



Sheffield Hallam University

## Research Centre for Community Justice

# An Evaluation of the Prison Fellowship Sycamore Tree Programme:

*based on a statistical analysis of Crime Pics II data.*

Simon Feasey: Sheffield Hallam University

Patrick Williams and Rebecca Clarke: REClaim North West\*

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*\*REClaim Northwest is a user-focused, community-based, research and evaluation resource. We are committed to increasing the social capital and the quality of life for marginalised individuals and groups through the provision and development of an evidence base through Research, Evaluation and Collaboration.*

# **An Evaluation of The Sycamore Tree Programme**

## **The Prison Fellowship**

The Prison Fellowship is a registered charity that trains some 2,000 volunteers from all Christian denominations to support prison chaplains. Support is given to all who request it, regardless of their beliefs. This is through prayer, practical action and programmes. One such programme is the Sycamore Tree which is the subject of this report.

## **The Sycamore Tree Programme**

The Sycamore Tree Programme is a victim awareness programme that uses restorative justice principles. The content is covered in six sessions designed to enable prisoners to understand the impact of their crime on victims, families and the community. It also encourages prisoners to accept personal responsibility for their actions and points to the need to make amends. Surrogate victims come into prison to tell their stories. At the end of the programme, prisoners are given the opportunity to take part in symbolic acts of restitution, taking the first step towards making amends for their past behaviour. The programme is available to all regardless of faith, gender or age and is presented by trained Prison Fellowship staff and volunteers.

## **Background**

The Prison Fellowship have been delivering the Sycamore Tree Programme throughout 50 penal establishments since 1998. Prisoners that have participated completed a psychometric questionnaire, Crime Pics II, both immediately before and after the programme as a part of an evaluation framework designed to measure the programme impact. Data was collected and in December 2004 Sheffield Hallam University was commissioned to undertake a retrospective analysis of the questionnaires. This report reflects the statistical outcome of that analysis.

## **Crime Pics II Analysis**

The Crime Pics II questionnaire was developed by Michael and Associates in 1994. Essentially, Crime Pics II is a 35 item, structured, questionnaire designed to measure an individual's attitude to offending on a number of distinct scales. It has been employed within a number of criminal justice agencies and has been extensively used for the evaluation of a range of probation/prison intervention programmes. In addition, the tool is one of eight measures currently employed by the National Probation Directorate (NPD) to evaluate the impact of nationally accredited general offending behaviour programmes.

The following table provides a summary of the 'attitudes', which are targeted by the questionnaire and provides an explanation for each of the areas.

Psychometric Features	
<b>Crime PICS II</b>	
<b>General Attitude (G Scale)</b>	Measures the offender's general attitude towards offending. A low score indicates that the individual believes that an offending lifestyle is not desirable.
<b>Anticipation of future offending (A Scale)</b>	Measures the offender's anticipation of re-offending. A low score suggests that the individual does not anticipate re-offending.
<b>Victim Empathy (V Scale)</b>	Measures the offender's attitude towards his / her victims – whether they believe they have caused any harm. A low score indicates that the individual recognises their actions impact on victims, directly or indirectly i.e. higher victim empathy.
<b>Evaluation of Crime as Worthwhile (E Scale)</b>	Measures the offender's evaluation of crime being worthwhile. A low score indicates that the individual perceives the cost of crime as being greater than its rewards.
<b>Problem Inventory (P Scale)</b>	This problem inventory measures the offender's perceptions of their current problems (e.g. money, relationships, housing etc). The higher the score, the greater the number and gravity of identified problems. However, caution should be taken when interpreting these results as an increase may also indicate better problem identification skills.

## Using the Crime Pics II Questionnaire

Within the context of the Sycamore Tree Programme, the questionnaire has been used as an evaluative measure, assessing at both the pre and post programme stages. In doing so a difference measure can be calculated that looks at the degree of change from before to after the programme and therefore can be used to inform about programme impact/effectiveness.

