



Title Page

An Exploration of the Garda Diversion Programme through the eyes of the
Participant

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Declaration

I, Aishling Donnelly, declare that this dissertation and the research involved in it are entirely the work of the author. This work has not been submitted for a qualification to any other institute or university.

Signature: _____

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore the Garda Diversion Programmes and Garda Youth Diversion Projects with participants who have been involved in the programme. The main aim of this research is to gain a clear view of the participants' experiences of the programme

The existing body of research provided the researcher with the knowledge of past studies and research. However, there was a lack of research in the area of participants experiences in the Garda diversion programmes in Ireland. The researcher used both international and national research to help conduct this research.

The study was conducted using a qualitative empirical method in the form of semi-structured interviews. The researcher interviewed five participants aged between twenty-one and twenty-four who had been involved in the programme when they were under eighteen. The semi-structured interviews explored the participants' experiences of the Garda diversion programme. The interviews looked at five different topics. These included the formulation of the plan, the project, the staff, feelings and success of the programme. These five topics allowed the researcher to gain a more in-depth look at the diversion programmes.

The findings indicated that all of the participants seemed to have a positive experience while being involved in the programmes. Under the five different headings, many topics were explored. The formulation of the plan was considered further under the topics of the involvement of the plan, participants' interest in the plan, expressing their views and opinions, did they have a voice and were they happy with the plan that was out in place. The findings of this topic suggest that the plan of the programme was not explained thoroughly to the young people when they first started the programme. Findings from this topic also show that the young people all felt they could express their views and opinions and they all felt listened to throughout their involvement in the programme.

Next, the research looked at the second heading which looked at the project that the young people were involved. Topics within this heading looked at what the participants thought the projects was, what they would change about the project and if they liked or disliked the project. Findings from this area seem to suggest that all participants' believed the programme was there to divert them from trouble. The findings also suggest that the programme was a very positive experience for most participants as they explained that they enjoyed going to the programme. Some of the participants expressed that there was a need for weekend services as they felt this would further help young people to stay out of trouble

The third heading looked at the area of staff professionalism, and staff relationships topics that are covered within this heading included the professionalism of the staff and whether they were trained efficiently, did the participant build positive relationships with staff and did the staff have contact with the participants' families. The findings show that the participants believed that the staff were all trained sufficiently to work in this line of work. The study also found that all participants built up a positive relationship with at least one member of staff and this helped them enjoy the programme more. Nearly all of the participants reported that the staff had regular contact with their families and this allowed the families to be involved with the young person's progress throughout the programme.

The fourth heading looked at feelings that the young person expressed while involved in the programme. Areas that were discussed within this heading were how the participants felt to be involved in the programme and whether they ever experienced feelings such as sadness, disappointment, embarrassment or guilt. The research found that there was no evidence to show that participants ever felt any of these feelings while involved in the programme. There was a mixed range of emotions when it came to leaving the programme as some of the participants enjoyed the process so much they felt sad that it was over.

Finally, the last heading looked at the success if any from the participants. Areas that were covered included whether the programme had helped them, whether they had been involved in crime since leaving the programme and finally what life has been like since the programme. Results show that the programme has had a positive impact on all of the participant's lives as none of the participants had been involved in any further crimes once the programme was completed. The majority of the participants are also now working or partaking in a course.

Introduction

The purpose of conducting this research is to explore the Garda Diversion Programmes in Ireland through the eyes of people who were involved in them. The research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the Garda Diversion programmes through the experiences of the young people involved. For the purpose of this study, the participants are over the age of eighteen and were involved in the programmes when they were under eighteen. This project also hopes to add to the existing research in this area

This research aims to bring the reader on a journey of restorative justice. It is largely based on four key themes they are as followed The formulation of the plan, the Garda diversion programme, relationships with staff and finally feelings and success.

The research will further explore these four topics through seminal headings under each topic. The topics explored that will relate to the formulation of the plan will involve the young person's interests in the plan, views and opinions and whether they were listened to throughout the process of the plan

Furthermore, the topics that are covered within the second theme will be revolved around the young person's experiences towards the Garda Diversion programme. This will include what they thought the project was about, whether they liked or disliked it and in their opinion what they would change about the project to make it better.

The third theme looks at the relationship between the young people and the staff. Topics that will be covered in this theme are whether the participants believed the staff were trained well to work with young people, did they build a relationship with staff, were staff involved with their families and did the staff listen.

Finally, the last theme covers the area of feelings and success. Within this theme, we will look at the area of the young people feelings towards the programme and any success they may have experienced due to their involvement with the Garda Diversion Programme

Literature Review

This chapter engages in a discussion of the restorative justice system. The researcher will bring the reader on a journey of the different aspects of punishment. It will provide an explanation of the restorative justice system and why it is used predominately with young people. The chapter will include a detailed account of the Irish developments in the area of juvenile justice. It will also include information on the diversion strategies in Ireland while also introducing the international developments in the area of juvenile justice. This chapter will also show the reader the different types of research that have been done in this area both nationally and internationally.

Philosophy of Punishment

Theorists and philosophers have long debated over the reason for punishment, why we do it and what principles are involved when we punish. The theories of punishment can be divided into two general philosophies that are better known as the utilitarian philosophy and the retributive philosophy (Tunick, 1992). The utilitarian argues that we should punish individuals only when doing so would expand social utility. Under this philosophy, laws should be used to maximise happiness in societies. The utilitarian understands that a criminal free world does not exist but believe only in inflicting as much punishment that is required to prevent future crimes (Law, Jrank, 2016).

There are five different punishment philosophies used in the criminal justice system. They are known as deterrence, rehabilitation, incapacitation, retribution and restoration. The aim of each of these philosophies it to prevent criminal offences from occurring (Meyer & Grant, 2003)

Firstly, the deterrence philosophy aims to convince people not to commit crimes or violate laws. The 'Tow-away Zone' is an example of deterrence where the aim is to intimidate people into obeying laws by setting down examples of what could happen if they do not abide by that law (Lectlaw, 2016). There are two types of deterrence which are known as general and specific. The specific deterrence is when an individual decides not to commit future crimes, and the general type is when an individual does not want to commit a crime as they know others have been punished for similar crimes (Meyer & Grant, 2003).

Secondly, under the philosophy of rehabilitation, the criminal justice system tries to end criminal behaviour by trying to stop criminals from breaking the law (Meyer & Grant, 2003). According to Day (2015), rehabilitation can be associated with cognitive behavioural therapy. It targets a narrow range of crime-producing needs, including pro-criminal attitudes. Programmes dedicate a lot of time trying to change personality traits such as low self-control, hostility, thrill seeking and lack of empathy. Evidence shows that this type of an approach can produce significant reductions in re-offending (Day, 2015). Mark Lipsey examined the effectiveness of different types of interventions for young offenders. When he combined and compared the effects of these particular interventions, he found that interventions based on punishment and deterrence appeared to increase criminal recidivism. Lipsey found that therapeutic approaches that were based on counselling and building skills had the greatest impact in reducing any further criminal offences (Lipsey, 2009).

Thirdly incapacitation takes on the form of physically restraining offenders from victimising others. It includes isolating offenders from the rest of society by putting individuals into jail to prevent crimes. The idea behind it is that when the individual is in jail, they can no longer victimise other people in society (Meyer & Grant, 2003).

The fourth type of punishment focuses on retribution. This style punishes the offender by taking away their advantages that they may have gained from their criminal activities. This theory believes that an individual must be punished for what they have done. Retribution believes by punishing individuals we can restore balance in society instead of society seeking the desire for revenge (Meyer & Grant, 2003).

One of the oldest justifications for punishment involves the principals of revenge and retribution (Filozofijas, 2010). The retributive philosophy argues that we should punish individuals that commit crimes, even if by doing this diminishes social utility. They believe that justice demands that we punish those who do wrong (Tunick, 1992). According to the retributivist, individuals have the power to make rational decisions. The classical retributive principle was that of 'let the punishment fit the crime', and this was the primary basis for criminal sentencing in Western Europe during the time of the nineteenth century. This principle of thinking was subsequently modified with time as people began to understand that offenders who commit similar offences may be less blameworthy due to certain factors outside of their control such as diminished capacity, mental illness or immaturity. With this new understanding came the revised retributive theory which now looks how punishments should fit the moral gravity of the crime and it also looks at the characteristics of the offender (Filozofijas, 2010).

Finally, restoration is when the criminal pays back the victim for any damage or loss that they may have caused. This type is almost like undoing the crime and trying to restore life back to what it was before the crime was committed (Meyer and Grant, 2003). In the late 19th and early 20th-century juvenile courts were first established on the principle that children are different to adults. Their brains are not fully developed yet, and they are still learning, this is why they are capable of rehabilitation. According to Louis Kraus who is a forensic psychiatrist states that the part of the brain that controls emotions does not finish developing until our early 20's. As a result of this Krauss explains that teenagers may have a difficult time understanding or expressing feelings of remorse for the behaviour they have expressed or crimes they have committed (Kraus 2005; cited in Schill, 2012; p.1). The restorative style is the type of punishment that will be focused on throughout the research.

