s decision to change involved agency – change
did not just happen to him. His strategy of reminding himself about what he felt in prison is a good example of this agency and the active, cognitive role he is playing.

8.2.2 Informal support
Peers and drug use led to issues over the location of Jay’s accommodation for release as he was not allowed under his licence to return to the area where his negative peers lived, but this was also the location of his current girlfriend and youngest children. Jay was upset that he would live a two and a half hour train journey away from his youngest children whilst knowing that this was best in terms of avoiding his negative peers. There is a conflict for Jay within the informal support factor: negative informal links are located in the same place as positive informal support. His licence conditions had decided that the negatives outweighed the positives.

He returned to live with his mother upon release, which was near his eldest children. In the community Jay discussed how he was staying away from his negative peers and was instead spending time with his friends from when he was at school, which seemed to be a more positive group. Jay had not let the licence conditions affect his process of change, showing resilience, an important element of self-determination. In finding a positive group of friends (which shows agency) he was further enabled to remain self-determined. This shows the link between informal support and self-determination over time.

When asked explicitly about support Jay could not recognise anyone who had supported him. However he spoke about his family helping him avoid his negative peers, his mother acting as a mediator between him and his ex, his mother and girlfriend bringing his children for visits, and positive peers. Therefore Jay was supported when in prison, and perhaps even more so when he was back in the community. He benefited from informal support (Maruna et al, 2004a).
8.2.3 Formal support
There were also examples of formal support throughout his interviews (Maruna et al, 2004a). Jay spoke about the support he received from his Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice, and Through-care (CARATS) worker and this being instrumental in him becoming drug free. This support also indirectly supported him as a father because it reduced the salience of the drug taking identity and allowed the fatherhood identity to replace this. Jay’s offender manager also supported his fatherhood identity by relaxing his licence conditions to allow him to stay with his current partner occasionally, thus allowing him opportunities to enact his father identity with his youngest children. This shows how formal support can indirectly help with positive identity transformation.

8.2.4 Positive social and personal contexts
Before prison Jay said that his relationship with Kirsty, the mother of his two eldest children, had been difficult. He did not really speak to her and contact with his children was arranged through the children's paternal grandma. He believed this would also be the case after release. Jay admitted that this negative relationship with Kirsty over her disapproval of his lifestyle meant that he had not seen much of his eldest children prior to imprisonment.

Kirsty was now in a relationship with a friend of Jay’s, a fact Jay viewed positively. When Jay was back in the community after release, Jay and Kirsty’s relationship was much improved mainly because he was no longer dealing drugs:

"She didn't like the fact that I was doing what I was doing at the time [...] I don't do that no more, I just get on with her now plus I am mates with her fella so he puts good words in for me (laughs)" (Community)

Jay and Hayley had a good relationship before prison but did split up when he first came to prison because he wanted to concentrate on become drug free. They got back together during his prison sentence when he started getting home leaves. Jay presented as very empathetic towards Hayley’s situation throughout both
interviews. For example, after prison Jay took actions to make life easier for Hayley and enabling her to have some time to herself:

“When I stay over down there, I take my little lad to school and that, I give her some time to herself, I take the baby to the park when he is at school and with her being pregnant and that she is a bit stressed out” (Community)

These positive actions also represent generativity (Maruna, 2001); Jay was giving back to people he considered important.

Jay’s main hope for his release was to gain employment and he explicitly linked this to wanting to provide for his children. Interestingly, despite drug dealing before prison, and saying he had quite a lot of money, providing financially for his children did not seem to have been his priority. Jay said,

“I wouldn’t say I contributed a lot but yeah I contributed some (laughs)” (Prison)

Yet in prison, like many of the men in the sample, being a provider seemed to become more of a priority to Jay.

Jay had limited work experience before prison and while acknowledging the difficulties he might face in gaining employment upon release, while in prison he remained optimistic. In reality Jay was struggling to find employment because of the lack of vacancies and opportunities in a time of economic downturn (Burghes et al, 1997; Speak et al, 1997). At the time of the community interview he appeared to be coping with this situation. Crucially, he was remaining persistent in applying for work because he was aware of the advantages to him of being employed, namely that it would mean both his time and his mind were constructively occupied.

The positive relationships with Kirsty and Hayley created a positive social and personal context (Farrall, 2002; Walker, 2010). Even though he still had accommodation and employment issues he was able to cope with these and remain
persistent and resilient. Thus social and personal contexts and informal support were very much connected to his levels of self-determination. For Jay the three factors of informal support, positive social and personal contexts and self-determination are very much interlinked.

8.2.5 Identity Transformation
Jay's two interviews showed great contrast in discussions about his children and his identity as a father. His prison interview was characterised by very limited discussion of his children and a realisation of what he was missing out on. His community interview was full of discussions about what he did with them and what they were like, reflecting an identity transformation.

8.2.5.1 Before prison
Jay admitted in his interviews, unlike some of the other men in the sample, that prior to his imprisonment he did not spend time with his children in any capacity. Instead he was "more for myself back then, selfish". Prior to prison, Jay's identities of peer and drug dealer appeared highly salient to him, something which he could reflect upon when this was no longer the case. Whilst, Maruna (2001) argues that people 'make good' their past in order to be what they want in the future, Jay's case would suggest that when he had achieved his aspirations there was no longer a need to 'make good' his past. Maruna (2001) found that desisters continued to 'make good' their past, which does not appear to be the case with Jay.

Prior to prison, Jay spent most of his time with his drug using friends before he came to prison and prioritised them over others, including his children. This suggests that previously he would enact roles associated with offending and 'being a lad' in situations where these and other identities were available to him, for example, in his spare time. When his eldest daughter, Holly, was born he had spent a lot of time with her but split up from Kirsty when Harrison was only five months old so admitted he did not do the same with him. His new partner, Hayley, lived some distance away and so when he moved in with her contact with his eldest children was very limited. He had once gone a long period of time (nine months)
before prison without seeing his two eldest children. Despite this throughout both interviews Jay referred to Holly affectionately as a “daddy’s girl”. Even with Ed, his son with Hayley, he did not appear to have had much of a role prior to prison. He would “see them” but did not go into any other detail apart from saying he did not change nappies. Before prison, it was clear that his fatherhood identity was not salient and his enactment of fatherhood roles was limited.

8.2.5.2 During prison
Jay's youngest, Isabel, was born while he was in prison. He then did not see his daughter for six months because this was during the time he and Hayley were separated. Of this time he said:

“It really hurt me to be honest with you it was horrible” (Prison)

During prison he had regular contact with all of his children. His mother brought his eldest two children for visits and Hayley brought his youngest two children. He felt that it was hard to entertain children on visits because they do not want to sit still, especially when there is a toy area. Jay was perceptive and empathetic in noticing that this led to further pressure on the person bringing them as he could not get out of his chair to help. He had regular phone calls to all of his children.

Jay had found being away from his children ‘hard’ but had seemingly used his prison sentence to reflect on fatherhood and during this time had realised that he had “missed out on it all”.

“being away from them, when you don’t see your kids apart from visits and they’ve changed it makes you realise” (Prison)

He seemed to regret time not spent with them saying:

“I’d see them but now, I don’t know, I just want to be with them” (Prison)

Like in some other studies (Dennison and Lyon, 2001; Nurse, 2002; Edin et al, 2004; Jarvis et al, 2004; Arditti et al, 2005; Clarke et al, 2005; Roy and Dyson, 2005; Meek, 2007a; 2011), being away from his children in prison seemed to reaffirm Jay’s parental identity.
8.2.5.3 After prison
At the community interview, Jay was seeing more of his eldest children not only because he has had to return home to his mother’s house near where they lived, but also because he wanted to. He saw them when they were at his mother’s but also took them out for the day once a week and picked them up from school. He described having a “normal” relationship with them which he saw as an improvement. This was about ‘being there’ for his children.

Jay tried to see his youngest children every week and he often got permission from his offender manager so that he could stay over at their house. If not, however, Hayley brought his children to stay with him. He now spent time with them and interacted with them,

“like we are in the house with the kids so go and play on the trampoline with them or something or like I got my youngest one of them little quads and I take him out on that, my little lad, erm, yeah we just go out and go and visit family and that, round their Grandads and that or to the park, my little lad likes to play footie so we go and play footie on the field” (Community)

He also took more responsibility for them, taking Ed to school and Isabel out, reflecting a more holistic approach to parenting than just fun activities.

Jay felt that his relationships with his youngest daughter had been affected by prison but the home leaves and contact had helped alleviate some of the issues:

“Respondent: it was a bit weird because my youngest she didn’t really know me when I come out of jail and she just saw my little lad calling me Daddy and that so she started doing it (laughs) but that is the only thing really Interviewer: how long do you think it took for your youngest to get sort of used to you being there then after? Respondent: well by the time I got released she knew who I was because I was getting home leaves and that so she was coming down here to see me, [...] just the first couple of home leaves because I was there for a couple of days and then I was gone again so she was trying to get used to me and she couldn’t” (Community)

In the community Jay said, that unlike before prison, he now puts his children first. He spoke about his time with his children with enthusiasm rather than having nothing to say on the issue:
“All my time is with my kids yeah [...] I just love my kids, I want to be with them as much as I can really” (Community)

At this time Jay’s fatherhood identity was high in the salience hierarchy. He was choosing to enact roles associated with fatherhood over other roles. Using Stryker and Serpe’s (1982) definition of commitment, Jay’s newfound positive relationship with Kirsty and her partner meant that there were more people he was tied to through his father identity and that these ties were strengthened resulting in higher commitment to fatherhood (Burke and Reitzes, 1991). This shows the link between contexts and identity transformation.

Fatherhood was an alternative identity for Jay from the one he had before prison. Even though it had been available to him before prison he had not realised how important his children and therefore this identity were to him. His attitude towards fatherhood had become more positive (Giordano et al., 2002). Following release from prison Jay’s paternal identity became more and more salient and he became more committed to this identity resulting in behaviour to enact this identity (Burke and Reitzes, 1991). For example, he prioritised spending time with all of his children, both having fun and taking on a more nurturing role. The more he carried out this behaviour, the more he realised he enjoyed it which furthered his commitment to this identity.

8.2.6 Discussion of Jay
For Jay many factors had come together at the same time and were remaining constant resulting in continued success: through reflection while in prison (structure), he became open to change (agency) which led to a positive view of fatherhood (structure) and identity transformation (agency); he received formal support and intervention (structure); his personal life improved, in part due to his actions (agency), resulting in a more positive relationship with his ex, a new baby on the way, and less contact with negative influences (structure); and he remained in receipt of informal support from his mum and current girlfriend (structure).
Whilst not living near his current girlfriend could have proved problematic, Jay was resilient against this setback and persistent and agentic in trying to change offender manager to be nearer her. Likewise with employment. His self-determination (agency) remained over time. This case study has highlighted the interconnectedness of the factors needed for sustained change as well as the reciprocal nature between agentic and structural factors in the process of change and emphasises that both agency and structure are important (Farrall and Bowling, 1999).

8.3 Howard: A Case Study

Howard is an example of a young father having periods of varying success on release, especially in terms of relationships and offending. His case reflects how the absence of positive social, economic and personal contexts can make it difficult for some young offending fathers to maintain self-determination over time. This case also provides a good illustration of the impact of significant others on a person’s identity, particular how those who support a young father can help shape fatherhood identity by their interest in them being a father. Informal support is very much inter-linked to these discussions of identity and to social and personal contexts.

Howard was interviewed for the first time in prison the day before his release. At this time he was 23 years old. He had been in prison for 18 months (and in this prison for five months) of a 36 month sentence. Howard had some offending history, with 7 previous convictions. This was Howard’s second custodial sentence (his first being when he was 18). A second interview with Howard took place after he had been living in the community 15 months. As he was late to his probation appointment his OM spoke at length about supervision post release. Howard’s mother, Catherine, was also interviewed.

22 It is worth noting that this was the longest gap of the follow-up interviews.
Howard is the father of a young boy, Charlie, who was 29 months old at the time of the first interview. Howard was no longer with Charlie’s mother, Rebecca but was in a new relationship, with Collette.

8.3.1 Self-determination

Like many of the men in the sample, whilst in prison Howard spoke with self-determination about not reoffending again: “I have no intention of doing anything”. He felt this change in attitude was due to time spent away from his son:

“I have been taken away from him, you know what I mean. I don’t like being away from him and I don’t want to be away from him again. I want to be a dad to him, I don’t want to just be someone he comes and sees in prison” (Prison)

This is an example of fatherhood adding an extra dimension to self-determination. The strong use of ‘I’ in this reflects the ownership Howard is taking of the decision. Alongside his son, Howard’s mother and girlfriend were also reasons he wanted to stop offending, because he thought it disrespectful to them if he returned to prison.

Howard had some awareness of potential difficulties he may face in readjusting to life in the community after so long away:

“cars, I am scared of cars, you know because it has been 2 miles per hour since I have been in here, it is going to be weird [...] like on my town visit I went to the shop and bought ciggies, I give her a £10 note, bought 10 ciggies and walked away, she was shouting me like, I was shitting myself ‘what, what’, ‘you forgot your change’” (Prison)

As reflected in the above quote, these concerns were neither about difficulties in relation to his aims of being father nor about reoffending. Like many in the sample he was generally optimistic about his future and had high levels of self-efficacy around his self-determination. In particular, Howard was certain of a continued positive relationship with Charlie on release:

“I just want to pick up where I left off basically and build it back up. I have got a good relationship with him now but I want to make a better one with him” (Prison)
Despite his intentions, seven months after his original release he went back to prison for six weeks for breach of his licence after being found with cocaine in his possession. The reasons for this breach will be discussed in section 8.3.4 but it is clear that his self-determination was reduced at the time of the breach and that he did not have the resolve and resilience elements of self-determination.

Howard described being upset over being recalled to prison. Interestingly, during this six week sentence neither his mother, nor Charlie, visited him in prison:

“it was only 6 weeks and it was a conscious decision from both of us not to go in to sort of, not so much the baby but to teach [Howard] a lesson to say to him, ‘you have got to think about other people and the consequences of your actions’ which might seem a bit harsh but we did” (Howard’s Mother)

This seemed to have the desired effect and left Howard with self-described renewed self-determination.

Following his imprisonment for breach, Howard’s OM described Howard as “hot-headed”. Of her caseload of 28 he was the one she was most worried about over Christmas, and the nights out associated with this, but Howard had told her he only drank at home apart from two planned nights out. Howard’s mother supported this saying Howard was trying to avoid trouble:

“I think he tries to keep out of trouble a lot more now [...] Obviously he is a bit more wary about getting himself into situations where he can get into trouble so he does try and keep away from it [...] He doesn’t go out drinking quite as much as he used to” (Howard’s mother)

These decisions reflect Howard’s agency. He had made a conscious decision to alter his lifestyle (although this had not gone all the way to a complete change as he still had two planned nights out – see 8.3.2) and therefore had taken some ownership of his self-determination and goals. This also shows some recognition by Howard that his offending was entrenched in his lifestyle and peer group.

8.3.2 Informal support
While in prison Howard recognised that he received support from many people, but mainly his mother and girlfriend:
“My mum, constantly, even when I have been in jail she has been brilliant [...] Between my mum and my girlfriend they have both been brilliant while I have been in here, couldn’t have asked for better support to be honest with you” (Howard)

He also received support from the other men in prison especially in relation to coping with being away from his son:

“the lads on the wing to be honest with you, I get back and it is mad you get like really close to people in here [...] because you are with them every day, sharing the same experiences and that [...] they just say, ‘they come up and see you all the time’ make you realise what is important and it’ll be okay [...] just moral support really, being there to talk to, to get things off my chest” (Howard)

These informal support mechanisms while in prison were all focused on fatherhood. Howard’s discussion shows that friendships in prison can have an emotional element (Crewe, 2009). This demonstrates the extra dimension that being a father adds to informal support; it gives extra need for, and focus of, that support. Furthermore, given Stryker and Serpe’s (1982) argument that people become more committed to an identity the more good quality relationships they have with people tied to that identity, it is perhaps not surprising that Howard’s identity became more salient while he was in prison (see section 8.3.5.1).

In contrast, on release from prison Howard’s discussions of support were more limited. He again spoke highly of his mum, briefly mentioned Collette and also acknowledged that Collette’s mother had supported him, especially financially. Instead, it appeared Howard was relying more on his peers for support in the community. Given that he linked his peers to his licence recall it would seem that peers are a negative source of informal support. His mother recognised the negative influence of peers saying,

“I know that sounds awful but he is very easily led. He is one of these people who is a sheep if he is with a flock of sheep and he is a wolf if he is running with the wolves. So when he gets back into bad company he will have too much to drink and if they all start fighting he will start fighting or if they all start smoking weed he will smoke weed” (Howard’s mother)
This quote shows that there are limits to Howard’s agency and to change more permanently Howard needs higher levels of resolve that perhaps he has not got.

While he can plan to avoid his peers, he also needs to plan strategies for when he does spend time with them. Peers support Howard’s drug taking and offending identities and his commitment to, and the salience of, these identities appeared to be increased through contact with those that are tied to them. As a result this led to a reduction in the salience of his fatherhood identity after prison.

### 8.3.3 Formal support

Contact with his son, Charlie, enabled by the prison was crucial to Howard maintaining his fatherhood identity whilst in prison. Being a father was something that he thought about regularly and thoroughly enjoyed. Quotes such as those below show that being a father was a large feature of Howard’s time in prison:

“the family day was one of the best days I have had since I came in jail”.

“I really, really look forward to it [visits] like and I have a record book with dates and I am counting the days down, I just can’t wait to see him” (Prison)

Howard believed the fact Charlie always got upset at leaving him was the only negative effect of prison on their relationship.