Central to the Sycamore Tree programme is the victim empathy area. In this regard, analysis of the V (victim empathy) scale is crucial in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the Sycamore programme for its participants.<sup>1</sup>

## Methodology

In total, 2197 sets of questionnaires were inputted for prisoners who had commenced and completed the Sycamore programme between April 2002 and December 2004.<sup>2</sup> Although it has not been possible to ascertain the numbers of prisoners who actually commenced the programme the number of questionnaires for analytical purposes is

<sup>1</sup> It is important to highlight the limitations of the following analysis in the absence of offence data and offending profiles. Empathy for victim(s) is highly related to perceptions of the victim. This should not be considered as a “is or is not” factor. Indeed victim empathy and perceptions of it are likely to be graduated whereby the extent of victim empathy will be determined by the nature of the victim, the characteristics of the offender and the offence type.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the report there may appear discrepancies away from this overall figure. This is due to missing data in relation to pre and post scores for a very small number of prisoners.

excellent. A data set of this size enables a statistical analysis in which significance can be validly tested.

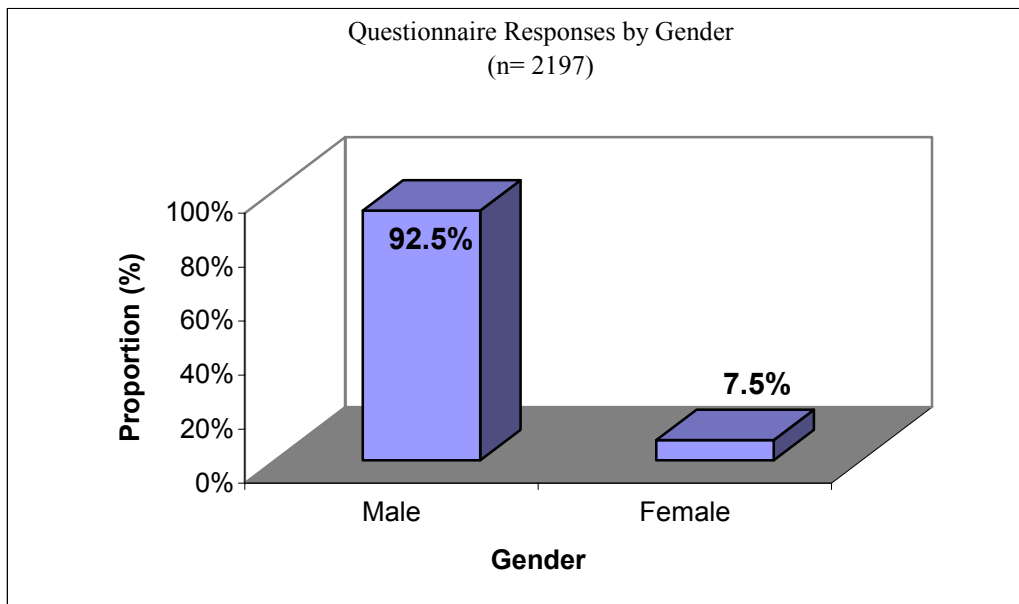
The methods employed for this project will explore the change in attitudes, as measured by the Crime Pics II questionnaire, for prisoners who completed the programme. This will be done by measuring prisoner attitudes at the beginning of the programme and then again on completion of the programme. In relation to the programme aims, it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in the offending related attitudes of participants and specifically attitudes relating to victim empathy. In this regard, it is important to measure the size of the change using statistical tests to allow us to state whether the change is as a result of the programme or due to chance.

A 'paired samples t-test' was used to demonstrate this as it enables us to measure changes in the same attitudes at two different times, and therefore can tell us if the change is (a) significant and (b) attributable to the programme. In addition, this evaluation will explore the levels of change against a range of demography. The following will present the findings from analysis of all inputted questionnaires.