International Development

Knutsson (1997) has traced the history of the rise in international awareness of the rights of children back to the work of Eglentyne Jebb who founded the Save the Children Organisation. According to Hayes (2002), Jebb was motivated by her belief that in the context of conflicts there was no such thing as an enemy child. Jebb drafted a declaration that is firmly known as the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child. This was a short document that was adopted by the League of Nations in 1924. In 1948 it was revised, and this was also the same year that the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1959 the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child was published, it included ten principles on the special needs of children as a group. This marked the beginning of a movement to make children more visible as a constituency.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a legally binding international agreement that sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child regardless of their race, religion or abilities (Save the Children UK, 2015). This convention was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989. The UNCRC is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world (Unicef UK, 2016). Ireland signed the UN Convention in September 1990 and further ratified it into force in September 1992. By doing this, the Irish State commits itself to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of children as outlined in the UN Convention (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2010).

The UNCRC is a wide-ranging treaty and has application to all children under the age of 18 (Lansdown, 1994). The age 18 is specific to the convention as the Convention defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 (Hayes, 2002). The Convention is an instruction on how children should be treated and respected. It offers a new attitude towards children with the aim to further the status of children in the world. Within the UNCRC the child is viewed as a human being, someone that should be listened to and somebody with their own needs and somebody who has the right to an active role in all the activities and issues that are relevant to their wellbeing (Juvenile Justice Reform Commission, 2007).

Article 12 of the UNCRC pays close attention to the voice of the child and the child being able to express their views in matters that affect them. Article 12 states that "State Parties shall assure to the child that is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child". Article 12.2 of the UNCRC states that "the child shall, in particular, be provided with the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child either directly or through a representative or an appropriate body" (United Nations General Assembly, 1989).

In relation to children's rights when they come into conflict with the law, Article 3, 37 and Article 40 of the UNCRC are extremely important as these two articles protect the child from harm if they find themselves in a situation due to crime. Art 3 of the UNCRC states that in all actions where a child is directly or indirectly involved with the justice system thought must be given to how this action will affect the child to ensure that their best interests are always being met. At all times the child's best interests must also be considered and balanced with any other conflicting human rights of other children, groups of children or adults (Penal Reform International, 2013; cited in The UNCRC, 2010; p.14). However, Freeman (1992) believes there is a problem with Article 3 as it can be interpreted as portraying children as passive and allowing for an independent determination of what is in 'the best interests of the child' (Freeman, 1992; cited in Hayes. 2002: p.21)

Next Article 37 looks at torture and deprivation of liberty. It claims that state parties should ensure that no child should be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It states that neither capital punishment or life imprisonment should be imposed for offences committed by an individual under eighteen years of age. Within this article, it also aims to protect children of their liberty rights. It states that the arrest, detention or imprisonment of an individual under the age of eighteen should be done in conformity with the law. Also, it should only be done as a measure of the last resort and for the shortest appropriate period. (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2010).

Furthermore, Article 40 of the UNCRC looks at the administration of juvenile justice. This article aims to protect individuals under eighteen and to treat them in a manner that is consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth. Article 40 takes into consideration the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration into society. Within this article, it guarantees that the child is innocent until proven guilty. That the child is made aware of and told the charges that are made against them. The child is entitled to an interpreter if the child cannot understand the language and finally, the child has the right to have their privacy respected at all stages of the proceedings. (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2010).

In addition to these articles, the UNCRC has also ratified conventions to protect the child if they come into conflict with the law. According to the Juvenile Justice Reform Commission (2007), international standards invites States to avoid as much as possible formal proceedings or trial by a court in all cases that involve juvenile offenders. The rights of juvenile offenders are illustrated in a wide range of international instruments such as;

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice
- Beijing Rules (1985)
- Riyadh Guidelines (1990)
- UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles in Custody (1990)
- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1953)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ICCPR (1966).

However, unlike documents that are legally binding like the UNCRC, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Guidelines and rules are not binding. However, they do serve a good purpose to countries as guidance to what direction they should develop their juvenile justice systems (Juvenile Justice Reform Commission, 2007).

Irish Developments in Youth Justice

Over a long period in Ireland, juvenile justice received very little attention. The area of juvenile justice was governed by the then outdated Children Act 1908 and very few resources were spent on this part of the system. It included a low age of criminal responsibility, which at the time was seven years of age, it has since moved to twelve years of age. Under the Children Act 1908, a relatively extensive use of adult prisons for young offenders. The act also allowed for the establishment of industrial and reformatory schools where children who were seen to be out of control or unruly were sent (Kilkelly, 2006)

The main legislation that was governing the Irish childcare services for the majority of the 20th century was the Children Act, 1908. This Act included legislation that regulated the treatment and provision of services for children since the middle of the 19th century. The Kennedy Report in 1970, the Hency Committee Report in 1974 and the Task Force on Child Care Services in 1980 all made important recommendations about the administrative structures that were needed to ensure an inter-disciplinary response to youth crime and an efficient youth justice system. Despite the recommendations, further political inertia followed. The Act remained in place for a significant amount of time with only minor adjustments being made through its time (Buckley, Skehill and O'Sullivan, 1997). It was a Dáil report on Juvenile Crime- its causes and its Remedies that was released ten years after these recommendations that prompted the government to finally undertake the task of replacing the Children Act 1908 (Ireland Oireachtas. Dáil. Select Committee on Crime, 1992).

The Child Care Act 1991 brought considerable changes in relation to children in care. This Act focused on the child and the promotion of the child's welfare. It underpinned the basic belief that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance (Caranua, 2016).

It wasn't until 1992 that the report *Juvenile Crime – its causes and remedies* argued that this area needed urgent attention, as it was becoming a social problem. The report made many recommendations for reform but also identified what it saw as significant underlying principles. These included detention as a last resort, the importance of a multi-faceted response to youth crime, the importance of efficient administration of the youth justice system, the desirability of key decision makers having a brief exclusively concerned with children and the importance of the Irish system conforming to international standards and practices (Walsh, 2005; cited in Kilkelly, 2006; p.2)

The Children Act 2001 undertook the reform of the Irish youth justice system. This Act replaced the Children Act of 1908 but also put in place a modern statutory framework for the treatment of children who came into conflict with the law (Kilkelly, 2006). The act draws on a some of the rights that the child is entitled to under the Children's Rights Convention (CRC) and emphasises on non-custodial measures as an alternative approach for dealing with young people who have committed a crime. These include restorative justice, cautioning, family group conferences and the strengthening of the Garda diversion programme. The underlying principle of this Act is to have detention as a last resort; detention should only be undertaken after all the other community sanctions have been exhausted (Children's Rights Alliance, 2015)

In respect to this, the Act upholds the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As the UNCRC Article 40 (3) invites states to adopt legislation that clearly indicates a minimum age below which children shall be presumed not to have the capacity to infringe the penal law (Juvenile Justice Reform Commission, 2007)

The responsibility for the Children Act 2001 is shared between the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the Minister for Justice and Equality. The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs has the responsibility of the Oberstown Children Detention Campus. The campus provides detention places for girls and boys up to the age of eighteen. The Minister for Justice and Equality holds the responsibility for youth crime policy and law. This includes crime reduction/prevention and diversion and community sanctions. This Minister also holds responsibility for any dealing with the Garda Siochana and the probation services. The Minister also had responsibility for the Irish Prison Service for children in St. Patrick's Institution (Irish Youth Justice Service, 2016).

The St. Patrick's Institution came under huge scrutiny in 1985 as a committee chaired by DR T K Whitaker issued the report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Penal System recommending its closure. The report described the institute as not 'human and morally acceptable'. Whitaker described the institute as inappropriate for children who were in conflict with the law. He felt it was seen to have a demoralising effect and the conditions of detention, including the fact that the residents spent at least 17 hours a day in their cells. He felt that this was no way for reform. In fact, the Inspector of Prisons described the prison as the "finishing school for bullying and developing criminal skills" (O'Halloran, 2015).

The Office of the Children's Ombudsman (OCO) carried out many visits to St.Pats after it was founded in 2004. The visits became more regular in 2009 and 2010 when the office conducted interviews to identify issues faced by inmates. Ombudsman for children at the time Emily Logan stated that children were not always seen as children because they had committed crimes. As staff were not seeing them as children, they were not adhering to child protection practice standards. This caused staff not to report child protection episodes. The OCO identified 'immediate concerns about safety, security and child protection (Humphreys, 2014)

The OCO reported that children were too afraid to complain as they would be seen as 'rats'. Gang violence was prominent in prison along with the failure to segregate the under 18's from the adult population. According to Shannon (2013), 2012 was an important year for child protection. The government announced in 2012 that they were going to end the practice of detaining sixteen and seventeen-year-olds in the St. Patricks Institution. Finally, in 2015 the Institute was finally closed almost 30 years after recommendations were made to close it (O'Halloran, 2015).

Diversion Strategies

According to the Minister for Justice and Equality (2013), there are a significant number of young people in Ireland each year that require targeted strategic attention. Due to their behaviour, they have become involved in the youth justice system. Nolan (2015) claims that over 5,000 children each year are referred to the diversion programme. They can be referred by the Garda, school, community worker or a family member.

