

RMA

**INITIAL INSIGHTS INTO EXPERIENCES OF RELEASE,
COMMUNITY INTEGRATION AND RECALL FOR
INDIVIDUALS ON THE ORDER FOR LIFELONG
RESTRICTION**

ACCESSIBLE VERSION

July 2023



**REDUCING
SERIOUS HARM**

Contents

Summary.....	2
The Order for Lifelong Restriction.....	4
What we found.....	7
The OLR is a never-ending journey.....	7
Release from prison is challenging, but supported.....	8
Having positive ways to cope can help.....	10
What did our research tell us?.....	11
Recommendations.....	12
Helpful Organisations.....	13

Summary

This is an easy to read report. It will tell you about a research study the Risk Management Authority have completed.

Research allows us to learn more about a subject. This research was about people's experiences on the Order for Lifelong Restriction (OLR).

The OLR is only available in Scotland. It can be given to a person who has been found guilty at court of criminal offences. These offences may be very serious.

The OLR is a lifelong sentence. People with an OLR will spend time in prison. They will also be supervised for the rest of their life in the community (where they live). This is to keep the public safe.

We asked people on the OLR to tell us about getting out of prison and about settling into the community. We also asked questions about what it was like to have this sentence.

Some of these people had been returned to prison. We asked them to tell us about that.

The report is about what the people told us.

We would like to thank the eight people who spoke to us. We would also like to thank the Scottish Prison Service and Justice Social Work for helping with our study.

The report was written by:



Debbie Campbell

Debbie is the Head of Order for Lifelong Restriction at the Risk Management Authority.



Jihad Diab

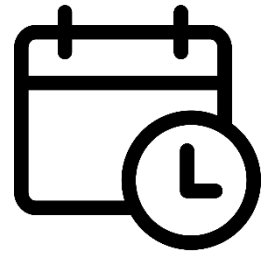
Jihad is a research assistant at the Risk Management Authority.

Emily West

Emily works in the Order for Lifelong Restriction team at the Risk Management Authority.

The Order for Lifelong Restriction

The Order for Lifelong Restriction, or OLR, is a type of sentence known as 'indeterminate.' That means that the sentence has no end date.



The OLR is only available in Scotland. It can be given to a person who has been found guilty at court of criminal offences. These offences may be very serious.

A risk assessment is completed before a person is given an OLR. This is to consider the risks the person presents to other people and whether that risk could be managed using a different type of sentence. This assessment helps the judge decide if an OLR is needed.

People with an OLR will spend time in prison.

The minimum amount of time they must spend in prison will be set by the judge at court. The person may not be released from prison when they've completed the minimum term set by the judge. They will only be released when the parole board believe the person can be safely managed in the community. This could take a long time.



The person will also be supervised by a social worker for the rest of their life in the community (where they live). This is to keep the public safe.

A person with an OLR will always have a Risk Management Plan. This plan tells professionals (people working with the person) about the person and how they should be managed.

The plan also helps the person with the OLR understand what they need to do to get out of prison, and to stay safe in the community.

The Risk Management Plan must be approved by the Risk Management Authority. The Risk Management Authority check that the plan is of a good standard. They also check that the people working with the person are doing what they said they would do in the plan.



A person with an OLR may be brought back to prison after they have been released by the parole board. This is known as 'recall.' This can happen if a person commits another crime. It can also happen if the person breaks the rules set by the parole board (known as licence conditions), or if social work believe the person's risk is increasing.



When we wrote the report in December 2022 there were 233 people serving an OLR sentence. 17 people had been released from prison on the OLR. Eight people took part in our research.



The eight people who took part had all spent time in prison before being released by the parole board. They had spent time being managed by social work in the community. Five people were still in the community when we spoke to them. Three people had been brought back to custody.

