

# What is rehabilitation and how it works criminology essay



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This dissertation aims to explore the effectiveness of rehabilitation within the youth justice system and whether it has an impact on recidivism, focusing on the drug treatment and testing requirement. The research will provide information about how this requirement works and how effective it is within the youth justice system. This chapter will look at: the background to youth culture and delinquency, the effects of drugs on young people and society, what rehabilitation is, the government approach to rehabilitation, public perceptions, what the Drug Rehabilitation Order is and the literature gap.

## **Background**

In recent years youth crime has been found to be problematic in English society, as in 2000 42, 326 young people had received a reprimand, warning or conviction regarding criminal activities (Lumley, 2010). The delinquent behaviours that is often associated with young people is mainly acquisitive and violent crimes (Connexions, 2006), along with illicit substance misuse. It is evident that youths are an issue for the public and raise a threat to communities as the Home office (2003) states that one of the issues related to youth crime is drug abuse (cited in Payne, 2003). Muncie (1999: 34) found that statistics showed half of the population had been involved in illegal activity by the use of illicit substances. Studies have shown that in the North-West England 1991, 6 in 10 had been offered drug and 39% had taken drugs, 31% in the past year and 20% in the past month (Measham, Newcombe and Parker 1994).

The most popular drugs that are taken by youths are predominately cannabis, cocaine and ecstasy (Boys, Marsden and Strang, 2001), although recently legal highs such as methadone have been popular amongst the

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youth culture. Cocaine and ecstasy are used to increase stimulant and are associated with 'party drugs;' whereas cannabis is a sedative and calms the nervous system which found to be popular within the youth population (Boys et al, 2001). Results indicated that younger people used cannabis to 'increase confidence' and 'stop worrying,' similar results were found in ecstasy and cocaine use along with other effects such as weight loss for females and for male were improve the effects of other drugs (Boys et al 2001). This suggests that young people consume drugs as a result of their lack of confidence. Other studies have notified that young people take illegal substances because of contextual society and have been related to club culture which links to class A drugs such as ecstasy (Muncie, 1999: 194) and recently methadone (M-kat). Young people often do not see the long term effects of illicit drug use and don't feel the substances that drugs contain are addictive and can lead to regular intake and more serious issues (Direct Gov, 2009).

Substance abuse increases the cost for government spending as research from the Home Office found that it costs £300 per person in England and Wales in 2002 (BBC News, 2002). This includes sentencing drug offenders, cost through drug related crime and any NHS treatment required as well as rehabilitation and intervention methods (BBC News, 2002). Due to the heavy cost of drug crime it is important to put in measures such as rehabilitation to reduce recidivism which ultimately reduces costs. A statement by the Home Office minister suggested that drug treatment works and is more cost effective although more attention is needed on the reduction of class A drugs (BBC News, 2002). Investment has been put forward in 2007 for drug

education and £5.65 million was given to attempt to reduce substance misuse (Jacqui Smith, Home Secretary cited in YJB, 2011). The effectiveness of the drug treatment requirement will be researched to see if rehabilitation methods to find out whether the Drug Treatment is effective and worth government costs.

## **Effect of Drugs on Young People and Society**

Drug abuse amongst adolescents was found to be a problem within the 1990's, one of the risks towards young people was their health as stated by the NHS (2009) that substance intake can have a negative effect on the quality of a young person's life. In relation to this was a study by Hawkins et al (1992) who explained how substance abuse causes issues for both the individual and society. The effects of drug abuse for the individual can be both physical and mental. It has been found to; decrease motivation, distort cognitive processes, change mood and increase death in young people (Hawkins et al, 1992). As a result of these factors Rutter and Smith (1995); Keating and Hertzman (1999) found that suicide, anti-social behaviour and depression were the main issues involved with substance abuse (cited in Spooner, 2002).

The negative impact that drugs have on youth's attitudes and behaviour also affects the community. The problems for society are that; more money is being spent on education of drugs, health services, drug treatment and youth crime (Hawkins et al 1992). As already stated within the BBC News (2002) there is a heavy cost in relation to drug abusers. Therefore is it clear that drugs are a concern amongst youths for both communities and young people (adolescents). This will be studied further to see whether

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implementation of the rehabilitation order for young people has had an effect on recidivism.

## **Why Young people become involved in illicit drugs**

Reasons why young people become involved in drugs have been associated with a lack of confidence and anxiety but other external influences can be a cause of drug abuse. The Advisory Council on the misuse of drugs (1998) established that the influence of drugs have been found within poorer areas (cited in MacDonald and Marsh, 2002). Other academic literature has supported this theory and state that the environmental factor such of a low socio-economic area is a result of substance abuse along with other factors including peer pressure and curiosity (Direct Gov, 2009). In contrast to this MacDonald and Marsh (2002) found that the environment is not always the cause of illicit drug taking and there will still be other groups such as non-drug users, recreational users and problematic drug users within socio-economic areas.

