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To investigate attitudes towards the use of Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) and the possible use of overnight stays for children in the Community Custodial Units (CCUs) in the new custodial estate in Scotland.

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Abstract

This dissertation is an investigation into the attitudes towards the use of Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) and the possible use of overnight stays for children in Community Custodial Units (CCUs), in the new custodial estate in Scotland. Scotland is currently undergoing transformative change in custodial provision for women and, with women continuing to receive visits from their children and give birth whilst in custody, now is the time to consider the provision of spaces to promote attachment between mothers and children living in or visiting a custodial environment. The intention to investigate, using two phases, anonymous questionnaires with mothers and interviews with staff, allowed the responses from the mothers from the Phase 1 questionnaires to be taken into the Phase 2 staff interviews. This research will add to the existing body of knowledge relating to the separation of mothers from their children, including those who are pregnant in the Scottish custodial estate. By reviewing my findings, alongside existing policies and legislation, as well as any academic literature already available the dissertation finds that, there is a lot of uncertainty in relation to what levels of support are available to mothers and children affected by parental imprisonment and what is in the best interest of the child. The findings suggest that more support is required for mothers and children to promote and maintain attachment whilst a mother is in custody. The overall attitudes indicated that the use of MBUs should continue as they can improve bonding and attachment in the early stages. There were mixed responses on the possibility of overnight stays in the CCUs for other children and attitudes indicated that more information was required, as well as new legislation to allow for it. Suggested areas for further research include, revisiting the CCUS once they are open to explore any benefits and challenges and, to investigate if the CCU model of custody could be offered to fathers in custody to promote a more gender-neutral approach to the current custodial offer in Scotland.

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| ACEs | Adverse Childhood Experiences |
| BERA | British Educational Research Association |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CCUs | Community Custody Units |
| EYP | Early Years Practitioner |
| GIRFEC | Getting It Right For Every Child |
| MBUs | Mother and Baby Units |
| PLS | Plain Language Statement |
| SPS | Scottish Prison Service |
| UNCRC | United Nations Convention On The Rights Of the Child |

Chapter 1: Introduction

Throughout history women have been defined in familial gendered categories such as mothers, wives and daughters, with historically motherhood providing the most significant social exclusion (Feinman, 1994; Baldwin and Abbott, 2020). Therefore, mothers serving a custodial sentence often find themselves even more excluded by society as they are considered to have fallen outside the ideals and ideologies of motherhood (O'Reilly, 2016). By suggesting that 'to become a prisoner is almost by definition to become a bad mother' (Corston: 2007, 2, 17:20) only adds to the social exclusion most mothers feel when entering custody. There can exist a struggle to manage the opposing 'correctional and educational frames' (Ragland, 2006; 173) in any justice setting and when anyone receives a custodial sentence, it must be accepted that prejudices may influence the way situations are viewed (Goffman, 1986). The experience of mothers in custody have been described by Baldwin (2018) as disjointed at best and at worst, motherhood can be destroyed by the location. As stated in the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) Strategy for Women in Custody: 2021-2025 (SPS, 2021:02) 'The buildings are essential to the strategy, providing environments that do not feel institutional but are more like home'. In an aim to improve the location for women in custody, SPS are currently redesigning the new custodial estate with a focus on trauma informed practice and the need for a more welcoming approach for children visiting custodial environments (SPS, 2021).

1.1 Rationale

It is estimated that 65% of women in custody in Scotland are mothers, it has also been reported that between the years of 2012 and 2016, thirty-two women gave birth while in custody and nine babies lived with their mother in Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) in Scottish prisons (Prison Reform Trust, 2017). Between 2016 and January 2022, fourteen women gave birth while in custody and four babies lived with their mother in a MBUs, with only one of those mother and baby pairs being placed in an MBU since 2018 (SPS, 2022a). This research will investigate the attitudes towards the use of MBUs and the possible use of

overnight stays for children in the Community Custodial Units (CCUs) in the new custodial estate in Scotland, suggesting that now is the time to 'consider emotion, space and society' in the planning of the provision for babies, children, and women living in or visiting custodial establishments (Baldwin, 2018;49). The research will also consider the facilities and services available to mothers and children in the MBUs and CCUs and how they can be used to develop and/or to continue the bond between mothers in custody and their children.

1.2 Personal motivation for the research

In my previous role as an Early Years Practitioner (EYP) based in a female prison, over the last five years I have provided support to successful and unsuccessful mothers with their application for places in MBUs when faced with the certainty of giving birth while in custody. In this time frame I was positioned inside the context of the research and experienced first-hand many of the challenges and perceptions experienced by mothers, either pregnant or whom already have children when entering custody. The research will draw on my own practice as a practitioner and will focus on the experiences of mothers in custody, as well as the importance of mother and child bonding and the opportunities which could be available to promote the development of attachment. By exploring the theory of attachment (Perry et al., 1995; Bretherton, 1992) alongside disrupted/disorganised attachment (Skinner-Osei and Levenson, 2018:) and the role transitions play during the early years (O'Conner, 2018), this research will explore the benefits and any challenges experienced when offering trauma informed services for women, babies, and children (Jewkes et al., 2019) in Scottish prisons. In addition, the research will make some recommendations regarding the development of and future use of both, MBUs and CCUs to ensure, where possible, mothers, babies and children can develop secure attachment and that the welfare of the children who are living with or visiting their mothers in custody is paramount (SPS, 2021).

1.3 Research aims

This study will research with people (McLintock et al., 2003), with a focus on experiences from mothers who have been separated from their children while in custody and the staff who support them. As part of the examination of the use of MBUs, I will also consider the application process for expectant mothers and explore any support available to them. A planned outcome of the Strategy for Women in Custody: 2021-2025 (SPS, 2021) includes the aim to refresh and implement updated family and mother and baby policies to further develop arrangements to support mother and child relationships in the best interest of the child. This strategy also includes a principle where children's rights and wellbeing will be considered in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UNICEF, online) when babies are cared for by their mothers or spend time with them in a custodial setting (SPS, 2021).

The importance of national policies intended to improve outcomes for children during the early years (Scottish Government, 2008a) as well as energies to identify the needs of children affected by parental imprisonment in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2015a) has led to this research focus being to provide recommendations for practice for staff on the attitudes towards the use of MBUs in the Scottish prison estate and the possibilities of overnight stays in the CCUs for other children. In undertaking research linked to my previous professional practice, I aim to share the experiences of others and identify areas for future improvements for mothers, babies, and children living in or spending time visiting the custodial estate in Scotland, as well as for the professionals working with them (Ragland, 2006).

After consideration of the research aims, listed below are four main research questions which this research will attempt to answer,

- How are MBUs perceived by mothers applying for access and for staff working in the establishment?
- What support is currently in place for pregnant women in custody?
- What are the views and attitudes of children having overnight stays in the CCUs?

- How can the new prison estate further develop arrangements to support the mother and child relationship wherever this is in the best interest of the child?

1.4 Structure of the research

The project will take place in two phases to explore the experiences and/or challenges for mothers who give birth and/or are separated from their children whilst in custody. Phase 1 will involve the use of two questionnaires. One with pregnant women in custody, and the other for mothers who have been separated from their children because they are currently in custody. Phase 2 will be the interviewing of SPS staff, prison-based external agencies working with families and/or mothers in custody and where possible previous users of the MBUs who may now be out of custody. Using the responses from Phase 1 to structure designed research questions, staff, agencies, and previous users will be asked about their perceptions and experiences of MBUs as well as the possibility for other children having overnight stays in the CCUs in the future. The data collected in both phases will be analysed using a thematic approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to identify themes. Before moving on to outline the methodology for the research in Chapter 3 and the data analysis and findings in Chapter 4 as well as the implications for practice in Chapter 5, the next chapter will present an overview of the existing literature as well as current and emerging legislation which supports and informs my research project.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter places the enquiry within wider research and critically reviews existing policies and legislation as well as available literature to reveal that whilst research does exist in this field, there is little written evidence on the Scottish context for mothers and or children separated by imprisonment. I will begin by presenting what is already known and then continue to discuss the focus of the literature and legislation already available. The main categories identified in the literature relevant to this research are; what is known, the role of MBUs, the new estate and a need for change, attachment, separation, trauma, the role of parenting programmes and equivalence. Discussion of these themes will demonstrate the importance of providing environments that support and or allow for the development of attachment between mothers and their children when a mother receives a custodial sentence.

2.1 What is known

In Scotland it is estimated that annually round 27,000 children in Scotland have a parent in prison (Long et al., 2021). In 2017, the Prison Reform Trust reported that 65% of women in prison in Scotland are parents of dependent children, with the effects of female imprisonment not being restricted to the women themselves but also impacting their families, where the children are often referred to as the ‘forgotten victims of crime’ (Myers et al., 2017:2).

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in May 2016, recommended that the UK Government should consider the best interest of the child at sentencing and where possible avoid custodial sentences which separate children from their parents (Brett, 2018). This is also stated in The United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, referred to as the Bangkok Rules, which set out standards for the treatment of women offenders including mothers and agrees that the best interest of the child should take priority as should provision for the care of the children (UN General Assembly, 2010). However, this is not always possible and when a mother is

imprisoned without their child, there is an interference with these rights (Minson and Flynn, 2021). Under Article 9 of the 1989, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children have the right not to be separated from their parents unless it is in their best interests, whilst Article 8 respects the right for a child to have family relationships (UNICEF, online). Nevertheless, when a parent is imprisoned, a child's rights may be curtailed rather than being removed entirely, unless it is in the child's best interest, the existence of MBUs and visits to facilitate contact recognises the child's right to family life and contact with their parent (Minson and Flynn, 2021). Unquestionably, in many cases a conflict of interest could arise between the justice system and the UNCRC, however by integrating the rights of the child into Scottish Law through the introduction of the Children (Scotland) Act 2020, the rights of the child must be considered in decisions made about them. This act should ensure compliance with the UNCRC and make substantial changes to the voices of children growing up in Scotland being heard in matters affecting them.

In many cases, when a parent receives a prison sentence, a child's daily structure and security can be destroyed, and often, they are rarely recognised as a distinct group within the systems and policy structures that should protect them (Wolleswinkel, 2002). When considering best interest of the child, there is no automatic entitlement or transition for a mother to be placed in an a MBU with her baby after their birth, however MBUs can play a crucial role in early stages of development and attachment for both mother and baby (Ministry of Justice, 2020).

2.2 The role of MBUs

In Scotland there are three options when women give birth in custody; the baby may live with mum in the MBU, they may live in the community with an alternative caregiver, or under a shared care agreement which is a combination of them living in the MBU and in the community (University of Stirling and Aberlour, 2016). The purpose of a MBU is to allow the baby to stay with mum in the unit during her imprisonment to allow the mother/baby relationship to develop, if it is in the best interest of the child (Ministry of Justice, 2020). The most appropriate care is considered by a panel of professionals where the mother has

input in the process, with the prison governor making the final decision. Cases are assessed on an individual basis, with the consideration of the long-term best interest of the child as outlined in the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) guidance being the final influencing factor in the decision (Scottish Government, 2008a). The GIRFEC framework outlines the responsibilities for professionals to assess a child's needs based around wellbeing indicators, and then structure a support system allowing for multi-agency information sharing (Scottish Government, 2008a). This framework indicates suggests an alignment with Ryan's (2018) authentic child model, where adults act as gatekeepers to children requiring protection (Byrne, 2016). This implies that the key agents of change (Wyness, 2006) are the professionals, positioned by the Government to improve children's outcomes by providing support to children and parents (Scottish Government 2008a).

