

# Evaluating the Man-Up Programme across Three London Prisons: An Interim Report

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## Introduction

When comparing the prison population to the general population, it is clear that more males are engaging in criminal activity than females. Recent Ministry of Justice (2015) figures show that there are 81,845 males imprisoned in the UK, compared to only 3,899 females. This is not, however, a new trend; males have been grossly over-represented in all major violent crime categories since the beginning of the collection of official crime statistics (Krienert, 2003). Similarly, Silvestri, and Crowther-Dowey (2012) have highlighted how males account for a much larger percentage of violent offences, sex offences and many other criminal behaviours in comparison to females. There is thus a gendered aspect to criminality with males much more likely to be involved in crime and criminal behaviour.

Research exploring this gender/crime disparity has suggested that masculinity is an important construct for understanding crime and violence (Messerschmidt, 1993; Kimmel & Messner, 2001; Whitehead, 2005). Traits that are key to masculine identity include toughness, dominance, and the willingness to resort to violence to resolve interpersonal conflicts (Krienert, 2003; Messerschmidt, 1993). Definitions of masculinity generally agree that masculine traits include power and authority (particularly over “subordinate” females), denying weaknesses and refusing help, displaying physical strength and dominance (often through aggressive acts) and heightened interest in sex (Courtenay, 2000). Courtenay (2000) has also suggested that males experience greater social pressure to conform to stereotypical gender roles and act in a masculine way, which may lead to criminal behaviour through multiple paths. Research surrounding ‘hegemonic masculinity’ has been particularly important in helping to understand masculinity and crime. Hegemonic masculinity can be understood as a pattern of practice that allows for men’s dominance over women. It embodies the most stereotypical image of what it is to ‘be a man’ and allows for the ideologically-legitimised subordination of women. This form of masculinity is sustained through culture, institutions and persuasion (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Messerschmidt (1993) used the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ in explaining how different crimes are used by different men in the construction of masculinities. For Messerschmidt (1993), criminal behaviour can be used as a resource when other resources are not available for accomplishing masculinity and male identity. For example, if a person does not have a steady, reliable job, a stable family life, or other traditional indicators of successful masculinity, violent behaviour may be considered an acceptable way to convey the “toughness” that is linked with masculine traits. Whitehead (2005) identified that masculinity may be a dynamic risk factor for male violence. Whitehead (2005) argues that masculinity only becomes a core aspect of a male’s identity when he enters conflict with another man. Whitehead argued that young men are more likely to

engage in “man on man violence” as a result of having a weaker identity in which masculinity is more central to self-definition in comparison to older males. These young men may then experience anxiety around their masculinity being challenged, a term labelled “masculine anxiety”, which enhances young males likelihood of behaving violently to reduce this anxiety.

Taylor, das Nair and Braham (2013) conducted a systematic review of the literature exploring perceptions of masculinity as a risk factor of violent behaviour. They studied both the perpetrators’ and victims’ perceptions of the perpetrators’ masculinity. It was found many male perpetrators strived to achieve the societal construct of masculinity, which involves physical dominance, demonstrated through “performing to a masculine ideal”, often manifested in violent behaviour. They also suggested that being economically disadvantaged may lead to violent behaviour, as men try to “prove” their masculinity (which is damaged through not being able to provide for their family) by behaving violently. Another further important theme in their study was that males who felt masculine were likely to experience misogyny, feeling superior over women and believing they had the right to abuse them. This is supported by research which has found an association between masculinity and domestic violence (see e.g. Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). They argue that men may display violence towards females to exert power and superiority, as a result of social stereotypes of masculinity (Vescio, Snyder, & Butz, 2003). They also highlighted that the relationship males have with each other may explain why some males are violent towards their female partners. They stated that domestic violence may occur as a result of *conforming*, with men wishing to maintain their place as a “male” in society. Males try to assert their masculinity in relation to other males, which they may try and achieve through domestic violence (Hearn & Whitehead, 2006).