The first programme that was set up with the main aim of diverting young people from criminal activity was established in 1963. This programme was known as the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme. This programme was set up to deal with children who came into contact with the law (Warren, 2001). If a child got in trouble with the law, it was then down to the gardaí to decide whether that young person needed to be given a caution and placed under supervision rather than having to go to court. The young person who has to be under the age of eighteen must accept responsibility for the crime they have committed before being placed on the programme.

The young person may also agree to terms with their caution to be involved in a restorative meeting which involves addressing the hurt that they have caused. This meeting involves the young person meeting with the victim of the crime and issuing them with an apology. The victim can be involved with the formulation of the plan for the young person. Due to the success of this programme, it is now established on a statutory basis by the Children Act 2001. Young people who are involved in the diversion programme can also be referred to the Garda Youth Diversion Projects (An Garda Síochána, 2017).

The first two Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDP's) were set up in 1991 following some disturbances between the local community and the Guards in Ronanstown (Bowden and Higgins, 2000). Garda youth development projects were set up to incorporate the Garda Síochána's commitment to a multi-agency approach to tackle youth crime and anti-social behaviour at a community level. They are funded by the Department of Justice and Equality through the community programmes Unit of Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS). An average of 5% of young people in Ireland are referred to GYDPs each year (Irish Youth Justice Service, 2013).

GYDPs work with young people from the age of twelve right up to the age of eighteen. In Ireland, there are over 100 GYDPs available at a community level. Projects such as Foróige are community-based organisations that aim to prevent youth crime and divert young people who have been involved in criminal behaviour. They also work with young who may be at risk of getting involved in criminal behaviour.

The young person can be referred to the project by the local juvenile liaison officer but can also be referred to the project by another agency or a family member. Once the young person has been referred to the project, an individual plan is then developed. This is developed to assist the young person in an examination of their decision-making process. The individual plan also allows the young person to focus on the actions that may lead them to offend and on the need for change. The plan may include getting the young person involved in sport as a way to divert them from crime. The staff that work in these projects are specifically trained in motivational techniques and pro-social modelling that is designed to enhance the skills of those working with young people (An Garda Síochána, 2017).

It is important at this point to express the importance of the child's participation when involved in a programme that is hugely based on their involvement and participation for the programme to be successful. The ladder of participation was developed by Roger Hart (1992). It was designed to encourage people working with children to think more clearly about the nature and purpose of children's participation in activities that involve them. The participation ladder consists of eight rungs which enable the worker to identify the participation levels they are portraying towards children that they work with.

Current Research

The breadth of research into the experiences of young people, when involved in the Garda diversion programme in Ireland is quite narrow. There is very little published in this area in Ireland, and there seems to be a big gap in the knowledge as a lot of the research that was completed in Ireland is quite old. Amongst the relevant research in this area is a study that was done by O'Dwyer (1998). He released a quantitative study which focused on reoffending rates in Ireland. Since this research, there has been no qualitative research undertaken on participants beyond the age of eighteen.

O'Dwyer (2003) also wrote about the highlights and insights of the Garda Restorative Justice programme. He evaluated his research on cautions that were given in a 20-month period of 1st of May 2002 until 31st of December 2003. The statistics within this are based on children under the age of 18. The main objective of this study was to observe process standards and identify critical learning points. The main findings from this particular research were that victims, offenders and family's all expressed high levels of satisfaction from being involved in the restorative meeting (O'Dwyer, 2003; Lalor et al. 2007; p. 65).

In addition to this study, Bowden and Higgins (2000) published literature based on the impact and the effectiveness of the Garda Youth Diversion Projects. This study was based on participants who were under eighteen and currently attending the Garda Youth Diversion Projects. Within this literature, the authors focused on evaluating the programmes about reducing crime and anti-social behaviour amongst participants. This research focused on many key areas such as the child's understanding of the project, the activities that took place in the GYDP's, the young person's input into the programme and relationships with staff.

Furthermore, another study was undertaken in 2001 in the Dublin Institute of Technology based on participants who had been involved in the Garda Youth Diversion Projects. This study's main aim was to identify risk factors that were thought to be prevalent in the lives of young people who are involved in the Garda Youth Diversion Projects. This study focused on the participant's wider community, education and relationships with friends. This literature was able to highlight the risk factors through these areas (Warren, 2001). Both of these studies were based on participants who were currently partaking in the programme.

Another piece of literature focuses on the National Youth Justice Strategy which was launched in 2008. This strategy consisted of five high-level goals. One of these goals was to work to reduce offending by diverting young people from offending behaviour. This was a part of a baseline analysis that focused on the Garda Youth Diversion Projects. Redmond (2009) published a report that looked at this strategy. The strategy focuses on targeted training of core staff and develops a learning community to exploit the knowledge across the network of Garda Youth Diversion Projects. The analysis was based on all 100 sites being visited. Semi-Structured Interviews were given to staff directly involved in developing interventions and also engaging the local projects in discussions about what areas needed to change to improve the effectiveness of the Garda Youth Diversion Projects.

In the context of international research, there seems to be a greater body of research in certain aspects in this area. A journal article that was published in America looks at the importance of parental involvement when their child is involved in the juvenile justice system. This report looks at the active involvement of parents during the child's involvement in the juvenile justice system. Parents' involvement in the programme is assumed to be crucial (Burke et al., 2014). A survey by the Centre of Juvenile Justice Reform (2008) identified the family involvement as one of the most important issues when working with children involved in juvenile justice.

Another piece of international research that was published in Canada looked at the effect of youth diversion programmes on recidivism. This meta-analytic review was conducted to see if diversion programmes reduce recidivism at a greater rate than the traditional justice system. Results from this study showed that children who were involved in programmes had a lower rate of reoffending (Wilson and Hoge, 2013).

In conclusion to this chapter, the research that will be conducted for this project will hope to add to the existing body of knowledge by producing a thesis based on semi-structured interviews with some participants who were involved in the Garda Diversion Programme. The main aim of this study is to look at many different avenues of the Garda diversion programme and the experiences the participants felt while being in a diversion programme. To date, there is very little research on this particular topic, especially in Ireland. This is the justification to undertake this research topic. The researcher hopes that the reader will gain a more in-depth understanding of the Garda diversion programmes and the experiences that young people feel by the end of this study.

Methodology

The purpose of this research is to assess the Garda diversion programme. The programme will be assessed by carrying out interviews with former participants. This chapter is divided into five headings as followed; Research Design, Participants, Materials, Procedure, Ethical considerations and finally limitations.

Research Design

Popular types of research methods are known as quantitative and qualitative research. The primary methods of conducting social science research are quantitative research which tends to analyse and predict human behaviour using mathematical data and qualitative methods which are directed towards understanding and reading certain social circumstances (Neuman,2014).

Quantitative data is based on collecting numerical data to explain a particular phenomenon. The data is then statistically analysed which creates soft data that will generalise expectations of others (Muijs, 2010).

According to Plummer and Macionis (2005), qualitative data is obtained through interviews, experiments, and focus groups. The researchers observe that qualitative research has become very popular in recent years. However, qualitative research has some limitations, such as it is time-consuming. (Plummer and Macionis, 2005; cited in Charleton, 2014; p. 56)

An assessment was carried out of the advantages and disadvantages of distinct forms of the research collection. The researcher had looked at many different ways to conduct the research. The first distinct form of research that was looked at was focus groups. If this were going to be an option, it would need a lot more participants to be involved in the study. The reason for this is that the focus group would last a maximum of forty-five minutes. To gather enough information on the topic, there would need to be two separate focus groups. It was decided not to go ahead with focus groups as participants may not be as open in a group setting as they would in an individual setting.

In addition to this Vaughn (1996) argues that focus groups are not always a quick way to gather information. Vaughn believes that a focus group is merely a social event that includes performances by everyone that is involved (Vaughn, 1996; cited in Smithson, 2000; p. 105). Smithson (2000) also highlights that some participants may be more performance led than others. This leads to the researcher not being able to obtain information that is reflective of the entire group. Some participants may be outspoken, and others may be very quiet. This leads to only a percentage of the group being able to express their views on the particular topic.

The researcher then considered a quantitative study by giving a certain amount of people questionnaires. It was felt that this would be a fast and easy way to gather results. During the research of advantages and disadvantages of quantitative studies, it was found that individuals can be dishonest in their answers. Also, feelings and emotional responses cannot be fully captured by questionnaires. It was decided to not to do questionnaires as the richness of detail that was being sought may be lost by this method (Debois, 2016).

The researcher then looked at the area of interviews as a method of gathering information. McNamara (1999) claims that interviews are useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. He feels that the interviewer can pursue an in-depth conversation based on the topic.

There are three fundamental types of research interviews, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Firstly, a structured interview can be related to a verbal questionnaire as a list of predetermined questions are asked (Gill et al., 2008). The researcher eliminated this type of interview as it offered no variation and it only allows for a limited response from the participant.

Secondly, research proves that unstructured interviews can be time-consuming and can also be hard to manage as the lack of predetermined questions can provide little guidance on what areas to talk about (Gill et al., 2008). This method was discounted as the researcher she did not know the participants it was felt that the questions would have to be pre-determined to a certain extent otherwise it would be very hard to strike up a conversation and keep things flowing with the participant.

Finally, the researcher decided to go with the method of semi-structured interviews. This method consists of several key questions that help to define the areas that are going to be explored. However, this method also allows the interviewer and participant to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Gill et al., 2008).