Since 2018, only one baby has stayed in the MBU after being born in custody (SPS, 2022a). The final decision on placement in the MBU is centred around the best interest of the child, however many of the primary considerations relate to what is known of the mother's background in relation to history of victimisation, substance misuse, mental health, nature of offence and any other issues that may present challenges to successful parenting (University of Stirling and Aberlour, 2016). The 2007 Corston report brought forward issues referring to mother and baby separation and more recent research carried out in 2021 identified concerns around there being no formal mental health support for women in custody separated from their children, which if not addressed could lead to significant negative consequences for mothers as well as their babies and children (Cahalin, 2021).

Following many tragic suicides in HMP Cornton Vale in the 1990's, the 2012 Commission for Women Offenders Report, carried out by the Dame Angiolini, reported that the only exclusive female prison in Scotland was not fit for purpose, mainly due to overcrowding and women not receiving the support they needed regarding mental health during their time in custody and that rehabilitation opportunities were deemed unsatisfactory (Angiolini, 2012). The findings of this report have led to the collaboration between the Scottish Government and SPS to completely rethink the approach to the female custodial estate in Scotland (SPS, 2021).

2.3 The new estate and strategy, a need for change

Prisons in Scotland have the second highest female population in Northern Europe and in 2015, the Scottish Government undertook a review into the international approaches for women in custody. This was in a bid to learn from and incorporate any existing good practice into the plans for the new estate in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2015b). In Scotland, this review initiated the beginning of the planning for the transformative changes to provision for women in custody, leading to the announcement of investment to build a new national facility, as well as the build commitment for the first two CCUs, which will provide a more 'personal, intensive and relevant approach to the needs of each individual' (Scottish Parliament Information Service, 2018).

The purpose of the five planned CCUs in Scotland is to provide both gender specific and trauma-based accommodation and services that are designed to encourage women's independence in preparation for successful reintegration into the community as responsible citizens (SPS, 2022b). Women will be housed in shared facilities, designed to blend into the existing community with no bars on the windows, where women will have access to appropriate, risk assessed local support agencies and amenities as outlined in their individual support plan (SPS, 2022b). In 2016 the Governor of the only exclusive female prison in Scotland highlighted the importance for opportunities in the new CCUs for women to rebuild links with their families and stated that there would be a mother and child area and there were plans for children 'to be able to come and stay overnight' (SPS, 2016). Baldwin (2018:55) highlights the need for supportive staff within these more 'open conditions' as relationships are key to the emotional management of mothers when maintaining their mothering role, making positive mother/staff relations crucial if or when children may be able to stay overnight.

The Vision for Justice in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2022) outlines the recognition that people are experts in their own lives and outlines core principles underpinning the need to ensure policies, procedures, systems, and environments are person centred and embedded with trauma informed practice principles. The document also highlights the need for children to have early and good quality contact with their imprisoned parent to reassure

them of their parent's wellbeing (Scottish Government, 2022). Hairston (2007) commends this approach, emphasising that feelings of abandonment and anxiety can be reduced by contact visits as they can help to promote emotional security for children by letting them see that their parent is safe.

This trauma informed, whole system approach is also echoed in the Strategy for Women in Custody: 2021-2025 (SPS, 2021) where SPS highlight the use of best practice in designing the new facilities and provision that relate to children while living in or visiting a custodial setting, including family rooms, visit rooms, mother/child facilities and CCUs. It has been argued that by considering 'gender-informed thinking' (Jewkes et al., 2019:1) in the creation of physical spaces and policies, SPS can build areas within the new estate intimately linked to the mothering role of women (Baldwin, 2018). These spaces provide an environment to promote positive mother and child interaction during a mother's time in custody, which can encourage relationships of secure attachment to develop (Schubert et al., 2016).

2.4 Attachment

Attachment theory has foundations in the principles that children should experience intimate and warm, continuous connections in the first years of their life, providing a secure base between them and their parents or caregivers (Bowlby, 1969). When children are too young to understand why they have been separated from their parent, these continuous connections are interrupted, leading to feelings of rejection and abandonment (Flynn, 2014), and in some cases, these early attachment experiences can link to negative outcomes in later life (Bretherton, 1992). In contrast to Bowlby, Anna Freud adopts a learning theory approach where the child's attachment is the outcome of the mother attending to the child's needs (Freud, 1953) and could be carried out by any adult. A further consideration to attachment theory is offered by Schaffer and Emerson where they suggest that a child will form attachment with any caregiver and that multiple relationship attachment can be developed to include fathers, siblings, and grandparents (Shafer and Emerson, 1964). However, in each of these studies it is unclear if separation from other relationships causes the same potential anxiety as separation from the child's mother (Branstetter, 1969).

It has been argued that when a child is separated from their primary caregiver because of imprisonment, their attachment can be disrupted/disorganised which could affect the emotional development of the child (Nichols and Loper, 2012; Skinner-Osei and Levenson, 2018). Murray and Murray (2010), in agreement, discuss the relevance of maternal incarceration and how the disruption can lead to risks of mothers and babies experiencing insecure attachment. In addition, Bretherton (2010) outlines that the effect of parental imprisonment on attachment in infants and children requires the assessment of the entire network of support around the child as children rely on other adults to look after them and to facilitate contact visits with their imprisoned parents (Minson and Flynn, 2021). If these adult relationships are complex and or strained, the child and mother may experience the concept of 'symbiotic harms' which are a framework developed to understand the negative impacts of imprisonment flowing both ways through relationships that are interdependent (Condry and Minson, 2020:1). An example of these harms could be where a family member restricts contact between an imprisoned mother and child, the mother struggles and is upset by the situation and the child may feel abandoned due to the reduction in contact (Mison and Flynn, 2021). The way in which families manage crisis using survival or resistance strategies are also recognised in the symbiotic harm's framework (Minson and Flynn, 2021). Whilst the evidence is limited on children's emotional outcomes when they do not have contact with their mother in prison, there remains consideration on the importance of maintaining some form of contact given that most mothers in custody plan to resume caregiving responsibilities on release, in these cases secure attachment could be fundamental to the success of the re-establishment of the parenting role (Schubert et al., 2016).

When considering the development of a child living in a prison, Jimenez and Palacios (2003) reported that there was no difference between them and a same age child living in the community. Whereas Catan (1992) disagrees and presented evidence that some babies' development could be disadvantaged from living in prison, although, continued to note that the decline in development was temporary and they soon caught up with their peers after returning to the community. However, they all referenced the mother's educational level and how if not supported, any gaps in the mother's education could influence the outcomes and development for their children. Myers, et al., 2017, further explores this by stating that

childhood disadvantage can stem from parental disadvantage beginning before birth, highlighting that women who end up in prison tend to have histories of low educational attainment and vulnerabilities which have led them to commit crime (Bryne and Howells, 2002).

The best interests of the child, remains at the forefront of policies for children living in or visiting a custodial establishment, which is understandable given the potential impacts of parental imprisonment. Attachment, however, can be determined on the relationship between the child and their carer, and it is possible that policies in the best interest of the child, often overlook the impact of separation on mothers, which could be a contributing factor to the difficulties felt by both mother and child (Powell et al., 2017). Attachment theory is considered relevant in prison settings to help understand the impact of separation and provide insights into supporting women if they experience distress because of being separated from their child (Borelli et al., 2010).

2.5 Separation

Having a child can be one of the most overwhelmingly important periods in any woman's life (Ministry of Justice, 2020) and throughout time the mother/child relationship has been presented as the most significant experienced by humans (Johnstone, 2019). Murray and Murray (2010) discuss the importance of understanding children's attachment and life experiences prior to the separation from their parent, as this would allow for the consideration of any potential disrupted/disorganised attachment (Skinner-Osei and Levenson, 2018) because of parental imprisonment. In 2012 it was reported that, of the two thirds of women with dependent children in prison in Scotland, many of them are single parents, with 80% of pregnant women in custody being single, separated or divorced (Angiolini, 2012).

In cases, when a father is imprisoned the majority of children remain in the family home where their mother continues the role as the primary caregiver (Schubert et al., 2016), however, when a mother receives a prison sentence, it is more common that children leave

the family home to live with relatives or, in some cases, the foster care system (Glaze and Maurschak, 2010). Therefore, it has been argued by many researchers that children are at increased risk of disrupted attachment relationships when their mother is incarcerated rather than their father (Dallaire, 2007; Murray and Murray, 2010; Glaze and Maurschak, 2010). Cunningham Stringer (2020), argues that not all mothers show commitment to motherhood, and some may avoid the situation or abandon their role, sacrificing their children to save themselves (Kennedy et al., 2020). Walker, (2018) goes further to say that where motherhood can act as a motivating factor, in many cases is not enough for women who have been in custody to make transformative change to their life choices. In every case the best interest of the child is the deciding factor as research indicates that children of incarcerated parents are more likely to experience positive outcomes if they receive high quality, stable caregiving during their parent's incarceration (Poehlmann, 2005).

When a parent receives a custodial sentence, many questions are raised by children regarding their disappearance, as it raises a threat to the security of the child's parental attachment (Murray and Murray, 2010). Silencing a child's questions can undermine trust (Cassidy et al., 2010; Poehlmann, 2005) and many studies highlight the need for truthful, developmentally appropriate explanations to help young children understand their absent parent have not abandoned them (Bowlby, 1969; Murray and Murray, 2010; Byng-Hall, 1995).

For most children affected by maternal imprisonment it is the first time they have been separated from their mothers for more than a day or so (Epstein, 2014). Equally it can be the same for their mother, with Datesman and Cales (1983:142) describing mothering from prison as a 'profound hurt'. Pregnant women in prison describe the stress of not knowing if they will be separated from their child as particularly traumatic and they also generally feel protective over their bump and fearful that their baby may be harmed if a volatile situation occurs (Baldwin and Abbott, 2020). Recent research has highlighted global themes referring to the attachment of mothers and children and acknowledging the painful impact of 'separation as trauma' when a mother and child are separated because of a custodial sentence (Powell et al., 2017:277).

2.6 Trauma

It has been reported that children and caregivers affected by parental imprisonment experience more trauma than other families (Arditti and Salva, 2015). It has also been suggested that traumatic events in childhood, including parental imprisonment can lead to lasting changes in the brain, leading to adverse health and mental health outcomes (Schoore, 2013). Babies' brains are incomplete at birth, and they rely on healthy human relationships to shape development (Zeedyk, 2016), therefore, exposure to traumatic effects during early brain development in infancy can have far reaching and irreparable consequences (Perry, 1995). Women in prison have also been categorised as a being part of a 'trauma population' due to their previous exposure to trauma throughout their lifetime, including domestic violence, rape, and physical assault (Seedat et al., 2004:263). In recent years, childhood trauma has been researched as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), one of these ten ACEs includes parental imprisonment (Skinner-Osei and Levenson, 2018). Baldwin (2018) suggests that the inclusion of parental imprisonment as an ACE supports the argument that the impact of trauma can be felt by children where motherhood is challenged by the social exclusion of them being in custody.

