

The 'Manageability of Risk' and Recall on Supervised Licence: Post-Release Pathways for Serious Violent and Sexual Offenders in Northern Ireland*

Alexandra Delimata and Mairead Seymour †

Summary: Extended custodial sentences (ECSs) for serious offenders were introduced under the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. These sentences combine custody with a subsequent period on supervised licence in the community during which offenders can be recalled to prison should their 'risk of serious harm' increase to an 'unmanageable level'. Using a documentary file analysis approach, the study investigates the outcomes for all ECS offenders released under supervised licence between 15 October 2010 and 31 December 2013 ($n = 57$). The recall rate was established at 54%, with nearly half of recalls occurring within four weeks of release. Collation of offender records developed profiles of the ECS offenders and examined characteristics of recalled ($n = 31$) and non-recalled ($n = 26$) offenders. The paper offers tentative observations as to why some offenders remained under licence in the community and others were recalled to custody. Analysis points to the potential of enhancing pre-release working relationships between offenders and supervisors, strengthening through-care supports to reflect the complexity of offenders' needs, and focusing on the integration of strengths-based approaches in risk management policy and practice.

Keywords: Recall, supervision, probation, risk management.