Gang culture within the youth population has been found to be an issue related to substance misuse as Bennett and Holloway (2004) found that there were 30, 000 gangs in England and Wales; within this were different types of gangs and ' drugs gang' was one (Carter, 2002 cited in Bennett and Holloway, 2004). This indicates a problem towards peer pressure and substance misuse.

Whether the reasons of drug taking is the impact of the socio economic society or the sheer inquisitiveness of the youth it is an illegal act and consequences of substance abuse can often result in delinquent behaviour.

## **Drug-crime Relationship**

There has been much debate over whether crime causes drug misuse or illicit drug taking causes crime. However it is a fact that approximately a third and half of crimes are by drug users. It is believed that once the young person is addicted then delinquency increases (NHS, breaking the link).

Drug-related crime poses a threat to communities as the main offence is burglary as the cost of drug dependency is expensive causing a bigger cost to the public and government of £13. 9 billion alone for burglary (NHS BTL).

## **What is rehabilitation?**

Treadwell (2006) states that rehabilitation is the concept that treatment is given through; training, education, work experience, treatment programmes, group work or counselling. However there has been much debate over defining rehabilitation and Raynor and Robinson (2005a, 2009a) explain that 'correctional' rehabilitation is related to treatment with the objective to stop offending. It aims to control individuals through rehabilitating their needs with specific programmes and resist offenders going against the 'norm,' and regenerate them into law abiding citizens (Raynor and Robinson, 2005a, 2009a: 5-9). It is argued by Hudson (2003) that there is a difference between rehabilitation and reform, as reform is suggested to be the educative and thought processing techniques, whereas rehabilitation is referred to treatment programmes, which implies a more individualistic method, for example the drug treatment and testing programme which accommodates the needs of the specific problem of the offender.

Treatment programmes have been implemented in the youth justice system to rehabilitate substance misuse as the problem  
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## **Governments Approach to Rehabilitation**

During the 90's youth crime was at its highest which meant that it was even more important for the government to take control and reduce the risks of delinquent youths to society. New Labours stance on young people was to punish but also consider their wellbeing, as it became the parties priority in 1997 to control youth crime, (Newburn, 1998). This meant that New Labour began to consider the individuals needs and become responsible for children in England after their gain of control in 1997. New policies emerged such as; the increase of training and education, increase of educating young people about drugs, measures to reduce truancy and exclusion, and to educate parents (Newburn, 1998?). New Labour believed that children grow out of crime, therefore implementing programmes to help means that society will eventually contain more law abiding citizens (Newburn, 1998).

The government aimed to reduce recidivism by targeting poverty stricken areas, as it has already been stated that substance misuse is widely associated with poorer areas, although this raised other concerns such as labelling. The labelling theory explains that by the government targeting low economy neighbourhoods and in particular youth crime such as drugs, then this will have an impact on the youths as Becker (???) suggests that people act in the way they are expected to act.

Government policies have also shown that there is a problem with delinquency amongst youths when New Labour came into power two legislations were implemented, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (Cavidino and Dignan, 2007: 321). These legislations were inflicted to change the government's approach <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-rehabilitation-and-how-it-works-criminology-essay/>

to manage the youth population more effectively. Other acts came in later which show how these legislations were not completely effective towards society. The Anti-social behaviour act 2003 aimed to allow police to have more power, for example stop and search. This was put into action to prevent youth crime and to allow the public to feel safer within their communities. From the Governments intentions it is clear that rehabilitation was being re-established in 1997, and political goals aimed to reduce recidivism through targeting the individual. Therefore it is evident that the New Labour Government re-developed the Youth Justice Service into shaping youths and regenerating society. They introduced Youth Offending teams, as well as reforming non-custodial sentences, and involved the introduction of new court orders (.....)

However rehabilitation has moved on since New Labour and other orders have been launched such as the Drug Treatment and Testing order, young people were sentence under the Community Order (YJB, ). According to the Youth Justice Board (????) in 2009 this was abolished and requirements are subjected to the Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO). The YRO means that sentencing young people is more simplistic as it is one order with 18 requirements, instead of eight separate community sentences (YJB, ). This means that young people are assigned to the appropriate requirements and gives sentencing a more reliable approach. New Labour was unable to effectively cut prison overcrowding, and Cameron aims to combat this issue by reducing the short-term prison sentences and increasing community punishment (Yorkshire Post, 2010).