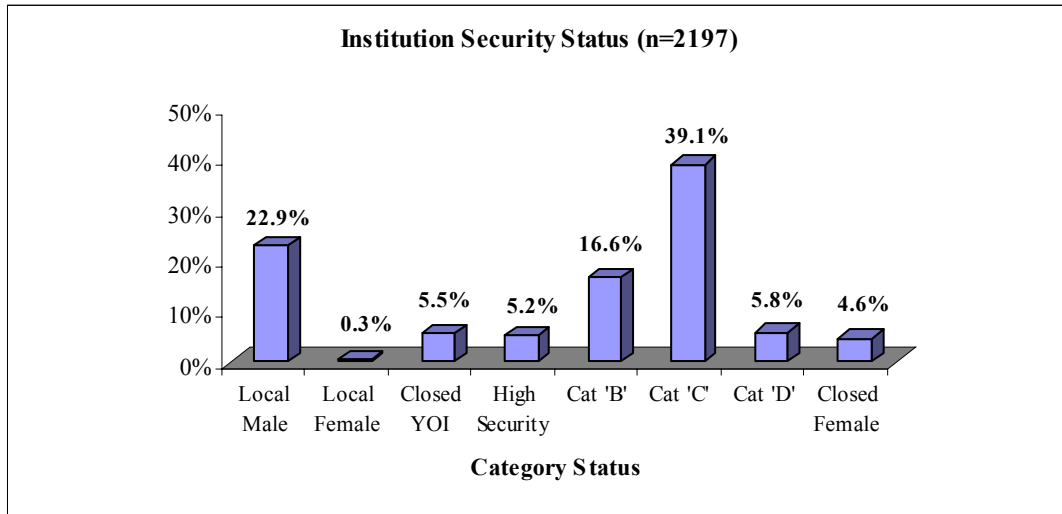
### Profile of the Participants

The following information provides a profile of the participants based on gender, security status and age. Information regarding ethnicity, offence type, previous convictions and risk levels was not available.

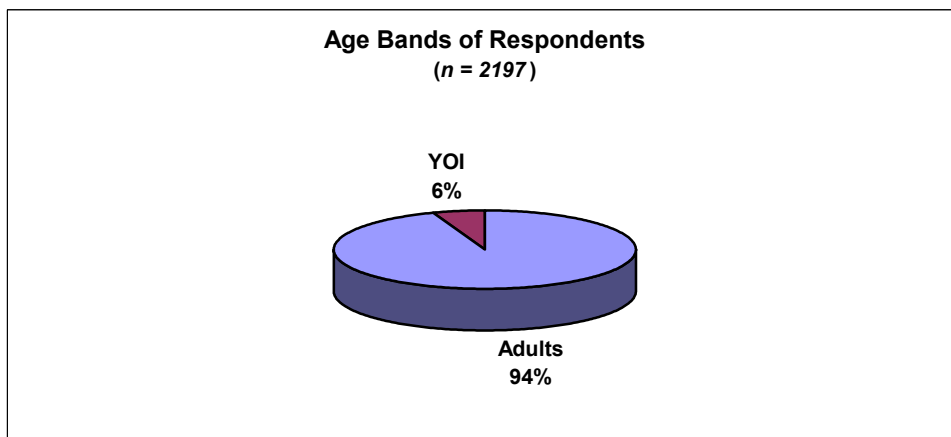
**Table 1. Participants by Gender**



A high majority of all respondents were male, accounting for 93% of the database, with 7% of respondents being female.

**Table 2. Participants by Prison Security Status**

The majority of prisoners underwent the programme within a 'Cat C' institution (39.1%), with 22.9% of respondents within 'local' prisons for males. 'Cat B' prisoners made up 16.6% of all respondents, following which the proportions of respondents that make up the sample are reduced. The lowest proportions are found within the 'local' female institution (0.3%), which reflects 7 women within one institution.

**Table 3. Participants by Age**

Although no age data was provided, it was possible to undertake some analysis by broad age bandings based on allocation either to adult or YOI institutions. The above pie chart reflects the prisoners' institution and therefore permits the broad categorisation by those who undertook the programme within a Young Offenders Institution (YOI) and those within 'adult' settings.

Ninety four percent of respondents undertook the programme within adult settings with all others within YOI institutions (6%).

## Means Information

As stated earlier, it was possible to utilise the Crime Pics II questionnaire as a static measure of respondents' attitudes prior to commencement on the programme. The following table provides the mean scores of respondents on the scales of the questionnaire. The sample has been broken into the following groupings, *Male, Female, Adults, YOI's*. In addition, the table incorporates the mean scores of a separate study as a comparison to the Sycamore sample<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that the number of questionnaires included in the 'Full Sample' for analysis purposes is reduced, due to 9 questionnaires being incomplete and therefore excluded from the sample.