Masculinity also interacts with other risk factors to increase the likelihood of some males acting violently. The consumption of alcohol and masculinity may be risk factors of intimate partner violence in heterosexual males. One key theme identified by Peralta, Tuttle & Steele (2010) was “masculine deficiencies and alcohol solutions”. This theme explored how being economically disadvantaged and not being able to provide for their families or being of a short/small stature may have led to participants in their study feeling emasculated. It has been identified that alcohol may be consumed by such men to reduce feelings of inadequacy, which in turn, heightens the risk of being violent (Shepherd, Sutherland & Newcombe, 2006). De Visser & Smith (2007) explored the impact alcohol consumption has on masculine identity amongst young men. They found that some men believed that alcohol consumption was a marker of masculinity and important for their masculine identities. They also found evidence that some men traded drinking competence with competence in

other behavioural domains. Male on male violence has commonly been associated with alcohol consumption in drinking establishments and masculine identity (Graham & Wells, 2003).

An important concept that is distinct, yet related to masculinity, is masculine gender role stress (MGRS) (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987). Men experience more masculine gender roles stress than women, with MGRS affecting the extent to which men cognitively appraise stress when failing to uphold traditional masculine norms. MGRS total scores has been associated with different aspects of intimate partner violence and violent behaviour in general (Eisler et al, 2000; Moore et al, 2008). Moore et al (2008) found specifically that gender role stress regarding failure to perform in work and sexually was related to psychological aggression. Similarly, Jakupcak, Lisak and Roemer (2002) MGRS has also been associated with the propensity to act aggressively and violently within romantic relationships.

Masculinity is becoming an increasingly important concept in treatment programmes for violent offenders (see Day et al, 2009) and other types of sex offenders (Saegar, Jellicoe & Dhaliwal, 2004; Jennings & Sawyer, 2003), thus demonstrating that offender treatment programmes are beginning to account for the role that masculinity may play in offending behaviour. Nonetheless, addressing constructs of masculinity is less prevalent in offender behaviour programmes, which focus on empirical derived risk factors (Harkins, Mann & Ware, 2011) and so not centrally concerned with concepts of masculinity. However, in light of evidence suggesting that masculinity could perhaps be considered a dynamic risk factor (Whitehead, 2005), there is therefore a need to take the concept of masculinity more seriously in correctional interventions (Beesley & McGuire, 2009). A recent non-accredited programme focusing on masculinity has been piloted in a number of prisons in England and Wales. The 'Man-up' programme designed to support men and young men to explore the ways in which the concept of masculinity contributes to shaping their individual identity. The programme uses active learning techniques and aims to challenge some of the attitudes and negative outcomes experienced by men as a result of wanting or needing to fulfil stereotypes and expectations. To this end the programme fills an important deficit within current intervention provision by focusing on the concept of masculinity. The aim of this evaluation is to explore prisoners' perspectives of the programme and whether the programme contributed to any personal change/development and what core learning they took from the course. The evaluation also aims to assess the programme on a number of psychometrically sound measures related to the outcomes of the Man-Up programme.

## Method

### Qualitative Study

The qualitative interviews featured in this research were used to gain an understanding of prisoner (N=12) experiences and learning from the Man-Up programme. Interview schedules were divided into 3 sections; pre-course, during course, and post course. As such, the first section aimed to target how participants felt before participating in Man-Up, and what they thought about gender roles and masculinity at this time point. The second section explored the content of the course, and how participants experienced and learned from this content. The final section focussed more on how participants might embed and use their newly-acquired knowledge in everyday life, if at all.

All interviews in this research were semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews allow participants to discuss issues of central concern to both themselves and the research topic. This interviewing style is flexible and naturally enables participants to elaborate on issues important to them. In order to facilitate discussion, all questions were kept open (Knight, Wykes & Hayward, 2003). This style of interviewing also enables “rapport to be developed; allows participants to think, speak and be heard; and are well suited to in-depth and personal discussion” (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005: 22).