“it was hard leaving him though, he was like ‘Daddy don’t go’ and I was like ‘I’ve got to. I have to go and look after the house’, he was like, ‘can’t nobody else do it?’, and I was ‘there are loads of us, it is big, it needs loads of us to look after it. Who is going to look after it if I don’t’ and he goes ‘well will you come back soon’, ‘yeah I will be back’, it was hard him looking at me with puppy dog eyes, it was horrible” (Prison)

Given this feature of the accounts of many of the men in the sample, it seems that there is a gap in the formal support offered to them. Helping young fathers with ways to cope with saying goodbye to children could be additional support offered by the prison. On the other hand, this negativity led to Howard reflecting and reinforced his self-determination as he did not wish to experience these difficulties again.

Howard spoke highly of the CARAT drug service team who had helped him with the side effects of stopping using cocaine. Howard was determined not to begin using
drugs again. Again, while Howard was in prison, his formal supporters appeared to help promote his fatherhood identity and reduce the salience of his drug taking identity. Once back in the community Howard seemed to miss having a professional person he could trust, at a time when he perhaps needed it most.

8.3.4 Positive social and personal contexts
Howard’s personal context was highly transient. Before prison he had experienced negative personal contexts which he believed had led to him committing his crime. Howard used neutralisation techniques (Sykes and Matza, 1957) to justify the drug offence for which he was currently in prison:

“I lost my job, I split up with my girlfriend, my baby’s mum. She had an affair behind my back and I found out she had been seeing this lad for 3 months so, I ended up using cocaine and alcohol and I got myself into debt which is why I started selling drugs because the fella I was getting cocaine off was getting really heavy on me” (Prison)

8.3.4.1 Relationships
During prison he was in a surprisingly positive social and personal context, especially as he had positive relationships. In prison, Howard had a good relationship with his ex-partner, Rebecca. He recognised that it must be difficult for her letting his new girlfriend, Collette, bring Charlie for visits, but she still allowed it. Howard also said that Rebecca had been good at showing Charlie pictures of him so that he recognised him and knew that Howard was his father. Even though Rebecca had had an affair, Howard did express some empathy as to why this was:

“she knows what she did was wrong, but it was because I got my job and I was working long hours and I was always out and she didn’t feel like I was there for her” (Prison)

His relationship with Collette was fairly new at the time of his imprisonment. Yet they had developed a strong relationship while Howard was in prison with Collette visiting every week and sending money and clothes and Howard spoke gratefully about the quantity of letters he had received from her. According to Howard, Collette also had a good relationship with Charlie.

In the community it appeared Howard was having a difficult time with his relationship with his ex and current girlfriend, his lack of employment, car and
accommodation. His mother was concerned about him. Even in the interview he was less focused, while in prison he had been engaged and open, in the community he was yawning throughout and less in-depth in his answers.

At the time of the community interview there were issues in Howard’s relationships with both women. With Rebecca there had been issues with her new boyfriend leading to social services becoming involved at Howard’s OM’s insistence:

“he [Charlie] come to me [...] ‘daddy, daddy, mummy crying’. I was like ‘what for?’ ‘Because X [new boyfriend] battered Mummy’ and I was like ‘what’. I got straight on the phone and was like ‘what the fuck is he telling me this for?’, She was like ‘oh ignore him’ and I was ‘no I won’t ignore him’ [...] I went round and she had a big black eye like so I just said to her ‘if he does that again to you in front of him I am going to kill him’, because the baby doesn’t need to be seeing that” (Community)

Howard also felt there were issues over access:

“she arses around every now and again with him but apart from that, she doesn’t say no to me seeing him, she just doesn’t tell me when she is going out or when she has plans you know what I mean [...] I can’t afford to say anything because then she will be funny and I can’t be arsed with her being funny because it’ll just make both of our lives horrible” (Community)

Consequently, relationships with Rebecca were strained and they were becoming increasingly reliant on Howard’s mum to be a mediator. Catherine reported that Howard had started missing visits without explanation, putting this down to his relationship with Rebecca, Charlie’s mother, becoming increasingly negative.

“They’ve sort of agreed a bit of access between them and some days he doesn’t turn up and he should phone her and say ‘I am not coming because I am ill’ or ‘I have got to go to probation’ but I don’t know he just seems to be drifting away at the moment a bit. I don’t know whether he’s becoming a bit estranged I don’t know [...] He does spoil him and he does think the world of him I just don’t know what is going on with him and his ex at the moment. I just don’t think he wants the arguments when he turns up to collect him you know” (Catherine)

In the community interview, Howard only mentioned Collette in relation to how much Charlie liked her. Catherine revealed that they were having difficulties maintaining their relationship due to the strain of their domestic arrangements. They were currently living with Collette’s parents.
At the time of the second interview Howard’s personal situation was characterised by conflict and complexity. He had an increasingly volatile relationship with the mother of his son, linked with jealousy over the mother of his child having a new boyfriend and his new girlfriend being suspicious over contact between Howard and Rebecca. Essentially in Howard’s case there is conflict between all of his child’s parents and step-parents. Alongside this he was experiencing difficulties in his relationship with Collette. His personal context had become increasingly negative since leaving prison. He was trying to parent in a situation where his relationships were strained and changing and therefore his base was fragile (Walker, 2010). These personal difficulties were contributing to reduced self-determination and decisions to not engage as much with his child. His fatherhood identity was seemingly becoming less salient as the strength of his ties to people connected to that identity reduced (Ihinger-Tallman, 1995; Stets and Burke, 2000). As Farrall (2002) claimed, social and personal circumstances are crucial in the process of change.

8.3.4.2 Employment and Accommodation
As soon as Howard was asked about his hopes for release in relation to fatherhood he started talking about employment. He had been on a course in prison and he felt that as a result he had a good chance of a job related to this course:

“well I did this Railtrack course, got 100% in both my tests on the railway like, so hopefully in a couple of months I will be working on the railways […] I want money to give him [Charlie] the finer things in life without doing anything illegal” (Prison)

His discussions of his other hopes for fatherhood (having his own accommodation and regular access) were also reliant on employment. For example, in relation to access to Charlie he described how he would not be able to see Charlie through the week due to work but planned on spending time with him at weekends.

Howard had struggled to find lawful employment since his release. He had worked casually and ‘off the books’ for his Uncle but a recent injury had meant that this was temporarily terminated. His OM said Howard was fixated on the Railtrack
work he had trained for in prison and chasing the certificate for this. She felt this had stopped him looking for other work and did not think it was likely that even with the certificate it would result in a job (and had told Howard so). His mother also discussed this Railtrack work saying not receiving the certificate from the prison or work had left him despondent.

The ‘provider’ role is obviously very important to Howard as losing his job contributed to him having a hard time before prison and he became very focused on employment and wanted to provide for his son legitimately. Due to this he pinned a lot of his hopes on his qualifications from prison. Howard’s new offence highlights that not all offending post prison for fathers is to do with physically providing. He was also dealing with masculine anxieties (Burghes et al, 1997) and the stress of not living up to expectations. It can be argued that avoidance of these pressures led to him beginning to spend time with his peers and therefore people not connected to his fatherhood identity.

There were also issues over living with Collette’s parents. Collette and Howard had limited space and Howard repeated the need to find their own accommodation throughout the interview. This further contributed to a negative social and personal context for Howard and affected his self-efficacy, resilience and resolve to stay self-determined.

8.3.5 Identity Transformation
In prison Howard had a seemingly salient father identity. His son was an essential part of his prison experience, both making it more difficult and giving him something to look forward to (getting him through his sentence as in one aspect of Walker’s (2010) generative model). There was evidence of this identity becoming less salient in the community (and peer identity becoming more salient) due to the issues with the child’s mother and reduced self-determination. Using Giordano et al’s (2002) process of change, Howard had had a shift in openness to change and a more positive attitude towards the structural event of fatherhood. He had
envisioned his appealing and conventional replacement self but was having difficulty in fashioning it.

Throughout the two interviews Howard spoke with love and affection about his son. He recalled funny anecdotes about Charlie. Howard expressed pride about watching him grow up and described how he had all the photos of Charlie his mother had sent him in time order, so he could monitor his development.

When he found out he was going to be a father Howard said he was “over the moon”. At this time Howard was 21. He had been in a relationship with Rebecca about six years and had a “steady job”. Howard split up with Rebecca when Charlie was approximately nine months old, after she had an affair, but continued to be involved and have regular contact (four times a week and including overnight stays at the weekend). Before prison, Howard said that he was involved in all aspects of parenting and seemed to relish his fatherhood role:

“Even now to this day my ex still says I am a brilliant dad. We share everything like when I came home from work for the day, I would change him, I would feed him, I would feed him even if I was in work at half 7 I would still get up in the night and give him his bottles” (Howard – Prison)

“Before I come to prison there was no worst, the shitty nappies that was the only bad thing and they weren’t that bad, it is just part of being a dad innit. Er I loved every minute of it. I love [Charlie] and I loved spending time with him” (Howard - Prison)

The above quote showed possible nostalgia and remembering things positively when removed from the situation, as with many of the men in the study. Howard was perhaps ‘making good’ his past in order to be what he wanted to be in the future (Maruna, 2001).

8.3.5.1 Fathering from prison
Howard was finding this prison sentence tough due to missing his son and “watching him grow up while I have been in here”. Whilst visits did impact on Howard’s ability to parent his son, he used the restrictions of visits to parent creatively and came up with strategies to make the rules easier and fun for Charlie:
“there is a big kids playroom at the back and he always pulls me and says ‘daddy come on lets go and get some toys’ [...] and I say ‘I am stuck, if you can get me up I can come with you’ and he is like trying to pull me up” (Prison)

He was actively enacting his fatherhood identity during these visits. Because he was committed to the identity he was acting in ways congruent with it (Burke and Reitzes, 1991; Ihinger-Tallman, 1995; Stets and Burke, 2000; Paternoster and Bushway, 2009). As mentioned in section 8.3.3 being a father was something that Howard focused on when in prison. Like the men in Meek’s (2011) study parenthood was a key component of Howard’s identity in prison. He was using his fatherhood identity to resist a prisoner identity (Ugelvik, 2014b).

8.3.5.2 Fathering back in the community
Back in the community, opposite to what Howard had expected, it had taken time for Charlie to readjust to having Howard around permanently:

“At first when I come out I felt like he didn’t remember me [...] He wouldn’t really come to me when I called to him but now like he phones me all the time and says to his mum ‘can I phone my dad, I want to speak to my dad’ [...] just the quality time spending it with me you know what I mean and learning to trust me again, [...] So I guess like I was a bit of a stranger to him when I first got out like, he had only ever seen me sitting on the other side of him hadn’t he, so he was a bit wary of me at first but he is sound now” (Community)

Howard had regular contact with Charlie seeing him twice a week. Howard said that they did whatever Charlie wanted on their days together. He no longer had Charlie to stay over nights because there had been some problems with Charlie getting very upset in the middle of the night when at Howard’s and wanting his mother.

At this time his descriptions of fatherhood were perhaps more realistic, describing his love for him but also recognising that he could be hard work, especially having to permanently watch him. Catherine, Howard’s mum, thought that while Howard has a good relationship with Charlie and spends a lot of time with him recently she was becoming concerned about Howard’s attitude, especially that he would not always prioritise his contact with Charlie and had missed visits. The salience of his fatherhood identity appeared in Howard’s case to have been affected by his
interaction with Charlie’s mother. Rebecca appeared to become less supportive of Howard being involved, he has distanced himself. This is similar to findings by Stets and Burke (2000) when they discuss when relationships are difficult with those linked to an identity that identity reduces in salience.

8.3.6 Discussion of Howard
Howard’s case demonstrates the instability of the factors needed for successful periods of change. This was especially true in relation to social and personal contexts. Howard had had all the factors needed for change present at some points in his journey of change, unfortunately this was most true of his time in prison. Howard’s case truly reflects the difficulties some young fathers face in reintegrating back into the community (Nurse, 2002) and the disappointment when the reality does not live up to expectations, especially around employment (Petersilia, 2003; Visher, 2013). For Howard the agency-structure divide was reciprocal and both were important. This can be demonstrated in the fact that structure of prison affected his agency in his self-determination. His social and personal structures were very much interlinked to his self-determination and to his agency over parenting, when they were positive in prison and negative in the community.

8.4 Conclusion
These case studies have begun to bring together the themes discussed in chapters five to seven. For successful change in young fathers being released from prisons the factors of self-determination, positive social and personal contexts, informal support, formal support and identity transformation all need to be present. We have seen the multiple ways in which these factors are interlinked. The links between these will be developed further in chapter nine. These cases have also revealed that both agency and structure are needed in the process of change for these young fathers. The two are reciprocal.

The fact that case studies focus on the individual is both a strength and a limitation. The former because they show that themes revealed from analysis of all
participants also exist at the individual level. The latter because it can be argued that they do not help us develop knowledge that can be applied to all young fathers in prison. However, Erickson (1986) argues that the general lies in the particular and the level of detail in the individual case studies of Jay and Howard means that what we learn from one case can be transferred to other similar situations.

Jay and Howard’s cases have both similarities and differences. They are similar in that they both faced difficulties/potential difficulties in the community; neither had employment, they both had children whose mothers they were no longer in a relationship with, and there was transiency in their lives be it in terms of relationships, new babies, or peer groups. Yet they were different mainly in the relationships they had with their ex partners in the community when they were trying to change. This contributed to their personal and social contexts and it also affected the level of informal support they received. This in turn led to differences in the maintenance of self-determination, reflecting this as agency an important factor but also reflecting the interconnectedness of all the factors needed for change.

The differences in the two men’s journeys of change show the fragility of the factors needed to change. Both Jay and Howard at certain times had all the factors needed but the transiency of their lives meant that they did not necessarily have all the factors at the same time. The inter-connectedness of factors meant that if one factor was lost then it was likely that other factors were also lost. The factors needed for change are clearly temporal. This highlights the importance of the timeliness of the convergence of the factors young imprisoned fathers need for desistance. Policy makers need to take from this the need to make the factors needed for change more stable in the lives of young fathers leaving prison. It is also evident in these case studies that formal support was a fairly weak factor for Jay and Howard; they both had received some formal support but this impacted on fatherhood indirectly.
Methodologically, it has been learnt from the case studies the importance of follow up interviews. It is only really when considering the men as individuals that the true extent of their transient lifestyles can be seen, and this can only be captured by case study analysis and by multiple interviews. This also allows the researcher to capture how descriptions of events change depending on the closeness or distance from it, for examples descriptions of being a father when they are being the type of father they want to be and when they are not.
Chapter Nine: Discussion

This chapter will begin by summarising and bringing together all of the findings from chapters five to eight, highlighting the complex interplay of factors needed for successful change and the original contribution to knowledge that this thesis provides. It will then move on to look at the implications of the findings for policy and practice and suggest areas for further research.

9.1 Summary of Key Findings
It has been shown across chapters five, six, seven and eight that for the young fathers in the sample, change is complex and multifaceted and reliant on many inter-related factors coming together at the same time. Due to the instability of many of these factors, it is very much a process characterised by successes and failures. While the findings provide evidence to support Maruna et al’s (2004b) description of a three track process of change, requiring self-determination, formal support and informal support, for these young fathers there were also the additional key factors of cognitive transformation (Maruna, 2001; Giordano et al, 2002) and positive social and personal contexts (Farrall, 2002; Walker, 2010). Structural factors also played a part (Laub and Sampson, 2003). Change can be said to be a difficult and complex process by virtue of the fact that all of these factors need to come together at the same time.

This thesis therefore contributes to the debate around the relationship between human agency and social structures in the process of change. The data presented here supports Farrall and Bowling’s (1999) argument that both are important. The process of change is highlighted as a gradual and active process that includes both internal and external elements. It is the interaction of elements that is important to change.
9.1.1 The factors essential for change for young fathers in prison

9.1.1.1. Self-determination
First, Maruna et al.’s (2004a) self-determination track will be considered. Self-determination has been shown to be a form of human agency in that, like other offenders (Burnett, 1992; Farrall, 2002; Gideon, 2009), young fathers in prison, subjectively decide they want to change. Wanting to change was almost universal for these young men when in prison and getting to the point of being motivated to change was shown to be influenced by a combination of factors (adding another layer of factors that are needed for change). These influences included: ‘life events’ such as parenthood and prison; reflection on what they were missing out on and what could be; growing up; and their families. It appears from the data that something about prison appears to make some men realise they want to change. This could be the institution itself, separation from families, or work with prison staff. Equally however, this realisation could happen without prison. Becoming a father did seem to play an important role in motivating the men to want to change.

The decision to change was expressed through not wanting to offend and not wanting to come back to prison. When asked about hopes for the future, the men spoke with realism and conventionalism (Shapland and Bottoms, 2011) and wanted more than merely to stop offending (Farrall et al., 2010). They wanted employment and to ‘be there’ for their children emotionally and physically, in positive relationships with the mothers of their children, and in their own accommodation.

Self-determination is not just about making the decision to change but it is also about maintaining that decision over time. Keeping their motivation was difficult for the young men that were faced with negative personal circumstances (such as splitting up with girlfriends) and social contexts (such as a lack of employment). As Burnett and Maruna (2004) argue personal motivation can be overwhelmed by reality, especially when the number of issues they face rises. Similarly, Deci and
Ryan (1995) and Ryan and Deci (2000a; 2000b) show the complexity of self-determination and its relatedness to the social world and others in it. People’s inner resources, such as proactiveness and engagement are related to social conditions (Ryan and Deci, 2000a).

Remaining self-determination can be said to require resilience and persistence, especially when things do not go immediately to plan. We saw in chapter eight, the case of Jay who kept on trying for employment even though he was not achieving success and was able to do this because he had informal support and positive personal circumstances with his children and partner. Self-determination for young fathers also requires self-efficacy so that people become determined to do things that are achievable and they have the confidence to fulfil aims. Deci and Ryan (1995) argue that self-efficacy is heightened when people are motivated intrinsically and take action for themselves. We saw in chapter seven the example of Glen whose self-efficacy was strengthened by the fact he had a job, even though he was later made redundant.