**Table 4. Participants psychometric profile pre-programme:**

	Full Sample	Male	Female	Adults	YOI	Other Studies (Caverley, et al 2004)	
<b>N</b>	<b>2188</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>2067</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>422</b>
G Score	37.11	37.28	36.09	36.87	41.19	38.28	44.84
A Score	12.1	12.18	11.17	12.01	13.7	12.2	13.89
V Score	5.6	5.55	6.24	5.59	5.79	8.04	8.58
E Score	9.74	9.8	9.1	9.68	10.79	10.5	12.03
P Score	26.21	25.88	30.27	25.94	30.79	26.62	28.62

Initial examination of the above table highlights that YOI respondents had the highest mean scores on the G (general attitude) and A (anticipation of future offending) scale. Female respondents scored lowest on both these scales.

In terms of the V (victim empathy) score, female respondents score higher than all other groups, indicating that female respondents are less likely to think that their offending had an impact on victims. Importantly the impact of sentence on attitudes is an area that requires further exploration. The above finding does not consider information around length of time in custody and therefore how this experience may impact upon Crime Pics II responses. In addition, the association between the length of time in custody and types/patterns of female offending may have a bearing on the V (victim empathy) scale scores.

Prisoners in YOI institutions were more likely to evaluate offending as 'worthwhile' when compared to the other groups, with female respondents scoring on average lower on this scale. In terms of the perception of current problems, prisoners within YOIs had the highest mean score (30.79) with female respondents scoring (30.27). The mean perception of problems score was reduced for the male and adult groups.

<sup>3</sup> Calverley, A. et al (2004) Black and Asian offenders on probation. Home Office Research Study (277). Home Office.

This study developed two sample groups one made up of white offenders and one made up of minority ethnic offenders. The scores are utilised for comparative reasons only.

In relation to YOI participants the higher general attitude to offending and perception of problem scores suggests that for younger offenders there may be a correlation between attitudes and perceived problems. Moreover, this may also contribute to the increased anticipation of future offending score (A scale).

By way of comparison the mean scores for the Sycamore Tree Programme ‘full sample’ are lowered when compared to the ‘Other Studies’ column. Importantly, Caverley's samples were taken from respondents who were serving community based penalties. This may suggest that offending conducive attitudes are higher for those serving community sentences. In relation to the victim empathy scale there are large differences in the mean pre scores between the Sycamore Tree Programme ‘full sample’ group (5.6) when compared to the ‘Other studies’ group. It is difficult to hypothesise as to the reasons for this given the data available.

**Table 5. Participants psychometric profile pre-programme by institution:**

	Local Male	Local Female	Closed YOI	High Security	Cat 'B'	Cat 'C'	Cat 'D'	Closed Female
<b>N</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>101</b>
G Score	37.53	43.43	41.19	38.19	37.45	36.81	33.28	34.65
A Score	12.36	14.57	13.7	12.56	12.11	12.02	10.65	10.69
V Score	5.47	5.71	5.79	5.46	5.94	5.45	5.37	6.55
E Score	9.98	10.14	10.79	9.54	9.94	9.6	9	8.97
P Score	26.31	33.57	30.79	27.34	24.07	26.21	23.03	30.17

The analysis of mean scores by institution has been employed as a pseudo measure for risk based on the categorisation of prisoner institutions.

Based on the above categorisations, ‘Cat D’ prisoners have the lowest mean score on all scales. This observation may suggest a correlation between risk status and ‘attitudes to offending behaviour’. Similarly, YOI respondents have the highest mean scores on all scales except the V scale, where again female respondents and specifically ‘closed female’ institutions score highest. It should be noted that the sample size for the local female group is very small, making extrapolations difficult.