As part of the Programme for Government, the Scottish Government have initiated a leadership pledge of support for trauma informed practice, which will raise standards of support across public sector organisations, including custodial environments, recognising the existence of ACEs in the justice system (Scottish Government, 2021). This policy will work alongside the SPS (2021) strategy to include the need for practice and services to be trauma informed and person centred, to provide access to trauma informed rehabilitation and support to adults and children who come into contact with the justice system (Scottish Government, 2022).

In general prisons are not designed with children in mind which can cause fear and anxiety for children visiting (Poehlmann, 2005). There can be a lot of uncertainty and emotional difficulty when visits are non-contact, as it is difficult and confusing to tell a child they cannot touch their parent (Schubert et al., 2016) which is why a lot of mothers forgo visits entirely, as they find the lack of physical contact too painful and traumatic (Allen et al.,

2010). Research indicates that when prison establishments consider the physical space and settings for visits and make them more child friendly and non-institutional, it can enhance the visit experience for both mother and child (Arditti, 2014; Sturges and Al-Khattat, 2009). However, it has been argued that by making visits more child friendly and frequent it normalises the visit experience and uses up the child's free time preventing them from engaging in other developmentally appropriate activities (Cranmer et al., 2017). There is an increasing body of research that supports the idea that parent/child visits are most beneficial when they are part of a parenting programme that works to strengthen attachment and reduce trauma by offering emotional preparation and support before and after the visit to the parent, child, and caregiver present (Arditti, 2014).

2.7 The role of parenting programmes

For mothers in custody, prison can allow for professionals and external agencies to provide interventions benefiting both mother and babies', this could include a stable, targeted influence that may have not been accessible in the community but could provide support to mothers where their parenting experience could be considered chaotic (Walker et al., 2011). In supporting the findings of Walker et al., (2011), Sled et al., (2013), notes that early attachment can be strengthened between mothers and babies in custody by establishments providing effective strategies of dedicated intervention.

Some experts claim that visits are an underused opportunity for intervention and, if visits are structured correctly, they are most effective when run in parallel with a parenting programme rather than as stand-alone activities (Beyer, 2008). However, it has been argued that only mothers who receive visits benefit from parenting programmes (Thompson and Harm, 2000). For mothers to receive visits there is a reliance on the family members the child is living with to have agency to make the best of the situation and support travel to the visit, or ensure the child is available for phone or video calls (Minson, 2019). Parental incarceration can create stigma and shame for children and their families with Cramer et al., 2017, highlighting the metaphorical bars they can find themselves locked behind, being judged by their peers and support network, including other family members. When prisons

facilitate children's visits in family friendly areas with age-appropriate activities, essential to promoting the mother and child bond, it can improve outcomes for both women and their children (Myers et al., 2017). In addition, a family friendly environment, with elements designed to maintain family ties, including live in and overnight stay options for children in an environment where children feel safe, can maximise the potential impact of parenting programmes (Paddick, 2011). The success of any parenting programme relies on the relationships between the mothers attending and the practitioners delivering the programme, allowing for feedback and for mothers to put into practice during the visit what they have learned during the programme (Beyer, 2008). These relationships can be challenging if a judgemental culture exists with prison staff who may not be committed to the benefits of visits or are not properly trained on how to interact with families and children (Cramer et al., 2017). In many custodial establishments parenting programmes are run by third sector charity organisations, where practitioners hold child development qualifications, many women attending these programmes have said the level of care offered by the charities was greater than any they had received in the wider prison environment (Baldwin and Abbott, 2020).

The goals for MBUs include providing a supportive environment with training and education that promotes child development for improved parenting and increased attachment, where if carried out successfully can help reduce recidivism by reinforcing the importance of the mothering role (Friedman et al., 2020). Research suggests that future interventions hold promise for improving the outcomes of mothers (Cassidy et al., 2013), when known factors related to reoffending can be identified and addressed through rehabilitation and parenting initiatives during their time in prison (Myers et al., 2017).

2.8 Equivalence

When a mother receives a custodial sentence, they have an additional layer of judgement to other mothers and can become highly critical of themselves, as well as how their situation intersects with their role as a mother (Baldwin and Abbott, 2020). To reduce reoffending rates and enable women to use their time in custody to contribute to better outcomes for

themselves and reconnect with their children (SPS, 2021), Crawley and Sparks (2005:352) highlight the need to address 'institutional thoughtlessness'. This refers to prison systems and polices not providing necessary support to a particular group, this includes perinatal women, and it has been commented by women that their pregnancy provides them no special privilege whilst in custody (Baldwin and Abbott, 2020).

This further raises the question of equivalence, whilst in custody a pregnant woman does have access to midwife care, however systematic barriers do not allow for women in prison to have the same unrestricted access to the care and expertise of a midwife experienced by pregnant women in the community (Cahalin et al., 2021). Within the prison environment, women are reliant on the system and staff to provide them with the appointments and support they need (Cahalin et al., 2021). Women in custody lack family support at key points in their pregnancy and often describe hospital visits as degrading when attending with prison staff and in some instances handcuffed (Baldwin, 2018). These experiences can affect the mental health of pregnant women by compounding what is already a stressful situation (Stanvea et al., 2015).

With the building of the new estate and implementation of new strategies, Scotland can employ policies that treat pregnant women and those separated from their children, whilst in custody, compassionately (SPS, 2021). By learning from previous lessons that exist to highlight, replicate, and encourage good practice (Baldwin and Abbott, 2020), purpose written policies can increase the likelihood of women being able to prioritise their children and families over their criminal identity (Berg and Huebner, 2011). This will allow for the formation of more stable family structures on release, which can work to minimise reoffending and keep families together (Minson and Flynn, 2021).

2.9 Summary

There are many obstacles and challenges when conducting research in prison establishments, which is one of the reasons why there is limited evaluations of parenting programmes and interventions between mothers and their children (Bretherton, 2010). However, researching relevant existing literature has enabled me to understand existing

contributions and define the direction of my research contribution within the existing major developments already presented in this field (Furseth and Everett, 2013).

The next chapter will outline the chosen methodology for the research including methods, design, ethics, data analysis, limitations, and ethics for study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will discuss the methods utilised to investigate the experiences of mothers in custody with young babies and children under the age of 18, as well as the views of professionals supporting them. It will start by first presenting two of the main empirical paradigms used in research, positivism and interpretivism. Weaver and Olsen (2006) describe paradigms as a means for a bridge between the requirements for and the production of knowledge. This research intended to bridge these requirements by collecting data centred on attitudes, and feelings, based on people's experiences (Ryan, 2018), which allows the findings from practical knowledge to transform understandings or change aspects of society (Campbell et al., 2004).

The chapter will also include details of both phases of the research, methods of analysis and ethical considerations relating to the research as well as considerations for trauma informed research (Beyrer and Kass, 2002). Expanding my existing knowledge will allow assurances that the most appropriate structure and methodological choice for the research is selected to most importantly, seek the experiences of mothers living in the situation (Weaver and Olson, 2006) as well as from those supporting them. Ethical issues which are pertinent will be signposted throughout the chapter and fully examined in the ethics section.

3.1 The paradigm

To ensure the development of knowledge in research philosophy (Saunders et al., 2009) the researcher requires an integrated understanding of paradigms (Weaver and Olsen, 2006). Paradigms can be viewed as a set of practices and beliefs, shared by researchers to regulate inquiry and position research (Guba and Lincoln, 2005, Weaver and Olsen, 2006). Without an understanding of the paradigms available, researchers may be unable to justify their decisions on the chosen methodology and design of their inquiry (Ryan, 2018). The design of any research study will depend on the selected methodology or paradigm selected for the research, which will also influence the methods of data collection and analysis (Holloway and Galvin, 2017). Researchers have many paradigms available to them, which can be

categorised by the differences in the values and beliefs of humans (Hamilton, 1984). Hairston (1982) argues that no one paradigm is better than the other, and equally they can be neither proven nor unproven (Moccia, 1988). Each paradigm, depending on the research question or issue, sets out to achieve different results (Hairston, 1982). By exploring positivism and interpretivism as two of the main paradigms that provide two extremes of the spectrum in the empirical research paradigm, I will consider where best to situate my own research.

As a research paradigm positivism seeks to prove or disprove theories, and values the process of objectivity (Ryan, 2018). Positivism remains ontologically based on the belief that there is only one proven truth (Ryan, 2018) which is logical, and can only be considered true once the facts have been tested and retested with the same result (Bryman, 2008). Related to science and controlled experiments, positivism often consists of generalisable numerical data based principally in quantitative research (Ryan, 2018). Epistemologically, positivists believe that in the world of research, the research and the researcher are entirely separate, in that the existence of the world would remain as is without the presence of the researcher (Bryman, 2008). Guba and Lincoln (2005) go further to suggest that the findings of a positivist research study would be the same regardless of the researcher. The axiology of values and ethics included in research in the positivism paradigm have a scientific voice, created to inform facts to policy and decision makers, gearing the ethics of the study towards external policies and procedures (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). This highlights the position of the positivist paradigm being that knowledge should be objective and remain free from any researcher bias (Phillips and Burbules, 2000).

Working in opposition, interpretivism, values subjectivity and originates from values and principles (Ryan, 2018), with ontological focus on people's experiences, arguing that there can be no single common reality, highlighting that knowledge and truth remain subjective (Ritchie and Lewes, 2003). Depending on the experiences and perceptions of the participants, the results can lead to the reporting of multiple realities (Krauss, 2005). Interpretivists' epistemologies argue that researchers will always look for qualitative methods to allow them to present knowledge differently (Adams St. Pierre, 1997) and accept that they need to remain non-judgemental and subjective, however, always

considering they may never be able to fully separate the research from their own feelings (Ryan, 2018).

Values and ethics reinforce any interpretive study involving researching with people and requires consideration of the transparency between all parties involved (McLintock et al., 2003), with the voice of the participants and the researcher always being evident in the research when values are included in the design of the study (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). The introduction of goodness will ensure the researcher integrates ethics into the process and produces findings situated in trustworthiness, noting that when working in the interpretative paradigm findings should always be shaped by experiences, opinions, and feelings of the participants (Tobin and Begley, 2004).