### Qualitative Data Analysis

Data were analysed using thematic analysis; a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns and themes within a data set. It aims to capture rich detail and represent the range and diversity of experience within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It differs from other qualitative methodological approaches in that it is not tied to an explicit theoretical assumption or position. Thematic analysis has been described as a ‘contextualist method’, sitting between the two poles of constructionism and realism. This position thus acknowledges the ways in which individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways in which the broader social context impinges on those meanings. As such, thematic analyses are seen as reflecting ‘reality’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The analysis adhered to the principles of qualitative thematic analysis as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994). Data analysis commenced with detailed readings of all the transcripts, and then initial coding of emergent themes. A process of sorting initial patterns then took place, and this was followed by the identification of meaningful patterns in the data, and then an interpretation of those patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data was organised systematically and themes were identified and reviewed. The final themes were representative of the sample as a whole. A form of inter-rater reliability was performed on the data, which involved the analysis being ‘audited’ (Lincoln

& Guba, 1985 as cited in Seale, 1999 p. 467) in that both authors of the report coded the data separately before synthesising the final themes. This process ensured that the interpretations had validity.

### Quantitative Study

The quantitative phase of the research evaluation explored pre and post course differences on measures related to the outcomes of the MAN-UP programme. The measures assessed whether participation on the Man-up programme had an effect on sexist beliefs and attitudes, masculine beliefs, male gender role stress and prisoners own beliefs that they can change their offending behaviour. The measures were chosen due to hypothesised relationships with the aims of the man-up programme.

The measures were administered pre-course and then approximately a week after participation on the course they were administered again. In total n=21 provided pre and post course information. The demographic information is provided in table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic Information**

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Age	21	30.82	11.367	21	52
Number of Prior Convictions	21	9.86	14.688	0	57
Age of first conviction	21	17.06	6.855	14	36

The demographic information highlights that the sample is comprised of prolific offenders who have had long offending histories. Index offences for the sample as a whole included drugs and violence offences (including 2 counts of murder).

### Measures

The **Masculine Gender Role Stress (MGRS) Scale (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987)** is a 40-item self-report inventory that measures the degree to which men cognitively appraise the stress they would experience in situations that might challenge their masculinity (e.g., “Letting a woman take control of the situation”). Responses on each item can range from 0 (*not at all stressful*) to 5 (*extremely stressful*). The MGRS comprises of 5 subscales: Physical Inadequacy, Emotional Inexpressiveness,

Subordination to Women, Intellectual Inferiority, and Performance Failure. The MGRS has been found to demonstrate high 2-week test–retest reliability ( $r = .93$ ; Skidmore, 1988) and internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha = .88$  to  $.94$ ).

The **Implicit Theory of Offending Behaviour Measure (Blagden et al., 2014)** is an amalgamation of domain-specific implicit theories of intelligence and personality, and Gerber and O’Connell’s (2012) implicit theory of crime and criminality (self and other). The ‘implicit theory of offending behaviour (self)’ (ITOB) is concerned with prisoners’ beliefs in whether they could change their offending behaviour. The scale is a six-item measure and consists of items such as “*My offending behaviour is a part of me that I can’t change very much*”. Participants indicated how much they agreed with statements on a 6-point Likert scale which ranged from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 6 (*strongly disagree*). Previous studies have shown that the measure has good internal consistency (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .893$ ) (Blagden et al, 2014).

The **Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) (Glick & Fiske, 1996)** is a 22-item scale which measures both hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes toward women. Hostile sexism (HS) expresses antipathy and resentment toward women who are perceived as violating traditional roles or challenging male dominance (e.g., ‘most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them,’ ‘women seek to gain power by getting control over men’). In contrast, benevolent sexism (BS) is a subjectively positive and affectionate attitude, portraying women as weak beings who ought to be protected and provided for by men (e.g., ‘many women have a quality of purity that few men possess,’ ‘women should be cherished and protected by men’). Ambivalent sexism theory suggests that hostility and benevolence toward women form a complementary belief system that reinforces gender inequality. Higher ASI scores represent a greater sexist attitude against women.