Although there have been measures and acts put into place by the government to prevent and reduce crime amongst youths, and England and Wales has seen a 24% decrease in drug use since 1998 (YJB, 2011). The drug strategy however has been updated as the Minister wanted to update the approach by tackling dealers as well as educating young people and updating the treatment for drug users (YJB, 2011). This dissertation will concentrate on the drug treatment requirement to analyse whether the approach has been effective in updating the treatment to reduce recidivism.

## **Public perceptions on rehabilitation**

Although the Governments intentions have been to combat youth crime and protect society for over a decade.... evidence rehabilitation has been given much negativity from the media which has impacted upon the public's perceptions (Cavadino and Dignan, 2007: 312). Haines and Drakeford (1998: 3) explained that there is a fear factor that is implied when the term youth is used, as it is expected that young people misbehave and have little respect and consideration for others.

Marlowe (2003) explained that society incarcerate drug abusers for public protection, however this study shows how imprisonment of drug abusers can result in society being more at risk. Langan and Levin (2002) stated that within 3 years of release 2 thirds of offenders including drug offenders re-offend, this puts society at more risk (cited in Marlowe, 2003).

The theory of normalisation of drugs amongst adolescents (parker? ) supports the ideas around the threat of youths in society as illicit substance misuse is popular and deviant behaviour surrounding this activity has

negative effects on the child's behaviour and attitude which results in anti-social behaviour. Although the British Crime Survey (2010) found that the public perceptions towards anti-social behaviour had decreased from the previous year, from 15% to 14%. The confidence of public attitudes also found to increase in 2010 as 42% of people were certain that the criminal justice system as a whole was more effective (British Crime Survey, 2010).

It is said that rehabilitation orders are seen as an easy option for offenders ())) and the argument around this theory is that if the rehabilitative method is effective then the public's views would not be so negative. This is not to say that rehabilitation is not effective it may be the cause of a lack of knowledge in the field as the media portray non custodial sentencing as a way out for youths and this is often the only representation the public will infiltrate. This dissertation will look into drug treatment further and assess whether it is effective or whether the public's negative views are worthy.

Heines and Drakeford (1998: 21) found that ' young people' and ' crime' were two words that went together in the thoughts of the older generation. This seems unjustified by the statistics of the actual crime committed by adolescents but it seems that youths have given a negative vibe to many citizens through the intimidation of gangs as stated by and the results of 30, 000 gangs within the UK ((((((())).

## **Drug Rehabilitation Order**

Drug treatment and testing requirement, is assessed by; the offence they have committed, the seriousness of the drug problem, willingness to change and level of drug related delinquency and must also be agreed by the

offender (Home Office, 2002p16). The programmes can last up to 3 years, the minimum is 6 months, and can involve; counselling, prescription drugs or attending a day centre (National Probation Service, 2005). The treatment aims to reduce or eradicate the dependency of the drug for the young person and should be attached to a Youth Rehabilitation Order if the young person's crime is related to the misuse of drugs or their behaviour has resulted in them committing the crime because of the drug/drugs (Youth Justice Board, 2010).

The drug testing requirement can only be given if the young person has been sentenced to the Drug Treatment. Testing young people allows the Drug Treatment to be assessed and measured, it has been stated that if the young person provides negative results this does not mean that they are sent back to court but that the Drug treatment varies for each individual and an appropriate treatment is applied to each individual case. Therapy differentiates from different settings, forms and lengths of time, depending on the seriousness of the individual's addiction. Although treatment is often long-term to reduce relapse and increase the possibility of rehabilitation.

The Drug Treatment requirement before 2009 will be analysed, as the rehabilitation requirement as not changed in the way it works. The Youth Justice System has however changed the way in which courts sentence juveniles to community based requirements.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that in the 90's substance abuse was a concern for young people, government and society. New Labour began to deal with the issue by

establishing legislations to combat drug crime. Confidence was not raised within society in the 90's which show that the impact of the New Labour was not fully effective on reducing recidivism in relation to substance abuse.

Public perceptions seem to generate a more positive attitude towards anti-social behaviour and the criminal justice system (BCS, 2010). This gives an implication that methods from the coalition government are effective. The treatment requirement for drug abuse will be analysed to assess the effectiveness towards recidivism.

## **Literature Gap**

In 2004 Martinson.... found that there was little research conducted on substance abuse treatments and.....

**Martin et al (1999) found that 85% of drug abuse offences within 1 year was involved in illicit substance misuse and within 3 years 95% became involved in drug use again.**

**<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Drug-misuse/Pages/Risks.aspx>**