**Table 6. Participants psychometric profile pre-programme by institution and gender:**

	Male						Female			
	Local	Closed YOI	High Security	Cat 'B'	Cat 'C'	Cat 'D'	Local	Closed YOI	Cat 'D'	Closed Female
<b>N</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>101</b>
G Score	37.53	42.57	38.19	37.45	36.81	33.23	43.43	36.37	33.41	34.65
A Score	12.36	14.04	12.56	12.11	12.02	10.62	14.57	12.52	10.76	10.69
V Score	5.47	5.68	5.46	5.94	5.45	5.38	5.71	6.15	5.34	6.55
E Score	9.98	11.38	9.54	9.94	9.6	8.81	10.14	8.74	9.66	8.97
P Score	26.31	30.09	27.34	24.07	26.21	21.83	33.57	33.22	27.1	30.17

## Male Prisoners

The relationship between gender and institution illustrates that YOI respondents again rate highest on the G (general attitude), A (anticipation of future offending), E (evaluation of crime as worthwhile) and P (problem inventory) scales. The results of this data suggest that there is a need to explore the key features of prisoners within YOIs to highlight the factors that impact upon their attitudes to offending behaviour (including onset and patterns of offending). Moreover, the consistently higher mean scores for younger prisoners on the P scale indicates that a number of criminogenic problems may well impact upon their attitudes to offending behaviour and therefore may need to be addressed in order to reduce the attitudes that are conducive to offending behaviour.

On the V (victim empathy) scale, 'Cat B' prisoners recorded the highest score and again may reflect the offence types and previous offending history of this more serious group of prisoners. This finding is tentatively stated but demonstrates a pattern that 'Cat D' prisoners recorded the lowest mean score on the victim empathy scale.

## Female Prisoners

YOI prisoners scored highest on the G (general attitude), A (anticipation of future offending) and P (problem inventory) scales. However, female respondents within 'Closed' institutions scored highest on the V (victim empathy) scale whilst Cat D prisoners evaluated offending as worthwhile higher than all other groups. As with male respondents, the increased likelihood of a raised attitude to offending behaviour (G scale) is correlated with the prisoners' perception of problems.

## Measurement of Change

As stated at the outset of this report Crime Pics II is often utilised as an evaluation tool to gauge the impact of an intervention following programme completion. Therefore the following will begin to explore the impact of the Sycamore Tree Programme on the attitudes of the prisoners.

The following tables illustrate the pre and post programme scores on each of the Crime Pics II scales to illustrate the shifts in scores. A paired sample t- test was undertaken to test for significant difference between the pre/post programme scores.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Throughout this report statistical tests will be applied. By way of clarification a 'paired samples t-test' is used to look at whether there is any *statistically powerful difference* between the pre and post mean. The level of significance applied was the standard  $p \leq 0.05$ , this means that the probability is less than 5 in 100 (5%) that the change in score is due to chance.

**Table 7. Overall measurement of change- whole sample.**

	<b>Whole Sample (n = 2188)</b>			
	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Evidence of Change</i>
G	2.32	1.17	0.000	Yes
A	3.6	2.73	0.000	Yes
V	1.9	1.19	0.000	Yes
E	3.07	1.85	0.000	Yes
P	3.86	3.06	0.000	Yes

Based on the analysis of the whole sample there was a statistically significant reduction on all the Crime Pics II scales indicating that the programme had the desired impact on participants and reduced the attitudes that are known to be conducive to offending behaviour. Moreover the results from the t-test show that the shifts are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Importantly, in the context of the means information discussed earlier, it will be useful to explore the impact of the programme on the groups discussed earlier.

**Table 8. Programme Change by Gender**

	<b>Male (n = 2024)</b>				<b>Female (n = 164)</b>			
	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Evidence of Change</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Evidence of Change</i>
G	2.37	1.21	0.000	Yes	1.68	0.73	0.000	Yes
A	3.65	2.79	0.000	Yes	2.97	2.01	0.000	Yes
V	1.86	1.14	0.000	Yes	2.46	1.72	0.000	Yes
E	3.12	1.89	0.000	Yes	2.45	1.36	0.000	Yes
P	3.75	2.97	0.000	Yes	5.22	4.15	0.000	Yes

Exploration of pre/post programme shifts by gender highlights a similar pattern as the whole sample analysis above. For both male and female respondents there is a statistically significant shift on all attitudinal scales.

Importantly where we look between the scales we find that the post score on the P (problem inventory) scale for female respondents is higher than the pre-score for male offenders. This suggests that although there is a significant reduction in the perception of problems this is still higher than the pre programme levels for male prisoners. In other words, even though a reduction in perception of problems is seen across gender, women have greater perception of problems after the programme than men did before.