Materials

Each participant of this research project was given a consent form (See Appendix A). In the consent form, the participant was consenting to be involved in the project and also giving consent to having the session recorded. A voice recorder was used in recording the interview, from which the interview was then transcribed onto a laptop and saved on a memory stick. An information sheet was also given to the participant prior to the interview (See Appendix B). An interview schedule of topics was used (See Appendix C) from which the interviewer asked some questions in an informal manner. A notepad and pen were also brought to the interview in case the participant decided last minute that they did not want the session to be recorded. This way notes could still be taken.

Participants

In this study, 5 participants were interviewed. They were aged between 21 and 24. The participants consisted of three women and two men who had been involved in the Garda Diversion Programme and the Garda Youth Diversion Projects when they were under the age of eighteen. The researcher was in contact with a gatekeeper who was involved in the process of recruiting participants.

The gatekeeper got in touch with the participants initially to see if they wanted to be involved. If they decided they wanted to be involved the researcher, then got in contact with them. The interviews were conducted in the Ballybane resource centre. The decision was made to interview the participants in an area that was familiar to them.

Procedure

A list of eight participants was established from a project worker of a Garda Diversion project. The project worker was used as a gatekeeper and she made initial contact with the participants. The gatekeeper contacted all eight participants. Some of the participants decided not to be involved in the study as they simply did not want to be a part of it. However, the gatekeeper was able to get five participants who were interested in taking part in the research. Once the participants showed that they were interested the gatekeeper then passed on a consent form (See Appendix A) before the interview stage. Details on the consent form included informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, an option to withdraw from the study at any time and to give informed consent about the session being recorded. The consent form included clear directions that the recording would only be used for the use of the study and that it would be destroyed at the end of the research when the thesis was submitted.

An information sheet (See Appendix B) was also given to each participant. The researcher gave a brief introduction to herself and explained the project that she was required to do. Within the information sheet, the researcher explained to the participant on how long the interview will take and gave a brief example of the questions that will be asked. It was also explained to the participants that their real name would never be used. It was explained that although some quotes may be included in the study, no name would be accredited. The participants were also informed in this sheet that if they required a copy of the voice recording that the researcher would arrange for it to be sent to them. Participants were told again in the information sheet that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any stage and should they wish to withdraw all information collected at that stage would be destroyed. The researcher's name and contact details were given in the information sheet to ensure that if the participants had any queries that they could get in contact with the researcher first hand themselves.

Each participant was given two to three days to see if they wanted to be involved in the study. Once the participant had read the information sheet and signed the consent form arrangements were then made for the researcher to contact each participant. Contact was made with each participant through a phone call. Through these phone calls arrangements were made to conduct the interviews in a neutral setting at a time and date that suited both parties.

The interviews were all carried out in the Ballybane resource centre. It was decided to conduct the interviews here as it was a venue that was familiar to all the participants. The interviews ranged from thirteen to twenty-two minutes each and were carried out over two days. All participants were happy to have the interview recorded, and therefore the researcher did not need to take any notes on the day.

Ethical considerations

The researcher thought that for some participants this could be a delicate subject as they may not want to talk about their past experiences. This is why the researcher gave each participant an information sheet (See Appendix B) ensuring that each participant knew exactly what was involved if they decided to partake in the study. Questions were thought through to make sure not to ask the participant about any crimes they may have committed. It was believed that this information was not relatable to the study and that it might upset the participant during the interview. The questions were strictly about the participant's experiences and the project itself. This way the researcher believed the experience would be a positive one for both the participant and the researcher. It was decided to give each participant two to three days to go over the consent form and information sheet this would give enough time to each participant to read over the forms and understand the study they were getting involved in. The researcher also made it clear to the participant that they could stop the interview at any time and that everything they said would be kept confidential with no names being used throughout the study. The researcher believed it was a good idea to give her contact details. This way the participants could have the chance to speak with the researcher if they had any queries or questions.

Limitations

The researcher felt that the main limitation of this study was the number of participants involved. At the beginning of this project the researcher had hoped to get between eight and ten participants but as the research went on it seemed quite difficult to get participants. As the participants were over the age of eighteen, the gatekeeper had informed the researcher that a lot of people she had contacted did not want to be a part of the study. The researcher understands that with a limited amount of participants the study may not make an impact on past research.

Results

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results which emerged from the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with five participants who had been a part of the Garda Diversion Programme. The semi-structured interviews explored the participant's experiences of the Garda Diversion Programme. To achieve this, the following issues were explored under five different headings they included involvement in the plan, The project itself, the staff, feelings and Success. Results were presented through the process of thematic analysis (Bryman, 2004). According to Attride- Stirling (2001) thematic analysis seeks to discover the themes that are in a text at different levels. The thematic networks then aim to facilitate the structuring of these themes. The procedure of thematic analysis does not aim or pretend to discover the beginning of arguments or simply the end of rationalisations. It is used to provide a technique that will break the text up and find within the text the explicit rationalisations and their implicit signification (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

In addition to the Garda diversion programme for this project the topics that are going to be researched are as follows, the formulation of the plan, the Garda diversion programme, relationships with staff, feelings and success.

The research will further explore these five topics through seminal headings under each topic. The topics explored that will relate to the formulation of the plan will involve the young person's interests in the plan, views and opinions and whether they were listened to throughout the process of the plan

Furthermore, the topics that will be covered within the second theme will be revolved around the young person's experiences towards the Garda Diversion programme. This will include what they thought the project was about, whether they liked or disliked it and in their opinion what they would change about the project to make it better.

The third theme looks at the relationship between the young people and the staff. Topics that will be covered in this theme are whether the participants believed the staff were trained well to work with young people, did they build a relationship with staff, were staff involved with their families and did the staff listen.

The fourth theme looks at the area of feelings. Within this theme, we will look at the area of the young people feelings towards the programme. Finally, the last theme covers the area of success. Within this theme, we will look to see whether the participant has been successful since being involved in the programme.

General Background

For the purpose of this study, five participants were interviewed. They were between the ages of 21 and 24. The participants consisted of three women and two men. All had been a part of a Garda Diversion Programme when they were under the age of eighteen. Three of the participants were referred into the programme by their schools due to their behaviour or fighting, and 2 participants were referred in by a Judge. The two participants that were referred in by a judge were on their last chance before being sent to jail. The Judge hoped that the programmes would help them to stay out of trouble and would teach them life skills that would help them establish the differences between right and wrong.

As noted earlier three out of five of the participants were referred into the programme by their schools. 4 participants were referred to Fóróige with one of these participants also being involved with Youthreach. The fifth participant was referred into Dóchasnaóige. Two of the participants informed me that they had been expelled from school eventually due to their behaviour. A third participant was expelled due to her attendance. When she tried to go back to school, she found out she was pregnant so decided not to bother. One of these participants went on to Youthreach when she got expelled but eventually had to leave that too when she got pregnant with her first baby. One of the participants who stayed on to do his Leaving Cert stated that *'I was still in school yeah, but I was constantly getting in trouble. They kept telling me I was on my last chance and that they were on the verge of expelling me. They had given me a lot of chances. I think because they felt sorry for my Mother. She was in the school a lot because of me, and she would always be crying. I probably should have just dropped out it might have been easier on my mam'*.

Topic 1 Involvement in the evaluation of the Plan

For this section, the individuals spoke about their participation in the programme and their involvement in the plan.

Two of the participants spoke about how they wanted to be a part of the programme as they thought it sounded interesting. One of the participants spoke about how she did not want to go into the programme but eventually she began to like it *'No I didn't want to go at first because I didn't know what it was. But the Project Worker sat down with me and explained what was involved so I said I'd try it. At the start, I didn't really like it and I wanted to leave because I didn't want to be wasting my time at that shite. But the more I got into it the more I gained from it. And I realised I could be in the project rather than out messing. It kept me quiet for a while'*. Two participants spoke about how they only wanted to partake in the programme to stay out of jail *'I only wanted to do it so I wouldn't get sent on really. I was doing it really to keep my mam and the Judge happy'*. Another participant said *'I did it because I wanted to stay out of trouble. I was afraid I was going to go to jail, the judge told me if I didn't do it I'd have to go to jail, so really I had no choice in the matter'*.

Next, the participants spoke about what happened when they started the programme. Each of the participants seemed to have a different experience at this stage. One Participant stated that *'there was a group meeting with three project workers and some other girls that were involved in it to tell us what we were going to be doing. None of us actually got an individual plan'*. The next participant seemed to get the best experience from the meeting *'yeah there was a meeting at the start with the project worker my Juvenile Liaison officer and my Mother. They discussed what would be happening and whether I was happy with the plan. There was then a meeting once a week with the project worker to go through how everything was going and to decide what we would do for the week. I liked this because I got to say what I wanted to do like bowling or cinema and sometimes we got to do those things'*

The following participant seemed to get no indication about a plan that was in place and instead just had a brief talk with the manager of the programme. *'Not really, there wasn't really a plan in place my probation officer had rang ahead and I just went in the following Monday. There was nothing really set up it was just straight into the course to do the classes. We had a little talk in the office myself and the manager but that was it.* This was quite worrying as this particular participant was on her last warning by the Judge. A plan should have been explained thoroughly to the participant about what was expected of her while she was in the programme and what the judge would be looking for. Whether it was explained to her or not the participant had no recollection of a plan being set for her.