3.2 Situating the research

I will now consider where my research question and aims are best situated on the spectrum of the empirical research paradigm. As the aims for my research are based on the purpose of understanding experiences (McLintock et al., 2003), I am situating this research in the interpretive paradigm. By working within the interpretative paradigm, where the ontology is subjective and dependent on context (Guba, and Lincoln, 2005), my research project will investigate the attitudes and experiences (McLintock et al., 2003) of MBUs in Scotland, as well as the future consideration of overnight stays for other children in the CCUs. The study was carried out in a Scottish prison setting and considers the development of attachment relating to parental imprisonment (Murray and Murray, 2010). This research involves the study of people experiencing lived situations (Weaver and Olsen, 2006) and can never be separate from the values and beliefs of the researcher (Ryan, 2018). For this reason, when producing findings for this research, values and ethics will have a significant role in the collection, coding and interpretation of the data presented for analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.3 Methods

As a qualitative study situated with the interpretive paradigm, the primary data has been collected using questionnaires and interviews to provide a collection of contemporary accounts of first-hand experiences of parental separation. When researching a topic involving participants of 'trauma populations' (Seedat et al., 2004:263) it is important to ensure every step is taken to maximise the potential benefits to the participant and researcher as well as minimising any potential risks. Newman et al., (1999) has argued that there are perceived benefits in using questionnaires and interviews when conducting studies with trauma survivors. As a method of data collection, the use of focus groups was considered as they can become a forum for change by allowing for multiple views and experiences to be shared (Race et al., 1994), however, the sharing of feelings can be emotionally challenging to participants (Gibbs, 1997). Due to the custodial location of this research, focus groups were ruled out, as maintaining confidentiality would be too challenging and would require a high level of trust (Gibbs, 1997) between the group of mothers, SPS staff and professionals as participants.

The project has been carried out in two phases. Phase 1 involved the use of two questionnaires, one with pregnant women in custody, and the other for mothers who have been separated from their children because they are currently in custody. Both paper-based questionnaires were short, anonymous, and contained both open and closed questions. Phase 2 involved the interviewing of SPS staff and prison-based external agency staff working with mothers in custody. Using the responses from Phase 1 and research questions designed by the researcher, staff were asked about their perceptions and experiences of MBUs, as well as the possibility for other children to have overnight stays in the CCUs in the future. The data collected from both phases was analysed separately and coded using a thematic approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This process will be fully explained, in more detail, further on in this chapter.

3.4 Questionnaires

When designing questionnaires, social studies can sometimes be reliant on closed questions to measure attitudes towards situations, which can guide the reply of the participant by only offering selected responses (Farrall et al., 1997), whereas using an open question, qualitative approach will allow the participants to reply noting an experience which could be closer to the truth than any of the presented options in the closed approach. Each data collection tool chosen for this research included a mix of open ended and direct questions which is considered useful when participants have had exposure to trauma (Seedat et al., 2004).

The primary data collected in Phase 1 was carried out using questionnaires with mothers currently in custody at HMP Cornton Vale, an anonymous method was chosen to allow participants the opportunity to answer freely, offering a true contemporary reflection of their own first-hand experiences with no fear of being identified. Questionnaires offered a flexible approach in that closed questions allowed for the collection of rapid statistical information, whereas open questions permitted participants to offer a more complex response based on their experiences (Menter et al., 2011). This anonymous process was chosen due to the researcher having no direct relationship with the participants and ensured the participants could answer sensitive open and closed questions honestly in private, in their own time and the results could be submitted back to the researcher confidentially (Menter et al., 2001). As the questionnaires were anonymous the participants did not have the option to withdraw at a later stage once they had given consent via the check box. The questionnaires were distributed by the researcher, once completed they were placed in a sealed envelope by the participant and returned to me, the researcher, by a prison-based member of staff to ensure anonymity. To ensure inclusion of all participants, the researcher was also available should a participant require further clarification or an audio recording of the questions. It was also explained that spelling/grammar did not matter, and it was more important they captured their responses and experience in their own words. The participants also had the option of a scribe who was not the researcher. The questionnaire responses were then analysed using thematic

analysis and coded, themes were identified and taken forward into Phase 2 interviews (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.5 Interviews

Once the questionnaire responses from Phase 1 had been coded using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), research questions were designed by the researcher, and included in the Phase 2 interviews with staff to ask about their perceptions and experiences of MBUs as well as the possibility for other children to have overnight stays in the CCUs in the future. Interviews were chosen as the data collection tool for Phase 2 as they allowed participants, without judgement to speak freely, telling the story behind their experiences (McNamara, online). When generating knowledge and understanding through qualitative research, conversation can be a valuable method of collecting data (Feldman, 1998). Similarly, convergent interviewing techniques have a comparable focus in that they encourage the building of rapport by allowing the researcher to begin interviews with open questions to ensure participants feel at ease and permit for conversation themes to develop holistically (Rao and Perry, 2003). Interviews enabled the researcher to build trust and empathy with the participant and allowed them to feel safe to be able to share their experiences and views (Smeaton, 2018). The interview process was not anonymous, this ensured goodness (Tobin and Begley, 2004) and interview transcripts were returned for checking and validity.

3.6 Transcribing and analysis of the data

Creating credible qualitative research is reliant successful data analysis and the researcher's ability to understand what the data is telling them (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Thematic analysis was carried out, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stage framework after each phase of the research. The use of thematic analysis is not bound to any epistemological perspective and considered an adaptable method of data analysis when carrying out research (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis allows themes to be identified using a process of coding, this is where initial codes capturing significant information relating to the

research question, are highlighted, and classified in sections within the data (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). By moving forwards and backwards through the data, codes relating to the initial proposal can be identified as well as noting any emerging themes not related to the original research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006). By engaging with literature throughout the research, and continually analysing data (Dick, 2017), any emerging questionnaire themes will be able to be identified during the process and included in the interviews (Given, 2012). As I am writing this from a perspective of having had a previous role inside the research, it was important for me to consider 'emotional data' and subjectivity when folding, unfolding, and refolding the data (Adams St. Pierre, 1997:178). As this study contains the opposing frames of 'correctional and educational' as referenced by Ragland (2006; 173), it can be argued that it may be difficult to identify an impartial frame (Schon and Rein, 1994) and that our own experiences may influence the way we view situations (Goffman, 1986). By considering honesty and ethics in the research, the findings will tell the complex story of lived experience by providing a succinct account of the data across all existing and emerging themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). These findings can then be shared with external agencies and stakeholders in the creation of new and shared knowledge (Mellor, 2001).

3.7 Ethics

Since any research may cause harm to the existing field of work it is situated in or to the participants of the study, the existence of ethics will continue to be scrutinised (Sikes, 2006). Ethics are also put in place as a safeguard for the researcher, however, it has been argued that in some cases, ethics can be influenced to provide benefit to the researcher (Fine et al., 2000). As this study is situated in the interpretative paradigm, ethics form an integral part of the research proposal, particularly as participants are expected to share their individual experiences during the data collection process (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). By correctly applying ethics to the research, a clear feedback loop will be evident, ensuring all participants know they are being researched and understand that they have an equal voice which will ensure morals are considered in any collective working (Fullan, 1993 and Anderson and Herr, 1999).

As all research will ultimately end up in the public realm (Sikes, 2000), it is important that the ethics of the study have been approved to ensure goodness in the findings, which will in turn ensure the integrity of all participants, including the researcher (Tobin and Begley, 2004). By incorporating ethicality to research in the same way we do to professional practice (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2007), we can create knowledge that is not only clearly characterised, but ethically connected with the chosen methodology of the study (Cook, 1998).

To alleviate any possibility of harm or distress to participants (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012), the five principles of ethics as specified by the British Educational Research Association (BERA), have been considered in the design of this research study. The research has received University of Glasgow ethical approval (University of Glasgow, online) alongside additional ethical approval from SPS after demonstrating that the research also meets the five research principles outlined in the SPS strategy and innovation guidelines (SPS, 2017). This project is considered by the University of Glasgow ethics procedure (online) as high risk as it does cover topics sensitive in nature involving women having experiences of giving birth or being separated from their child/ren whilst being held in custody, therefore, a trauma informed lens must be considered (Scottish Government, 2021). ACEs are traumatic and or stressful events that occur during childhood that may impact on mental and physical health in later life (Scott, 2021). The Scottish Prison Service (2017), Women in Custody prison survey, revealed that six in ten women reported having four or more ACEs. It is also known that having four or more ACEs increases chances of offending or involvement in the criminal justice service (Scottish Government, 2017). All participants in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the research were informed that due to the sensitive nature of the research they had the right to refuse to answer any of the questions if they felt it may cause distress (Fallot and Harris, 2011). By considering trauma in the early stages and ensuring trauma focused ethical principles (Scott, 2021) were embedded in the ethics framework from the beginning demonstrates the researcher valued and respected the participants at each stage of the research process.

3.8 Trauma focused ethics

Relatively little is known about the effects of research on participants affected by trauma in a family context (Griffin, et al., 2003). When researching in any trauma-based field Turnbull et al., (1988) states that studies should only take place when the research question cannot be studied in any other way. Measures should be put in place to ensure all participants are always supported, especially as the research may recall traumatic memories (Kassam-Adams and Newman, 2002). It has been argued that many of the 'trauma population' (Seedat et al., 2004:263) are grateful to share their experiences and Griffin et al., (2003) goes further to say that, for many survivors sharing stories can be perceived as therapeutic. In conducting trauma focused research, the researcher must consider ethics as a framework rather than set guidelines (Seedat et al., 2004) and it may be that certain ethical principles must take precedence. The concerns for confidentiality, informed consent, disclosure, and risk of harm can be heightened as trauma can imprint a participant's, brain, mind, and body, which can negatively affect how they view themselves and the world around them (Van Der Kolk 2015).

This highlights the need for the researcher to consider any impacts of the questionnaire in Phase 1 and ensure continued engagement with stakeholders to ensure the correct support is in place for all participants. All questionnaire participants were issued a Plain Language Statement (PLS) and consent was confirmed by return of survey. As the questionnaires were anonymous the participants did not have the option to withdraw at a later stage. The main risk in Phase 2 was that due to the small scale, those taking part in the interviews may be identified. To mitigate this risk there was a PLS and Consent Form for all interview participants outlining the hazards and asking them if they wished to be referred to by job role/experience or use a pseudonym chosen by them for use in any written reports. As all transcripts were available to participants for checking they did have the option to make changes or withdraw from the process before final submission. PLS and consent forms, can be found in Appendix A, of this dissertation. Working in this way allows for the consideration of any limitations to the research and enables the researcher to think about possible mitigations and controls that could be put in place.

3.9 Limitations

When carrying out research in custodial establishments there can be many obstacles, this has led to a relative lack of published research highlighting difficulties relating to the complexity of caregiving arrangements, or the separation felt by mothers and children affected by parental imprisonment (Bretherton, 2010). Cooperation from all participants will be vital to enable this research project to produce valuable qualitative findings based on attitudes, they study may be weakened if the cooperation is not available (Bryne, 2005). The potential limitation in undertaking this research was access to the custodial establishment. Due to the incarceration of the mothers, they do not have access to internet facilities and cannot complete an online questionnaire. It was therefore necessary to directly provide paper questionnaires to the participants involved in this study. For the interviews in Phase 2, SPS staff have minimal access to platforms such as Microsoft Teams and required a face-to-face interview with recording permission granted by the establishment. After submitting and receiving back ethical approval from SPS, as discussed earlier in this chapter, access was granted by SPS for the research to be carried out in the prison establishment, therefore it was important in the interest of transparency for me to ensure continued collaboration with stakeholders to ensure all participants and interested parties, including myself, were protected (McLintock et al., 2003). Due to the rebuilding of the new estate, and the movement of staff and mothers as participants, I considered that data collection may be interrupted (Shlafer and Poehlmann, 2010). Relationship building and trustworthiness (Furseth and Everett, 2013) will be essential to enable me to overcome this and ensure I can retain access to staff and mothers, even if they move establishment during the timeframe of the research project.