We have seen in chapters five, six and seven the multitude of issues that these young fathers often have. They are not just offenders and fathers, but also often lack employment, have dependency issues and negative peer groups, and messy and dynamic relationships. Consequently, it can be argued that self-determination and resilience needs to be more than for others as they have lots to overcome, and will face many setbacks.

These discussions show that self-determination is not fixed but fluid in response to circumstances and time. Once a person becomes self-determined it does not mean they will always remain that way. It is something that has to be worked at. This like many other elements in the process is unstable, decreasing the likelihood of all the factors coming together at the same time.
Like Giordano et al. (2002) and Maruna et al. (2004a), this thesis argues that for young offending fathers self-determination is important but is one of many factors that are important: alone it is not sufficient.

### 9.1.1.2 Identity transformation

In addition to the self-determination strand of human agency, there also needs to be a second form of human agency: identity transformation. Like Maruna (2001) and Paternoster and Bushway (2009) argue for the men in this study taking on the alternative conventional identity of fatherhood was intentional. For the men in this study prison seemed to have reaffirmed their fatherhood identity. The findings here support the findings of Meek (2007a; 2011) as like the men in her studies, many of the men in the current study had highly salient fatherhood identities despite being absent from their children.

It appeared that many of the men while in prison began practicing their fatherhood identity and their narratives appeared similar to the redemption scripts of the men in the Maruna (2001) study. They were not ‘knifing off’ their fathering before prison but had rewritten or distorted their pasts into positive narratives of fatherhood. Maruna (2001) argues people find positive qualities even in negative experiences to show that the ‘new’ me is the ‘true’ me and ‘good’ elements have always been there. Some of the men’s descriptions show how their goal of a ‘good father’ identity is what they have been all along. There were also men who, once they were achieving change, presented a realistic account of their fathering before prison. This perhaps shows that for young fathers, ‘making good’ is primarily needed at the start of a journey of change.

While in prison the men were also deciding which roles within the fatherhood identity were most important to them and it seemed ‘being there’ emotionally and physically, and ‘providing’ were the most salient roles to them. As highlighted in chapter five it is interesting that providing was not something that formed part of the men’s narratives when discussing parenting before prison but almost all of the
men listed being able to provide for their child as their main hope for release. This change in the men’s attitudes is interesting. It may be that prison had helped them see the importance of work with its heavy focus on employment. This could mean that they agreed with this or that they were echoing the prison but did not really mean it. It may also be because part of the process of change is to find legal employment rather than offend for money and therefore it is an indication they are taking the idea of stopping offending seriously. The change in attitude is also interesting because of the possibility of disappointment and failure if they do not find work.

Chapters seven and eight have shown that some men in the community were enacting their fatherhood identity, it is salient and they are choosing it over other possibilities. Some men have been successful in change and have affiliated with pro-social others to support this identity (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009), others are less so and their social and personal contexts have led to them reverting back to old identities (King, 2012). This shows that identity is also fluid.

The men’s observations about their children, discussed in chapter five, are fairly banal, simple and often without depth. They spoke about love and wanting to change for their children without any further justification. This may be because the men are trying to reflect the ideal images and stereotypes of what fathers should say about their children or it may indicate the shallowness of the relationship some men have with their children. Another explanation, and perhaps a more accurate one, given the way the men spoke about their children, and their inability to really express emotion, is that these banal observations are very important to them during their incarceration in preserving the idea that there is a stable ‘normality’ outside the closed world of the prison, and that this has not changed much in their absence. This is especially important given the amount of change in their children they will witness during their incarceration. Some of the relationships will be superficial in the way prison officers described, where young men want to show off
photographs of their children but not invest any time or effort in them, but many will reflect a deeper connection.

**9.1.1.3 Informal support**

Informal support has been shown in this thesis to impact upon the young father’s change process. All of the men in the study had some level of informal support from parents, girlfriends and friends, but some did acknowledge there were other people they knew in prison who had no-one. Informal support was important to change because of practical support (employment, money and accommodation) and emotional support. Practical support came mainly from parents and emotional support came mainly from partners. Emotional support was providing someone for the men to talk to. This seemed to develop their emotional engagement. For example, Jason began to recognise other people’s (especially his partner’s) feelings. This, and developing a more salient fatherhood identity, is a form of generativity and psycho-social development (Hawkins *et al.*, 1995; Marsiglio, 1995b: Maruna, 2001; Walker, 2010), which is also important in changing. As discussed in the literature the influence of others is also important on a person’s identity (Ihinger-Tallman *et al.*, 1995). There were parents, girlfriends and peers that encouraged the fatherhood identity, yet there was also the opposite. There were peers who pressured the men into spending time away from their families. There were also the fathers who wanted their children to have a different experience of being fathered than they had received.

There were examples in the data of positive informal support and negative informal support. There were parents, girlfriends and peers that were there for the young men but there were also informal networks that antagonised the young men and created more issues for which they needed support. This was especially the case with ex-girlfriends.
Informal support was also shown to be important in helping to provide these young men with personal support and social structures to try and sustain self-determination and a positive base to try and change from.

9.1.1.4 Positive personal and social contexts
Part of the importance of this informal support is that it helps, or hinders, creation of positive personal and social contexts in which to undergo change. The men in the sample had transient and chaotic lives and the importance of this in the context of change cannot be overstated. The transiency is best exemplified by the fact that of six men followed into the community two had new babies on the way and one young man in prison had impregnated a girl on his home leave. A good example of a chaotic lifestyle is Howard in chapter eight. The complexity of the process of change is in part due to the complexity of the lives of the young men being studied. Further, all the young men differed in their situations and to some extent in their reactions to situations.

The personal and social circumstances were shown to have an impact on change. Clearly, those who had issues on release also had chaotic lifestyles and of the seven unsuccessful men (that had been back to prison or who were not doing well on licence), it was known that three of them had split up with their girlfriends.

Prison may have a negative impact on personal and social contexts. It is difficult to establish causality but after prison many men ended their relationships with the mothers of their children, citing growing apart as the reason. There was also the problem of gaining employment with a criminal record. These are highly transient factors needed for change contributing to the process as one with successes and failures.

9.1.1.5 Formal support
Formal support was shown to be important indirectly in that it contributes to informal support and positive social and personal contexts through allowing contact with those contexts. Directly, formal support was shown to be important in that
interventions allowed the men to deal with some of their other problems, like drugs, that had previously taken them away from their children. The prison that the men in the research were in also had interventions and rewards for the men which eased the process of reintegration. There was also evidence of some emotional support provided by the prison, although emotional support was hampered by bureaucracy, the fundamentally coercive setting, and a focus on punishment and security. These factors meant that officers did not have the time to offer support, and young fathers were not willing to accept support from uniformed staff.

Formal support is especially important for young fathers who have limited informal support, but there are issues over engagement with this in prison and in the community.

9.1.2 The links between the factors
All of these factors discussed above are very much interlinked. The relationship between all the factors is complex and it has been shown that they all interact with each other and many have reciprocal relationships.

Self-determination and cognitive change, the two forms of human agency needed, are linked in the way that Giordano et al (2002) found: openness to change led to men seeing fatherhood identity as a positive and so they began to fashion an appealing and conventional self, based upon this.

Societal factors and self-determination are linked together. Informal support has been shown to lead to positive personal and social contexts, for example by parents helping with accommodation and employment, and girlfriends providing opportunities for the men to discuss their problems. In turn, these positive contexts allow self-determination to be maintained over time and provides these young fathers with the resilience to overcome hurdles (Farrall, 2002; Burnett and Maruna, 2004). An example of this is Jay whose support from his mother and girlfriend and happiness at re-establishing relationships with all of his children has meant that he
was coping well with the hurdles of not getting employment and staying away from negative peers.

Formal support, especially prison, also helps to maintain self-determination by providing opportunities for reflection. Formal support is also important for keeping the young men in contact with their informal support. Therefore both informal and formal support can help maintain self-determination and influence the personal and social contexts in which the men are trying to change. The common routes into employment appear to be through family, and as Farrall (2004) highlights without this men struggle and imprisonment reinforces intergenerational patterns of offending (Farrington et al, 1998).

Life events in this sample, especially prison and fatherhood, made people think and want to change. However sustaining that desire was hard for the men unless the right structures and support were in place. In conclusion, the data adds to the debate over the structural/ agentic relationship by suggesting that for the young men in this sample it is a complementary and interactive process. As Farrall and Bowling (1999) say they “represent two sides of a coin” (261). There can be an event which leads to reflection and relies on agency but then further events, structures and support are needed to help people fulfil those reflections, keep their motivations and persevere with change. This seems to fit with Giordano et al's (2002) ‘hook for change’ discussions in that these life events did cause people to question their direction but not necessarily change. Individual decisions (to stop offending, stop taking drugs, not see peers) are important but are influenced by social and personal factors (Farrall, 2002), both in order to make, and maintain, that decision. As Laub and Sampson (2003) argue, choices and thoughts are always embedded in social factors.

Ihinger-Tallman et al (1995) highlight the importance of others when they discuss variables which moderate the relationship between father identity and involvement.
For them the mother of the child is important (especially her preferences for contact, her belief in his abilities, the father’s perceptions of her parenting skills and her emotional stability). The relationship between the two parents also affects father involvement, as does the father’s emotional stability and his economic well-being and employment stability (Ihinger-Tallman et al., 1995). The actions and reactions of others that favour father involvement (therefore encouragement) are also seen as important to involvement for Ihinger-Tallman et al (1995). The findings offered support for this in the context of young fathers in prison. It was clear that when men had positive relationships with the mothers of their children (whether in a relationship or not) this affected how important they saw fatherhood.

9.1.3 Contribution to academic knowledge

The findings in this thesis contribute to academic knowledge in that they add to the debates around the process of change for the specific group of young imprisoned fathers. The desistance process is complex and offenders are not one homogenous group; it is important that sub-groups of offenders are considered. All of the factors that were found to be important to the process of change for young imprisoned fathers have been found in relation to offenders in general. It seems that fatherhood provides an extra dimension to these factors. While the data supports Maruna (2001), Giordano et al (2002), Laub and Sampson (2003), and Maruna et al (2004a) it shows that for young fathers all the factors are of equal importance and it is timing that is the important issue. The process for change for young fathers is reliant on a ‘timely convergence’ of many factors coming together at similar times. The findings develop Marina et al’s (2004a) concept of self-determination in relation to young fathers, showing that it involves resolve, resilience and self-efficacy and that it fits with Deci and Ryan’s (1985) self-determination theory.

Following the interviewees on release into the community filled a gap acknowledged by other studies into imprisoned fathers (Nurse, 2002; Day et al, 2005; Meek, 2007a). The findings provide knowledge about how young fathers readjust to
fathering and living back in the community after imprisonment and show that this process is helped by town visits and home leaves. The findings also show whether hopes and fears are a reality on release and the reason behind success and failure.

This thesis has shown that the debates in the general desistance literature are applicable to young fathers in prison. Furthermore, it has shown that young fathers have the opportunities to access the factors needed for change in ways that other offenders do not. For example, fatherhood can act as motivation for self-determination and openness to change. Fatherhood is a potential alternative conventional identity which was taken advantage of by some of the men in the sample. Finally fatherhood has the potential to mean there are more people to provide informal support to the men (through the mothers of their children and their families). This can also mean fathers have more positive personal contexts in which to undergo change but on the other hand can also mean much more complex lifestyles characterised by jealousy, transiency and chaos, as we have seen in the sample. In summary, fatherhood can offer further potential for desistance.

This thesis also adds to the more specific body of literature that has considered fatherhood and desistance and has largely been inconclusive. This work contributes to the debate as for young fathers in this study fatherhood did offer the potential for desistance.

This thesis also adds to the debate over the relationship between agentic and structural factors in the process of change, especially how the two interact in the context of young imprisoned fathers. Both agentic and structural factors are considered important in the process of change for young imprisoned fathers and the two are reciprocal.
9.2 Implications
These findings lead to wider questions for policy and practice around how we punish young men with children. First, there are clear arguments in the data for making changes to elements of the system that already exist. The data could be influential in the way prisons manage father-child contact, especially impacting on the extent and set-up of visits and the level of importance the prison service attaches to father-child contact. Some possible changes could be:

- A more systematic way for finding out who are the young fathers in prison are so support can be better targeted.

- More opportunities for men to enact their fatherhood identity in prison, for example, more opportunities for interaction at normal visits and more family days. This contact has to be balanced against the family’s time and availability, the fact men have courses, education and work to do during their prison sentence, and against fairness on non-fathers in prison. One suggestion from key professionals was to have father-child visits (rather than family visits) to alleviate the issue of men enacting their partner identity during opportunities to enact their fatherhood identity.

- Visits gave men the opportunity to enact their fatherhood identity but there are institutional limits to this enactment. There should be more guidance on how men can still enact roles within their fatherhood identity while obeying prison rules, for example, advice on how to be the ‘fun’ parent while staying sat down. Similarly, there could be advice on how men can still be fathers (and supportive partners) over the phone by encouraging their children to behave for their mothers and taking an interest in their schooling.

- A way for the prison to capitalise on the moments when the desire to change is at its strongest, following visits and home leaves, when men are at their most reflective. This could be ensuring there is someone for the men to talk to at this time, or ways for them to put into motion some of the steps that will lead to successful change, for example, offending behaviour programmes.
The birth of a child seemed to be a moment where people reflect. The prison could make arrangements for men to attend births, like they do with funerals. This would involve some flexibility and urgency as births are not usually scheduled but is something that could be considered.

One issue that was raised by this research is the prison raising men’s expectations for release. There needs to be a balance between inspiring them to want to change and being realistic, for example about the labour market. There is a policy issue here for prisons to keep an aspect of realism to their education and training, albeit a difficult one, as optimistic prisoners are likely to have more success (Burnett and Maruna, 2004) and any initiatives need to pay attention to this fine balance. It is sad in a way that there may be a need to limit people’s expectations as actually the men in the study were not aiming too high and were being realistic. The young fathers wanted low level jobs for which they were qualified. They did not want or expect to be managers or highly paid.

Increasing the employment opportunities for young fathers released from prison would give them opportunities to provide for their children, as well as keeping them occupied and away from negative peers. Opportunities such as community employment schemes may help get the men started in employment. The criminal justice agencies working more closely with employers to create opportunities would also be beneficial. This is not to say that there are not such schemes but the value of these could be recognised further.

There needs to be more work done on teaching young fathers in prison how to have relationships with the mothers of their children, as this will contribute to informal support and positive personal contexts.

Foster inter-personal relationships with formal supporters, especially prison officers. Increased the awareness, through training and other means, of prison officers about the value of positive relationships may work towards this.
• Provide more support to those who give the men informal support, for example by giving them access to counselling, parenting classes, support for visiting men in prison.

• There is an identified need for interventions to help men overcome self-consciousness on visits and family days. The Young Fathers Worker reported innovative days out where young men could learn from their peers in an informal environment. If something else is going on this takes the attention away from individual men and families.

• Arrangements for cover when prison staff are absent long-term. The prison did run a parenting course but the member of staff was ill and so the young men in the prison at the time did not benefit from this. This may have offered some of the recommendations above.

There was much good practice in the prison for others to learn from. For some men in this study, having home leaves had helped ensure that children were comfortable with their fathers on release. This is a good example of prison policies easing reintegration and could be made available to more men across the young offender estate. The research site prison also has to be commended for initiatives to increase the men’s employability through training and opportunities for ‘work outs’. The family days were also excellent.

These recommended and commended strategies are all aimed at increasing the chances of the many factors needed for desistance coming together at the same time.

Second, there are arguments for completely changing the system we have for punishing young men with children. While for some men in this study experiencing fatherhood within the confinement of prison was an important element in deciding to change, the data shows that this is not necessarily the only route to becoming open to change and it is most often a combination of factors. For some men
becoming a father led to openness to change and they were currently in prison for offences committed prior to children being born. The importance of fatherhood in itself being enough was apparent in key professional interviews who had seen openness to change being present in those sentenced to community sentences. People can realise the impact prison would have without experiencing it, by talking things through with offender managers. The criminal justice system could be proactive, and encouraging people to see the consequences of carrying on with a criminal path, rather than reacting to such behaviour with a prison sentence. For others the fear of sentence may be enough to influence desire to change. For those that need a sentence, community penalties involving rehabilitation and treatment may be enough. For some men prison does not lead to wanting to change according to the key professionals. Furthermore, men often forget the feelings and desires they had when in prison.

Chapter six on the adequacy of formal support also contributes to an argument against imprisonment. Reflection in the process of change is key but this is often not a result of separation but of the men understanding what they want to be. The role of the mother of the child can have a great impact upon this, if the young men have positive relationships with her (again why policies enabling young men to have better relationships are recommended).

Decisions to imprison young fathers have to be taken against the backdrop of the importance of the men having positive personal and social contexts, which prison often works against. Therefore the role prison has in leading to an openness to change has to be balanced against the fact prison often leads to tension within families and fewer employment prospects and it takes young men a lot of effort, determination and resilience to rebuild relationships and find jobs. This thesis has shown that for the process of change to continue successfully many things have to come together at the same time: self-determination, identity transformation and positive social and personal circumstances. Prison reduces the chances of these
three elements being present at the same time. Therefore this thesis does not provide a case for the efficacy of prison for young fathers but for the importance of family relationships and identity transformation in change. There are signs that, in relation to young offenders, policy rhetoric is becoming less punitive and more rehabilitative. An example is the increased focus on education and employment through secure colleges, and on restorative measures (Ministry of Justice, 2013a).

9.3 Further research
While this work has considered the unique group of young imprisoned fathers, there are many sub-groups within this, especially considering the wide range of men in prison who are fathers. Two sub-groups to be considered further were shown to be especially important in this research. First, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, particularly Asian men, as the file reading showed additional cultural issues in this group that would be interesting to explore further. Second, those who have come from a care background need to be considered further. According to the key professionals these men are especially likely to lack the informal support and positive contexts we have seen as critical to change. The number of Foreign National in the prison population are increasing and it would be interesting to consider these as a separate group as they face different potential problems, especially over contact given that their families may not live in the country.