The **Male Role Norms Inventory (MRNI) (Levant et al, 2013)** is a 21 item measure which measures masculinity and beliefs about stereotypical male roles on a 7 point likert scale ranging from (1 = strongly agree) to (7 = strongly disagree). The MRNI comprises of 7 subscales including ‘restrictive emotionality’, ‘self-reliance through mechanical skills’, ‘Negativity towards sexual minorities’, ‘Avoidance of femininity’, ‘Importance of sex’, ‘Dominance’ and ‘Toughness’. Higher scores on the MRNI indicate greater endorsement of traditional masculine ideology (Levant et al, 2013).

## Results



## Quantitative Results

Table 2 shows the pre and post scores of the measures used to evaluate the Man-Up programme, it details the means and mean differences in the measures.

**Table 2: Pre and Post Scores**

Measure	Pre-Mean	Pre-SD	Post-Mean	Post-SD	t	Df	P
Ambivalent Sexism Total	2.486	.318	2.582	.584	-2.451	11	.032*
Benevolent Sexism	2.613	.593	2.844	.802	-1.783	13	.098
Hostile Sexism	2.300	.564	2.250	.742	-.306	11	.766
Male Norms Total	3.534	.959	3.538	.806	1.462	16	.163
Male Norms: Negativity towards sexual minorities	3.900	1.699	3.761	1.850	.324	19	.750
Male Norms: Restrictive emotionality	2.968	1.559	2.717	1.262	1.292	19	.212
Male Norms: Self Reliance	4.444	1.270	5.031	1.010	-2.312	20	.032*
Male Norms: Avoidance of femininity	3.761	1.216	3.365	1.264	1.396	20	.178
Male Norms: Importance of Sex	3.174	1.23	3.952	1.657	-2.348	20	.029*
Male Norms: Dominance	2.867	1.33	2.428	1.150	1.846	19	.081
Male Norms: Toughness	3.550	1.35	3.857	1.522	.324	19	.750
Implicit Theory of Offending Behaviour	5.025	1.01	5.075	1.011	-.633	18	.535
Male Gender Role Stress Total	2.097	.697	1.886	.720	1.658	12	.123
Male Gender Role Stress: Physical Inadequacy	2.327	.909	2.105	.921	1.106	17	.284
Male Gender Role Stress: Emotional Inexpressiveness	1.550	1.102	1.571	.929	1.142	16	.270
Male Gender	1.227	.934	1.211	.880	.594	18	.560

Role Stress: Subordinate to women							
Male Gender Role Stress: Intellectual Inferiority	1.428	.871	1.360	.854	.839	18	.413
Male Gender Role Stress: Performance Failure	3.081	1.213	3.456	1.147	-1.763	18	.095

The mean scores on the ambivalent sexism and related subscales and male gender role stress and related subscales show that the sample were endorsing relatively low levels of sexist beliefs and gender role stress both pre and post course. There were some slight mean increases post course for ambivalent sexism, benevolent sexism, male role norms and subscales of the MRNI. The sample also had very high incremental beliefs that they can change their offender behaviour and the sample had low endorsement of gender role stress. There were some mean reductions in MGRS total scores and the subscales of 'Physical Inadequacy', 'Subordinate to Women', 'Intellectual Inferiority' and 'Performance Failure'. However, it is not possible to draw concrete inferences from the data due to a number of reasons. The first is the low sample size – the difficulty in detecting an effect pre/post course presents the caveat that all results should be treated with caution. The second main problem is that there appears to be a confounding treatment effect in that all prisoners who participated in the Man-Up programme had already gone through intense accredited offender behaviour programmes. This may explain the low endorsement on pre-treatment measures and why there are few significant post-course changes. However, this remains an empirical question and the data is not sufficient to allow for robust statistical analysis. Therefore, inferential statistical analyses have been omitted from this interim report, but will be included in the final full report.