The next participant also seemed to have a positive experience by meeting with the project worker when they started the *programme 'yeah it was an individual meeting, I met with the person in charge, we discussed my hobbies and interests and what I would like to be involved in. He said that he would focus the things we would do on things that I liked'*. The last participant seemed to have a good group meeting as he had a Project Worker (PW), a Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) and his Mother present, however, he didn't seem too interested in his group *meeting 'I met with the PW and my JLO and my mam. They just talked about what needed to be done. I didn't really listen to be honest. I didn't care as long as I stayed out of jail'*.

Only two out of the five participants felt like the plan was explained to them and were able to say exactly what their plan would *involve 'yeah I suppose they kinda told me they were gonna get me involved in like behaviour classes something like anger management and they knew I loved football so they were gonna try get me back into that'*. One participant noted that the plan wasn't really *explained 'like they told me about the plan but not in full, like I got the gist of it, to be honest it was all short and sweet'*. This is quite worrying as these individuals were referred into these programmes due to their behaviours. A plan should have been explained thoroughly to each and each individual should have known exactly what was going to lie ahead according to their individual plan.

Three out of the five participants felt that they could express their views and opinions from the start. The other two participants felt that at the start they didn't think they could express their opinions but once they got settled, they felt they could *'at the start no because I didn't know them but then when I got to know them all it was better I felt a lot more comfortable'*. Also, all five participants felt that they were being listened to within the programme with one participant *saying 'yeah, they were down to earth, they weren't posh, very approachable, felt I could really tell them things and they always listened'*.

Topic 2- The project

In this section, the participants were given a chance to talk about the Garda Diversion programme or Garda Project that they attended.

All of the participants recognised that the Garda Diversion programmes were a place that people went to stay out of trouble. One participant, in particular seemed to really understand the aspect of the *programmes 'the programmes were about communication, getting young people off the streets and showing young people that there are more things that they can do instead of getting in trouble and telling them that there is people out there to help with your problems'*. It was interesting to see that all participants made a comment about the programme being somewhere to go to stay out of trouble. This was nearly the first response from all of the individuals before they explained about what else they thought the project was such as hanging out with friends and going on trips. There was no evidence in the interviews to show that they did not know the main purpose behind the programmes.

When asked what was the project like four of the participants seemed to like going to the programme and looked forward to going to it each week *'It was good I enjoyed it, there was lots to do when you got there. It got me communicating with people and got me socialising with people, it built up my confidence cause I met new people. Before the project I would never meet people I would usually just fight with people'* Even though some of the participants had stated earlier that they were only going there to stay out of trouble it seems that they learned to like it once they got settled. The participant who went to Dóchasnaóige seemed to like going to the programme as she was paid to attend *'It was grand like it was good cause we got paid to go there. It was soft money really'*

All of the participant's cited different aspects on what they would change on the project. Two of the participants replied with very interesting answers. They both made the point that they felt there should be programmes at the weekend as this was when they went drinking and got in trouble most *'well like I think they should do more courses on the weekends, cause like this is where I got in trouble the most and it's when I went drinking. I used to get arrested a lot at the weekends. Never really during the week. So like no matter how good the programme was it was no good to me once the weekend came around'* This was interesting to see as both participants could see that implementation of weekend programmes may have decreased the number of times they got arrested or at least keep them off the streets for that bit longer over the weekend.

Four out of the five participants gave the Garda Diversion projects a good rating. With one being poor and five being excellent two of the participants gave the programme top marks, with the other two participants giving the programme a score of four out of 5. One participant noted that he'd give it full marks only for he still got in trouble *'I'd give it a 4, cause it was unreal. I can't give it the 5 cause I still got in trouble at weekends'* The other participant still gave the programme a high score, but he just was not interested in being involved in the *'I'd give it a 3 like it was grand but I was only going there cause I had to'*. The rating shows that the participant enjoyed going to the programme.

Topic 3- Staff

This section gave the participants an opportunity to speak about the staff that were involved in the programme. This section covers the area of training and staff relationships.

All evidence from the interviews seemed to suggest that the staff that were involved in the programmes were all highly trained in this area. All five participants believed that the staff were trained sufficiently to work with young people *'They were trained well for working with young ones I think cause in fairness they were always sound even when I was being a prick they'd help ya an awful lot. I suppose ya could see they cared'*.

There was a mixed response from the participants when it came to building relationships with the staff involved in the programmes. Four of the participants believed they built relationships with the staff, with two of the participants feeling they only built relationships particularly with one member of the staff *'One staff I got on really well with he was sound out, there was no bullshit with him like, that's why I liked him. He helped me a lot with my anger issues. The others I didn't really trust I knew they didn't like me'*. Even though all of the participants are no longer involved in the programme two of the participants still have regular contact with their past project workers *'I had a very good relationship with her, I'm still in contact with her like she's always there for us if we ever need her. If I had a problem, I'd ring her straight away'*. One participant claimed that having a good relationship with the staff was the only reason she stayed involved in the programme. The final participant seemed to have trust issues with the staff and evidence from his interview showed that he didn't allow himself to get too close to the staff *'we were friendly with them but you'd still be weary of them at the same time. I wouldn't be telling them things like I always thought they would rat ya out to the Guards'*.

All five participants indicated how having a relationship with staff was important for their overall experience in the programme *'100% if you get on with them you feel that you can tell them anything and go to them if you were in trouble or anything'*.

It is important when a young person is involved in a programme that staff are in contact with their parents/guardians to monitor success and improvement across the board, but also to let them know when things are not going too well. It is important that staff and parents/guardians work together to help the young person stay out of trouble but also for the young person to have the best experience from the programme. Four out of five of the participants knew that their family were involved in the process and knew that the project workers were reporting back to their parents *'ya they would have rung home a good bit. We got in trouble a lot for small things, yano yourself like messin and lots of blaggarding, so they used to ring home to tell mam these kind of things, but we had to be good to go on trips so they used to tell mam that if we weren't good at home for her to tell them. Suppose it was there way of getting us to be good at home and the programme. If we weren't we wouldn't be allowed on the trip'*

Topic four- Feelings

For the next section, the participants spoke about their feelings throughout the process of being involved in the Garda Diversion programme. There was a range of different replies when asked how they felt to be involved in the programme. The answers ranged from feeling proud, feeling hatred at the start, having no feelings at all about being there with one participant *replying 'I felt shitty, to be honest cause like everyone is looking down on ya, and I knew I was acting bad for my mother it was kinda stressful for her'*

There was no evidence to show throughout this section that the participants ever felt sad, embarrassed or disappointed in themselves. However, two of the participants noted that they felt bad at times but only because they knew their Mothers were disappointed in them *'I felt bad at times cause I knew my mam was disappointed and she was doing her best it's just I loved messing'*.

There were mixed emotions between the participants when it came to them leaving the programme. Two of the participants felt sad to be leaving as they had learned to rely on the programme *'I didn't wanna finish, I was so used to it. I relied on it. My day used to revolve around it. It was a routine for me. But I finished there then when I had my baby'*. This shows that the programme had become a big part of the participant's lives. I would say the participants would have stayed in the programme for a lot longer if they had the chance. Two of the participants were glad to be finished with it.

At this stage the final participant expressed to me that while she was attending Dóchas na óige she got in trouble again with the Guards, she was eighteen at this stage, and it led to her being arrested and sent to jail *'well I kinda went to jail while I was in the programme. I got sent on for 6 months there was a bench warrant out for my arrest. When I got out of jail I went back in to Dóchas for a little while. They helped me then to try and get a job. When I got a job then I got to finally leave the programme I was happy with this because I wanted to move on with my life. When I was still in the programme I still felt like a criminal'*.

Topic 5- Success

This section looked at the success of the participant if they had experienced any at all. It also looks to see if the individual has been involved in crime since leaving the programme and how their lives have been since they completed the programme

All of the participants believed that the experience of being involved in the programme had helped them in their own personal lives *'ya it has helped me I suppose cause I haven't really got in trouble with the Guards since I finished school. So I suppose it copped me on a bit. I suppose ya can only carry on for so long until the shit hits the fan'*. One participant was even glad that the Judge made the call for him to go to the programme *'at the end I was glad that the judge made me go there cause it calmed me down an awful lot and I knew if I didn't go and stop getting out of trouble that I would get jail'*.

Findings from the interview show that three out of the five participants got arrested while involved in the programme with one of these participants serving a six-month jail sentence. However, all five participants believe that programme has stopped them from preventing further crime. The participant that served a jail sentence has not been in trouble with the Guards since *'since I got out of jail I haven't been arrested since. It was a wake-up call. I needed to be sent on because it copped me on so much'*. Another participant felt that the programme had calmed her down, and it had prevented her from getting once she turned sixteen *'sometimes at the weekends when I was in the project I used to get arrested but once I turned 16 I didn't get any more charge sheets and no more cautions. It definitely calmed me down'*.

Life since the programme seems to have been quite positive for all the participants. Four of the participants are now parent's. One of these participants is happy for the moment being a single mother but hopes to get a job sometime in the future. Three of the participants are working and one of the participants has one more module to do before becoming a qualified childcare assistant. *'Ah ya it's been good I have a kid now and a girlfriend and our own place so that has settled me. And I'm in my second year of my apprenticeship for plumbing and I really like that. So hopefully my blaggardin is in the past'*.