Given the importance attached to informal support and those supporting the young imprisoned fathers, more research could be done on their points of view and what support would be helpful to them. They could be the focus of a piece of research in their own right meaning that the access issues that hindered their involvement in this research could be overcome.

The research tried to highlight the areas that were important to the process of change for young fathers but further research is needed in developing knowledge of some of these areas in more detail. One such area is formal support, especially
considering when and why this worked and did not work. This is perhaps where more impact could be made in terms of policy implications. The level of general distrust of criminal justice staff was worrying especially as inter-personal relationships have been shown numerous times to be important for race relations (Haslewood-Pocsik et al, 2006), a safe and decent environment (Liebling et al, 1999) and in this case support for a fatherhood identity. More research needs to be done looking at how to foster good relationships between offenders and prison and probation staff so the aspect of formal support can be accessed by more offenders.

The men in prison seemed to decide that ‘providing’ was an important part of their fatherhood identity, when it had not seemed as important to them in their discussions of fathering before prison. More research could be carried out to look at this in more detail and where this change in attitude came from. Similarly, the men in this study were interviewed towards the end of their prison sentence and it would be interesting to consider the fatherhood identity of young fathers in prison who are a long way off from their release date.

9.4 How can we learn from the findings to support the desistance potential of fatherhood

This work adds to the knowledge of the desistance potential of fatherhood for young imprisoned fathers, saying fatherhood can offer this, but it a complex and difficult process. This thesis has shown that criminal justice policies need to support fatherhood to take full advantage of this potential. This thesis is not arguing for a policy of encouraging young men to have children but to proactively pick up where young men are fathers and support the desistance potential of this. Formal support is patchy and could go further.

This research is timely with increasing concern over young adult offenders in general. Anne Owers (2006) has referred to young adult prisoners as the “lost generation” and there have been calls for the young offender age range to be
extended (Transition to Adulthood Alliance, 2009). With high reoffending rates, especially among young offenders, society is not currently seeing the desistance potential of fatherhood in practice. This may be due to pre-existing levels of chaos and adverse life experiences and pro criminal activities and relationships. On the other hand it may be because the National Offender Management Service and society are not supporting and nurturing the potential to desistance that fatherhood offers. Taking a fatherhood focus could be one useful way of looking at providing a solution to some of the issues currently facing this age group.

‘Being there’ (financially, emotionally and practically) is an idealised, but important, construction of fatherhood for the young men in this study. The system as it stands makes the achievement of this harder to do, both during and after a prison sentence.

The ‘benchmarking process’ recently undertaken by Her Majesty’s Prison Service is intended to ensure the delivery of improved regimes at a lower cost (National Offender Management Service, 2013). It has to be questioned whether benchmarked prisons will be able to exploit any desistance potential of fatherhood better. It may be that with fewer officers there may be even less time spent with prisoners and more fractured staff-prisoner relationships and reduced provision of formal support.

The release from prison was problematic for some of the men in the sample and that is despite having a gradual resettlement plan. This makes probation work pivotal in helping young fathers deal with hopes and dreams not coming to fruition and keeping them focused on why they wanted to change. Again, it has to be questioned whether a privatised probation service will recognise the importance of this.
To take full advantage of the desistance potential of fatherhood the National Offender Management Service needs to develop innovative strategies to ensure the enactment of the fatherhood identity within prison, while at the same time improving employment opportunities and relationship skills and providing formal support.

9.5 Conclusion
This thesis applied desistance theory to the unique group of young imprisoned fathers and found that these theories can be applied to young fathers, but that fatherhood adds an extra dimension to the factors needed for sustained change. For the young fathers in this study to have successful periods of change they needed the timely convergence of: self-determination, informal support, formal support, positive social and personal context; and identity transformation. These factors are all interlinked and fluid and therefore change is characterised by periods of success and failure. This is especially the case given the transient lifestyle of many of the fathers in the sample. Change is difficult but it can happen. The factors that are important in the process of change for young fathers also show that agency and structure are equally important and reinforce each other.

The extra dimension shows the clear potential that fatherhood has to enhance the desistance process. Fatherhood provides a reason to be self-determined, it provides an alternative identity to transform into, and it provides extra informal support networks and can provide positive social and personal contexts. The research has clear theoretical implications and policy implications, especially as it provides those working with young offending fathers a focus. There were pockets of good practice found in the research in relation to formal agencies and these could be developed further and made widespread to positively influence more young imprisoned fathers to have longer periods of successful change.


Barnardo’s (2013) *Working with Children with a Parent in Prison: Messages for Practice from two Barnardo’s Pilot Services*. Barnardo’s: Essex


Ministry of Justice (2013a) Preventing more young offenders from re-offending [online]. Ministry of Justice. Available from:


Thompson, S. (1996) 'Paying Respondents and Informants'. *Social Research Update,* 14


Transition to Adulthood Alliance (2009) *A New Start: Young Adults in the Criminal Justice System*. Transition to Adulthood Alliance: London


Appendixes

Appendix One: The variety of approaches taken to access the different probation areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Approach</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Procedure to be followed:</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probation trust</td>
<td>Area A</td>
<td>- Apply to NOMS (09.05.11)</td>
<td>1 of 4 *one no longer wanted to participate, one was back in custody and the third’s licence had expired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contacted</td>
<td></td>
<td>- NOMS response - permission was not needed as prior agreement had already been sought from the prison and prisoners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>researcher</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Apply using probation area research request form (10.06.11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Phone calls to Area Research Officer chasing issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>initial letter</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Show proof of CRB check (08.08.11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Area contacted individual OMs asking them to contact offenders to check they were still interested in participation and then passed on the OM details to me (19.08.11). However did not receive details of one OM until November 2011.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area B</td>
<td>- Area telephoned (26.05.11) to arrange meeting with area Head of Research &amp; Policy</td>
<td>2 of 3 *the 3rd no longer wanted to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- At meeting (07.06.11) showed copies of consent forms, names and contact details of OMs given to researcher and OMs emailed by Head of Research to ask for their cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Telephone liaison with OMs to arrange interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area C</td>
<td>- Area emailed with approval (09.05.11)</td>
<td>1 of 2 *2nd no longer wanted to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Contact Heads of Local Delivery Units to ask for names of OMs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Email liaison with OMs to arrange interviews</td>
<td>0 of 1 *due to recall to custody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone call (26.05.11) saying happy for research to go ahead and to email the details on offender and copy of consent form</td>
<td>2 of 3 * the 3rd no longer wanted to participate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area contacted individual OM asking them to contact me which they did (01.06.11)</td>
<td>0 of 1 *Licence had expired</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response to initial letter</td>
<td>NOMS copied in head of research to their response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>- Emailed the OM whose names were known directly saying Chief Officer and Head of Research aware of the research (06.06.11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Emailed head of research for name of OM did not know the name of (07.06.11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Email and phone conversations with OMs to arrange interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Emailed and phoned the OM directly to arrange interviews saying Chief Officer and NOMS aware of research (end of June 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did not know the name of the OM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Phoned offices but they were not happy to give out that information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Asked for contact information for head of research and was put in contact with Information Services Manager who contacted the OM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Never heard back from OM or ISM when tried to chase again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 of 1 *Never found out who OM was</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix Two: Extract from Research Diary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent 26</th>
<th>Respondent 23</th>
<th>Respondent 11</th>
<th>Respondent 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emailed OM – no reply</td>
<td>Emailed OM</td>
<td>Phone call to OM who said to come along to offender’s next appointment – would let me know if he was no longer interested.</td>
<td>06.06.11 – emailed OM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.06.11 – phoned OM</td>
<td>22.06.11 – phoned OM following no reply to email – off sick till 27.06.11</td>
<td>22.06.11 – phoned OM – no answer</td>
<td>22.06.11 – chased OM by phone as no reply to email. OM said offender was next due in on 23.06.11 and would check with him then if still willing and phone me back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OM chasing email – message left</td>
<td>28.06.11 – phoned OM – no answer</td>
<td>28.06.11 – phoned OM – been bereavement in family</td>
<td>23.06.11 – OM rang to say offender willing and set up appointment for interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.07.11 – Phoned OM – message left</td>
<td>15.07.11 – still off – spoke to duty officer who said they would ring offender and get back to me (never did)</td>
<td>15.07.11 – message left with OM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.07.11 – OM returned call saying offender was next due in on 11.07.11 and she would ask him about research then</td>
<td>26.07.11 – phoned OM – due back in 27.07.11</td>
<td>18.07.11 – new OM on leave till 25.07.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.07.11 – Phoned OM – message left</td>
<td>28.07.11 – spoke to office who said that offender had new OM, spoke to Amanda who said that she was on leave from tomorrow, before arranging anything she would need to speak to head of research and the offender so would get back to me in a couple of weeks</td>
<td>18.07.11 – new OM details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.07.11 – Phoned OM who said offender had attended appointment but was seen by duty so hadn’t asked whether still happy to participate</td>
<td>06.10.11 – Phoned OM – no answer</td>
<td>18.07.11 – new OM on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.08.11 – Phoned OM – her boiler had broken down so she had missed offender again but had got duty to get phone number. When she phoned and asked him he said he was not at all interested in participating.</td>
<td>11.10.11 - Phoned OM – no answer</td>
<td>18.07.11 – new OM on leave till 25.07.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.06.11 – 1st interview attempt - Offender arrived early for appt and his OM was not there and had not informed the office I was going therefore they did not hold the offender and so I missed the respondent.</td>
<td>13.10.11 - Phoned OM – no answer</td>
<td>26.07.11 – spoke to new OM who said he would ask offender whether happy to still participate and email me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.06.11 – phoned OM</td>
<td>08.07.11 – 2nd interview attempt – did not turn up. Found out would have new OM.</td>
<td>06.10.11 – phoned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.07.11 – 2nd interview attempt – did not turn up. Found out would have new OM.</td>
<td>15.07.11 – message left with OM – phoned back with new OM details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.10.11 – Phoned OM – no answer</td>
<td>18.07.11 – new OM on leave till 25.07.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(tried to leave message but none else in office answered phone)</td>
<td>25.07.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.11.11 – Phoned OM – message left</td>
<td>26.07.11 – spoke to new OM who said he would ask offender whether happy to still participate and email me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.01.12 – Phoned OM – she said the offender had transferred to Bootle and had new OM</td>
<td>31.01.12 – phoned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.01.12 – phoned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.01.12</td>
<td>OM – message left</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.01.12</td>
<td>OM returned call to say she was due to see offender on 07.02.12 and would ask him then whether still interested and get back to me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.02.12</td>
<td>OM phoned back but missed call – she left message saying that offender was happy to take part in research still and to call to make appointment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.02.12</td>
<td>Phoned OM – appointment arranged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.10.11</td>
<td>Om – not in back in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.10.11</td>
<td>OM – phoned OM – was on way out said he would ring back in 1 hour, he did but missed his call</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.10.11</td>
<td>OM – offender not attended for a while, there was a concern about risk - OM said it was okay for me to keep chasing him</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.11.11</td>
<td>OM – phoned OM – left message</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.11.11</td>
<td>OM – left message</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.01.12</td>
<td>OM – left message</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.02.12</td>
<td>OM – OM spoken to offender a few times but the offender is adamant that he is no longer interested in participating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix Three: Comparing the Interviewees, the Fathers in Brocklebank Prison and the general Brocklebank Prison Population

Table one: Comparing the age of Brocklebank Prison population, the fathers and the interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Whole prison</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Interviewees&lt;sup&gt;24&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* data missing for 3 fathers (n=67)

<sup>23</sup> There were small variations in the list used to identify fathers and the list of demographic information as the latter was collected three days later and the prison population is constantly changing. A key learning point from this research is to gather all data on the same day.

<sup>24</sup>Note this data was taken from the official data at the start of the research period and for some their age had increased by the time of interview.
Table two: Comparing the ethnicity of Brocklebank Prison population, the fathers and the interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Whole prison</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. (%)**</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
<td>No. (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W1 - White British</td>
<td>235 80.8</td>
<td>55 82.1</td>
<td>17 89.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W2 - White Irish</td>
<td>2 0.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W9 - White other</td>
<td>2 0.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 - Asian Indian</td>
<td>8 2.7</td>
<td>1 1.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 - Asian Pakistani</td>
<td>16 5.5</td>
<td>3 4.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 - Asian Bangladeshi</td>
<td>1 0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A9 - Asian other</td>
<td>8 2.7</td>
<td>1 1.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 - Black Caribbean</td>
<td>9 3.1</td>
<td>2 3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 - Black African</td>
<td>1 0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9 - Black other</td>
<td>2 0.7</td>
<td>2 3</td>
<td>1 5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1 - Mixed White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td>5 1.7</td>
<td>2 3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2 - Mixed White and Black African</td>
<td>1 0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3 - Mixed White and Asian</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9 - Mixed other</td>
<td>1 0.3</td>
<td>1 1.5</td>
<td>1 5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL BME</td>
<td>56 19.2</td>
<td>12 17.9</td>
<td>2 10.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* data missing for 3 fathers (n=67)
** data missing for 3 prisoners (n=291)
Table three: Comparing the main offence of Brocklebank Prison population, the fathers and the interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main offence</th>
<th>Whole prison</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug offences</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisitive offences</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent offences</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving offences</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* data missing for 3 fathers (n=67)

25 Offences were grouped following Home Office definitions (Flatley et al, 2010) which could be considered crude as there is a wide range in terms of seriousness of offences within each category.

26 includes 71 cases of robbery (24.1 per cent)

27 Includes 16 cases of robbery (23.9 per cent)
### Table four: Comparing the sentence length of Brocklebank Prison population, the fathers and the interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Length</th>
<th>Whole prison</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. (%)**</td>
<td>No. (%)***</td>
<td>No. (%)****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-6 months</td>
<td>15 (5)</td>
<td>2 (3.1)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 months</td>
<td>33 (10.9)</td>
<td>8 (12.3)</td>
<td>5 (26.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-18 months</td>
<td>14 (4.6)</td>
<td>2 (3.1)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-24 months</td>
<td>24 (7.9)</td>
<td>3 (4.6)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-36 months</td>
<td>92 (30.5)</td>
<td>22 (33.8)</td>
<td>3 (15.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37-48 months</td>
<td>63 (20.9)</td>
<td>15 (23.1)</td>
<td>6 (31.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-60 months</td>
<td>35 (11.6)</td>
<td>11 (16.9)</td>
<td>4 (21.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 months +</td>
<td>26 (8.6)</td>
<td>2 (3.1)</td>
<td>1 (5.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>302 (100)</td>
<td>65 (100)</td>
<td>19 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Data includes segregation unit (n=302 prisoners)

**** Data missing for 5 fathers (n=65)
Appendix Four: Pro Forma for collecting information on the fathers

Respondent id: _____

Date accessed information: _____________________

Data sources accessed: OAS [ ] LIDS [ ] Other [ ]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prison Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home town</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current offence information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current offence type (main)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional offences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of current offence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current sentencing information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDC date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARD date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRD date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LED date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SED date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous offending history</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Id as persistent offender?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at first conviction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of court appearances at which convicted (under 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of court appearances at which convicted (over 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of previous custodial sentences under 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of previous custodial sentences over 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender lives with...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitability of accommodation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

314
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment history</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any qualifications?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main source of income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug misuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol misuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional well being</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking/ behavioural issues/attitudes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/ mental health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Any information on children</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current relationship with close family members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do any close family members have a criminal record?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of childhood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current relationship with partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of domestic violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does current partner have a criminal record?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship issues linked to risks/ offending behaviour?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other info on relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix Five: Interview Schedule - Young Fathers in Prison

- Review aim of research
- Tape recording
- Confidentiality and exceptions to this
- Can leave the interview at any time
- Do not have to answer any question do not want to
- If a question is not clear please ask interviewer to explain
- Not here to judge
- Length of interview – approx 40 mins
- Any questions?

1 Background Information

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Prompts: How old are you? DOB? What is your ethnicity? What is your home town? Distance from this prison?

Can you describe your prison sentence so far?

Prompts: How long have you been in prison? How long have you been in this prison? Which other prisons have you been to? How long have you got left? Offence type? How have you found all the different prisons?

Can you give me a brief summary of your offending history?

Prompts: How many other convictions? What for? Previous sentences?

2 You and your children

Please can you tell me about your children?

Prompts: How many children have you got? Names? Ages? What are they like? What do they enjoy doing? When were they born in relation to your offending history? Can you describe how you felt when you found out you were going to be a dad? Who does the child/ren currently live with? Was this the same situation as prior to your imprisonment? What are the current childcare arrangements? Is this the same as prior to your imprisonment?

Can you tell me a little bit about your relationship with the child’s mother?

Prompts: Are you still in a relationship with her? How long have you been together? How long into the relationship did she fall pregnant? If no longer together – do you still get on with/ have any contact with her? When did you break up?

3 Contact and relationship with the child (prior to prison)

Can you tell me about your relationship with your child before your imprisonment?

Prompts: Positive or negative relationship? What was your role (play, provider, discipline, care e.g. feed/ nappy changing)? Did you enjoy
spending time with your child? What were the best and worst bits about being a dad prior to your imprisonment?

How often and what form of contact did you have?

Prompts: On average how often did you have contact with your child prior to coming to prison? What form did this take? What were the main things that you did with your child?

Who were the important people that supported you prior to prison in your role as a father and what did they do?

Prompts: What is their relationship to you? What did they do to support you? How are these people linked to each other?

4  Contact and relationship with the child (in prison)

Can you tell me about the contact you have with your child while in prison?

Prompts: On average how often do you have any contact with your children? If non, why not? What form of contact does this tend to be?

If mention phone calls – How often do you speak to your child on the phone? How do you find speaking to your child on the phone? How does it make you feel speaking to your child on the phone?