### Qualitative Results

The themes identified in the table below were extracted from the data following reading and re-reading of all interview transcripts. As such, these themes represent not individuals, but the sample as a whole. This analysis should be treated as preliminary, and is intended to give a snapshot of how the first roll out of the Man-Up programme was received by its participants.

**Table 3: Qualitative Themes**

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
<p><b>“Manning-Up”</b> (I like the idea of discussing what it is to Man-Up in Safe Ground terms – it seems to be about becoming more accepting and challenging negative stereotypes etc. So, I like the ironic tag).</p>	<p><b>Initial Perceptions</b></p> <p><b>Addressing Negative Masculine Attitudes</b></p> <p><b>Opening Up</b> (Refers to experiences during man-up, i.e. chatting with others about feelings and experiences and for the first time feeling OK to do so)</p>
<p><b>Best Bits / Worst Bits</b></p>	<p><b>Cohesive Environment</b></p> <p><b>Facilitators</b></p>
<p><b>Bridging Gaps</b></p>	<p><b>Selection Criteria</b></p> <p><b>Course Extension / Follow-up Refresher</b></p>

### **“Manning-up”**

The title of the course, “Man-Up”, was intentionally selected for its provocative nature. It was Safe Ground’s aim to create a buzz around the prison that surrounded the programme, and it was hoped that this would lead to curiosity and ultimately to programme participation. This strategy appeared to work, and there was certainly some recognition from participants of the initial attention that the programme received across all prisons. Given the significance that programme titles seem to carry amongst prison populations, it was considered worthwhile to explore participants’ initial perceptions of “Man-Up”.

### **Initial Perceptions**

All participants asserted that they didn’t have any clear expectations about the course, and had little idea what to expect. The title “Man-Up” certainly appeared to generate curiosity in participants and this seemed to work as a hook that facilitated recruitment.

*Why I decided to do the course, I’ll tell you what, with me, I just thought it would be interesting.. I had a look at what it’s about and one of the facilitators showed me the pamphlet and I though it sounded interested.. so I didn’t really go with any expectations, I just wondered what I could get out of it.. although, the name.. I will say the name kinda drew me to it as well. That name “man-up”, I thought it sounded interesting and like I say it drew me to it. SG1 Matthew*

Matthew describes how he had little idea about what the course would entail, and that it was mainly the title “Man-Up” that intrigued him. A catchy title appears important in the context of prison, which is characterised by suspiciousness, distrust, scepticism over regimes and programmes, and resistance in terms of participation (Schwaebe, 2005). The title seemed to satisfy a balance in terms of being intriguing enough for participants to come forward, but not informational in a way that would attract prejudgements.

*The name anyway, it's bold.. you know “Man-Up” in capital letter.. you it's catchy. The name is catchy.. and a lot of people in prison need to man up.. and I'm not talking about manning up in a criminal sense, I'm talking about it in a normal-being sense.. and you know.. manning up where you act with impulsivity in a situation, when really and truly you should think. Manning up really to me is when you think about something and you do it.. and you do it in the right way. In a good way.. without harming other people and without bringing misery to people or.. it's taking responsibility, that's what man-up means to me... taking responsibility. NB4 Kyle*

Interestingly, the tag ‘Man-Up’ was internalised by many participants, as Kyle demonstrates in his extract. ‘Manning-up’ seemed to symbolise a narrative that participants would use to reflect on the course and the individual ways in which they were ‘manning-up’ as a product of their newly-acquired knowledge. Refreshingly, ‘manning-up’ for all participants meant taking responsibility for being a man, not harming others, not behaving impulsively, and ultimately moving away from criminality. These viewpoints changed dramatically when contrasted with the ideas of participants pre-course. These ideas were more synonymous with traditional gender role stereotypes, such as men being required to be strong, assertive, dominant, and aggressive (Krienert, 2003; Messerschmidt, 1993).