Summary

The findings of this research indicate that the overall experience of the Garda Diversion projects seems to have been a positive one for the participants that were involved in this study. Although some of the participants did not want to go to the programme and were weary of it at the start. Based on their answers they seemed to settle into the programme and start to enjoy the experience. The topic in the area of what needed to be changed showed that participants were interested in a weekend programme being made available to young people. The participants believed that the trouble they got into at the weekend could have been prevented if there had been programmes in place. Over half of the participants were sad when they realised their time in the programme was coming to an end. This indicated that the participants might have benefited from extended programmes for people over the age of eighteen. All participants believed that the staff were trained well at their jobs and that they helped them through the process of the programme.

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the results chapter and relate it to the existing body of knowledge in the area of the Garda Diversion Programme. The results chapter presented the participants' experiences of being involved in the Garda Diversion programme and how it has had an effect on their lives. To achieve this, the results were presented under five themes. The themes included the participant's involvement in the plan, the Garda Diversion Programme itself, the professionalism of the staff, feelings and finally any success they may have experienced.

The research will further explore these five topics through seminal headings under each topic. The topics explored that will relate to the formulation of the plan will involve the young person's interests in the plan, views and opinions and whether they were listened to throughout the process of the plan

Furthermore, the topics that will be covered within the second theme will be revolved around the young person's experiences towards the Garda Diversion programme. This will include what they thought the project was about, whether they liked or disliked it and in their opinion what they would change about the project to make it better.

The third theme looks at the relationship between the young people and the staff. Topics that will be covered in this theme are whether the participants believed the staff were trained well to work with young people, did they build a relationship with staff, were staff involved with their families and did the staff listen.

The fourth theme looks at the area of feelings. Within this theme, we will look at the area of the young people feelings towards the programme. Finally, the last theme covers the area of success. Within this theme, we will look to see whether the participant has been successful since being involved in the programme.

General Background

According to Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). This is significant to mention as the participants were under the age of eighteen when they were involved in the programme, therefore they were protected by the Irish constitution and the UNCRC.

According to the Minister for Justice and Equality (2013), there are a significant number of young people in Ireland each year that require targeted strategic attention in the area of criminal behaviour. Due to their behaviour, it has led to their involvement in the youth justice system. According to the report on the effectiveness of the diversion programme over 5,000 young people, each year are referred to diversion programmes.

In relation to numbers from those 5,000, 55% are referred into the diversion programme following a caution from the juvenile liaison officer. However, a child can also be referred to the programme by another Garda, another agency such as school, by a community worker or a family member (Nolan, 2015).

The results from this study on the Garda diversion programmes through the eyes of the participant show that three of the participants were referred by their schools due to their constant bad behaviour. They were involved in the Garda youth diversion projects were attending special groups to suit their particular needs.

As stated three of the participants were referred into the programme by their schools. Out of the five participants, only two stayed in school and sat their Leaving Certificate Exams. The other three participants had been expelled from school. This study draws on research previously conducted by Warren (2001). Warren found that aspirations of educational achievement were relatively low with the young people involved in the programmes. In her study, there were 110 participants. Out of this number, sixteen participants had left school and from this sixteen eleven of the participants had not completed any state examinations indicating that they had dropped out before the Junior Cert exams.

Similar to this Bowden and Higgins (2000), found in their research that 15% of the participants involved in the study had left school, 13.7% had been expelled with 13 of these participants not completing any state exams. Past research in this area seems to validate the fact that young people involved in the diversion programmes have a high rate of dropping out and expulsion from school. Warren (2001) believes that the Garda Youth Diversion Projects have an important role to play in enhancing the future aspects for these young people in relation to education and job opportunities.

Another route of referral to the diversion programme can be by a Judge. Two of the participants in this study were referred to the diversion programme after receiving numerous cautions by a Judge as a last chance to divert them away from crime. One of the participants that were referred by a judge was a female and the other was a male. In 2015 75% of the referrals were male and 25% of the referrals were female (Nolan, 2015). *'I was always getting in trouble with the Guards, and the last time I was in court he said I either did a programme or I was going to jail'*.

By the evidence that is currently available, it seems fair to suggest that there is a higher rate of males involved in the Garda Diversion Programme. However, for the purpose of this research, there were more females involved in the interview process.

In addition to the general background of this study three of the participants described the area that they lived in as very rough *'I lived in a rough area, we moved a bit but everywhere we lived was rough'* this was similar to the findings in the Bowden and Higgins (2001) study. One participant explained how it was rough, but he liked living there *'it was grand, a lot of fighting would happen in my estate cause some families didn't like each other, but I liked living there'*.

The results might indicate that the areas that the participants were living in had minimal facilities. Research shows that those who spend more time away from their homes in unsupervised activities such as hanging out on the streets have a higher chance of becoming involved in crime and offending (Smith, 2001). As three of the participants were living in rough areas, it may indicate that individuals who grow up in lower-class areas are at a higher risk of being involved in crime.

Topic 1 Involvement in the Formulation of the Plan

Two of the participants who had been referred by the judge discussed how they only wanted to take part in the programme so they could stay out of jail *'I only wanted to do it so I wouldn't get sent on really. I was doing it really to keep my mam and the Judge happy'*. Even though both participants had accepted responsibility for their behaviour, neither of them wanted to be there. According to the Annual report on the effectiveness of the diversion programme participants must take responsibility, agree to be cautioned and agree to supervision where appropriate. For the purpose of supervision, it may involve the individual agreeing to attend a youth project (Nolan, 2015). In this case, the participants were attending programmes such as Dóchan na óige and a Fóróige group.

Both participants discussed how they didn't really get involved in the formulation of the plan. Both participants said they didn't care what it entailed as they were only partaking in the programme because they didn't want to go to jail. One of these participants seemed to have a good group meeting at the start as he had many people involved in helping him set up a plan. There was a Project Worker (PW), a Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) and his Mother all present however, he didn't seem too interested in this meeting *'I met with the PW and my JLO and my mam. They just talked about what needed to be done. I didn't really listen to be honest. I didn't care as long as I stayed out of jail'*.

According to research once an individual has taken responsibility for their behaviour a restorative justice meeting can then take place. This is a voluntary process in which the victim of the behaviour can meet with the individual and express their views. A plan is then put in place to divert the young person from committing a crime in the future. The victim also has a say in what they would like the offender to partake in (An Garda Síochána, 2016).

Meyer and Grant (2003) explain that the process of restoration involves the criminal paying the victim back for any damage that may have occurred. Restoration enables the criminal to undo the crime and try to restore life back to the way it was before the crime was committed. The findings from the present study indicate that not one of the individuals interviewed were involved in a restorative meeting.

Two of the participants had been involved in crime as they had been cautioned on more than one occasion. It is a cause for concern that neither of the cautioned participants were involved in a restorative meeting. The idea of restorative justice is that the young person restores what they did wrong. A restorative meeting can be hugely beneficial to the young person as they get to meet the victim and see what their behaviour has caused to this person. A study by O'Dwyer (2003) found that offenders and victims found the restorative meeting hugely beneficial and both were satisfied with the outcomes (O'Dwyer, 2003; Lalor et al. 2007; p. 65). However, we do not know of the crimes that these two participants were involved in. Due to this, it is not up to the researcher to say whether a restorative meeting would have been beneficial towards the formulation of the plan. The crimes committed may not have involved a victim such as drinking on the streets.

Furthermore, two of the participants reported that they attended a formal meeting with the juvenile liaison officer, project worker and a parent present to discuss the plan that was being put in place for the *individual* 'yeah there was a meeting at the start with the project worker my Juvenile Liaison officer and my Mother. They discussed what would be happening and whether I was happy with the plan. There was then a meeting once a week with the project worker to go through how everything was going'. The two participants felt they had involvement in the plan as they got to talk about their interests and hobbies and the project worker told them that a plan would be put in place based on their interests.

A closer look at the results shows that two of the participants did not receive a formal meeting from a JLO but did meet with the Project workers of the Garda Diversion projects to discuss the plan that was being put in place to support their needs.

One participant explained how staff talked him through the process of the programme and what he would be doing *throughout* 'ya I suppose they kinda told me they were gonna get me involved in like behaviour classes something like anger management and they knew I loved football, so they were gonna try get me back into that'. Daly (2015) explains how rehabilitation programmes take advantage by looking thoroughly at the therapeutic opportunities that arise by observing the participant's social functioning and day to day interactions. It is clear to see by this result that the staff in this programme had observed that this participant needed behavioural classes and also that football could be used as a therapeutic intervention as it was something that the participant was interested in.

The results relate to Bowden and Higgins study (2000) where they found in one of the projects all participants met with a project leader at the start. The purpose of this was to explain the programme. As a result of meeting with all new participants, it led to the participants having a clear understanding of what the project was and its objectives.