If mention letters – How often do you write to your child? How often do you receive letters/pictures from your child? How does it make you feel writing to/receiving mail from your child?

If mention visits – On average how often do you see your child/ren? Who brings your child/ren to visit you? Can you describe an average visit? What do you tend to do with your child/speak to them about? Who else tends to be present at visits? How is the child during the visits? How do you feel before, during and after visits?

Can you describe the experience of being a father in prison?

Prompts: How easy/difficult do you find it? Has it affected your relationship with your child? What are the best and worst things about being a father in prison?

Who would you say currently supports you most in your role as a father in prison and what do they do?

Prompts: What is their relationship to you? What do they do to support you? How are these people linked to each other?

5  Formal provision for fatherhood

What does the prison provide in relation to fatherhood? (e.g. family visit days/parenting courses/storybook dads)

Have you been involved with these?

Looking at each provision separately, what is your opinion of them?
Prompts: What are the good things and bad things about each one? How did they make you feel? How could they be improved?

What else do you think needs to be provided?

6 Offending

What would you say the effect of having a child has been on your attitude to offending?

What has caused any change in attitude? Do you think your desire to change will become reality? Have you wanted to change before? Why haven’t you?

7 Hopes and Fears for release

Hopes

We are now going to look at how you see yourself in the future, about three months after release from prison.

Please now tell me what you hope for yourself upon release in terms of being a father. You can include things that are likely and things that may seem quite far-fetched.

Why did you say each of these? Which of these are the three most important hopes?

Now can you tell me what you hope for in your future in terms of yourself in general and in terms of your criminal life (what would you like to achieve)?

Why did you say each of these? Which of these are the three most important hopes?

Which of these do you feel are most likely or most unlikely to occur?

How easy do you think it will be to achieve your hopes? How long do you think it will take?
What do you think could help you achieve these hopes?

*Prompts: Any formal support e.g. probation, voluntary groups? Any informal support/ help from family/ friends?*

**Fears**

We are now going to look at fears for the future. Again these can be likely or unlikely to happen. Please can you tell me what you fear about your future in relation to fatherhood.

Why did you say each of these? Which of these do you fear the most?

Now can you tell me what you fear for in your future in terms of yourself in general and in terms of your criminal life?

Why did you say each of these? Which of these do you fear the most?

Which of these do you feel are most likely or most unlikely to occur?

What do you think could help you avoid these fears?

*Prompts: Any formal support e.g. probation, voluntary groups? Any informal support/ help from family/ friends?*

**8 Release**

**Can you tell me about your plans for release?**

*Prompts? Have you any plans for release? Where will you be living? Who with? Any employment, education or training lined up?*
Has your involvement with your child/ren already been discussed and if so what has been decided?

How easy do you think it will be to re establish relationships with your child, the mother of your child, and other key people when you are released?

What support do you think will be available to you in the community in relation to your role as a father and your offending?

Anything else you would like to say about any of these issues?

Thank you for your time
Appendix Six: Characteristics of Fathers and Interviewees in Brocklebank Prison

Table five: Risk of Reconviction for the young fathers in Brocklebank Prison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood of reconviction</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Range of scores (Low to High)</th>
<th>% having low risk of reconviction (0-40)</th>
<th>% having medium risk of reconviction (41-99)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 12 months</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4-80</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 24 months</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8-89</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 12 months</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>15-80</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 24 months</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>26-89</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table six: Employment and Education of the young fathers in Brocklebank Prison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed prior to prison</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed on release from prison</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No previous work experience</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some/limited work experience</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Seekers Allowance as main source of income</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not finish school</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28 It was assumed by the researcher that unless the OASys form mentioned otherwise that the men still had the jobs they had prior to employment and it was assumed they were still unemployed if the OASys did not mention them finding employment for release.
Table seven: The qualifications of the young fathers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Any qualifications</th>
<th>Number of fathers</th>
<th>Percentage of fathers*</th>
<th>Number of Interviewees</th>
<th>Percentage of Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gained in school</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gained in prison</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gained elsewhere (college/work)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* data missing for 3 fathers (n=67)

Table eight: Young fathers and their drug and alcohol misuse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug and alcohol dependency29</th>
<th>Number of fathers</th>
<th>Percentage of fathers*</th>
<th>Number of Interviewees</th>
<th>Percentage of Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dependency</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current dependency</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent in the past</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dependency</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current dependency</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent in the past</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* data missing for 3 fathers (n=67)

---

29 Drug and alcohol use was seen as an issue if it was said in the OASys forms to be connected to their offending or if they were receiving treatment for it. There were prisoners who were counted as having no issues who still drank or took drugs occasionally. For those where it was an issue in the past this was where it had been connected to offending previously but was not connected to their current offence. The ‘no issue’ category might not be completely accurate as that includes offenders for which there was limited information in the appropriate OASys section but as the OASys assessments had been completed with some information one could naively assume that if there were dependency issues they would have been included.
### Table nine: Mention of negative peers in OASys assessments for the fathers and interviewees in Brocklebank Prison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fathers*</th>
<th></th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Influence of peers</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware and keen to disassociate from peers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37.5 (of those with negative peers)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.7 (of those with negative peers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have disassociated from peers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.4 (of those with negative peers)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3 (of those with negative peers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not disassociated from peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8 (of those with negative peers)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1 (of those with negative peers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No mention of disassociation in OASys</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>55 (of those with negative peers)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.9 (of those with negative peers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Information missing for 3 fathers (n=67)

### Table ten: The number of children the young fathers and interviewees in Brocklebank Prison had

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>All fathers</th>
<th></th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage*</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (includes unborn child)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* data missing for 3 fathers (n=67)
**Table eleven: Relationship status of the Young Fathers and Interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship status</th>
<th>Young fathers**</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With mother of the child</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With mother of some of children</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With someone other than the mother</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** This information was missing for 7 fathers (total = 63)
Table twelve: The young fathers living arrangements prior to custody and planned for release

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who the offender lives with</th>
<th>Prior to custody</th>
<th>On release(^{30})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of fathers</td>
<td>% of fathers **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Fixed Abode</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By themselves</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent &amp; step-parent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent &amp; sibling(s)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parents &amp; sibling(s)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent, step-parent &amp; sibling(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family/friends</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; girlfriend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girlfriend’s parents &amp; girlfriend</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent &amp; girlfriend</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With child (ren)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent(s), sibling(s), girlfriend &amp; child(ren)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girlfriend’s parents, girlfriend &amp; child(ren)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex girlfriend’s parents &amp; children</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girlfriend &amp; child</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girlfriend &amp; step-child(ren)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** data missing for 7 fathers (n=63)
*** data missing for 4 fathers (n=66)

\(^{30}\) It was assumed the young fathers were going to live with the same people on release as prior to custody unless expressly stated on the OASys form.
Appendix Seven: Information Sheet for Young Fathers in Prison

Information Sheet

Realities on Release:
The hopes and experiences of young imprisoned fathers

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what taking part will involve. You do not have to participate and you should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating.

The research
This research is being carried out with young adult offenders (aged 18-24) who are fathers. We are looking for volunteers to take part in one-to-one interviews.

The research being carried out is looking at how young adult offenders (YOs) experience being a father in prison and in the community. We are interested in finding out about the hopes you have for your future (especially in relation to fatherhood) while you are in prison and whether these hopes are converted into reality on release. Following this the research will try and investigate what factors have influenced the success or failure of this, especially focusing on the importance or lack of formal and informal support. The research also aims to investigate how YOs perceive fatherhood, in particular how it has impacted upon their attitudes to offending and their plans for the future.

Your Contribution
Contributing to this research will mean taking part in a one-to-one interview in prison. This will last approximately 40 minutes and will take place within the next few weeks in the prison. There is also the option of a second interview in the community, approximately 3 months after you have been released from prison, at your probation office.

With your consent we will tape-record the interviews or if not, we will take written notes. These recordings will then be transcribed and any recordings made will be destroyed upon completion of the transcription. Transcripts will be anonymous, so you will not be identifiable from these (i.e. we will take out the names of people and places). The transcripts will be held at The University of Manchester, and only the research team will have access to them.

Everything you say will be confidential; we will not tell anyone else what you tell us. However, if you tell us about behaviour breaking Prison Rules that can be adjudicated against, behaviour that is a threat to prison security, intention to commit a specific illegal act or behaviour harmful to others or yourself, such as intent to commit suicide or self harm, we have a duty to inform the appropriate person.

Please note, you will not be identifiable in any outputs from this research. The interviews will be a chance for you to talk about your experiences and problems you feel you face in being a parent in prison and in the community.

You will not be asked about the offence for which you have been convicted.
**Consent to interview others**
We are also interested in finding out the views of other people that have been supportive to you in your role as a father both in prison and in the community and also in speaking to the mother of your child (ren). However, we will not do so without your express consent. We will be asking these other key people how they feel you have coped with being a father in prison, what support they have given you and about what other support they think could have helped you.

If you are happy for us to do so please fill in the appropriate section of the consent form. If not we would still like you to take part in the research. We may not contact all of the people you say that you are willing for us to speak to.

**Participation and the right to withdrawal**
It is up to you to decide whether or not you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to fill in the consent form. Participants will be chosen randomly from replies; therefore filling in the consent form does not automatically mean you will be asked to take part in all stages of the research.

If you do take part in the research you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You also do not have to answer any question you do not want to. A decision to withdraw at any time, or decision not to take part, will not affect your status within the prison or your opportunities for parole.

As it is an important subject, we hope you will be able to participate in this study.

If you participate in both interviews you will receive £25 in High Street Vouchers (after the second interview) as a thank you for your time.

Please note that your participation is still wanted even if you do not agree to participate to all parts of the research. Please only tick the sections on the consent forms that you are willing to take part in.

**Further Questions**
If you would like to ask any further questions regarding taking part in this research, you will have the opportunity to ask these during and after the researcher’s presentation to you.
Appendix Eight: Consent Form for Young Fathers in Prison
(completed at presentation)

Title of Project: Realities on Release: the hopes and experiences of young imprisoned fathers

Researcher(s): Emily Smith

You can take part in all or part of the research

(Please tick only those parts you are willing to take part in)

1. Agreement to participate

Yes. I agree to take part in the above study

Please Tick

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>I agree to be interviewed in prison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>I agree to be interviewed when I have left prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>I agree to my case file being read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>I agree to others who have supported me being interviewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reasons, without any consequence to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)</td>
<td>I understand that everything I say will be confidential* and that I will not be identifiable in the final report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*With the exception of disclosure of behaviour breaking Prison Rules that can be adjudicated against, behaviour that threatens the security of the prison, future illegal acts, and behaviour harmful to yourself, such as intent to commit suicide or self harm.

OR

No. I do not wish to take part in the above study

Name ........................................ Signature ....................................

Prisoner No. ...................... Date .................................
Appendix Nine: Detailed consent form for Young Fathers in Prison
(completed at time of interview)

Title of Project: Realities on Release: the hopes and experiences of young imprisoned fathers

Researcher(s): Emily Smith

1. Prison interview

I consent to the interview being recorded.

If I get upset during the interview I give my consent for the researcher to contact the appropriate person in the prison and ask them to come and talk to me.

2. Community interview

I consent to an interview after I have been released and to the researcher contacting me in the community through my probation office.

Probation Office (home area) ..............................................................

Probation Officer’s name (if known) ...................................................

3. Consent to interview others

a. I consent to you interviewing the mother of my child

b. I consent to contact the mother of my child, tell her about the research and ask her for her permission for me to pass the researcher her contact details if she is happy to take part in an interview

c. I consent to you interviewing other key family members/ friends who have supported me (please give details of these family/ friends below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship to you</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. I consent to contact these family/ friends, tell them about the research and ask them for their permission for me to pass the researcher their contact details if they are happy to take part in an interview
e. I consent to the researcher contacting the professionals who have supported me in my role as a father and asking whether they are willing to participate in an interview (if yes please give details below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of person who has been supportive</th>
<th>Their role</th>
<th>Contact details (if known)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signature ............................................

Date .................................................
Appendix Ten: Interview Schedule – Young Fathers in the Community

- Review aim of research
- Tape recording
- Confidentiality
- Can leave the interview at any time
- Do not have to answer any question do not want to
- If a question is not clear please ask interviewer to explain
- Length of interview – approx 40 mins
- Any questions?

1 Current situation

Can you tell me how you have been doing since release? What is your current situation?

Prompts: how long have you been out? What were the terms of your release (HDC etc)? How did you find it being back in the community initially? What are the best and worst things about being back in the community?
Accommodation:
Where are you living? Who with? Where is this in relation to your child?
ETE: Have you got a job, or are you doing any education or training? If so, can you tell me about this? If not, have you been trying to find ETE?

Can you tell me about your relationship with the mother of your child since release? Can you tell me about your relationships with your other family and friends since release?

2 Contact and relationship with your children

Can you tell me about the contact you have with your child/ren now you are in the community?

Prompts: How often do you have contact? What form does this take? What are the main things that you do with your child?

How would you describe your relationship with your child now you have been released?

Prompts: Positive or negative relationship? What is your role (play, provider, discipline, care e.g. feed/ nappy changing)? Do you enjoy spending time with your child? What are the best and worst bits about being a dad? Has your relationship changed in any way from what it was like before imprisonment?

Who are the important people that support you in your role as a father now you are back in the community?

Prompts: What is their relationship to you? What do they do to support you? How are these people linked to each other? Are they the same people as prior to your imprisonment? Are they the people you thought would be the ones that would support you?
3 **Formal provision for fatherhood**

What does probation provide in relation to fatherhood? (e.g. parenting courses/advice)

Have you been involved with these?

Looking at each provision separately, what is your opinion of them? What are the good things and bad things about each one? How could they be improved?

4 **Were your hopes and fears converted into reality?**

You said when we last met that X, X and X were your main hopes for release in terms of your relationship with your child, have these hopes happened in reality?

   Why/ Why not? What factors do you think have contributed to this (formal/informal support/own efforts)? How do you feel about this?

You said when we last met that X, X and X were your main fears for release in terms of your relationship with your child, have these fears happened in reality?

   Why/ Why not? What factors do you think have contributed to this? How do you feel about this?

You said that X, X and X were your main hopes in terms of yourself in general and in terms of your criminal life, have these hopes happened in reality?

   Why/ Why not? What factors do you think have contributed to this (formal/informal support/own efforts)? How do you feel about this?

You said that X, X and X were your main fears in terms of yourself in general and in terms of your criminal life, have these fears happened in reality?

   Why/ Why not? What factors do you think have contributed to this? How do you feel about this?

Overall what were the main ways that formal support mechanisms (prison, probation, voluntary organisations) have helped you in your role as a father?

What other formal support do you think could be offered to young men in your situation both in prison AND in the community?

What are the main ways that informal support mechanisms (family/friends) have helped you in your role as a father?

What are your new hopes and fears for your future?

*Anything else you would like to say about any of these issues?*

Thank you for your time
Appendix Eleven: Interview Schedule – those who supported the young fathers

- Review aim of research
- Tape recording
- Confidentiality
- Can leave the interview at any time
- Do not have to answer any question do not want to
- If a question is not clear please ask interviewer to explain
- Length of interview – approx 30 mins
- Any questions?

Telephone – is anyone around? Is it okay to talk? VERBAL CONSENT

1 You and the young offender

What is your relationship to the young offender and to his child(ren)?

Can you tell me about what you did to support him in his role as a father PRIOR to prison?

Can you tell me about what you did to support him in his role as a father while he was in prison?

Were you in contact with him when he was in prison? Did you visit him? If so, can you tell me about this?

Prompts: How often did you visit? how did you find the experience of visiting a prison? What did you tend to talk about? Was the child there? How did they find the experience? How could visits be improved?

How were phone calls?

How were home leaves?

How could contact while X in prison have been improved?

If there have been any changes in the role, what are the reasons for this?

How did you find the experience of X being in prison?

Who has supported you while X was in prison? Any formal support? What formal support would have been useful to you?

Can you tell me about what you do to support him in his role as a father SINCE he has been released from prison?

Has your relationship with him changed in any way over this time period (through him going to jail)?

2 The young offender as a father

Before prison, can you tell me a little bit about the contact he had with his child/ren?
Prompts: How often? What form did this take? What were the main things that he with his child?

How would you describe his relationship with his child prior to prison?

Prompts: Positive or negative relationship? What was their role (play, provider, discipline, care e.g. feed/ nappy changing)? Did he enjoy spending time with your child?

How do you think he coped with being a father from inside prison? How did he find the experience?

Can you tell me about the contact he had with his child when he was in prison?

How would you describe his relationship with his child while he was in prison?

How do you think he is coping being a father back in the community?

Can you tell me about the contact he has with his child/ren now he is back in the community?

Prompts: How often does he have contact? What form does this take? What are the main things that he does with his child?

How would you describe his relationship with his children now he has been released?

Prompts: Positive or negative relationship? What is his role (play, provider, discipline, care e.g. feed/ nappy changing)? Do you think he enjoys spending time with his child? Has this relationship changed in any way from what it was like before imprisonment

Same relationship with all children?

How are you finding having X back in the community?

3 Changes in the young offender

Did you notice any changes in the young offender from being in prison in relation to his personality?

Did you notice any changes in the young offender from being in prison in relation to his role as a father?

Did you notice any changes in the young offender from being in prison in relation to his attitude towards offending?

What are the possible reasons for any changes?

4 Others and the offender

Who else would you says has supported the young offender in his role as a father and in what way?

Prompts: Names? Relationship to him, the child and to you? In what ways do they offer support? Was this before, during or after imprisonment?

What formal support (e.g. prison, probation, voluntary organisations) has the young offender received in his role as a father? What did you think was good about this support?
What formal support do you think would have helped the young offender in his role as a father in prison?

What formal support do you think would have helped the young offender in his role as a father back in the community?

Anything else you would like to say about any of these issues?