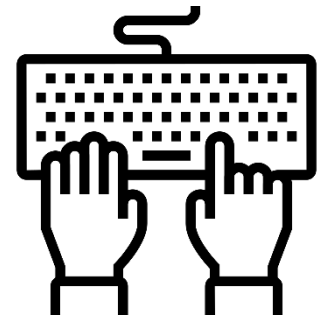
Our study

We wanted to speak to people who had been released from prison on the OLR sentence. By speaking to these people, we hoped to learn about the different stages of the sentence. We also hoped to learn about the things which help a person work towards release and settle into their community when they get out of prison.



We spoke with eight people. Five were still in the community and three had been returned to prison.

We asked each person questions about their time on the OLR sentence. We recorded what they said. We used these recordings to type up 'scripts' of the discussion. We then studied these and found where different people had told us similar things. We call these similarities 'themes.'



What we found

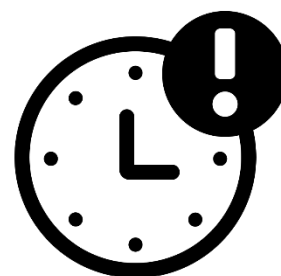
We found three main themes when we studied the information people gave us. These were:

- The OLR is a never-ending journey
- Release from prison is challenging, but supported
- Having positive ways to cope can help

Each of these themes is explained below.

The OLR is a never-ending journey

All the people who took part spoke about believing that their progress was delayed (late, or slow) in prison. They felt that prison processes were often delayed. Prison processes are things like offending behaviour programmes and moving to prisons where they have more freedom.



Many of the men who took part also told us that they didn't understand the OLR when they received the sentence. They didn't understand that they wouldn't leave prison after a set period of time, known as the punishment part. The punishment part is the minimum time someone with an OLR must spend in prison. This is set by the judge. They reported that this made the time spent in prison feel longer.



The people who took part also said they felt that professionals did not support them in prison. They believed that they were treated differently from other prisoners. They felt that they had to do more work than others, and wait longer to move to a prison where they would have more freedom. They believed that this was due to the OLR sentence.

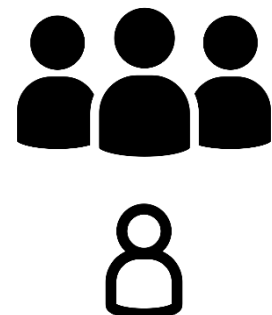


They told us that they didn't understand their risk assessments or how decisions were made. Many said that they had not seen their Risk Management Plan. Others told us that they had chosen not to read it as it was upsetting for them.

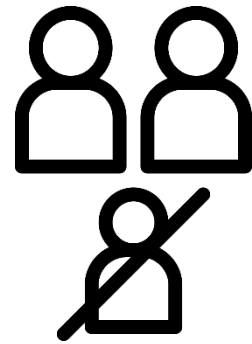
The people taking part said they sometimes felt that they may never get out of prison. They told us that they felt the OLR was unfair and that it had a negative effect on their mental health.

Release from prison is challenging, but supported

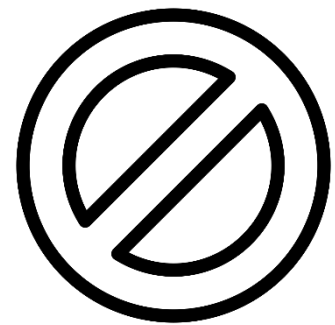
Everyone who spoke to us told us that moving from prison back to the community was difficult. They told us that getting a house, finding a job, money problems, and living by rules set by the parole board was hard. The biggest challenge was feeling separate from other people.



Feeling separate happened when people didn't have any friends. It was also because their family relationships had changed, or they were finding it hard to get a job. People also said they were often rejected from clubs and groups in their area due to their past offences.



The men who spoke to us said they felt that they had more rules in the community than people on other sentence types. Many spoke of not being allowed to go to certain areas, having to wear an electronic tag and having to be at home during certain hours. Some of the people who spoke to us felt that these rules stayed in place longer because of the OLR sentence.



However, the group told us that they felt well supported by the people working with them in the community. The men spoke of good relationships with social work, police and charity organisations. These good relationships helped them to settle into the community and to cope with any difficulties.