To allow participants to feel at ease and remain honest and open be open about their experiences, Phase 1 opted for anonymous questionnaires rather than focus groups or interviews so participants could answer freely without the fear of being singled out. All mothers can feel pressure from society to be the best mother they can be, therefore, mothers in custody can be worried about being honest and can feel even more anxiety, especially, if staff supporting them have judged them negatively based on their situation and/or location (Baldwin, 2018). The scope of this study does not allow for the whole

system of attachment relating to babies and children separated by parental imprisonment (Bretherton, 2010) to be studied, however, the consideration of the best interest of the child will be included in relation to The Early Years Framework (Scottish Government, 2008b) as well as the rights of the child included in the UNCRC Articles (UNICEF, online).

3.10 Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology of the research and has demonstrated that by collaborating transparently with participants and stakeholders this research study has been ethically passed, agreeing that it meets the quality expectations in relation to academia and practice (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2007). These approved ethical guidelines will ensure the voice of the participants are incorporated and can be considered by SPS to ensure women in custody know their wishes and ideas are valued (SPS, 2021) which will allow their experiences the possibility to become 'knowledge that is acted upon' (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2007:208) by SPS in any future policy decisions. The next chapter will detail the analysis and findings, including reference to any implications for future practice.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings

The previous chapter provided an outline of both phases of the research project and highlighted the steps taken in the design process to ensure necessary considerations were put in place due to the nature of the topic and the experiences of the participants (Seedat et al., 2004). This chapter will present data analysis and findings, and signpost to any recommendations for practice, which will be discussed fully in the following chapter. As previously stated, the data was analysed at various points of the project using Braun and Clarke's 2006 six phases of thematic analysis. This was carried out to find repeated patterns of meaning across the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As part of the analysis process, I considered the 'folding, unfolding, and refolding' of the data (Adams St Pierre, 1997:178) to allow for any new themes to emerge that were not previously identified (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

4.1 Phase 1 analysis

Phase 1 involved the use of two anonymous questionnaires, one with pregnant women in custody, and the other with mothers who have been separated from their children because they are currently in custody. I received responses back from two pregnant women and six from mothers who have been separated from their children. Currently due to the rebuilding of the new estate at HMP Cornton Vale the numbers of women held there has dramatically reduced, however the responses I received provided sufficient data and themes to include the voice of the women (Fullan, 1993) in the Phase 2 interviews. The questionnaires for the pregnant women were designed to find out attitudes towards the continued use of MBUs and the questionnaires for the mothers separated from their children were designed to find out attitudes towards the provision of overnight stays in the CCUs. The full questionnaires, including responses and coding can be found in the Appendix B.

4.2 Phase 2 analysis

Phase 2 of the research project involved the interviewing of two SPS senior members of staff, both responsible for high level decision making including strategy, policy, and implementation. I also interviewed two staff from third sector external agencies working with women in custody, one at Chief Executive Officer (CEO) level supporting families and children of men and women in custody and the other a qualified Early Years Practitioner (EYP) working directly with mothers and children affected by parental imprisonment in HMP Cornton Vale. The interviews with staff and external agencies who support mothers in custody were also designed to find out attitudes towards the continued use of MBUs and attitudes towards the provision of overnight stays in the CCUs. The themes identified during the thematic analysis of the Phase 1 questionnaires were used to create the basis of the interview questions for Phase 2 of the research. The interviews in Phase 2 took a semi structured format with the opportunity for the themes to be further explored allowing participants to speak freely about their experiences and attitudes (McNamara, online) towards the continued use of MBUs and the possibility of overnight stays for children in the CCUs.

At the beginning of the four recorded interviews, I provided interviewees with a plain language statement and consent form to sign or verbally agree to. Three of the interviews took place face to face and one over Microsoft Teams. All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants. The recorded interviews were then transcribed into written word (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006) to enable themes to be identified from the transcripts when coded using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As outlined in the project ethics, all transcripts were returned to each participant for checking to ensure goodness throughout the process (Tobin and Begley, 2004). Example interview questions and an extract of the interview transcript findings can be found in the Appendix C, full transcripts are available on request. At this point I combined the data analysis from both phases to identify overarching themes which will structure my overall findings. The full coding for both Phases of the research can be found in the Appendix D. Table 4.1 shown below, brings together the final key themes found in both sets of data after multiple coding and recoding (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

| Attachment | Support | Best Interest |
|------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Separation | The new estate and a need | Rights and views |
| Contact | for change | Equivalence |
| Avoidance | Trauma informed practice | Voice |
| | Parenting programmes | |

Table 4.1 – Combined themes from Phase 1 questionnaires and Phase 2 interviews

4.3 Findings

Throughout the coding process, the high number of unsure responses surprised me and indicated the uncertainty felt by women in custody when it comes to relationships with their children and any overall decisions on what is in their best interest. Levels of support were also highlighted, especially for pregnant women. Again, the high level of uncertainty and concerns around policies and procedures regarding hospital visits raised the concept of equivalence and how their treatment may differ from pregnant women not in custody (Cahalin et al., 2021). After the coding of the interview transcripts, I revisited my literature review to include avoidance as part of attachment as an emerging theme mentioned in all four of the interviews. Reflecting on previous reading and what has already been highlighted during the literature review, as well as any emerging topics, the three main themes identified and discussed in the rest of this chapter will be attachment, support, and best interest.

4.4 Attachment

Attachment, contact, and involvement were mentioned multiple times in both questionnaires and in all four interviews with participants, suggesting the importance of bonding between mother and child and for mum to be involved in their children’s life.

I think’s it’s important for mothers and kids to maintain a close relationship even when in prison....being involved in helping with homework etc.....making meals for your children. (CCU, 3).

I think it's really important and I wish there were more opportunities for women to be involved in their children's lives as it is important for bonding. (Jane, EYP).

It can be incredibly disruptive, and I think that is why you hear a lot of people say it's better for kids if they don't visit, but it's about trying to recognise what children want. (Mary, CEO).

For the MBU questionnaire neither of the women had applied for a place in the MBU as they were both due to be released from custody prior to or just after the birth of their baby.

I will be libbed 3 weeks after baby is born so no point in applying. Baby going to my boyfriend's parents from the hospital till I am out. (MBU, 1)

I will be released the day before my 20 week scan so I never bothered applying. I have rescheduled my scan so I can go to the hospital with my boyfriend. I am hoping I will never be back in here. (MBU, 2).

Both pregnant women agreed that being in the MBU could help them bond with their baby and maintaining contact may help with any feelings of abandonment felt by their children when they have been separated from their mother due to parental imprisonment (Flynn, 2014). As outlined in the UK Government report, The right to family life: children whose mothers are in prison (2019), the starting premise also aligning with the Bangkok Rules (UN General Assembly, 2010) is that the best way to safeguard a child's rights and respect family life is by not giving custodial sentences to mothers in the first place. This was echoed in the interviews where SPS indicated:

The first priority would always be, can we get mum out and back into her home environment and if that wasn't possible then can baby stay for a period once assessments have been carried out by social work. (Liam, SPS).

Although not always possible, if pregnant women could serve their remaining sentence at home this could allow the early bond to develop in a more natural environment, minimising the risk of disrupted/disorganised attachment (Nichols and Loper, 2012; Skinner-Osei and Levenson, 2018). Mothers parenting in a custodial establishment, may experience stigma around feeling like those early moments of attachment are being surveilled due to the

environment (Walker, 2018). However, as indicated during the interviews, some women withdraw from the process or avoid situations of contact:

Maybe they feel so guilty about the way they have treated other people that they don't trust themselves to be a good mum, so they avoid, they withdraw from the process. I have met women who keep their kids at a distance and don't want to see them whilst they are in custody because of their own experiences or lack of trust in themselves. (James, SPS).

Mums just don't feel confident enough to move through the process and just give up. (Jane, EYP).

Some can even view the institutional environment of custody as a safe place compared to the potentially chaotic situation they have come from (Walker, 2018) leading to the assumption that the children are better off not having contact. This feeling of hopelessness can lead to separation which can disrupt the mother-child relationship (Rossiter et al., 2015) and prevent the forming of any attachment at all (Perry et al., 1995). Equally children and families should not be unnecessarily punished, and consideration must be taken in that:

There is always more than one person serving a sentence when someone comes to prison, the kids never did anything wrong to anyone and neither did their partner but because of what the courts decided to do with the other half, everybody is affected. (James, SPS).

It's recognising that there is a different context and a different behaviour that the rest of the family will experience with the mum in prison. (Mary, CEO).

These situations highlight barriers to promoting attachment and can also contribute to the negative effects flowing both ways between mothers and children, which can lead to mutual feelings of abandonment due to the separation caused by parental imprisonment, defined by Condry and Minson (2020:1) as 'symbiotic harms'. Feelings of abandonment may be minimised for some mothers and children through contact visits (Cramer et al., 2017). Night-time routines were mentioned in a few of the questionnaire responses as well as flexibility around visit timetables, indicating that longer day visits were favoured. Both SPS interviews agreed that contact is important for attachment and that:

Physical contact and cuddles are important but events also....pieces of music or particular stories can create a bond. (James, SPS).

There was also an indication that:

It is much more beneficial to have an overnight stay in an environment the child is familiar with. Therefore, if mum can get community access, we should be looking at home leave rather than bringing a child into a custodial environment. (Liam, SPS).

Two mums also noted:

Benefits of overnights would be getting to have 'normal' night-time routines. (CCU, 2).

Being able to fall asleep together feeling content, instead of worrying at night and overthinking/feeling alone. (CCU, 1).

Whilst there is little evidence around the benefits of specific length visits (Cramer et al., 2017) it can be argued that longer, more frequent visits may improve relationships however, the relationship between the mother and the child's caregiver can be key to any contact being in place at all (Friedman et al., 2020). In both questionnaires the importance of the provision of age-appropriate resources during visits or in the MBU were highlighted.

I feel there should be more resources and activities for kids and families during visits and to be more child friendly. (CCU, 4).

Prison need better mother and baby bonding visits. (MBU, 1).

Structured visits providing activities and links to wider parenting support programmes can benefit parents as well as children (Fraser, 2011) by improving opportunities for parents to provide a secure environment for attachment to be formed (Bowlby, 1969). Visits allowing contact either in a custodial establishment or in the community can have an impact on family connectedness and may improve the attachment for both mother and child by helping them to cope emotionally and reconnect with each other (Cramer et al., 2017). However, it has been argued that no matter how committed mothers appear to be to their

parenting role and identity (Bartlett and Eriksson, 2018), the success of the attachment could depend on the support around them and if a holistic family centred approach is put in place to support and build greater resilience (Condry and Minson, 2020).

Possible recommendations for practice to encourage and promote attachment could include identifying levels of support for families and children whilst a mother is in custody (Cunningham Stringer, 2020). This could also involve SPS linking in with external services who support families including the independently run Family Visitors Centres within each establishment to share practice and identify potential gaps in specific support or the upskilling of staff. Only once the new estate is operational can there be any evaluation of the newly designed spaces in relation to attachment and contact between mothers in custody and children visiting. Many of these recommendations involve the support available to mothers and children, which will be discussed further in the next section.