One participant explained how she did not have a meeting with anyone before starting the programme and only talked with the manager of the programme briefly before she started her classes. According to Hart (1992), people who are working with children should pay close attention to Hart's ladder of participation in order for the child to feel valued and for the child to have a good experience. The ladder identifies eight levels of children's participation in projects, and it was designed so staff could look closely at the nature and purpose of children's participation in activities. The evidence indicates that staff used rung three of Hart's participation ladder with this participant which is known as tokenism. Tokenism is used when children apparently have a voice but in who have little or no choice about the situation. If no explanation is given to the child it can usually indicate that the organisation is not truly an example of participation (Hart, 1992). *'There was no plan in place the probation officer had rang ahead and I just went in the following Monday'*.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that "State Parties shall assure to the child that is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child" (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). The results indicated that three of the participants felt they were able to express their views and opinions from the beginning of the diversion process. The other two participants took a bit longer to feel that they could express their views and opinions but once they felt settled in the programme they felt they *could* 'Not at first it took me awhile to get used to it, but with there was one project worker that I liked and when I got to know her I felt more comfortable'.

Article 12.2 of the UNCRC states that "the child shall, in particular, be provided with the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child either directly or through a representative or an appropriate body" (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). All of the participants felt that they were being listened to by the staff who worked at the diversion *programmes* 'Yeah I suppose I was listened to throughout'. This evidence shows that the organisations were abiding by the UNCRC regulations as participants felt that they had a voice.

Topic 2- The Garda Diversion Programme

All five of the participants believed that the programme was a place to go to stay out of trouble. In Bowden and Higgins study (2000) the participant's belief for attending the programme fell into four categories. The majority 68.6% responded that they attended the programme as it was something to do, others reported that they went as their friends also attended the programme. Some participant's replied that they went there to stay out of trouble and the remaining participant's reported that they attended the programme as they believed it would be 'enjoyable' and 'good fun'. It is clear to see from the current evidence that participants from this study believed it was somewhere to go to stay out of trouble *'something to do with the girls after school, a place to keep ya out of trouble, to keep ya occupied, taught us that there was more to life then dossin on the the side of the street'*. This may be down to the fact that the participants in this particular study are over the age of eighteen and can reflect on the programme by looking back. The participants of Bowden and Higgins study (2000) were under the age of eighteen and still attending the programmes.

The young people were asked to describe in their words what they thought the project was about. Within these questions, participants again described it as a place to go to stay out of trouble. Two of the participants explained how it helped them communicate more with others and how it helped them socialise with others in the group and build friendships. One participant also explained how it was a place that had helped build her confidence *'It got me communicating with people and got me socialising with people, it built up my confidence cause I met new people'*.

The same question was asked in the Warren (2001) study. The answers were quite similar in that participants responded that the programme was there to help keep them out of trouble and off the streets. In this present study participants also mentioned how building friendships was an important aspect of the programme. Participants in Warren's study also spoke about how the programme was there to help them learn new skills and how it was a place to go to talk about your problems. In this regard, we can see that the participants who were over eighteen and the participants who were under eighteen and in the programme both had similar answers about what the programme was.

Two of the participants made very interesting recommendations for the programme. Both participants felt that there should be programmes running throughout the weekend. They believed that the implementation of weekend programmes could help decrease at of young people getting into trouble with the *Guards* *'to have it at the weekend cause that's when I was getting in trouble. It didn't stop me drinking at the weekends as I would still get arrested'*. This related to a previous study, where a group of girls wanted to increase the number of activities that were available to young people (Warren, 2001).

All participant's reported being involved in many different activities throughout their time in the programme they included both indoor and outdoor activities. These included computers, cooking, art, woodwork, kayaking, paintballing and soccer. *'kayaking, paintballing, anything at all I would try it. The project worker would always try and get me to try new things which was brilliant for me. She pushed me to do different things'*. Past research showed similarities with this study, showing a range of different indoor and outdoor activities that were available to participants (Bowden and Higgins, 2000). Both sets of research show that the participants involved in the programmes had a wide range of different activities to be involved in and enjoy throughout their time involved.

Topic 3- Staff

For this section, the participants were given the opportunity to discuss the staff's professionalism and any relationships they may have built with the staff who worked at the programme. Redmond (2009) looked at the National Youth Strategy 2008-2010. This strategy committed to an improvement programme after its analysis on Garda Youth Development Projects (GYDP's). Within this research, it was agreed for all staff who worked in Garda Youth Diversion Projects to be given core training that would focus on competence development in pro-social modelling and helping staff deal with uncertainty. This would enable staff to work more effectively with young people. This strategy seems to have worked as training was rolled out to all 100 of the project sites. This coincides with this research as all five participants believed that the staff who were working in the programmes were trained sufficiently '*They were trained really good for working with young ones*'. We can see that the strategy seems to have worked well as all the participants believed that the staff were trained well in this area. Improving certain aspects of the GYDP such as training can have huge positives for the programmes and participants.

Four participants expressed building positive relationships with the staff involved in the programme. However, two of the participants' indicated that they only got on with one staff member, in particular stating that they didn't trust the other staff '*the others I didn't really trust I knew they didn't like me*'. This result differs from past research where all participants felt that they had a positive relationship with the staff. In general, they reported being able to relate to the staff (Bowden and Higgins, 2001). The results of this research show that some of the participants may have had trust issues. This could be seen as they were only able to relate to one member of staff '*I could trust the project worker with my life the others I didn't trust at all*'. Further explanation would have been beneficial in this area to identify why the participant only got on with one member of staff. However, the participants moved on quickly from this area.

Also, this present research and past research show that the participants were able to identify certain characteristics within the staff that were similar. These included the participants being able to trust the staff and the staff having the ability to listen to the participants (Bowden and Higgins, 2001) When asked were the staff good at their jobs one participant replied *'100% they knew were they at. They weren't just sitting there talking shit. They weren't stuck in their offices, they were actually out mixing with us. They were really sociable even if you met them outside the group they'd stop and talk to you. They actually listened to what you had to say they didn't judge you or judge the background you came from. It helped us get on with them better'*.

Two of the participants reported being in contact with the staff outside of the programme and since finishing the programme they still hold strong relationships with the staff *'I'm still in contact with the project worker I love her she's just so good to us and has been really helpful'*. This was similar to past research where participants reported being in contact with staff outside of their involvement in the programme this gave young people familiarity and enabled them to build a trusting relationship (Bowden and Higgins, 2001). This research and past research show that if young people can build strong relationships with staff it can empower their experience in the programme and make the programme more worthwhile for them.

Interestingly the two participants who had built relationships with one member of staff were the same two participants who reported staying in contact with the staff after the programme had commenced. The result indicates that both had built up a very strong relationship with one staff member and wanted to continue it. However, both of the participants also reported that if they needed help or if something was wrong in their personal lives that the staff member would be the first person they would ring. Again this would have been beneficial to explore for the researcher to have a better understanding of the participant's wider community.

In regards to success of the diversion programmes this may happen more frequently if staff members develop positive relationships with parents and guardians.

According to Burke et al. (2014), the parent-child relationship is a hugely important factor in adolescent development. Research shows that a teenager moves to independence from this primary relationship with their parents and returns to it at different points throughout adulthood. Due to this parental involvement is now recognised as a crucial consideration for promoting positive child outcomes in areas such as mental health, education, child welfare and juvenile justice. Sometimes service workers can be uncertain when working with parents as they can be a negative influence however they can also be a positive resource to use throughout the programme.

Four out of the five participants reported that their parents had involvement in their process of the diversion programme '*there was one who was in contact with my mam a good bit he was the one I got on the most with. He'd ring if I was doing good but he'd also ring if I was carrying on bad*'. One participant reported that her mother wasn't really involved in her programmes and that the staff didn't have much contact with her '*Not really it was all on me, if I got in trouble they wouldn't phone home or anything*'. This could be because the girl was nearly eighteen when she was involved in the programme. However, it also correlates with the research as the staff may have been uncertain on how to involve the parent in the process. Interestingly this was the same participant that served jail time. It is unclear whether parent's involvement in the process would have had an overall impact on her committing further crimes.

Topic 4- Feelings

For this section, the researcher looked at the area of feelings. The participants were given the opportunity to discuss any feelings they may have felt during their involvement in the programme and feelings they felt towards the programme.

Kraus (2005) claims that the area of the brain that controls the emotions does not stop developing until a person reaches their early 20's. Due to this, adolescents may find it hard to show feelings of remorse for behaviour they have expressed or crimes they have committed (Kraus 2005; cited in Schill, 2012; p.1). In this research, there was no evidence to indicate that the participants ever felt sad, disappointed or guilty.

The research showed that no participant felt remorse for their behaviour when they were involved in the programme. However, two participants did express that they felt guilty at times but not for what they had done. Both participants felt guilty towards their Mothers as they knew that their mother was disappointed in them due to their behaviour. As the participants were aged between 21 and 24 it is not clear whether they had reached the point of feeling remorse for the behaviours they expressed. It would be interesting to interview older candidates to see if there would be a difference in their answers about feelings. If candidates were older it would allow them to have a longer period to reflect on past events and truly understanding the outcomes that arose due to their behaviour.

Many aspects of attachment in teenagers are quite similar to those of babies. However, there is one big difference. When a child becomes a teenager they are at the stage where the mum or dad are not always the main caregiver. Teenagers can often gain support and guidance from other people who are a part of their lives such as project workers.