### **Addressing Negative Masculine Attitudes**

There was a consistent and clear recognition from participants that they held very strong and traditional views of male and female roles before the course and that these views altered after course completion. All participants in the sample presented almost a sense of embarrassment and self-deprecation regarding their strong viewpoints (most participants laughed at themselves when describing their views pre-course), and felt their eyes had been opened as a consequence of completing the course.

*My upbringing was to be the aggressor, to be the dominant and aggressive one.. for me.. I believe I need to be.. especially in this environment, it can be volatile sometimes.. I do feel that I.. shouldn't project any hostility towards people.. being able to contain any anger is to be a man.. and I believe it takes a stronger man to contain his anger than to physically get into an altercation with someone.. Yeah, definitely to be able to contain my anger, and to talk to people and know how to ask for help and when to ask for help.. not feel so, what I used to think was that a man had to be independent, not ask for help.. do everything alone if you could, but now.. I believe I do have to be able to ask for help and not feel lesser or weak for asking for help.../... Now, I can actually sit down and feel comfortable expressing myself now.. and not feel weak and less than a man for being able to do that.. so I think the course helped me identify that more. SG1 Matthew*

Matthew describes how his views of what it is to be a man have changed following his participation in Man-Up. He directly references that his views of being a man pre-course were typified by aggressiveness, anger, physical strength, and situational hostility. Matthew goes on to describe that following the course, he accepted the realisation that being a man is actually more about addressing anger, and learning to control what were once impulsive feelings and actions. In this respect, the Man-Up programme appears very much to be doing what it claims to.

*People can come across as if they're angry and aggressive but really, they're scared.. you know.. there's a lot of people with images.. and that in the past might have kept me away from them, or.. being scared of them but.. you know.. today I just look and see he just don't want anyone to get close to him.. I think.. it's made me more tactile in my approach to people like that.. and.. normally I'd just laugh at them really.. but now I'd help them to understand what they're doing and.. make them aware of what they're doing.. it's a defence mechanism isn't it really, the anger.. or people isolating on the wing. SG2 Teegan*

### **Opening Up**

This theme was characterised by participants' views of what it is to be a man being altered in front of their eyes. Many participants recounted having physical experiences that they would not have engaged in previously through fear that it would not be 'manly'. This physical process of opening up nicely accompanied some of the internal re-storying that seemed to also occur throughout the course; participants were being challenged in more ways than one.

*They were lowering our guard a bit.. with ice breaker.. One of the guys that took the course he was, an actor, so he was really outgoing, so yeah one of the things we was asked to do to start off with was ice breakers../..Going back a few years, I wouldn't have participated in it.. I would've thought.. I'm too manly.. you know it's not man enough to do that, it's a bit effeminate or something like that. But I did, I partook in that. SG1 Matthew*

Matthew describes here how he would once have refused to get involved in things like 'ice-breakers' because it would be too effeminate. However, through participating, Matthew realised that he is capable of getting involved in such tasks and that he can actually learn a lot from opening up in this way. In his interview, Matthew continually referred to the ice breakers, and how they enabled participants' guards to be dropped, and learning to become more solidified in the group.

### **Best Bits / Worst Bits**

All participants were simply asked what they felt the best bits and worst bits were about the course. This question brought about some unexpected positive experiences and, refreshingly, very few negative ones. Information gathered from this question seemed to imply that the potential benefits of the programme go beyond just addressing masculinities, and influence prison culture in other ways.

### **Cohesive Environment**

Integrating diverse groups and creating a cohesive environment was one aspect of the course that participants seemed to enjoy. This was encouraging, especially as most participants suggested they had reservations about being in an emotive environment with people they were not close with. It appears that Man-Up helps to surprise its participants in many ways, one of them being that group settings and cohesive work isn't so scary, and can be both enjoyable and personally rewarding.