4.5 Support

Internationally, best practice includes changes to policies to ensure a gendered approach for women including mothers in custody (Bartels and Gaffney, 2011), this includes support for reproductive health needs specific to women in relation to pregnancy and childbirth (Bard et al., 2016). Given the role of women within families, custodial establishments should be looking to provide women with the services and skills they need to be better individuals and family members (Peterson et al., 2018). In the plans for the new estate in Scotland SPS are aiming to:

Be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem... We want to build relationships between staff and residents with real levels of trust, respect, honesty, integrity, and openness to facilitate people supporting each other.... That's a good foundation to build something more sophisticated, around relational engagement and becoming more trauma informed. (James, SPS).

Custodial environments can be a traumatic space, securing a ‘trauma population’ (Seedet, et al., 2004:263) and currently by design, many are punishing environments that separate mothers from their children (Breuer et al., 2021). SPS plan to change this with the new estate and have created a trauma informed model in relation to environment and staffing, creating a softer feel with a less custodial design (Scottish Government, 2012b). The staffing for the new women’s estate is planned to include:

Staff who can understand trauma and who can provide support to an individual they have a relationship with.... Ultimately the job of a prison officer needs to be to upskill mum... Women tell us time and time again that relationships are essential to them so if we can get the community partners, they need to engage with identified and tied in pre-release they are far more likely to engage post release. (Liam, SPS).

Cunningham Stringer (2020), argues that not all mothers are committed to motherhood, and some may abandon their role, sacrificing their children to save themselves (Kennedy et al., 2020). Walker, (2018) goes further to say that where motherhood can act as a motivating factor in many cases is not enough for women who have been in custody to make transformative change to their life choices. In bringing community partners to the women in custody by the forming of a community hub space within the CCUs, steps can be made towards equivalence for both women and children, where they are supported by and have access to services in a similar way as they would if they were not in custody (Cahalin et al., 2021). One mum highlighted the lack of support felt in reference to her up and coming release as:

For my release and general support there seems to have been a breakdown in communications which leaves me feeling that I'm being set up for failure for getting out as I've got someone willing to support me and I am eager to receive this because it is vital for what happens to me and baby when I am released and where I stay. (MBU, 2).

The role of the personal officers and community hubs in the new estate will aim to go one step further in supporting women in custody by:

We are trying to break down barriers and we know that even lanyards can act as a trigger for people who have suffered trauma.....The hub will be a busy dynamic area. It will be the same space that women interact with their families, engage and service providers. (Liam, SPS).

In building on existing relationships, the CCU personal officer role allows for officers to attend appointments with women in the community as part of a community access approach (Liam, SPS). There will also be possibilities for women who, after risk assessment, have opportunities to leave the CCUs for an agreed time, referred to as community access, to attend appointments with staff they know who can offer support, this could also include overnight stays in their own home (Liam, SPS). This staffing approach will work towards minimising feelings echoed in the MBU responses where currently women attend appointments alone and are accompanied by transport staff they have never met before.

3 transport staff coming to appts makes it look as though the public needed to be protected more than me. 2 of them came into the room with me while personal things were talked about. (MBU, 1)

In response to this comment SPS advised:

The idea being if a woman needs to attend an external appointment and needs a bit of support in the community it would be the personal officer who would be able to support her. The new personal officer role is designed to be a bit more flexible to meet the needs of women in custody. (Liam, SPS).

One response from the MBU questionnaires demonstrated a positive experience for pregnant women working with establishment health services:

Prison medical staff have supported me very well i.e., mother and baby nurse and GP and other hospital staff. (MBU, 1).

By creating the reflective practice and staff professional development model planned by SPS, they can build on what they know works well which may drive improvement and can be a desirable source of learning and development in any setting (Findlay, 2008).

The rationale for upskilling staff is about creating time and space to introduce a proper professional development and supervision model.....which is part of a vehicle which will allow staff to manage their own vicarious trauma and so we can mitigate against things such as compassion fatigue. (Liam, SPS).

It has been argued that risks must be considered when carrying out any form of reflective practice, and if not managed effectively, risks can lead to reflection not empowering staff in the way desired (Brookfield, 2002). The role of support can be crucial if mothers are to be successful in re-establishing their place in the community after release as well as their

maternal role and relationships with their children (Cunningham Stringer, 2020). One way in which steps are taken to 'upskill mum' (Liam, SPS) is for custodial establishments to offer parenting programmes, where non SPS partner practitioners can build relationships with parents to encourage improved interactions and attachments between mothers and children (Cramer et al., 2017). It has been argued that such programs can cause re-traumatisation (Walker, 2018) if they are delivered in a way that mothers feel like they must prove themselves as 'good mothers' (Von Weller et al., 2018:59). The interviews also indicated:

It's also recognising that parenting from prison is quite a different context and recognising what that means for people in prison, and how they can maintain those relationships, it's not just about plucking a programme from the outside and putting it in a prison. (Mary, CEO).

Currently the parenting programme on offer to women in the women's national facility is child development based, however the practitioner did comment in the interview:

I have had the opportunity to work with lots of women and can quickly build a relationship which allows me to tailor the programme to their family circumstance. Women are very good at opening up and letting you know their situation and where to go with it. (Jane, EYP).

The feedback I have received from women who have completed the programme is that what they have learned they have taken forward and carried on when they have had contact with their children. (Jane, EYP).

Traditionally parenting programmes focus on child development and are not designed to deal with the psychological distress that family separation can cause for mothers in custody (Tripodi et al., 2017). There is little research on how a mothers parenting capacity from custody intersects with their own mental health (Kennedy et al., 2020). Thompson and Harm (2000) argues that while not all mothers value their mothering role, it can be a potential motivation of change to mental health with the correct support, especially if the mothering role is considered in other programme delivery such as substance abuse and wellbeing (Tripodi et al., 2017). Maternal mental health must be considered when supporting mothering in custodial establishments and the implications of mum being able to provide and practice parenting skills (Friedman et al., 2020). This is where mothers' groups focused on parenting and supported play programmes during visits may help with bonding

and attachment for mother and child (Perry et al., 2011). The Strategy for Women in Custody: 2021-2015 (SPS, 2021) outlines the strategy as rights-based and founded on values and principles based on the UN Bangkok Rules (UN General Assembly, 2010) and the UNCRC (UNICEF, online). As also stated in the strategy applications for the MBUs and contact visits will be considered on an individual basis in accordance with GIRFEC (Scottish Government, 2008a) with priority given to the long-term best interest of the child.

Recommendations for practice which could be considered for supporting mothers could include the provision of programmes that address the potential distress experienced by mothers who are separated from their children (Tripodi et al., 2017). This would also link directly to mental health support where the mothering role could be included within wider programmes offered to women in custody, such as addiction and recovery. The new community hub should also offer more targeted support for mothers and children, bringing closer the equivalence between custody and the community. SPS should also consider the use of reflective practice to ensure they are moving forward with the plans for the new estate in the best interest of mothers and children (SPS, 2021). Best interest will be further discussed in the next section.

4.6 Best Interest

When a mother, with sole custody or caregiving responsibilities, receive a custodial sentence, they can be at high risk of losing custody of their children either formally or informally (Dowell et al., 2018). In cases where a mother has sole caring responsibility, a 'significant other' must be appointed to become the primary caregiver while the mother is absent (Cunningham Stringer, 2020:338). In some cases, mothers can choose who their children live with and will opt for someone in their family who they trust and have some mutual respect for, to provide a parenting role in their absence (Cunningham Stringer, 2020). However, in many cases mothers face a complex formal and informal process, resulting in the state appointing care responsibilities (Kennedy et al., 2020). This was highlighted in one of the interviews:

In some cases when mums know early on that it is likely that baby will go into foster care they aren't willing to put the work in, even with support from the prison Social Work team.....They feel like they are going to be put through all of that for baby to be taken so they just decide in those early stages to sign the papers and put the foster care process in motion. (Jane, EYP).

Whilst mothers may accept that their children being cared for by others is in the best interest of the child, they also must contend with the reality that someone else is responsible for the day-to-day care of their child (Cunningham Stringer, 2020). The relationship between mother and caregiver can be challenging as co-parenting requires mutual support and agreement to contact visits (Nichols and Loper, 2012). The questionnaire responses indicated that whilst mums had feelings their baby may miss out by being in the MBU, they were unsure if they would be better off fully with other carers on the outside or if shared care was the right decision. The interviews indicated each mother and baby pair must be treated individually and there needs to be consideration to when shared care may become detrimental to the child and mother:

If having to say goodbye to the child for 3 or 4 days negatively impacts on mums' mental health, then it may be in the best interest of the child to go to someone else to have more stability. (Liam, SPS).

Lockwood (2018) suggests that mothers separated from their children are often seen as abandoning them through choice, rather than recognising that the separation felt can be a 'profound hurt' (Datesman and Cales, 1983:142) which involves the constant challenge to maintain a mothering role whilst in custody. Of the responses received from all women in the questionnaires, all were over the age of twenty-five and already had at least one child. Of the women who responded to the CCU questionnaire, all six had contact with their children and all twelve children they have between them knew where their mum was. Contact was a recurring theme throughout both questionnaires, with both pregnant women agreeing that the use of MBUs should continue. However, there was uncertainty regarding the possibility of overnight stays in the CCUs, with two in agreement, two unsure and two disagreeing. The interviews also echoed the opinion that the use of MBUs should continue in the new estate and that provision could potentially be provided geographically to meet

the needs of families and make it easier for mothers to access external agencies in areas where they will return on release.

I am working with women who are breastfeeding their children who are out in foster care, trying to keep that bond and process going....in this situation why not have baby in the MBU with mum rather than mum getting out every single day to breastfeed her baby. (Jane, EYP).

In relation to overnight stays, all four interviewees also were uncertain if they should take place with the overall feeling it could be beneficial to relationship building of mothers and children:

I think it would be amazing for mums to have the opportunity to have their children stay overnight because as a mum in custody I personally know how much it would mean to me to be able to have that opportunity and how much my kids would love it. (CCU, 4).

I have worked with women who do have contact with their children but will not have them come up for visits. They just don't want their children in that environment. (Jane, EYP).

However, it would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis and one concern included:

Mums could be desperate to see their kids but not necessarily wanting to see them in a custodial environment, therefore, it would all depend on how it looks and feels. (Mary, CEO).

This was also mentioned in the CCU questionnaire responses, with one mum commenting:

I feel that I would like to know the layout and the procedure involved. (CCU, 2).

All six responses from the CCU questionnaire agreed that the views and rights of the child were important, despite the difficulties some women experience in maintaining their parental rights whilst in custody (Friedman et al., 2020). The introduction of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill (2020) should create the opportunity for the recognition of children's views and rights to be considered

when their parent receives a custodial sentence. This recognition was highlighted in one the interviews as:

It's about recognising that the best interest of the child is by definition a bigger picture. Also, what will be the processes of asking children what they want to see happen? There needs to be a recognition to listen to children and the ability to change their care plan, based on their views and needs. SPS need to consider UNCRC focus on the children who are coming in and out of prisons every day. (Mary, CEO).

