

# The Mixed Method Evaluation of 188 UK-Wide Community Circles of Support and Accountability

## Co-authors

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# Overview

- Circles UK received funding from the Big Lottery to set up 188 Circles over the next four years.
- Projects partners included:
  - Circles Merseyside
  - Safer Living Foundation
  - Circles South East
  - Yorkshire, Humberside & Lincolnshire Circles
  - Circles North West
- CoSA started in November 2015, with the first CoSA starting December 2015
- Mixed method programme of evaluation also started at this point.

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# Aims of Evaluation

- To understand the impact and success of CoSA in risk management and re-integration of sex offenders released into the community, through a Big Lottery funded Circle of Support and Accountability.
- To ensure the required outcomes of the Big Lottery funding are addressed, where these are research/evaluation related (i.e. not directly project related, such as ensuring x number of Circles are set up).
- To ensure robust evaluation data are collated and disseminated that can form the platform for future funding bids.

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# Study 1/2: Changes in Core Members

Study 1 will focus on the dynamic risk of Core Members.

- It will highlight changes over time for risk-related items, outline 'normal' trajectories of DRR scores (baseline and end points) and incorporate more advanced analysis of data (logistic regression, factor analysis, multi-level modelling of data) to maximise usefulness of the DRR in predicting the failure of a CoSA /a red flag incident.
- The study will also report on the re-integration of the CMs as assessed by participation in appropriate hobbies and activities, having stable accommodation and having any paid or voluntary employment.

Study 2 will focus on the emotional wellbeing of Core Members

- This study will research on examining changes in the emotional wellbeing of Core Members, and in particular compare pre and post CoSA levels.

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# Study 3: Through the Eyes of the Beneficiaries

- This study will seek to understand areas for improvement for the service delivery of CoSA through the eyes of the beneficiaries.
- This will include understanding the following aspects of the CoSA service: volunteer input; access to Circles; experience of Circles; and attitudes of external organisations for example Offender Managers and Supervisors working with service users whilst on CoSA.

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# Study 4: Circles: Examining Success and Failure

- The research will analyse the reasons for circles ending, and will explore in detail, the experiences of all components of a failed circle by developing rich, mixed method case studies that involve CMs, volunteers, coordinators, and any other stakeholders (such as offender managers/supervisors, MAPPA members), and an analysis of data on the CoSA.
- This will help understand the reasons why a circle fails, what happens on failed circles and can be learned from failures (i.e. are their volunteer training needs that are unmet?). Where CoSA fail due to recalls, the reasons for recalls will be examined.
- This research will also include 2-3 case studies of successful CoSA, exploring how the CoSA has worked and what volunteers and the CMs have gained from it. Understanding the challenges that even successful CoSA need to overcome (and how they have done this) will also be part of this research.

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# Study 5: Volunteers

- The research would analyse examine the chart the level, type and volume of volunteering, and increases in skills, confidence and experience.

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# CoSA challenges

- Reflections from Core Members, Prisoners at HMP Grendon and the Whatton and NTU Service User Research Group
- Rosie to add
- Service users
  - OMs / OSs did not know about CoSA
  - Nothing in their area
  - Indeterminate sentences
  - Not applicable as 'got' social support (but did not want to talk to them about sexual thoughts and worries)
  - Very positive about CoSA and typically wanted one – maybe too popular
  - Grendon service users talked about the need for people to talk to post TC

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# Timeline

- CoSA starting per year (2017 in Y1, 2018 in Y2, 2019 In Y3 & 20 in Y4)
- Interim review and outputs November 2017
- Final report December 2019

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# Questions and Contact details

Please feel free to ask questions or make contact with us.

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