Three of the people who spoke to us had been returned to custody. Two out of the three reported being well supported in the community. They felt that they had made bad decisions which resulted in being brought back to prison.

Having positive ways to cope can help

All the participants told us about how they coped with their OLR sentence. The skills they used are called ‘coping strategies.’ These skills helped them to keep working towards their goals when things were difficult.

Many participants spoke of activities which helped, including exercise and education. Others told us that they chose to focus on the things in their life that they could control. Setting goals helped them to feel more in control.



Those that took part also spoke about the importance of accepting the sentence rather than fighting against it.

What did our research tell us?

Our findings tell us that the eight people who took part had similar experiences whilst serving their OLR sentence. The themes tell us that participants felt that working towards release from prison whilst on an OLR sentence was difficult. They told us that they thought this was due to delays and a lack of support from professionals in prison. Release from prison was also challenging. But those that took part told us that support from professionals and use of personal coping strategies helped.

Our findings are similar to other studies which suggest that people serving sentences without an end date (indeterminate sentences) may experience more challenges. We will do more work to better understand these challenges.

The findings also tell us that work needs to be done to help people understand the OLR sentence and how decisions are made. Ensuring the Risk Management Plan is central to a person's management should help with this.

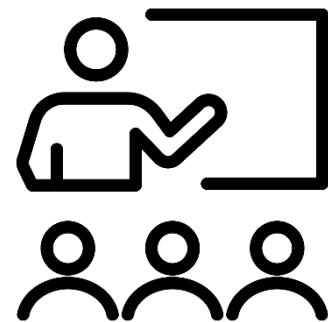


We did not identify any themes about recall to custody. This may have been because only three people in our group had been recalled. Their experiences of recall were also different. We suggest that it would be helpful to do a further study on recall at a later date.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, these are things that could improve peoples' experience on the OLR sentence, and help them work towards release:

1. People with an OLR should understand what is in their Risk Management Plan. They should have the chance to review it regularly and talk to professionals about what goes in it. Professionals should ensure this document is easy to read to help people understand it.
2. Training could help everyone understand the OLR sentence better. Training may help professionals to answer questions about the sentence. This may help people with an OLR understand how decision are made and what steps they need to take.
3. The RMA should develop resources and training for social workers in the community who will manage people with an OLR. This may help to ensure that others released in future also have a positive experience.
4. We need more research to understand how the OLR is different from other sentence types. It would also be helpful to follow up with our eight participants in future.
5. The RMA should study how the OLR is working. This should think about what is working well, and what could be improved. This work has started.



Helpful Organisations

Some people may experience negative emotions when reading this report. If you feel you would benefit from support, please find some helpful organisations below:

Anxiety UK

Provides confidential advice and support for those with anxiety, stress and anxiety-based depression.

Telephone: 03444 775 774

Text support: 07537 416 905

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

Free and confidential helpline and webchat for men of all ages and backgrounds to talk about their fears and problems.

Telephone: 0800 58 58 58

www.thecalmzone.net

Families Outside

A national charity who offers an independent support service for families and friends of prisoners.

Telephone: 0800 254 0088

Text support: 60777 start your message with Famout

www.familiesoutside.org.uk

Mind

Provides information and support for a range of mental health problems.

Telephone: 0300 123 3393

www.mind.org.uk

Rape Crisis Scotland

Provides confidential support for people of all genders living in Scotland who have been affected by sexual violence.

Telephone: 08088 01 03 02

Text support: 07537 410 027

www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Safeguarding Communities, Reducing Offending (SACRO)

Provides a range of Criminal Justice, Youth Justice and Mediation services.

Telephone: 0131 624 7270

www.sacro.org.uk

Samaritans

Provides confidential emotional support 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress and/or despair.

Telephone: 116 123

www.samaritans.org

Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline

Provides information and support. Calls are answered by women with training in all aspects of domestic abuse.

Telephone: 0800 027 1234

www.sdafmh.org.uk

Victim Support Scotland

Supports victims of crime, witnesses and their family members, regardless of who they are and their circumstances.

Telephone: 0800 160 1985

www.victimsupport.scot