Thank you for your time.
Appendix Twelve: Interview Schedule for Key Professional Interviews

- Review aim of research
- Tape recording
- Confidentiality
- Can leave the interview at any time
- Do not have to answer any question do not want to
- If a question is not clear please ask interviewer to explain
- Length of interview – approx 20 mins
- Any questions?

1 Background Information

Can you tell me a little about your job? (Especially in relation to young offenders who are fathers)

Prompts: What is your job title? How long have you been doing this job? Previous role of any relevance? What are your main duties? How old are the men on your unit?

If involved in delivering programmes aimed at young fathers – can you tell me a little bit about these programmes?

Prompts: who attends? How long for? What topics are covered? What do the young men say about these? How do you think they benefit the young men?

OFFENDER MANAGERS - OASYS ASSESSMENTS - WHAT INFORMATION THEY THINK IS IMPORTANT TO PUT IN SECTION 6 AND WHY

2 Young offenders (15-24) who are fathers

Do you know which men on your unit are fathers? How do you find out which men are fathers?

Do you talk to the fathers about their role as a father? What kind of things do you talk about? If not, why not? Do the men ever approach you about their role as a father/ issues over parenting?

Are there any types of offender who are more likely to be young fathers?

How do you think young men find the experience of being a father in prison?

In your experience, do most young men have contact with their children while they are in prison? What form of contact? If men don’t have contact what tends to be the reason for this?

What kind of relationships do the men you have had experience of have with their children?

How suitable do you think the methods of contact (telephone, letters, visits) are to encourage a relationship between fathers and their children? Could they be improved in any way?

Can you comment on what the relationship tends to be like between young offenders and the mothers of their children?
How do you think becoming a father tends to impact on young offenders, especially in terms of their offending attitudes? Can you give me any real life examples to illustrate this point?

How do you think being in prison tends to impact on young offenders in terms of their attitudes to fatherhood? Can you give me any real life examples to illustrate this point?

If there are changes in attitude what factors do you think lead to this?

Would you say that young offenders in prison reflect on their role as a father while they are onside? What are your reasons for saying this?

Are there any differences between the age ranges of 18 to 24 in their attitudes/contact with/relationships with their child/ren?

What hopes and fears for release (in terms of their role as a father) do you think they develop while in prison?

How easy do you think it is for the young men to transfer their hopes into a reality on release? What factors help to make it happen and what factors work against this happening?

3 Support

What formal support is offered to young offenders to help them in their role as a father in prison? (e.g. parenting classes? Family visits? ROTLs?) Is this prison level, local level or national?

What do you think of this support? Good things and bad things about it?

What more is needed?

What do you think is the importance of informal support (family and friends) in terms of the fatherhood role?

Are there any other support issues in terms of young offenders who are fathers?

Anything else you would like to say about any of these issues?

Thank you for your time
## Appendix Thirteen: Summary of the Participants – Father Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age of child ren</th>
<th>No. of child ren</th>
<th>Age 1st became a father</th>
<th>Length r/ship with mother</th>
<th>In r/ship with mother</th>
<th>Cont. act with child</th>
<th>Outcome (quotes from OMs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Been back in prison (released without charge), completed licence, split up with girlfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>No - new r/ship</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Back in prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Still on licence AND doing well (girlfriend pregnant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>No - single</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No Info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen</td>
<td>Black other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Still on licence AND doing well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>No - single</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>White British</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>No - single</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Completed licence successfully</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cont- act with child</th>
<th>Outcome (quotes from OMs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Been back in prison (released without charge), completed licence, split up with girlfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Back in prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Still on licence AND doing well (girlfriend pregnant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No Info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Completed licence successfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudonym</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuart</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudonym</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil</td>
<td>Mixed: Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>White British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>White British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>White British</td>
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</table>
## Appendix Fourteen: Summary of the Participants – Offending Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Lots</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Handling stolen goods</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Wounding WI to do GBH</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Supply class A drugs</td>
<td>15</td>
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INTERVIEWER: That’s recording now, just to start off with can you tell me a bit about yourself, how old are you, where are you from what’s did you do before prison, that type of thing?

RESPONDENT: I’m nineteen from X; I didn’t really do anything really apart from looking after my kids and that

INTERVIEWER: How many kids have you got?

RESPONDENT: I’ve got two

INTERVIEWER: How old are they?

RESPONDENT: My daughter’s five in X and my son is eighteen months nearly

INTERVIEWER: We’ll come back to talk about them in a lot more detail later on, in terms of your prison sentence, how long have you been in prison?

RESPONDENT: About nineteen months

INTERVIEWER: What other prisons have you been to and how long have you been in TX?

RESPONDENT: I’ve been in here nearly a year now; I was at X before here and then X before that so I’ve been on tour a bit!

INTERVIEWER: You’re coming up towards the end of your sentence?

RESPONDENT: Yeah I’m out in four weeks

INTERVIEWER: Is this your first custodial sentence?

RESPONDENT: No

INTERVIEWER: How many times have you been in prison before?

RESPONDENT: Third

INTERVIEWER: How have you found this sentence, how have you found the experience of being in prison this time?

RESPONDENT: More eye-opening

INTERVIEWER: Why?

RESPONDENT: Because on the last two times I’ve come I weren’t willing to change for nobody but I’ve done loads of stuff on this one, being in here has opened my eyes thinking wow I don’t really want to be in jail

INTERVIEWER: Being in [this prison]?

RESPONDENT: Yeah because if you don’t behave you don’t get privileges like town visits and stuff like that and I wasn’t behaving when I first come back in
January till September, I weren’t behaving I was always getting nickings and going down the block and that, now I’ve started behaving I’m getting privileges like town visits and home leaves and that

**INTERVIEWER:** So it’s good in here because you do get rewards?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** You said that in your other prison sentences you haven’t been interested in changing, why is that?

**RESPONDENT:** Just immaturity, just didn’t want to grow up just wanted to do the same things I was doing

**INTERVIEWER:** But this sentence it’s different?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** Is that all good about [this prison] or are there other reasons?

**RESPONDENT:** No I think its more to do with how long I got rather than the jail itself, it’s more the fact that I’m away from my family and there’s nothing better in the world than family

**INTERVIEWER:** Were your other sentences a bit shorter?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah the first one that I had was an eight do four, eight months and do four, the second was twelve months do six, this one is like three years three months so it’s a big jump that

**INTERVIEWER:** So the length has something to do with that?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** Lets talk about your children then, you said that you’ve got a little boy and a little girl, what are their names; can you tell me a bit about them?

**RESPONDENT:** My daughter is X the same last name as me, my son is X, my daughter was born on X Day and my son was born on X of X, I was in jail for my sons birth but I was out for my daughters

**INTERVIEWER:** your daughter is five?

**RESPONDENT:** Five in X

**INTERVIEWER:** In terms of your offending history then, when were they born? Was your daughter born in between different prison sentences or before you’d ever been to prison?

**RESPONDENT:** Before I’d ever come to prison, she was born, I’d just turned fifteen she was born a month after, I came jail about three months after that for fighting

**INTERVIEWER:** And your son was born on this sentence?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** But obviously you knew he was being born before you came to prison
RESPONDENT: I tried speaking to the judge so that I would be out for my son's birth, I got arrested literally it was like twelve days before I came to prison so I was trying to persuade the judge to let me get out before my son's birth and he was like no, you commit crime you've got to face it, that wounded it really did

INTERVIEWER: Just then before we move on to talk about some of those issues can you tell me a bit about them, what’s your daughter like, what is she in to?

RESPONDENT: She likes her Barbie’s and Dora, as kids do and that, I don’t know any kids of her age that like rides, you know like Alton Towers and that? She likes all the rides and that

INTERVIEWER: She’s a thrill seeker is she?

RESPONDENT: Yeah she loves it she’s pretty tall as well, she’s up to my hip so she’s going to be a tall girl when she gets older I’m not exactly tall and my Mrs isn’t so I don’t know

INTERVIEWER: What’s your son like?

RESPONDENT: He doesn’t really do much he’s just starting to talk at the minute he’s not really talking properly, I can’t really tell you what he likes and what he doesn’t because I’ve been in prison haven’t I? I know he likes chips and that, like all kids do!

INTERVIEWER: In terms of your daughter, before you came to prison you had X, what kind of involvement did you have with her before you came to prison?

RESPONDENT: All I wanted to do was look after her, you know what I mean? I wanted her to have everything she wanted so I was getting her it by grafting if I can say that if you know what I mean by that?

INTERVIEWER: Yes

RESPONDENT: I was going out selling drugs, anything to get money so that I could look after them give her whatever she needed, it didn’t help really because if she wants something she gets it, you know what I mean? You only got it through selling drugs and I always thought that was natural

INTERVIEWER: Was that your main motivation for offending, to provide for your family? Or were you offending already before you had children?

RESPONDENT: I hadn’t really offended but I was but I was more thrill seeking than offending, just to get money just doing it just for the buzz but then when my daughter came along I was too young to get a proper job so I just had to find my way on my own by myself

INTERVIEWER: Did you spend a lot of time with your daughter?

RESPONDENT: Yeah

INTERVIEWER: What kind of things did you do?

RESPONDENT: When I was out, when I get out I just take her to some Wacky Warehouse things, places like that give her a day out obviously I can’t take my son he’s not old enough yet but when he gets old enough he’ll be able to come in and that, I take her to the football and that
INTERVIEWER: What football team?

RESPONDENT: Stoke, I enjoy it and she loves it, when we go football she doesn’t like the Stoke but she always puts on, on a Saturday or Sunday she knows the games on, she knows the days of the week she puts it on and she’s like ‘come on Dad we’re going football’ and I’m like that are we? Its not today its tomorrow and she’s like oh

INTERVIEWER: So you’ve got a shared interest?

RESPONDENT: Yeah but my bird hates it, my girlfriend she’s a Rangers fan, she’s Scottish my girlfriend is, she’s a Rangers fan and she’s like I hate you! She says I’ll get X supporting Rangers you watch!

INTERVIEWER: Did you before prison, when your daughter was little were you involved in all the nappy changes and stuff like that?

RESPONDENT: Yeah whatever I could do I would try and help, even if I couldn’t do it I’d give it a go

INTERVIEWER: Did you look after her a lot in the days?

RESPONDENT: Yeah because my girlfriend is like a year and four months older than me so she’s basically always had a job and I’ve always looked after the kids

INTERVIEWER: So you were really involved and did most of it?

RESPONDENT: Yeah I really enjoyed it because you don’t normally get, when you’re working you don’t get that intimacy with them if you know what I mean so I just took it as it came

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that you’re quite close to your daughter?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I’ve got some building to be close to my son but he’s still young isn’t he?

INTERVIEWER: How did your daughter cope with your short prison sentences?

RESPONDENT: She didn’t know where, because she was young and that I just said that I was working away but now obviously she’s old enough to understand so I’ve told her I just said listen, on my first town visit, I’m in prison and I’ve got to go back now she’s old enough to understand now, she rung me the other day, no it wasn’t the other day it was round September time she was in nursery, I rung her up and she said how come you don’t take me nursery like the other Dads? I was like oh, it wounded me it did I was wounded I didn’t know what to do or say I said it wont be long now, she’s like I’ll be at school when I see you next wont I? I was like no you wont, I’m on a home leave in two weeks so I’ll be able to take her then

INTERVIEWER: So that upset you being able to take her to nursery?

RESPONDENT: Yeah I’ve always said to my girlfriend and my Mum and Dad that I wanted to take her to her first day at school just to meet all the teachers and see if she’ll settle in and that, I think she’s doing alright

INTERVIEWER: Did she start school in September?

RESPONDENT: Yeah she started school this September
INTERVIEWER: You think that she’s getting on okay and you’re happy with that?

RESPONDENT: Yeah I’ve read one of the report things that they get every month, I read one and she’s doing alright she’s interacting with different people, meeting them and talking and all that, I can’t do nothing about it though can I?

INTERVIEWER: You said on your first town visit that you told her you were in prison, how easy or difficult did you find that and how did she react?

RESPONDENT: It was hard to explain because I didn’t know how to put it at first so I just came out with it and she was like what prison like on that film? I’m like what film’s that? She’s like that film we watched what’s it called Mean Machines it’s called, she goes! I’m like similar to that yeah and she’s like oh can I come and watch you play football? I said no you can’t darling you can’t, she knows what she’s on about sort of thing but I didn’t know how to put it at first obviously...

INTERVIEWER: What made you decide to tell her, just her age?

RESPONDENT: Yeah because she’s growing up now, she’s growing up and I just thought I’m not going to hide it from her its better off telling her than her finding out from someone else

INTERVIEWER: So you were very involved in her upbringing before you came to prison, what about your relationship with your children’s’ mother, is it the same Mum for the two children?

RESPONDENT: Yeah

INTERVIEWER: How’s your relationship with her been through all this?

RESPONDENT: Well we’ve stood by each other sort of thing, since I’ve been in jail I just can’t wait to get out and spend time with my kids and you and chill, when I first come prison I got a letter off her and the letter basically said listen I don’t care what you’ve done, fucking I’ll always be here for you and I thought yeah that’s nice that she’s just waiting for me

INTERVIEWER: She’s waiting for you and that’s important?

RESPONDENT: Yeah

INTERVIEWER: How long had you been together when you had your first child?

RESPONDENT: About a year, eighteen months something like that, through school

INTERVIEWER: So you’ve been together quite a while now and she’s supporting you?

RESPONDENT: Yeah

INTERVIEWER: That’s good okay lets talk about just before you came to prison what would you say were the worst bits and the best bits about being a Dad in the community before you came to prison?

RESPONDENT: In the community? Worst bits? I can remember people judging me because of my history and that, people only know you as one thing and that’s a criminal so they judge you on that and that’s horrible that I don’t like being judged
because, I don’t now I can be a nice person if I need to be its just that I choose not to be most of the time

**INTERVIEWER:** What are the best bits about being a Dad in the community?

**RESPONDENT:** Doing things like a normal family like swimming with my kids and just enjoying normal things

**INTERVIEWER:** So nice days out and things like that are the best bits?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** In terms of before you came to prison who was there for you, who supported you in your role as a Dad before you came to prison?

**RESPONDENT:** My girlfriend

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of support did she give you?

**RESPONDENT:** Just like when I was having doubts about being a Dad and about not being a good Dad she would say no, you can be a good Dad just chill and try

**INTERVIEWER:** How did you feel when you first found out you were going to be a Dad? Obviously you were quite young at the time

**RESPONDENT:** Scared I really was, I was fourteen when she got pregnant, I’d just turned fifteen when she gave birth and I was like wow! I’ve got to grow up!

**INTERVIEWER:** Has there been anybody else that supported you before you came to prison or was it just your girlfriend?

**RESPONDENT:** My parents, my Mum and Dad

**INTERVIEWER:** What did they do?

**RESPONDENT:** They just helped me you know like because obviously they’d been through it all and had kids and that just showing me, when my daughter was first born, how to change a nappy and all this it was just new experiences for me and they were like I’ll show you, I’ll show you how to make a bottle as well just little things like that

**INTERVIEWER:** So they helped you with the practical things and your girlfriend was there for the emotional support?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah just little things like that help you, have you got kids yourself?

**INTERVIEWER:** No but I’ve got lots of nieces and nephews

**RESPONDENT:** Its, have you looked after them from when they were first born?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes

**RESPONDENT:** Its hard work isn’t it? I just don’t know it helped me to mature when I was younger but not completely until I came to jail this time

**INTERVIEWER:** Let’s move on to this prison sentence, lets start with your son, you came to prison and your son was due anytime can you describe that experience for me, how it was?
RESPONDENT: I didn’t know what to do with myself I really didn’t I was just devastated I missed my sons birth and everyone in X, like its all set out in blocks and everyone who was on the blocks was proper supportive of me and that they was like don’t get yourself mad they’ll come and see you soon, it wont be long and then it was like I think the thirteenth night I was in there and an officer came to my door and he opened the door and said come to the office X and I was like why? I’ve got to tell you something and I went to the office and he said pick the phone up, I picked the phone up and it was my girlfriend on the other side I was like no way! They let her ring up and that, I was happy then because I said to her listen what’s his fucking date of birth because I wasn’t too sure if he had been born that day or the day before, she told me all that and brought him down for a visit and brought him up, it was the fastest hour of my life! It really was it felt like I’d only been sat there for a minute!

INTERVIEWER: How long after the birth was that?

RESPONDENT: I think it was like three days after

INTERVIEWER: So you saw him quite soon quite quickly?

RESPONDENT: Yeah

INTERVIEWER: In terms of that phone call do they usually do things like that or was that different?

RESPONDENT: I honestly don’t know I couldn’t tell you but it was at night as well and there was only one officer on the unit as well I was sat there and he just come and I thought what does he want now? He’s not allowed to open my door, he opened my door he come in and was like X I was like yeah? He said come to the office, I was like what’ve I done? I was buzzing though when I picked the phone up I was like, picked it up thinking it was going to be the governor or something so I was like what’ve I don’t? I didn’t even know and it was my bird and I was happy man, buzzing, I got the night officer a couple of packets of biscuits just helping him out and that

INTERVIEWER: So you did find out quite quickly and you did get to see your son quite quickly?

RESPONDENT: Yeah

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel when he was born, really happy?

RESPONDENT: I was relieved if you know what I mean, stress had been lifted I was just worried about if anything goes wrong and I cant be there but no it was alright, my girlfriend and my son were alright

INTERVIEWER: How’s your daughter about having a little brother?

RESPONDENT: She wanted a sister as all girls do, I wanted a sister! But now as she’s growing up she’s like I love him now, he’s mine now I’m like you’re mad you!

INTERVIEWER: Okay let’s talk about contact with your children while you’ve been in prison, have you had visits off both of your children whilst you’ve been on this sentence?

RESPONDENT: Yeah in the unit its like you can only have three kids on your visit its kind of hard to just bring my kids up because there’s a few kids, I’ve got two my sisters got one, my others sisters got two and I like seeing them all, you know what
I mean? I like being involved in them all it is hard to try and get visits because of transport and stuff like that its alright though because I do get to see them, I’m out in four weeks so...