*There was so much input from all the guys in the group. And I did like the age different in the group as well.. there was one guy who was 21.. and I was standoffish at first.. you know I thought maybe he's be immature and I was judging him.. but he brought so much to the group and he challenged my own prejudices in a way.. so that was something I enjoyed – the different age ranges, the different cultures, and the different backgrounds. SG1 Matthew*

As well as a range of ages, the Man-Up courses also integrated people of many different ethnicities, cultures, and religions. Some participants admitted that they had some reservations about this, but actually really enjoyed the diversity in the group.

*Doing the course with some other people, who, I probably wouldn't usually associate with in the prison, you know.. there was a couple of Muslim people there, and you know, I wouldn't really have anything to say to them, and they wouldn't really associate with me but.. I found, in doing the course, it did.. it broke down a lot of barriers.. yeah, I see them around now and I stop and have a chat and I'll ask them how they're doing. SG2 Teegan*

### **Facilitators**

All participants were very complimentary about the facilitators that ran their course and, when asked if they had any additional comments, provided positive feedback regarding their delivery of the course content. This theme characterised the facilitators as being flexible, compassionate, encouraging, and expertly knowledgeable.

*I've got to praise them.. they made you feel really comfortable. They delivered it really well.. we had fun and games as well and everyone took part.. not everyone takes part in many courses but there was always something to relate to.. NB4 Kyle*

The 'human' and compassionate approach of the facilitators was most-valued by the participants of Man-Up. All participants expressed how it was initially difficult for them to feel comfortable in this kind of group situation, and so this represented a very difficult challenge for the facilitators. However, those delivering the course seemed to rise to the challenge, and used a variety of differentiation techniques to ensure the group came together and dealt with the content as one.

### **Bridging gaps**

Participants were asked what they would change or improve about the course, if they were able to. All participants responded firstly by saying how much they enjoyed the course and that they "wouldn't really change anything". However, some suggestions did follow and this theme is divided into three subthemes that capture some of these recommendations.

### **Selection Criteria**

All participants, when asked if they would recommend the course to others, were once again very positive about Man-Up and said they would definitely recommend it. However, some participants suggested it would be better for everyone if some form of selection criteria could be used. These participants spoke of the potential benefits of perhaps focussing on a more “narrow-minded” sample of prisoners, who would benefit especially from the modules included in the course.

*For me it was like an addition.. it was a good course.. but.. for those guys who had a lack of knowledge or a narrow-minded perception.. I think a lot of those guys' views changes.. after being on man-up.. just from the different opinions that were coming.. you know, the debates.. and if it's done in a correct way then.. “OK yeah.. maybe that way I was thinking was a bit wrong”. And I enjoyed seeing that light-bulb moment../.. I would recommend it to all. But predominantly to selective inmates that I believe they could get something from it. You know, many of them are quite narrow-minded (laughs), and they just need a little kick in the right direction sometimes. SG3 Thomas*

When asked about masculinity and what it meant to be a man, Thomas described how he has never held strong or “very traditional” views of male and female roles, and that as such, he didn't feel that Man-Up really changed his beliefs surrounding masculinity. He said he enjoyed the course and got “a lot from it” but was unable to specify anything in particular, other than his enjoyment of the diversity in the group. This led on to the above extract, in which Thomas suggests that the course should be offered only to those who “need a little kick in the right direction”. This seemed a logical suggestion and indeed, most courses offered throughout UK prisons are targeted at specific types of offenders and aim to address a specific area of risk or need.

### **Course Extension / Follow-up Refresher**

When asked about their favourite parts of the course, some participants had a little trouble recalling specifics. This led on to recommendations from some that there should be a follow-up, or a ‘refresher’ course.