Teenagers can develop secure attachments at this stage but are far more aware of what is going on around them (Baras, 2015). This may be the reason why two of the participants in this present study were sad when the programme had *commenced* '*I didn't wanna finish, I was so used to it. I relied on it. My day used to revolve around it. It was a routine for me*'. Not only had the programme become a part of this participant's life she had also built a strong relationship with one of the staff members. This present study may indicate that the reason she felt sad was due to her having to leave a secure attachment she had built behind.

There was very little past research on the area of feelings. Even though there was little research in this area the researcher thought it was important to add it to this present research. The researcher believes that it is an area that could be looked at for future research. The researcher believed it is extremely important to understand the feelings of young people especially young people who are vulnerable and involved in diversion programmes. If staff have a better understanding of their feelings and how to recognise certain feelings it can lead to relationships being stronger between staff and young people.

Topic 5- Success

An international study by Wilson and Hoge (2012) conducted a meta-analytic analysis that involved forty- five diversion evaluation studies that reported on seventy-three programs. It involved 14,573 diverted youths and 18,840 youths that were processed by the traditional justice system. The results found that children who were involved in the diversion programmes had a lower rate of recidivism.

However, in this research three of the participants were involved in further crimes while being involved in the restorative programmes. One participant, in particular, served a six-month jail sentence while in the middle of her programme. Interestingly all three participants who had engaged in further crime expressed how they felt the programme had helped them to calm down and not be involved in further crimes. All of the participants have been successful in staying away from crime as they have not been arrested since leaving the programme. This would suggest that the research is true. It is clear that all participants got the support they needed while being involved in the programme and this support has enabled them to stay away from crime. Even the participant who went to jail got continued support when she was released as she was allowed back into the programme to help her get a job *'When I got out of jail I went back in to Dóchas for a little while. They helped me then to try and get a job. When I got a job then I got to finally leave the programme'*.

All of the participants believed that their involvement in the programme had helped them in their own personal lives *'ya I was glad that the judge made me go to this cause it calmed me down an awful lot'*. This relates to past research where participants believed that they had seen a change in themselves and expressed how the programme helped changed their behaviour and stay out of trouble (Bowden and Higgins, 2001).

Summary

Much of the results attained in this research correlates with the existing body of research and theories. The research explored the participant's experiences of the Garda Diversion Programmes. This included looking at the participant's route of referral, relationships with staff feelings they expressed, their view of the project and the success they have attained. The results indicate there is a significant gap of knowledge in Ireland when it comes to research. The two main studies that related to this study were Warren (2000) and Bowden and Higgins (2001). Both of these studies showed exceptional research in the area of diversion but both are over fifteen years old. These studies were also based on participants that were involved in the programme while being interviewed which were different to this research. However, a lot of the results proved to be quite similar.

Limitations

This study was restricted to participants who were over the age of eighteen and under the age of twenty-four. Some of the information may have been inaccurately presented as it is very much dependent on the ability of the participants to recall a specific detail about past events.

In addition to this, a huge limitation in the researcher's eyes was the number of participants who were involved in this study. It was hoped that at least eight to ten candidates would be interviewed for this particular study. The researcher believes if more participant had been involved it might have led to different outcomes in the results section. Due to the small number of participants, it was difficult to compare the experiences to each other as all of the participants believed they had a positive experience while they were involved in the programme.

Another limitation of this research was the lack of current research in this particular area. It was hard to find studies that were done on the experiences of the participants. There were two studies that helped with this research, however there was a big gap between past research as they were over fifteen years old.

Suggestions for future research

The researchers' suggestions for future research include an overview of the importance of the Garda diversion programmes in Ireland. Rather than just Garda reports and statistics an up to date study should be completed looking at the diversion programme as a whole and the participants' experiences throughout. A second suggestion for future research is to look at the area of past participants. The researcher believes this could be a very interesting piece of research as it allows participants who have been involved in the programme time to reflect on their experiences.

Lastly, the researcher believes that the parent's involvement in the diversion programmes could be a significant piece of research. There seems to be very little research done on this area. It would be interesting to see whether parent's involvement in diversion programmes leads to a successful outcome young people.

Recommendations

Arising from this research it is quite clear that more studies need to be done in the area. With more studies come more changes which will further benefit the children who are involved in these programmes. A particular area that needs to be addressed is the need for weekend activities. This research shows that some of the participants got involved in crime mostly at the weekends. This is an area that could be adapted to suit young people who are more at risk at the weekends. The researcher believes it is an interesting part of the diversion programme that could be looked into more.

There are approximately 5,000 young people each year who are referred into the diversion programme. However, only the young people who accept responsibility for their crime are looked at for the diversion programme. Depending on the crime that they have committed even if they do accept responsibility they may not have to enter the diversion programme. This is an area that needs to be looked at. It is obvious that young people make mistakes and for a lot of young people they will only get arrested once or be in trouble with the law once in their lives. Regardless of this, the researcher believes that the programmes should be opened to all individuals who get in trouble even if it is only once. These diversion programmes and Garda Youth diversion projects teach young people life skills and prepare them for the future. The researcher does not believe that the participant should have to accept the crime to be allowed into the programme. The young person should be allowed into a programme and this way they may develop and learn from their mistakes and in time they may then accept responsibility. The doors should not be shut automatically just because they are unwilling to accept responsibility. As it was said earlier the brain does not develop fully until the age of twenty-four therefore, young people may not have the capacity to make such decisions.

Conclusion

To conclude, the purpose of conducting this research was to assess the garda diversion programme through the eyes of the participant. This was done by looking at the participant's experiences while looking at five different topics. The five topics included the formulation of the plan, the Garda Diversion programme, professionalism of staff, feeling and success. The intention of this study was to get a clear view of the participants' perspective of what the Garda diversion programme is. This researcher believes that this present study provides a clear portrayal of the garda diversion programme in Ireland and also a sufficient amount of information that allows the reader to understand the experiences of the participants. The researcher was satisfied that the aim and the objectives were met through qualitative research

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Appendix (A)



Consent Form

An Exploration of the Garda Youth Diversion Project through the eyes the participant.

I agree to take part in this study which will discuss the Garda Diversion Project. The information for this project has been explained to me through an information sheet. I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation in the research at any time. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and received satisfactory answers. I also understand that any information or personal details gathered in the course of this research about me are confidential and that neither my name nor any other identifying information will be used or published. I agree for the interview to be recorded with the knowledge that the interview will be destroyed at the end of the research when the thesis is submitted.

Signature: _____

I agree to the session being recorded:

Appendix (B)



Information Sheet

An Exploration of The Garda Youth Diversion Project through the eyes of the participant.

My name is Aishling Donnelly and I am a master's student in Athlone IT, the course I am undertaking is Child and Youth Studies. As part of my course I am required to complete a thesis on the area of child and youth studies. For my topic I have chosen to examine the Garda Diversion Project. For my study, I will interview young people who have had experience of the Garda Diversion Project.

I would like to invite you to partake in this study. The study will consist of you attending a once off interview that will take approximately 20-25 minutes of your time. Within the interview I will ask questions to try and get a clear view of the participant's opinions of the Garda Diversion project. The areas I will be focusing on will be, what being involved in the programme meant to you, has the Programme prevented you from getting involved in any other crimes, whether you enjoyed the programme, whether you were properly informed about the projects and did the programmes make changes to your life.

For my research I would like to record the conversation. If you do not want this, that is ok. I will take notes instead. After the session the tape will be securely stored. The only people who will have access to the recording will be my supervisor and I. The recording will not be given to anybody else. The recording will be destroyed immediately after my thesis is submitted.

I guarantee that the following conditions will be met:

1. Your real name will never be used at any point of information collection, or in the thesis; instead, you and any place names involved in this research will be given made up names that will be used in all written work
2. Should you wish to receive the recording I will arrange for this to be delivered to you.
3. Your participation in this research is voluntary; you have the right to withdraw at any point of the study, and should you wish all information collected from you will be destroyed
4. The recording will be kept in a secured area until it is destroyed once the research is completed.

If you have any further questions you can contact me Aishling Donnelly at
0857161662

Appendix (C)



Semi- Structured Interview Schedule

Topic 1- Involvement in the evaluation of the plan

Was there a group meeting to discuss the plan that was being put in place?

Who was at the meeting?

Was the plan explained to you?

Were you happy with the plan in place?

Were you interested in the plan?

Did you want to make any changes?

Do you feel you were able to express your views and opinions?

Did you feel you were being listened to?

Topic 2- The Project Itself

What was the project like?

Did you like going there?

What was your favourite thing about going there?

What did you dislike the most?

What would you change about the project?

Topic 3- The Staff

Do you feel they helped you well through the process?

Did you think they were good at their jobs?

Did they provide supervision to you?

Did they listen to you?

Did you build a relationship with staff? (was this relationship good or bad)

Did you trust the staff?

Do you think having a good relationship with the staff is important to your outcome?

Topic 4 –Feelings

How did you feel to be a part of the Garda Diversion Projects (GYDP)?

Why did you feel like this?

Were you embarrassed, sad, disappointed?

How did you feel when you were finished in the GYDP?

Topic 5- Success

Do you think the process has helped you?

Do you feel it has defined you into the person you are today?

Did the GYDP prevent you from being involved in crime again?

What has life been like since the experience?