**Table 9. Programme Change by Age**

	<b>Adults (n = 2067)</b>				<b>YOI (n = 121)</b>			
	Pre	Post	Sig.	Evidence of Change	Pre	Post	Sig.	Evidence of Change
G	2.25	1.15	0.000	Yes	3.54	1.55	0.000	Yes
A	3.54	2.72	0.000	Yes	4.71	2.94	0.000	Yes
V	1.9	1.19	0.000	Yes	1.98	1.2	0.000	Yes
E	3.02	1.83	0.000	Yes	3.93	2.29	0.000	Yes
P	3.77	3.01	0.000	Yes	5.38	3.85	0.000	Yes

The impact of the Sycamore Tree programme in reducing offending attitude is consistent across gender. The above table also shows that the programme is a significant influence on participants irrespective of the age groups employed. As inferred earlier within this section, YOI respondents were increasingly more likely to have attitudes that were more conducive to offending behaviour than the adult group. However, the above table illustrates statistically significant reductions in the attitudes of both young offenders and adult prisoners.

The exploration of programme impact has shown positive results for all prisoners who undertook the Sycamore Tree programme.

The following section will continue the exploration of variance in effect size (between pre and post scores) between males and females and type of institution. As identified earlier, there is a variance in the scores for male and female respondents. Moreover, further examination by age revealed that then there is an increased likelihood of attitudes that are conducive to offending in the YOI group compared to adults.

**Table 10. Programme change by gender and institution- YOI**

	<b>Male (n = 94)</b>				<b>Female (n = 27)</b>			
	Pre	Post	Sig.	Evidence of Change	Pre	Post	Sig.	Evidence of Change
G	4.06	1.91	0.000	Yes	1.74	0.3	0.002	Yes
A	4.95	3.23	0.000	Yes	3.89	1.96	0.004	Yes
V	1.9	1.17	0.001	Yes	2.26	1.3	0.101	No
E	4.48	2.6	0.000	Yes	2	1.22	0.177	No
P	5.11	3.94	0.000	Yes	6.3	3.56	0.000	Yes

As undertaken earlier, programme impact is firstly measured through the shifts between pre and post programme scores. T-test results indicate that change in scores (between pre and post) is the result of undertaking the Sycamore Tree programme. Examination of the above table shows there is a reduction on all scales. Crucially, for female respondents, the shifts in attitude on the V (victim empathy) and E (evaluation of crime as worthwhile) scales are not significant, suggesting that any change/reduction cannot be attributed to the programme.

**Table 11. Programme change by gender and institution- Cat D**

	Male (n = 98)				Female (n = 29)			
	Pre	Post	Sig		Pre	Post	Sig	
G	1.38	0.66	0.000	Yes	1.39	0.43	0.012	Yes
A	2.65	1.78	0.001	Yes	2.93	1.43	0.007	Yes
V	1.74	1.39	0.252	No	1.62	1.59	0.938	No
E	2.34	1.38	0.000	Yes	3.03	2.28	0.180	No
P	2.44	2.04	0.035	Yes	4.54	4.11	0.206	No

Similar analysis for Cat D respondents by gender shows that for *male* respondents in Cat D prisons were significant on all scales except for the victim empathy scale. For female respondents in Cat D prisons, statistically significant reductions were recorded on the G (general attitude) and A (anticipation of future offending) scales only. Although there were reductions from the pre-post scores on all scales, the significance of the shift was reduced on the V (victim empathy), E (evaluation of crime as worthwhile) and P (problem inventory) scales.

Interestingly, there were non-significant shifts between pre-post scores on the V (victim empathy) scale for both male and female respondents within CAT D prisons implying that the programme had no **statistically significant** impact on this sample of prisoner.

### **Programme Impact (Victim Empathy)**

The key objective of the Sycamore Tree programme is to improve the participant's attitude towards the victim(s) of their behaviour. Intrinsically, analysis of the V (victim empathy) scale, contained within the Crime Pics II questionnaires, provides a mechanism for evidencing programme impact.

It is expected that increasing an offender's awareness of the impact of their crime on victims will have a beneficial effect on future behaviour and reduce the likelihood of reconviction. However this evaluation has no information regarding reconviction rates and the relationship between empathy and further offending is complex.