*“I'm not sure I remember a specific bit, it was a couple of weeks ago now and now my memory has gone. I do remember some stuff about.. it was quite technical..”*

*Interviewer: “Maslow?, hierarchy of needs?”*

*“Yeah that was it! The pyramid thing. I remember really thinking that that was good.. this is one thing I said though.. it was a lot to take on over a couple of days. I think it could be longer, the course”. Jason*



Jason was not the only participant who had some trouble recalling certain aspects of the course. This was not surprising considering how condensed the course was, and how technical some of the modules were. A good amount of the information that comprised each module was very psychological and fairly detailed, and so it was perhaps ambitious to expect participants to solidify this knowledge in such a short space of time. Jason's recommendation of extending the course was welcomed by the researchers, who firmly got the impression from all participants that an extended programme or a refresher course would be both worthwhile and very welcome from the participants' point of view.

## Summary

The aim of this research was to explore the impact of the Man-Up programme. To this end, interviews were conducted across 3 prisons and with a total of 12 participants. The findings have revealed that, principally, Man-Up is a positive experience for those that take part. All participants expressed that their interest in Man-Up stemmed solely from its provocative title, and that they had little expectation regarding the content of the course. Whilst this was the case, all participants described being pleasantly surprised at how the course was delivered, and the impact that it had. All course completers expressed how their strong masculine identities and associated values and beliefs were challenged throughout the course, and how this prompted reflection and subsequent change. These reflections seemed to be about re-storying what a man's role should be; specifically one concerned with responsibility and accountability, rather than dominance, aggression, and assertiveness. This self-reflection process was driven by ice breaker tasks throughout the programme, the diverse range of individuals that made up the groups, and the facilitators' ability to enable participants to 'open up'. All participants spoke about becoming more open minded and more 'accepting' following the course, and how they enjoyed experiencing this. The course was enjoyed to the extent that all participants asserted that it should be longer, and that a refresher course would also be welcome. One recommendation put forward by the sample as a whole was that course leaders could be more selective about those that participate, and that targeting individuals who hold particularly strong views about gender roles would be helpful. This recommendation was presented with the intention of galvanising the impact of man-up, and ensuring that those in heightened need of the intervention are given the opportunity to 'man-up'.

## Recommendations

The Man-Up preliminary evaluation has generated a number of key recommendations that should be considered for future evaluations and the running of the Man-Up programme. These recommendations are detailed below

- 1) There needs to be a more considered selection criteria/procedure for entry onto the course. While the course is open to any individual where issues of masculinity affect their behaviour, the course seems best suited for those who are pre-accredited in terms of programme treatment. All participants on the Man-Up programme had gone through accredited programmes and it was difficult to establish the effect the course was having (quantitatively) on the individuals. The sample was skewed towards the positive ends of the measures and so this was unlikely to change post-treatment. This course seems most suitable for those who are pre-treatment and who need extra work on motivation/readiness for treatment. Participants commented on how much they liked the pace of the programme and activities, which make this ideal for pre-treatment prisoners. A further reason why this is important is that it mitigates the risks associated with 'over-treatment' and the finding that giving some individuals too much treatment can make them worse, especially for low-risk groups.
- 2) Related to the first point, it is also recommended that the evaluation be replicated either in part or fully with a previously untreated sample for the reasons already outlined. This repeat study would focus on participants that match the above-mentioned criteria.
- 3) It was clear from the qualitative interviews that the length of the programme varied between prison to prison. There needs to be consistency in terms of programme delivery. There was also big disparity in terms of numbers within the group. It is recommended that Safe Ground supply (or reiterate) the upper- and lower-bound limits of groups and also the ideal programme duration.
- 4) Although all participants valued and enjoyed the course, the core messages of Man-Up needed greater reinforcement. Participants had forgotten some key aspects from particular course modules and this was sometimes attributed to rushed delivery. Participants in the interviews wanted more time to go through information and reinforce learning. This is crucial as there is potential for misunderstanding.
- 5) Future evaluations may also benefit from incorporating measures of motivation, stages of change, and positive and negative affect. Again, this would help to establish the Man-Up programme as a viable pre-treatment or 'booster' course.
- 6) The length of the programme should be reconsidered and ideally lengthened. This links with recommendation 4 in that some participants appeared to forget key aspects of the course and others suggesting that the course felt "rushed".