

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Does this fit?
A study of the perspectives of Home Detention Probation Officers.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

IN SOCIAL POLICY

Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

Avril Eileen Ward

2007

ABSTRACT

The thesis is a qualitative study informed by Standpoint Theory (Smith, 1997) examining the perspectives of six Home Detention Probation Officers (HDPO's). In particular, the research explores the participants' perspective of two of the three major objectives of the Home Detention Order outlined in the Community Probation Service Operations Manual (CPSOM) Volume four. These are to: a) ensure that the criminogenic needs are met by the constructive use of programmes; and b) to ease the transition of inmates back into the community through a staged process of release by providing support and control structures. The research questions were focused on the 'fit' between the two objectives, the part the objectives and electronic monitoring play in guiding practice, and the combined impact of these on the everyday practice of HDPO's. The primary questions explored whether these objectives are working or achievable, what supports them and what barriers exist to their effective operations.

The findings of this research show that, while the stated objectives are achievable, the fit between the manual and everyday practice for the participants could be challenging due to high caseloads, management regime requirements and areas within the manual and policy that were considered sparse, effectively leaving HDPO's without clear guidelines or procedures. Programmes were considered vital to home detention but issues around rescheduling, entry criteria to programmes and availability of programmes caused concern.

Participants identified training areas such as working with families, combined with practice-based training would assist their practice delivery. They suggested that regular conference based trainings and meetings would inform policy and clarify practice issues, for instance in relation to after hours incidents.

Electronic monitoring was considered to be a major component of home detention, however equipment reliability and communication problems with the monitoring company created difficulties with effective management of home detention.

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank the six Home Detention Probation Officers, Simon, Peta, Dana, Mary, Keith and Maria, who participated in this research. Also Linda Everson, Administration Officer, who contacted prospective participants and forwarded the names and contact details of participants to me.

I will be forever grateful to the un-stoppable support I have received from my friends during this research. Special thanks to Angela Jury who often placed her own research aside to assist me. Also Jude Marshall for proof reading and Julie Collins for walking and listening.

My supervisors, Dr Martin Sullivan and Kieran O'Donoghue. This project would not have been completed if not for their guidance and support. I would also like to thank Dr Martin Tollich who supervised my first year of research.

I would like to thank Dr. Tracie Mafle'o for extensive peer and critique review prior to submission.

Thanks also to The Department of Corrections who provided financial assistance and permission to contact participants.

The Massey University Human Ethics Committee approved this research on the 25th of July 2005. Approval 04/117.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
DISCLAIMER	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUNISHMENT AND HOME DETENTION	9
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW	24
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY	49
CHAPTER FOUR PARTICIPANTS PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES	67
CHAPTER FIVE SUPERVISION, PROGRAMMES AND ELECTRONIC MONITORING	84
CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION	103
APPENDIX ONE: Consent form	118
APPENDIX TWO: Information sheet	119
APPENDIX THREE: Semi-structured interview guide	122
APPENDIX FOUR: Ethics proposal	125
BIBLIOGRAPHY	139

Disclaimer

The Department of Corrections has assisted the author by providing access to participants, financial assistance and paid study leave for this research. The opinions expressed in this research, material selected, information presented and conclusions expressed are those of the author and are not intended to represent the position of the Department of Corrections.