Commentators have identified two aspects of empathy: "cognitive empathy" refers to the ability to recognise and understand other perspectives, whilst "emotional" or "affective" empathy relates to the capacity to vicariously experience the emotions of others. Crime Pics II primarily seeks to measure changes in cognitive empathy so that improved scores might indicate a greater awareness of the impact of their crimes on victims and a recognition that they are responsible for inflicting harm on others.

The following table provides a breakdown of programme impact by the institution within which the programme was delivered.

*Table 12. Programme impact on victim empathy by institution.*

Institution	N	Pre	Post	Sig.
Garth	126	2.25	1.15	0.000
The Mount	166	1.94	1.04	0.000
Lowdham Grange	176	2.02	1.24	0.000
Woodhill	39	2.18	1.08	0.000
Swaleside	99	2.76	1.84	0.001
Cardiff	28	1.96	0.50	0.001
Parc	97	1.53	0.92	0.002
Dovegate	106	1.92	1.17	0.002
Send	91	2.88	1.96	0.004
The Verne	187	2.40	1.81	0.005
Erlstoke	61	1.16	0.52	0.006
Camp Hill	74	2.08	1.32	0.013
Maidstone	31	1.10	0.39	0.018
Blantyre House	65	0.86	0.35	0.022
Wayland	35	2.20	1.31	0.024
Bedford	30	2.43	1.37	0.028
Wellingborough	87	1.53	1.14	0.036
Rye Hill	13	2.23	1.08	0.037
The Wolds	32	1.53	0.88	0.038
Whitmoor	62	1.66	1.10	0.044
Stocken	65	1.42	0.88	0.046
Norwich	63	1.81	1.30	0.053
Wormwood Scrubs	24	1.88	0.96	0.053
Channings Wood	96	1.31	1.00	0.058
Highpoint	11	2.27	0.55	0.062
Leyhill	23	1.35	0.61	0.081
Brockhill	27	2.26	1.30	0.101
Guys Marsh	7	2.14	0.43	0.158
Liverpool	41	1.05	0.63	0.164
Preston	18	2.22	1.44	0.181
Spring Hill	20	1.60	0.80	0.245
Belmarsh	9	1.11	0.56	0.247
Feltham	11	1.91	1.00	0.257
Styal	9	2.00	1.22	0.274
Exeter	24	1.54	1.08	0.315
Sudbury	8	1.13	0.38	0.483
Lancaster Castle	7	1.86	0.86	0.485
Durham	4	1.75	0.75	0.495
Hollesley Bay	39	2.23	1.95	0.596
Foston Hall	7	1.86	1.57	0.726
Morton Hall	29	1.62	1.59	0.938
North Sea Camp	30	1.37	1.33	0.947

Within almost all institutions there was an improvement in participants' attitudes towards his/her victims as measured by the reduction in V (victim empathy) scores 'before' and 'after' the programme. However, significant changes were realised within 21 of the institutions within which the programme was delivered; in the other institutions, bar one, there was evidence of an improvement in victim awareness but

not at a level that enables us to determine that the programme was responsible. This might partly reflect the relatively small sample size in individual institutions.

However it is also possible that there are variations across institutions not only in the profiles of participants but also in the environment in which the programme is delivered. These could include a range of issues that will be discussed in the conclusion to the report.

In relation to the above table, where the *sig.* value is less than 0.05, between Garth and Stocken, the changes in 'before' and 'after' scores can be attributable to participation on the Sycamore Programme and not to any other factor/event. For all other institutions, the changes in 'before' and 'after' scores cannot statistically be attributed to participation on the programme.

As explored earlier within this report, collectively there are highly significant changes in the attitudes of offenders toward victims following completion of the Sycamore Tree programme. However, where analysis is undertaken by establishment then it is possible to identify which institutions have a significant impact on participants.

In light of this, it becomes important to explore and compare the features of programme delivery that contribute to improved programme impact across the institutions.