In relation to overnight stays, it was widely accepted over both phases of the research, that these could be in the best interest of the child, however, would need individual consideration and would also require a change in legislation:

I can see the benefits, but even the CCUs are still a custodial environment. Our difficulty is there is no legislative framework for us to allow anyone, including a child in a prison overnight voluntary. There would need to be new legislation to make this happen and that would take time and would ultimately be a government decision. (Liam, SPS).

The Strategy for Women in Custody: 2021-2015 (SPS, 2021:7) describes a framework that will 'support the development of women's agency through opportunities to make choices and have their voices heard'. This highlights the importance of the need to address 'institutional thoughtlessness' (Crawley and Sparks, 2005:352) and to listen to the experience of women and children when planning new policies that directly affect them.

Recommendations for practice in relation to best interest could include the use of geographical MBU units, this would bring women with children closer to their own communities, making linking to services easier and more streamlined for when they are released. This will also help with contact visits if families have less distance to travel. The use of longer day visits could be considered until any decision can be made about overnight stays. The most important implication will be the views of mothers and children's and how their voice will be included in future. The introduction of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill (2020) will place a statutory regulation for children's voice to be considered by SPS in the designing and delivery of services put in place for them (Scottish Government, 2020b).

4.7 Summary

The voices of mothers in custody and their children can often be overlooked as professionals work together in the best interest of the child as outlined in the GIRFEC approach (Scottish Government, 2008a). To truly identify strategies that generate meaningful support and intervention (Kennedy et al., 2020) for women in custody and their children affected by their imprisonment requires policy and programs makers to listen and incorporate the rights, views and needs of mothers and children. The next chapter will contain an overview of the research questions as well as recommendations for practice and any limitations of the research.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The research question aimed to investigate attitudes towards the use of MBUs in the Scottish prison estate and the possibilities of overnight stays in the CCUs for other children. In this final chapter I will consider the initial aims of the research and discuss how my findings can be used as recommendations for practice.

5.1 Summary of the findings

By researching with people and finding out the experiences of mothers in custody, as well as the staff and external agencies supporting them (McLintock et al., 2003), I have been able to gain a better understanding of what is already in place and what could be added to support mothers and children in the new estate. I will now summarise the findings of the research in response to the initial research aims. Overall, the research indicated that the use of MBUs should continue, and that they can promote the development of attachment (Perry et al., 1995; Bretherton, 1992) by allowing for targeted support from establishment based and external support agencies during the early stages. In relation to overnight stays for other children, the findings showed a lot of uncertainty and highlighted the need for cases to be considered individually and more information to be provided on the process. It was also evidenced that there is currently no legislation in Scotland that allows anyone to stay overnight in a prison voluntarily and until that is included in statutory law, overnight stays cannot be considered operationally (Liam, SPS). The mothers who responded to the questionnaires did indicate that they may prefer a longer day visit and a more flexible visit timetable than what is currently available. The new community hubs based in the CCUs, and the new estate will encourage supported contact visits and parenting programmes to continue as well as support from wider community agencies to build relationships with women prior to their release, which will allow for a whole system approach to mothers and children (Kennedy et al., 2020). The introduction of the CCU personal officer role will enable staff to build on existing relationships with women in custody, to provide a link for mothers to access the community closer to their release date and support women, especially those

who are pregnant to attend community-based appointments with someone they have a relationship with.

5.2 Limitations

I have already identified and discussed limitations previously in Chapter 3, the main limitation being access, which was granted, ensuring co-operation from all parties taking part in the research (Bryne, 2005). By having a previous role inside the research (Adams St. Pierre, 1997), I had to put aside any personal stakes in the research (Ragland, 2006) to develop as a researcher and ensure the data moved from describing to explaining the attitudes and experiences of the participants (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This has allowed me to identify recommendations of practice for mothers, children, and stakeholders in the new custodial estate in Scotland.

5.3 Recommendations for practice

As stated by Holloway and Weeler (2006) the role of the researcher is to understand the experiences of participants and not to make decisions about the reality of their situation. However, these findings indicated there is a high level of uncertainty felt by pregnant women in custody and for mothers who have been separated from their children because they are in custody. This would indicate the main recommendations for practice are around support for women, children and the staff supporting them. In supporting a 'trauma population' (Seedat et al., 2004:263), a trauma informed approach from SPS and external agency staff will be vital to building relationships and creating resilience to facilitate more positive outcomes (Skinner-Osei and Levenson, 2018). All partners should work together to create a community of practice where competencies are not looked at in isolation, but instead, core values and visions are shared among professionals to create good practice and achieve change (Wesley and Buysse, 2001). The creation of the community hubs will allow for the conception of resilience by allowing women to build relationships with their community through partner agencies who understand their experience (Skinner-Osei and Levenson, 2018) and the SPS personal officer role will ensure women can be supported

during community visits. This will enable mothers and children to feel more connected to their home communities and allow for the promotion of attachment.

In considering attachment, the research indicated a strong feeling for MBUs to continue and to be further developed to provide activities and support for pregnant women and those giving birth whilst in custody. By including the mothering role as part of wider programmes, SPS and external agencies could work to provide a whole family approach to supporting mother and child relationships and this could work to minimise feelings of worthlessness and avoidance, which can sometimes be felt by mothers in custody where 'institutional thoughtlessness' exists (Crawley and Sparks, 2005:352). By working together in adopting a trauma informed approach for women and by implementing a reflective practice model for staff, SPS can put processes in place to encourage staff to critically evaluate their responses to situations and share best practice (Finlay, 2008). These steps will work towards the sharing of good practice to promote trust when relationship building with women as well as within the staff team supporting them.

Finally, to ensure the building of positive relationships people need to feel valued, this includes all women, children, and staff, living, working, or visiting custodial establishments in Scotland. As shown by the levels of uncertainty in the research, women could benefit from support during processes, especially concerning decisions about their children, which would also include their views being considered in decision making and the designing of services put in place to support them (Kennedy et al., 2020). The incorporation of the UNCRC to Scottish Law will have implications for SPS to ensure the voices of children are included in future planning, as well as the continued consideration of acting in their best interest (Scottish Government, 2020b). It also could be useful to look at expanding the current visit offering to include longer day visits while considerations are ongoing to overnight stays. If overnight stays are to be considered in the future the experiences, views and voices of the women and children must be incorporated to ensure SPS continue towards achieving the planned outcomes of their strategy for women in custody to provide a rights-based approach to enable women to have their voices heard and that children's rights are upheld (SPS, 2021).

5.4 Lessons learned

If I was to carry out this research again, I would add more questions on the programmes available to women in custody and their outcomes as well as investigating experiences around any mental health support available. I also feel interviews with a select number of chosen mothers in custody would help to further include their voice in the research. If this was to be the case the interview would not be anonymous, so would require a level of relationship building which could take time and would need to take place in partnership with another organisation. The anonymous questionnaire worked well due to the location and challenges of carrying out research in a custodial establishment, however, interviews would allow me to further explore the data gained from the questionnaires and for women to speak freely and add their own experience in their own words (McNamara, online). Due to the size of this project, and the low numbers of women in custody in HMP Cornton Vale at the time of the study I feel further research could expand the findings of my investigation.

5.5 Future research

Given the small scale of this investigation, any further research would add value to these findings as well as the wider research field. During this research I have identified three possibilities for future research. Firstly, with the new estate and CCUs not open yet, it would be advisable to follow up on any challenges and successes in the first few years to investigate if the new plans have made a difference to the experiences of women separated from their children whilst in custody and for children living with or visiting them. Secondly, the level of uncertainty felt by women in custody is worthy of further research, especially into the levels of distress experienced by separation from their children and what steps could be put in places to support mothers and work to limit feelings of mothering avoidance and worthlessness (Breuer et al., 2021). Thirdly, in terms of a much wider perspective in relation to equivalence and in a bid to make the residential offer from SPS more gender neutral, could the CCU establishment model be available to fathers in custody. In terms of my own professional development, I am interested in exploring the challenges and

successes of the CCUs and investigating the possibility of them being offered to males as part of a gender-neutral inclusion of services offered to everyone in custody in Scotland.

5.6 Conclusion

This research set out to investigate attitudes towards the continued use of MBUs and the possibilities for overnight stays for children in the CCUs in Scotland and has highlighted the importance of including a dedicated space within custodial establishments to ensure the promotion of attachment between mothers and children (Baldwin, 2018). In providing trauma informed spaces and staff approaches, SPS can work to build relationships with women, and with external agencies to support mothers living with or separated from their children, these relationships can have positive implications for successful integration back into the community following release. By including the views of mothers and children, SPS can look to provide wider targeted programmes to include the mothering role, where programmes can be delivered in establishment or potentially externally, as part of community access. Parenting from custody will always remain a traumatic experience, however, by creating gender specific policies and establishments, Scotland can work towards becoming a role model for the provision of spaces that work in the best interest of the child to promote attachment for children living in or visiting their mothers in a custodial environment.

Appendix A: Plain language statements and consent forms



Plain Language Statement Questionnaire

Title of project and researcher details

To investigate attitudes towards the use of Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) and the possible use of overnight stays for children in the Community Custodial Units (CCUs) in the new custodial estate in Scotland.

Researcher: xxxxxxxx

Supervisor: Dr Mary Wingrave

Course: MEd Childhood Practice

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to investigate attitudes towards the continued use of Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) and the possibility of other children having overnight stays in the Community Custodial Units (CCUs) in the new custodial estate in Scotland.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as you are currently being held in custody and you are pregnant or have at least one child aged 17 years old or younger.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this research is voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part, there is a tick box for consent on the questionnaire. I will presume

consent to use the data for the research if this box is ticked. All questionnaires are anonymous and at no point are you asked to identify yourself.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will complete a short paper questionnaire which will take approximately 30mins to complete. This will ask about your experiences and or challenges of being in or accessing the Mother and Baby Unit or your views on the possibility of other children having overnight stays in the Community Custodial Units. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to. The completed questionnaire will be placed in a sealed envelope and should be returned to a Scottish Prison Service Officer and will then be returned to the researcher ensuring they remain anonymous.

I will be finished gathering data by May 2021.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the research will be kept strictly confidential. All questionnaire responses are anonymous. Therefore, when I write about what I have found no names will ever be mentioned. I will keep all the data I collect in a locked cabinet or in a locked file on my computer.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

I will analyse the data I collect and present this in the dissertation which I am writing for my qualification, MEd Childhood Practice. A written summary of the findings will also be shared with the Scottish Prison Service. I will destroy the data at the end of the project.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed by the University of Glasgow Ethics Forum as well as the Scottish Prison Service Ethics Committee.

Contact for Further Information

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact my supervisor Dr Mary Wingrave, email: Mary.Wingrave@glasgow.ac.uk or the University of Glasgow Ethics Officer Barbara Read, email: Barbara.Read@glasgow.ac.uk

End. _____

Plain Language Statement - Interview

Title of project and researcher details

To investigate attitudes towards the use of Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) and the possible use of overnight stays for children in the Community Custodial Units (CCUs) in the new custodial estate in Scotland.