**INTERVIEWER:** So it’s important for you, your whole family, you’ve been trying to keep contact with your nieces and nephews, that’s important to you?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** Let’s go back to closed conditions, did you have visits in closed conditions?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** And how were they, what did you do how did your girlfriend find them?

**RESPONDENT:** You’re more restricted in closed, you was only allowed to touch each other, if I wanted to say hello to her and that I couldn’t properly apart from hold her hand and stuff like that

**INTERVIEWER:** You weren’t allowed hugs?

**RESPONDENT:** No

**INTERVIEWER:** Could you have hugs with your children?

**RESPONDENT:** You could but you have to ask, you don’t want to ask if you can hug your own children do you? It’s ridiculous, stupid but either way I still got to see them

**INTERVIEWER:** What kind of things did you do, obviously your daughter was about…?

**RESPONDENT:** She was walking and that so she just went and picked a book up and come and sit on the chair and was like read me this! I’m like you’re just like your Mum you!

**INTERVIEWER:** So you were able to chat with your daughter, that’s good that you were able to read her stories and stuff, what about your son, obviously he was a tiny baby at that stage?

**RESPONDENT:** Just holding him and that just playing with him a little bit whatever he’s got in his carrycot, one of them just stick something in and play with him and that

**INTERVIEWER:** How did your girlfriend find bringing the children into closed conditions?

**RESPONDENT:** More difficult than in here because obviously you have to get searched and my daughter’s allergic to dogs, yeah so you have to get sniffed by dogs a lot, you do in here but its not a lot, in closed its like every other door you walk through there’s a dog there sniffing

**INTERVIEWER:** I’m terrified of dogs so I couldn’t handle it!

**RESPONDENT:** The dogs don’t bite or jump up or anything they walk round you, they just walk round you in a circle its not the dog my daughter is allergic to its their fur so if she gets a little bit on her and that she’d just be sneezing all day and
its like, do you have to bring those dogs out? Its winding me up, my daughter is
going to be sneezing and that I just ended up saying to the guy with the dogs listen
its my daughter obviously she’s not going to bring anything in is she? She was only
three at the time he was like its routine I was like if I’m on a visit next time and my
daughter is sneezing all over me I’m going to wring your dog out!

**INTERVIEWER:** You feel that the visits are better here in respect of that security
but you would like to not have a limit on the number of children you can bring?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** How are the visits different here to closed conditions?

**RESPONDENT:** You can do more in here if you know what I mean, if your kids like
say my daughter she’s energetic she’s a kid she can run round a lot, in closed
conditions I’d get threatened, get your kid now or I’m going to shut the visit off, in
here she can kind of do what she wants in her own little way if she wants to play
with the toys she can just go and play with the toys and bring them back if you
know what I mean? So it’s alright in here

**INTERVIEWER:** Now that she’s older what kind of things do you do with your
daughter on visits, and what do you do with your son?

**RESPONDENT:** Its different from there, you can do making things and she can
bring it in I’ve got a few things in my room in my cell, I’ll ask here because you can
get pens and pencils and things you can sit down and draw with them, just do stuff
like that if you’re ever in the visits you can see in her face that she’s happy just
coming in never mind being able to see me it makes me happy seeing her happy

**INTERVIEWER:** And what about your son now that he’s getting older and he’s
talking, I suppose he’s still not walking so what kind of things do you do with him?

**RESPONDENT:** He can, he can walk but when he holds on to something if there’s
nothing there he wont even attempt it (inaudible) I just sit there and read books to
him and that just the things you do when you’ve got kids

**INTERVIEWER:** How do visits make you feel, before during and after?

**RESPONDENT:** Its stress before then I go to the visit and it will chill me out then
I'll get back to the unit and I’m just happy then

**INTERVIEWER:** It makes you feel good?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** It makes you happy?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah especially if its with my kids but every now and again I get
one with me and my girlfriend and I get to have a proper chat with her its those
ones that make me realise I’m missing loads on the outside

**INTERVIEWER:** She’s talking about everything that they’re doing and things?

**RESPONDENT:** Yeah like it was my daughters birthday last X when I was in here
in prison, she come up on her birthday on X Day and they some thing going for X
card making or something so that’s what they did on the visits and they knew my
daughter was making a X day for my bird and just sat there and gave it to my bird
and was like wow have you made this? It just made me happy to be practical with her I enjoyed it really and she went to I think she went to some Barbie thing

INTERVIEWER: She’s a proper little girl then?

RESPONDENT: Yeah she’s got blonde hair as well, the type without being died, she does look cute she does

INTERVIEWER: What about other contact have you had cards and letters?

RESPONDENT: Yeah all the time I get letters pictures, every night about quarter to seven I ring them because that’s the time they go to bed so I ring them at twenty five to, quarter to seven then I ring in the morning

INTERVIEWER: Do you speak to everyone, your girlfriend and the two kids?

RESPONDENT: Yeah my girlfriend and the kids I speak to my Mum and Dad at weekend because they both work full time so I speak to them at weekends and that just ring them up and say go round mine and get my season ticket for Stoke and go every Stoke game I’m like get that season ticket and take X with you or something, take him or something because you can take two people on a season ticket that’s why I take my daughter he gets it and he’s like I’ll ring him up again and say are you going and he’s like yeah but I’m not taking X I’m going to take your Mum I think so I’m like that you’re a little sweetie aren’t you!

INTERVIEWER: How important are the phone calls that you get to say good night to your kids, how important are they?

RESPONDENT: It takes a load off my chest because if I’m sat there and I don’t ring them at night something could have happened, like my daughter could be in hospital again there was this once I was in here and I didn’t ring them this one time I just thought I’ll wait for the night see what’s going on, I rung her in the morning and my daughter was in hospital and I was wounded I was like oh what’s she in hospital for? She said my sister’s dog came round and she doesn’t like cats and dogs and she ran up and this dog just started

INTERVIEWER: So it was the first time that you’d not phoned and that happened, she was alright?

RESPONDENT: Yeah she was alright I just phoned up every night after that

INTERVIEWER: How do the letters make you feel?

RESPONDENT: Just keeps me in contact with normality just keeps me on the edge a bit, if you didn’t have letters or phone calls and that, you’d understand if you were in prison yourself or a hostel that’s similar to a prison and if you’d had no contact with the outside world or weekends you’d understand what I mean, its hard to get back in, there’s two different languages if you understand what I mean? It’s in here and out there I speak to my bird sometimes and she’s like its me! I can’t be bothered to explain it but that’s how it is if you know what I mean?

INTERVIEWER: So it’s important that you have contact with the outside world?

RESPONDENT: Yeah just to keep yourself on the scene of what’s going on

INTERVIEWER: Is it important that you’re kept in the loop of what’s happening with your children?
RESPONDENT: If it weren’t then it would be pointless me being a Dad, if you know what I mean?

INTERVIEWER: Just to sum this up then can you sum up overall what the experience of being a Dad in prison is like

RESPONDENT: Horrible

INTERVIEWER: Why what’s most horrible about it?

RESPONDENT: You miss, its not like kids can wait for things to happen its like my son I missed his first ever step man and my daughters first day at nursery and stuff like that its not very nice if I could do anything I wouldn’t be in prison right now if I could turn back time I’d be happy I wouldn’t be committing crime or doing things like that

INTERVIEWER: So it’s missing things those key moments and things like that?

RESPONDENT: Yeah it’s missing little things like that, that’s the things you miss

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that being in prison has affected your relationship with your children, first of all your daughter? You said that you were quite close before do you think you’re still close or that prison has had any impact on that relationship?

RESPONDENT: No it won’t have because she knows who I am and it will just go straight back to what it was before just interactive and do everything that we did before

INTERVIEWER: And what about your son do you think being in prison has affected your relationship with him?

RESPONDENT: It has but it hasn’t because he doesn’t know the difference yet but it would do if I was in here for a lot longer like if I was in here for about eighteen months he wouldn’t have a clue because that’s when they start recognising if I was in here from him being eighteen months I’d get out and I’d just be another man to him, just a different guy

INTERVIEWER: Do you think he does recognise you because you said that he sits and giggles at visits do you think he does recognise you?

RESPONDENT: Yeah I was surprised the first time I ever had my son I was surprised that he took to me because it’s a new voice isn’t it and he was sat there and he just knew straight away and he started giggling and moving trying to get comfy and that he took to me straight away, my daughter didn’t even take to me like that, must be a father son thing

INTERVIEWER: Who would you say supports you while you’re in prison in your role as a father?

RESPONDENT: Some of the officers do like if you’re having a bad day and that they will sit you down and listen, don’t lose your head because you’ve got things to think about you’ve got things to lose, kids to keep say like if you got extra days they’ll be waiting longer and I don’t want that and I chat with, if I need to talk to anyone there’s the chaplain

INTERVIEWER: Do you talk to the chaplain?
RESPONDENT: No but I know people who have so I know he's there if I needed to thought I'd talk to one of my mates on the unit that I know from the outside just talk to them and that

INTERVIEWER: You talk to the lads on the unit and they support you? You said that the officers, do the officers know you’re a Dad?

RESPONDENT: Yeah obviously I’ve been in here forty odd weeks now and that’s a long time in a place like this and you get to know the officers if they’ve got kids and they get to know us obviously they come and do room checks every day because they have to do room inspections and that so they look at your pictures and that and say who’s that? It’s my girlfriend and family and that, yeah and you have visits with them and sometimes the officers from the unit are on visiting duty as well walking round the visits room and they pull a chair up some of them and just sit with us! They do and say oh I’ve just come to say hello, madhead!

INTERVIEWER: So I suppose the longer you’ve been here the more interest the officers take and they do take an interest in knowing if you’re having a bad day?

RESPONDENT: They can do but not all the time because it’s hard to tell them I don’t share it, I'd take it in and just leave it like that, just take it on the chin and just pass it

INTERVIEWER: Have you been involved in any formal provision for fathers while you’ve been in prison, have you been involved in any family days and the family links course, anything like that?

RESPONDENT: The family days I put down for one and I just never heard anything of it so there must have been too many names on the list so its just one of them

INTERVIEWER: Would you have liked to have gone on a family day?

RESPONDENT: Saying it I don’t know I would have done but I’m not sure the kids would have done because of the animals because they go down to the farm and that my son wouldn’t have known anything different but my daughter doesn’t like sheep and there’s sheep on the farm so...

INTERVIEWER: Did you know that the prison runs family link parenting course?

RESPONDENT: I've done the parenting course in S

INTERVIEWER: How did you find that?

RESPONDENT: I thought it was going to be hard I’m not going to lie to you I thought it was going to be hard but when I got in there they were teaching you things that I already knew but I wasn’t aware that I knew them if you know what I mean? I was sat there and its stuff like if your kid picked up a lollipop in the shop and you didn’t notice would you, if you went outside and the bells went off would you walk off or would you go back and pay for it, just common sense that’s all it is really common sense

INTERVIEWER: Did you find it useful in any way

RESPONDENT: Yeah in stuff like nappy size, I didn’t have a clue in nappy size they told me the numbers went up two four six then nine seven and eight

INTERVIEWER: What do you think the prison could offer, is there anything that the prison could do more for Dads to make the experience any better?
RESPONDENT: Longer visits instead of like you just get an hour in the week days Monday to Friday and then you get two hours on the weekend, two hours is not long enough really because you’ve got to break it down then an hour straight away with your girlfriend, this is what I do, I have an hour with my girlfriend just to say what I want and I get my kids brought in then for an hour, get her to go out and get them out of the car with my Mum and Dad if they’ve brought her up and then I just spend an hour with them on their own

INTERVIEWER: Does your girlfriend stay when the kids are there?
RESPONDENT: Yeah she comes back in the last fifteen minutes or something

INTERVIEWER: So you have time just with them on their own?
RESPONDENT: Yeah

INTERVIEWER: So longer so that you can do more of that individual time

RESPONDENT: Yeah longer I’d do it like, I’d have my kids and my girlfriend come straight in together and I’d send my girlfriend away then, I would send her away!

INTERVIEWER: In a nice way!
RESPONDENT: Yeah in a nice way just so I can spend time with my kids

INTERVIEWER: The last few questions are just about the future now in terms of offending what do you think the being a Dad in prison has had on your attitude towards offending?

RESPONDENT: This time its made me think more of what I could lose if I offend I could lose my kids and I don’t want my kids just going to a random family that would push me over the edge that

INTERVIEWER: What is it about this sentence is it because it’s a longer one or...?
0:10:35
RESPONDENT: I think it’s a bit of that and a bit of maturity

INTERVIEWER: So you’ve matured and realised what you’ve got?
RESPONDENT: Yeah

INTERVIEWER: So are you quite determined not to offend again?

RESPONDENT: Since I come jail this time I’ve got, my Dad’s got me a job lined up and then I’ve found myself two jobs applying just off reading papers and ringing them up and that I’m hoping to do one of them is a scaffolding job which is hard graft but it pays good money and then one of them is working as a mechanic in a shop, garage and my Dad’s got me one driving fork lifts

INTERVIEWER: So you’ve got a few options
RESPONDENT: Yeah I can pick whichever one I want

INTERVIEWER: So you’re saying if you got employment you’d be less likely to offend because you’ll have an income?
RESPONDENT: Yeah because before when I was younger and that I had jobs when I was sixteen its just I was greedy I wanted more money than I could handle so I was working I’d finish work then I’d go grafting after grafting I’d just go home and sleep then the next day I’d have the day off work I was only sixteen so you don’t work so many days in a row I had a day on and a day off like which worked for me because I could spend time with the kids and chill that’s all I used to do is just chill

INTERVIEWER: So in terms of you not wanting to offend do you think that is down to your children?

RESPONDENT: Yeah definitely

INTERVIEWER: I want you to imagining yourself three or four months after release about X time, you’ve been out of prison four months what do you hope for yourself, first in terms of being a Dad, where do you see your relationships with your children where do you see yourself as a Dad in X time?

RESPONDENT: I see myself being hard working, working for what I need instead of committing crime for what I need, legitimately doing it

INTERVIEWER: So you see yourself providing for your children?

RESPONDENT: Yeah that’s it, providing yeah providing in the right way

INTERVIEWER: What about your relationship with them, what role are you going to play in their life what kind of Dad you’re going to be or do you hope to be?

RESPONDENT: Well I hope I’ll be a good Dad

INTERVIEWER: What does a good Dad mean to you?

RESPONDENT: Being there for them, you can spoil your kids but it doesn’t make you a good Dad you’ve just got to be there for them haven’t you? Well that’s what I think anyway

INTERVIEWER: How easy do you think it’s going to be to achieve these hopes, how easy do you think it’s going to be to be a good Dad?

RESPONDENT: It’s not going to be easy obviously there’s going to be steps on the way all I can do is not go down and keep my head down and get on with it, just keep at it

INTERVIEWER: What about in terms of what’s going to help you achieve these hopes is it down to you is there anyone else that is going to help you?

RESPONDENT: It’s not down to anyone else but me is it? If I don’t do it then it’s my own fault isn’t it? I can’t blame anyone else for my stuff that I do right and wrong can I?

INTERVIEWER: What about probation, do you think probation are going to help you? You’ve got to see probation have you?

RESPONDENT: Yeah I’ve got a good relationship with my probation officer like I didn’t think I would but I have

INTERVIEWER: Do you think they will help you when you get released? 0:15:02
RESPONDENT: They’ll help me as far as they can I’m not saying they wouldn’t like I can’t rely on them for stuff that I need its down to me isn’t it?

INTERVIEWER: So you will engage with them but most of it is down to you?

RESPONDENT: Yeah

INTERVIEWER: What about your fears, what are you worried about in terms of your release or is there anything that you’re worried about, anything that worries you?

RESPONDENT: Falling into the old traps you know like of what I was doing before selling drugs or getting into fights, just little things like that I don’t want I have to really try

INTERVIEWER: How are you going to try and avoid that?

RESPONDENT: Move out of the area

INTERVIEWER: Is that all sorted, are you planning to move out of the area?

RESPONDENT: It is but not straight away I want to get the job first and get a bit of money behind me just settle down and if I’m alright then move out of the area but we’ll see what happens

INTERVIEWER: Is there anything that you’re worried about in terms of your relationship with your children?

RESPONDENT: No I think me and my kids; we’ve got a pretty good relationship

INTERVIEWER: How easy do you think its going to be to re-establish your role in the family?

RESPONDENT: It won’t be easy its going to be hard, well not hard it’s not as easy as people think it might be

INTERVIEWER: What do you think is going to be difficult?

RESPONDENT: Just being settled in again getting into the routine of getting them a bath getting them in bed and giving them food and just little things like that I’ve got no routine in here have I? Well I have but not routine for them

INTERVIEWER: Their routine is going to be different

RESPONDENT: Yeah that’s what I mean I don’t go bed at quarter to seven, I go to bed whenever my eyes close so I don’t know I really don’t know

INTERVIEWER: How easy do you think its going to be to re-establish your relationship with your girlfriend?

RESPONDENT: That will be easy because we talk about things

INTERVIEWER: So you’re not worried about that?

RESPONDENT: No

INTERVIEWER: Just to finish off I need to backtrack a little, have you had and home leaves or town visits?
RESPONDENT: I’ve had town visits I’m on one tomorrow then on the fifteenth of December I’m on home leave

INTERVIEWER: Is that for two nights?

RESPONDENT: two nights three days

INTERVIEWER: Are the town visits good do you think?

RESPONDENT: If there’s no traffic yeah

INTERVIEWER: Why because it eats into your time?

RESPONDENT: Yeah it’s my time isn’t it I don’t want to be sat in traffic waiting

INTERVIEWER: Do you think town visits and home leave help with your relationship with your girlfriend and your children?

RESPONDENT: Yeah because you can build bridges again you can start to build up on the relationship and, I know it sounds daft this but just get to know them again

INTERVIEWER: Does that not happen in prison or do you need to be out there for that to happen?