**Table 13. Programme impact- Victim empathy- by quarter.**

<b>QUARTER</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Pre Score</b>	<b>Post Score</b>	<b>sig.</b>
April to June 2002	245	1.83	1.26	0.000
July to September 2002	196	2.1	1.42	0.000
October to December 2002	161	2.01	1.14	0.000
January to March 2002	288	1.88	1.04	0.000
April to June 2003	257	2.16	1.39	0.000
July to September 2003	112	1.81	1.17	0.000
October to December 2003	206	1.58	0.95	0.000
January to March 2004	242	1.79	1.18	0.000
April to June 2004	235	1.79	1.11	0.000
July to September 2004	213	2.02	1.23	0.000
October to December 2004	21	2.38	1.24	0.018

The above table evidences the consistent impact of the Sycamore Tree programme on participants and specifically the improvements in levels of empathy for victims. As can be seen on a quarterly basis there is a reduction within every quarter. Moreover, the shifts in scores are significant therefore indicating that the change in attitude is associated with programme involvement.

## Discussion

### *Mean Score Analysis*

Using the data from the pre-programme questionnaires it was possible to provide a profile of the participants pre-programme based on the measurement scales within Crime Pics II. The above report provides evidence of raised attitudes to offending behaviour for female programme participants and those who undertook the programme within Young Offender Institutions. It is possible that these attitudes are as a result of the levels of problems perceived.

However the profiling of the offenders is somewhat restricted in that there was no available data with regard to static factors such as previous convictions and disposals, index offence, sentence length, ethnicity and age. Similarly we had no information regarding dynamic factors such as substance misuse, emotional/psychological factors, stability of personal and family relationships etc.

Further evaluation of the programme would be enhanced by accessing profile information that is available via assessment instruments such as OASys that provide detail in relation to criminogenic need and risk levels.

### *Pre to Post programme attitude change*

Overall there is strong evidence of statistically significant changes in attitudes which can be attributable to participation in the Sycamore Tree programme. This change, across the whole sample, is evident on all the five measurements of change within Crime Pics II.

When this data is broken down into smaller categories it is apparent that the impact of the programme varies according to a number of factors. Concentrating specifically on the victim empathy scale the following findings emerged:

- **There were significant improvements in victim empathy for the 164 female participants**
- **There were significant improvements in victim empathy for the 2024 male participants**
- **There were significant improvements in victim empathy for the 2067 adult (over 18) participants**
- **There were significant improvements in victim empathy for the 121 young (under 18) participants**
- **The 27 female young offenders demonstrated an improvement in victim empathy but not at a level that was statistically significant**
- **There were significant improvements for the 94 male young offender participants**
- **The 98 male Cat D participants demonstrated an improvement in victim empathy but not at a level that was statistically significant**
- **The 29 female Cat D participants demonstrated an improvement in victim empathy but not at a level that was statistically significant**
- **The impact on participants varied by institution (see table 12 )**

## **Conclusion**

The Sycamore Tree programme has a positive impact on programme respondents with a reduction between pre and post programme scores on all scales. However, the analysis of programme impact by institution suggests that some institutions have better results than others. This provides an opportunity to explore the features of the programmes and the participants where improvements were seen in order to improve the programme's effectiveness in all institutions.

Although there are a number of difficulties in measuring impact in isolation from other contextual information, the significant reductions in attitudes illustrate that the programme is having a positive impact on participants.

It is apparent that the programme has been impacting less effectively with Cat D prisoners but it is not clear why. It is possible to hypothesise that Cat D inmates present higher risk profiles and have committed more serious offences but other factors such as the prison environment, relationships with staff and a range of other issues could be associated with the finding.

It would be useful to ensure that any further evaluation of the programme includes profiling data as suggested above and also considers issues of programme implementation and integrity including a participant self evaluation and feedback process.

### List of Tables.

Table Number	Table Name	Page Number
1	Participants by gender	3
2	Participants by prison security status	4
3	Participants by age	4
4	Participants psychometric profile pre-programme	5
5	Participants psychometric profile pre-programme by institution	6
6	Participants psychometric profile pre-programme by institution and age	6
7	Overall measurement of change - whole sample	8
8	Programme change by gender	8
9	Programme change by age	9
10	Programme change by gender and institution - YOI	9
11	Programme change by gender and institution - Cat D	10
12	Programme impact on victim empathy by institution	11
13	Programme impact on victim empathy by quarter	12