RESPONDENT: You need to have your own personal space for that don’t you? Then natural course happen and you get back on your feet and just do normal things

INTERVIEWER: Okay so what are your plans for release, where are you going to be living, have you arranged anything for your release?

RESPONDENT: I think at first, I’m not too sure what I want to do yet where I want to live yet, not too sure whether to give my house up at the minute and go and live with my Mum and Dad so I can save a bit of money there

INTERVIEWER: Do you own your own house?

RESPONDENT: It’s privately rented

INTERVIEWER: Is your girlfriend in there at the moment?

RESPONDENT: Yeah or I could live there and save up anyway I don’t know I’ve not decided yet still got a bit of time

INTERVIEWER: And you said that you’ve got some jobs lined up?

RESPONDENT: What I might do is take the one that’s closest to home so that if anything does happen I can be there straight away I’m not too sure yet

INTERVIEWER: I think that’s everything I need to ask you unless there’s anything that you want to say that you’ve not had a chance to about being a Dad in prison?

RESPONDENT: Don’t do it!

INTERVIEWER: Okay thanks for that, thanks for your time
Appendix Sixteen: Transcript of Interview with Max (in the community)

**Interviewer:** So just firstly, when were you released exactly?

**Respondent:** January 4th

**Interviewer:** and how have you been?

**Respondent:** I have been alright yeah, well I got out, soon as I got out and within the first 3 days I found, I got a job, that’s working at X down the road, then after about, I worked there for what about 4 month, 3, 4 month but it was too fast, it happened too fast so I just wanted to spend time with my son and chill out for a bit, so I did that, I spent a bit of time with C my son and then I ended up splitting up with my son’s mother and, she is being a bit iffy now like cause, I don’t know what it is, mothering instincts or whatever it is, but, she is letting me see him every now and then like, it is harder though now trying to settle into the community on my own again if you know what I mean but you know I have done it, I am doing alright, I haven’t committed any crimes or anything so

**Interviewer:** That is good, so you said, we will talk about your kids in a bit, lets talk about employment, accommodation and stuff first, so you got your job at X what is that?

**Respondent:** it is a cheese factory, it is like packing and stuff like that, just general

**Interviewer:** How did you get that?

**Respondent:** because I just went down and give my CV in and then they just went yeah, they rung me up day after ‘yeah come down for a little trial’ so I went down and got the job so I thought banging, laughing

**Interviewer:** and are you working at the moment?

**Respondent:** no not at the minute

**Interviewer:** are you looking for work?

**Respondent:** yeah, I am waiting to do something on the, probation are sorting out for me, erm, a fork lift truck licence because that would give me more options then like because I have got other qualifications like maths and English just your normal ones, and catering, cheffing, you know food awareness and all that, I have got all of them and I just want to do a fork lift truck licence and CSCS card which will help me, more options isn’t it

**Interviewer:** and probation are helping you with that

**Respondent:** yeah

**Interviewer:** so you are looking but you want these other things. Erm, and in terms of accommodation where are you living and who with?
**Respondent:** with my parents at the minute but I have just, literally just came from the housing place and they are looking for me while I am here, I have got to go back up there after

**Interviewer:** so that is to get your own place, and when you were released did you go back to your parent’s house?

**Respondent:** I went back to my well my partner at the time, her house, she had a house in Leek but she hasn’t got that anymore, she is living back in Scotland with her parents

**Interviewer:** right okay, so immediately after release how did you feel, when you moved back in with your ex partner how were you at that time, how did you feel, how long did it take you to readjust to being back at that time?

**Respondent:** I am still readjusting now like, it is just an ongoing thing because I spent like 2 and a bit years in jail, it is all change, everything has changed, everything is different and it is like reality isn’t it, do you know what I mean

**Interviewer:** what are the hardest things to readjust to do you think?

**Respondent:** not mixing with the old mates who I used to like, it is just saying no to them, it is hard that is really considering, I didn’t think it would be but it is, because obviously I have known them all my life and that, so it is different isn’t it, something I am doing different that I have not done before so it is going to be hard isn’t it

**Interviewer:** and that is an ongoing thing, so you are still having to sort of be strong and say no to them, it is ongoing?

**Respondent:** yeah

**Interviewer:** so let’s talk about the relationship with the mother of your children then, so why did you split up, was it the prison, growing apart, what was the reason that you split up?

**Respondent:** I think that is what it was, because I was away for so long, it probably just drifted us apart like, do you know what I mean, we just got n othing in common no more, lost everything that we had in common, just lost it

**Interviewer:** and when was that you split up, how long after you were released?

**Respondent:** well it was, I got released in January, I got the job, it weren’t long after I got the job really, it was what, I got the job and then about 3 and a half months after I got the job then we split up and I thought well I have only just come out of prison really, I need to settle down and then find a job, so I spoke to the boss like and he goes ‘yeah I understand where you are coming from, just go for a year, 12 months or something and come back, your position is still here’ so you know what I mean, so I went out spent time with my son for a week, had a full week just me and him like, took him places, football as you do, just little things like that, then she moved back up to Scotland, Glasgow and then I just see him once every 2 weeks now

**Interviewer:** okay where do you see him?

**Respondent:** I go up or she comes down, we still got a mutual agreement to see him like, she is not being a complete and utter you know what I mean
**Interviewer:** okay, so let us talk about that then, because you have got a daughter as well haven’t you?

**Respondent:** yeah

**Interviewer:** so when you first came out of prison how was, let’s talk about your daughter first because she is older and you had quite a good relationship with her before, when you first came out of prison how was your relationship with your daughter and how easy was it to adjust back to that?

**Respondent:** It was like I had never left if you know what I mean

**Interviewer:** that is good

**Respondent:** It is just I don’t know what it was, it is just the same, like as soon as I got back it was just like doing the same things as we were doing before I left like, little things like going to the park, swimming, stuff like that, that was stuff that I wanted to do just a bit of me and baby time do you know what I mean, it has all worked out good like

**Interviewer:** so with your daughter it was straight away back to the same, how about your son then, how was that when you first came out?

**Respondent:** because I didn’t bond with him when he was a kid, like when he was first born I am still bonding with him now if you know what I mean

**Interviewer:** how old is he now?

**Respondent:** he is 3 now yeah, he is growing up fast, I am still bonding now like it is just not going thing with us because obviously I haven’t been there for 2, 2 and a bit years so

**Interviewer:** so how was it with him when you first came out, because you had had quite a few visits and family days and town visits

**Respondent:** he weren’t like a stranger, he weren’t looking at me like ‘you are a stranger what are you doing holding me’, he weren’t like that, he was like ‘I know who you are but we haven’t had the connection me and mum have’ like, because obviously she has been there hasn’t she so, he is speaking and that now like, he will call me dad and that which is a bonus isn’t it so you know what I mean, it is one of them, just have to work on it

**Interviewer:** okay so you said that was one of the main factors for not working to have that week with him

**Respondent:** yeah just to spend time with him like yeah

**Interviewer:** and do you think that helped?

**Respondent:** yeah it did yeah because he is a Stoke fan now isn’t he (laughs)

**Interviewer:** you converted him did you (laughs)

**Respondent:** I know he supports Stoke so I must have done something right

**Interviewer:** and then they moved up to Scotland, how difficult did you find that then?
**Respondent:** it messed my head up a bit like, I thought why has she moved all the way up there, but that is where her life is if you know what I mean, that is where her parents are and all her family is so I don’t blame her for moving there because she was here on her own with me, you know what I mean so I don’t blame her for going back, it has just made it awkward for me to randomly drop in and knock at the door and ask to take them out for a bit like, it is just different

**Interviewer:** so now you say you see your kids every 2 weeks, what is it like, what kind of things do you do?

**Respondent:** it is just like I say, if say I go up there because still I don’t know Glasgow, I couldn’t tell you where anywhere in Glasgow is, it is like a maze, but I get a taxi to the local swimming baths or big play areas or, just stuff like that and they have got some dodgy, a rip off of Alton Towers basically you know so I have taken them there a few times like and they love it because kids like that kind of thing don’t they, and just normal thing like just going to a piece of field and playing football, juts normal things as you do, stuff that I have not had the chance to do for a couple of years

**Interviewer:** and is it the same if they come down here?

**Respondent:** yeah well obviously we spend time with my family down here like, I take them to my Nan and obviously round my parents house and just do normal little things like that, makes everyone happy then don’t it, make them not forget who my side [of the family] is

**Interviewer:** does their mum come with me and how is it with her?

**Respondent:** What she does, is because she has mates down here, so she will come down and give, let me have the kids for a couple of days over the weekend or if she comes down on a Monday she will come back Wednesday, Thursday or something, and she goes with them so she spends time with her mates and that while she is down here so, so she is not losing contact with them as well

**Interviewer:** and she lets, so you are pretty much in charge of the kids then?

**Respondent:** yeah well I have got to be haven’t I

**Interviewer:** so how are you finding being a dad back in the community then?

**Respondent:** (pause)

**Interviewer:** is it good? Are you enjoying it? Is it hard?

**Respondent:** Yeah I am really enjoying it, it is larger than life isn’t it. It is just exciting like when, because I have not really done it before because I was more interested in going out and doing other things but I was always there for them if you know what I mean and it is like, before I never used to take them places like I only used to take them the park, I never used to take them swimming or anywhere like that and it is just a change of things, not just for me but for them as well like you know what I mean, so I’m happy about it, I rally am

**Interviewer:** why do you think that has changed, why are you now more interested in spending time with them do you think?

**Respondent:** I am drug free

**Interviewer:** okay
Respondent: I am not on drugs anymore, I have got my priorities right

Interviewer: and you enjoy that?

Respondent: Yeah I figured it out, you get more of a buzz when you see your kids than you do when you are on drugs, I don’t know what it is, I think it is just the enjoyment of them being there like

Interviewer: what made you want to become drug free and sort of made you realise that you get more of a buzz from your children do you think?

Respondent: I gave myself a choice like, drugs or them and obviously I chose them

Interviewer: when was that?

Respondent: when I first come out of prison, because it would have been easy for me to get straight out of prison, start taking drugs and go straight back again but that wouldn’t get me anywhere would it because I have done that for years you know what I mean, it was doing me nothing so I thought ‘I have had enough of it, I want to change’

Interviewer: so you said you chose them, you said you had enough of it, do you think there are any other reasons you chose your kids?

Respondent: because I don’t want them looking up to me thinking that is right, I want them growing up to have a job and to have a career in the future not doing what I did, having drugs and getting into crime and trouble, it is not right is it?

Interviewer: did prison in any way help you realise that? Or is that you got older? What made you realise?

Respondent: I have matured haven’t I, I have grown up and matured a bit more, when I was in prison this time I was sat there thinking, ‘this is not me this, I know it is not me, because if it was me I would want to do it but I don’t want to do it’, do you know what I mean, I have just grown up

Interviewer: okay, so are there any bad bits would you say about being a dad in the community?

Respondent: bad bits, can’t say there is

Interviewer: okay, so it is all good, that is nice to hear, so when you do see your children, you sound like you re very involved in every aspect

Respondent: yeah well I have missed out on it so I have got to make up for it in a way so I have got a couple of year of making up for so

Interviewer: okay so now you have been out, it is 10 months now what is your relationship like with your daughter now?

Respondent: it is stronger than ever, it is happy and that is my new partner out there like and she is pregnant as well

Interviewer: okay so you have got another one on the way

Respondent: yeah I have got Olympic swimmers haven’t I,

Interviewer: (Laughs) and when is that baby due?
Respondent: April

Interviewer: That is good news

Respondent: So it is the 4th month now, I was going to bring the scan picture but I just completely forgot, I was rushing around and I forgot and

Interviewer: so in terms of your relationship with your children it all sounds quite positive, is that right?

Respondent: yeah

Interviewer: and when I spoke to you in prison you said your mum and dad were really supportive of you in your role as a father, is that still the case?

Respondent: yeah, yeah it is, yeah it is like if I need anything, if I am sure of a few quid or something they are like, ‘here you are if you need it take it’ and I have always got somewhere like to stay when I am there but I want my own independence, that is my next step do you know what I mean, my independence, my house and then when I have started getting a house I will hopefully get a job, you know what I mean, I might go back down there and ask them, I know it is not the best job in the world but it is money isn’t it, you know what I mean

Interviewer: what about, so have you got other people in the community who support you in your role as a father?

Respondent: Just family, a supportive family, I have got a close family, a very close family like so everyone and everyone is helping out and if I need some advice on something then my oldest sister she has got kids herself so say if I need advice on say I don’t know, a rash or something then I ask her and she would know because obviously kids go though all that kind of stuff don’t they

Interviewer: and is your new girlfriend supportive of your relationship with your other children?

Respondent: yeah she says, she said to me and she actually rang my ex partner, she goes, she said the same to both like, she said, ‘I am not going to get inbetween you both, it is your 2 lives which you have created so I am not going to get involved with it like unless you want me to like’ but when I go to the park I don’t just go on my own I take obviously my new partner as well and let them interact because obviously we are pregnant now and I want that kid to interact with my kids do you know what I mean so we can get on so they don’t start fighting and arguing, it is not about that is it

Interviewer: and what would you say your relationship is like with your ex now then? Obviously she lets you see your kids is it a good relationship, is it?

Respondent: it has been better but she speaks to me for the kids like you know what I mean, obviously things have changed like, she knows I will always love her for bringing my kids into the world like but that is as far as it goes now, we have both moved on, she has got a new partner, I have got a new partner

Interviewer: but you get on for the sake of the kids?

Respondent: Yeah just civil, a civil relationship
Interviewer: that sounds good, and what about formal support, you have got a lot of support from your friends and family so do you need support from any formal agencies?

Respondent: well I don’t but if I did, at the back of the car park here there is a doctors, it is a walk in centre and they give you like vouchers and stuff like that if you need help, just stuff like that and then just round the corner from where I live because I only live down the road here, by the monument, that big clock, just round the corner there there is a thing where say if I have got some clothes that don’t fit my kids anymore I could take them in and then I could swap them if I needed to like, swap them for toys or some more clothes or something like that, it is not like I need it

Interviewer: but you know where to go, what about probation, do probation help you in your role as a father?

Respondent: they are just helping me stay straight and clean like, keeping me drug free like you know what I mean and they are helping me what they can

Interviewer: when your kids moved to Scotland did you speak to [your offender manager] about how you were feeling?

Respondent: yeah, not [new offender manager] because he weren’t there at the time it was [old offender manager]

Interviewer: they are all called [the same]

Respondent: yeah there is about 5 of them in the same office, it is confusing, so yeah is poke to [old offender manager] and he just goes 'listen if you need nay help like I can help you out, like say if you wanted to go to court or anything like that], if I needed to take her to court if she was being a, I am not going to say it because of (looks at recorder)

Interviewer: so you would have talked to probation if you had needed it and they would have helped you if you needed it, that is good. Just a few more questions, when you were in prison we spoke about what your hopes and fears were for your sort of this time, and your biggest fear was falling back into your negative friends and drugs, so you said it has been hard but it has been going okay?

Respondent: yeah well it has been going more than ok, I haven’t done any crime since I have come out of prison

Interviewer: do you still see your friends?

Respondent: Yeah if I see them in the street I won’t just ignore them, I will say hello and that and if they are going the same way as I am I will walk with them like but I won’t purposefully go out to go meet them to cause crime with them like, I have grown up, I have grown out of that now, it is not me anymore

Interviewer: okay that was going to be my next question, why do you think it is that you have been successful in that, so you think it is that you have grown up?

Respondent: yeah I think that was it is, I have grown up, I have come more mature and you know what I mean

Interviewer: any other factors?

Respondent: Well just my kids, just positive for my kids now, I don’t want to go back to prison because I know that if I go back to prison that is it and I know she
will start being an arse with me if you know what I mean, so it is not just for me it is for their sake as well isn’t it do you know what I mean

Interviewer: yeah, and we also spoke about what you hoped for, now one of your hopes was that you are going to be a good dad and that you are going to be there for them when your kids needed you, do you think that has gone to plan?

Respondent: yeah, course it has yeah because they call me dad and that still

Interviewer: do you think they would come to you if they needed?

Respondent: well with my daughter I bought her a phone for her birthday present, it is no bigger than that thing there (points at recorder), she knows how to use it and she rings me up every other night before she goes to bed and that, you know what I mean so we have still got a good thing going there like, and obviously my son doesn’t know how to work a train, never mind a phone, push a train he doesn’t even know how to do that so she works the phone for him and he says hello and good night and that

Interviewer: so they know that you are there for them, that is good, and your other hope was about work so you wanted to be able to provide for them without committing crime so obviously I suppose your priorities changed when you got out so work wasn’t the most important thing anymore

Respondent: yeah it wasn’t, they don’t need all the new things do they, I figure they don’t, they just need love and attention, which is what I wasn’t doing when I was in prison so I just wanted time to do that really, you know what I mean and then once I thought the time was ready which it is getting to that stage now, then I will get a job again, I can do it while on probation, I’ve not messed about all the way through, I have not taken drugs for years now you know what I mean so I am doing okay

Interviewer: that is nice to hear, and I think that is all my questions apart from I suppose what are your new hopes for the future, what do you see you future like now especially in terms of being a father to three it will be?

Respondent: yeah it will be three soon well I want my own house, I want my own car, and I want just little things like that, not just for me but say I have my own car and house that means I can drive up to Scotland instead of catching the train, I can drive up there in a couple of hours, pick them up and drive back down you know what I mean I could do it in half a day, it would just be nice just to think that though, just to do that, just to pick them up and surprise them with Chester Zoo or something on the way back or anything just little things like that

Interviewer: so your long term plans are to

Respondent: just be there

Interviewer: and have more access to them

Respondent: yeah that is it yeah,

Interviewer: I think that is everything I need to ask you unless there is anything you want to say that I have not asked you about

Respondent: no I think we have spoken about everything haven’t we

Interviewer: thank you for that, that was nice to hear and good luck with the next one.