Researcher: xxxxxxxx

Supervisor: Dr Mary Wingrave

Course: MEd Childhood Practice

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to investigate attitudes towards the continued use of Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) and the possibility of other children having overnight stays in the Community Custodial Units (CCUs) in the new custodial estate in Scotland.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as you are currently or have been working with mothers in custody who are pregnant or have young babies.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this research is voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Not taking part, or withdrawing from the research after you have started, will not jeopardise your position or employment.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will attend an online or face to face interview (technology dependant) lasting no more than 90 minutes. The interview will either be audio taped or recorded online. You will be asked to discuss your experiences of the previous MBUs and also your views on their continued use as well as the possibility of other children having overnight stays in the Community Custodial Units. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to. If you will feel upset or distressed, you may leave during the research process.

Following initial transcription and my initial analysis of the data you will be given an opportunity to further comment on the data. This will further support the authenticity and potentially add/clarify further analysis. I will be finished gathering data by May 2021.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Any data collected will be kept confidential and anything that can identify you will be removed from any writing arising from this project. You will be identified by a code. Please however note that complete confidentiality may not be possible due to the uniqueness of the situation and location. Furthermore, assurances of confidentiality will be strictly adhered to but if evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered, I then may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies. Any written or recorded data collected from the recordings will be kept in the researcher's property and any files stored on the computer will only be accessible using a password. At the end of the research period, December 2022, any paper documents, and any recordings will be erased and any files containing any data collected will be deleted.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

I will analyse the data I collect and present this in the dissertation which I am writing for my qualification, MEd Childhood Practice. A written summary of the findings will also be shared with the Scottish Prison Service. I will destroy the data at the end of the project.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed by the University of Glasgow Ethics Forum.

Contact for Further Information

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact my supervisor Dr Mary Wingrave, email: Mary.Wingrave@glasgow.ac.uk or the University of Glasgow Ethics Officer Barbara Read, email: Barbara.Read@glasgow.ac.uk

End. _____

Consent Form - Interview

Title of Project: To investigate attitudes towards the use of Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) and the possible use of overnight stays for children in the Community Custodial Units (CCUs) in the new custodial estate in Scotland.

Name of Researcher: xxxxxxxx

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I consent and acknowledge to following clauses relevant to the research project:
 - The interview being audio-taped or recorded online.
 - Copies of the transcripts can be returned to participants for verification.
 - Participants will be referred to by code in any publications arising from the research.
 - Participation, non-participation or withdrawal in the research will have no effect on my professional relationship with the researcher.
 - Complete confidentiality cannot be assured and in case of evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered, the researcher may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.
 - I understand that the research project explores views and opinions of children’s rights and attachment between mothers and children, not child protection issues.
 - The session will be recorded and if I wish to participate, the recording will only be used for transcript purposes by the researcher. The recording itself will then be deleted.
 - I know that I can withdraw from this project after the online session by writing to ask that my contribution be deleted. However, once the researcher has analysed the data and codes have been allocated to all contributors, I will no longer be able to ask for my input to be deleted.
4. I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix B: Questionnaire responses and coding



Questionnaire Mother and Baby Unit

Consent

By ticking this box I give consent to my answers being used as part of this research project

Age

18-24 25-34 **1** 35-44 **1** Over 45

How many children do you have?

None 1 2 **2** 3 4 5+

How old are you children? (tick all that apply)

0-1 2 3 4 5 **1** 5+ **2**

Have you ever given birth whilst in custody?

Yes No **2**

Have you ever applied for applied for a space in the mother and baby unit?

Yes No Not Applicable **2**

Are you pregnant?

Yes **2** No Possibly

If you are pregnant, are you considering an application for the current mother and baby unit?

Yes No **2** Unsure

On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent how would you rate the application process?

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Please explain your answer?

- 'Will be libbed 3 weeks after baby is born so no point in applying. Baby going to my boyfriends parents from the hospital till I am out.' MBU, 1
- 'I will be released the day before my 20 week scan so I never bothered applying. I have rescheduled my scan so I can go to the hospital with my boyfriend. I am hoping I will never be back in here.' MBU, 2

Please consider the following statements and tick the box that you agree with best.

| Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Unsure | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | N/A |
|---|----------------|-------|--------|----------|-------------------|-----|
| Being in a mother and baby unit with my baby would help me bond more. | 2 | | | | | |
| Having a strong bond with my baby is important to me. | 2 | | | | | |
| Mother and baby units are in the best interest of babies. | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| The use of mother and baby units should continue. | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| I would rather my baby stayed outside with family members. | | | | 2 | | |
| I feel my baby would miss out if they stayed with me in a mother and baby unit. | | 1 | | 1 | | |
| My baby may struggle when they leave the mother and baby unit. | | | 2 | | | |
| I would struggle when it comes time for my baby to leave and I may still be in custody. | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| I would feel lonely being in a mother and baby unit. | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| I accept that it might be best for my baby to stay on the outside | | | 2 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| with family members rather than with me. | | | | | | |
| I would prefer a shared care arrangement where baby stayed some time with me and some time with family members. | | | 2 | | | |

Please use this box to add any other comments. This may include:

- Any positive or negative experiences
- Any changes or improvements that could be made to the application process
- Any challenges you have personally had when having a baby in custody
- Anything that can be done to improve contact for mothers and babies

'I feel that I've been supported as much as I should have been with comfort including clothing, cushions and housing.' MBU, 2

'For my release and general support there seems to have been a breakdown in communications which leaves me feeling that I'm being set up for failure for getting out as I've got someone willing to support me and I am eager to receive this because it is vital for what happens to me and baby when I am released and where I stay.' MBU, 2

'3 transport staff coming to appts makes it look as though the public needed to be protected more than me. 2 of them came into the room with me while personal things were talked about.' MBU, 1

'Prison medical staff have supported me very well i.e., mother and baby nurse + GP and other hospital staff.' MBU, 1

'Prison need better mother and baby bonding visits.' MBU, 1

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Questionnaire Community Custodial Units

Consent

By ticking this box I give consent to my answers being used as part of this research project

Age

18-24 25-34 **2** 35-44 **1** Over 45 **3**

How many children do you have?

None 1 **1** 2 **4** 3 **1** 4 5+

How old are you children? (tick all that apply)

0-1 **1** 2 3 **2** 4 5 5+ **9**

Do you currently have contact with your children?

Yes **6** No Working towards

How do you keep in touch with your children? (tick all that apply)

Phone **4** Letter **2** Virtual Visit **3** Face to Face Visit **4** No Contact

Do your children know where you are?

Yes **6** No Unsure

Do you think children should have overnight stays in the new Community Custodial Units?

Yes **2** No **2** Unsure **2**

Please explain your answer?

- 'I think it would be amazing for mums to have the opportunity to have their children stay overnight because as a mum in custody I personally know how much it would mean to me to be able to have that opportunity and how much my kids would love it.' CCU, 4
- 'I think it's important for mothers and kids to maintain a close relationship even when in prison.' CCU, 3

- 'I feel that I would like to know the layout and the procedure involved.' CCU, 2

If you do think children should be considered to stay overnight what age group do you think this should be for?

Under 1 Under 5 5-12 **1** 12+ Any **3** Don't agree **2**

Please consider the following statements when considering having children stay overnight in a Community Custodial Unit with their mum and tick the box that you agree with best.

| Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Unsure | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | N/A |
|--|----------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|-----|
| It would help improve relationships between mother and child/ren. | 3 | 1 | 2 | | | |
| It would help the child/ren to know mum is safe. | 3 | 1 | 2 | | | |
| It would allow mum to be more involved in decisions about their child/ren. | 3 | 1 | 2 | | | |
| I would prefer they did not stay overnight. | 2 | | 2 | | 2 | |
| It would be hard for mum when the child/ren left the next morning. | 2 | 4 | | | | |
| It would be hard for the child/ren when they left the next morning. | 3 | 1 | 2 | | | |
| Staying overnight is in the best interest of the child. | 1 | | 3 | | 2 | |
| The views and rights of children are important. | 5 | 1 | | | | |
| A longer day visit would be better than staying overnight. | 2 | | 2 | 2 | | |
| Children would benefit from a more flexible visit timetable. | 4 | 2 | | | | |
| It would be better for children not to visit their mum whilst they are in custody. | | | 2 | | 4 | |

Please use this box to add any other comments. This may include:

- Any positive or negative experiences
- How you would you and your child benefit for overnight stays?
- Any challenges you have personally had when having a baby in custody
- Anything that can be done to improve contact for mothers and children

'Being able to fall asleep together feeling content, instead of worrying at night and overthinking/feeling alone.' CCU, 1

'Being involved in helping children with homework etc.' CCU, 3

'Making meals for your children.' CCU, 3

'Having longer to spend time together than just the average visit times.'

'I feel there should be more resources and activities for kids and families during visits and to be more child friendly.' CCU, 4

'Benefits of overnights would be getting to have 'normal' night-time routines.' CCU, 2

'I was unsure in a few questions as I feel it depends on the child's age and what they have been told about where their mum is.'

'I never told my children I was going to court.' CCU, 2

'I didn't expect a sentence, so I never told my children. I thought I would be back home from court.' CCU, 2

'My son's dad is making contact difficult, and he also has a new girlfriend.' CCU, 2

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

MBU and CCU questionnaire coding

Attitudes towards MBUs continued use coding

| | |
|----------|--|
| Agree | MBUs can help with bonding |
| | Having a strong bond is important |
| | Are in the best interest of the child |
| | Use should continue |
| | Baby may miss out being in an MBU |
| | Mum would struggle when baby leaves MBU |
| Unsure | Are in the best interest of the child |
| | Mum would feel lonely in an MBU |
| | Baby may struggle when they leave the MBU |
| | Mum would struggle when baby leaves MBU |
| | It might be best for baby to stay outside |
| | Mum would prefer a shared care agreement |
| Disagree | Baby should stay outside with other family |
| | Baby may miss out being in an MBU |
| | Mum would feel lonely in an MBU |

Attitudes towards MBUs continued use theme coding

| | |
|----------|--|
| Agree | MBUs can help with bonding |
| | Having a strong bond is important |
| | Are in the best interest of the child |
| | Use should continue |
| | Baby may miss out being in an MBU |
| | Mum would struggle when baby leaves MBU |
| Unsure | Are in the best interest of the child |
| | Mum would feel lonely in an MBU |
| | Baby may struggle when they leave the MBU |
| | Mum would struggle when baby leaves MBU |
| | It might be best for baby to stay outside |
| | Mum would prefer a shared care agreement |
| Disagree | Baby should stay outside with other family |
| | Baby may miss out being in an MBU |
| | Mum would feel lonely in an MBU |

Attitudes towards MBUs continued use theme and category coding

| Themes | Categories | Quotes |
|----------------------------|--------------|---|
| Attachment | Promote | 'Prison need better mother and baby bonding visits.' |
| | Important | |
| | Separation | 'I am hoping I will never be back in here.' |
| Best interest of the child | Contact | |
| | Miss out | |
| | Stay outside | 'Baby going to my boyfriend's parents from the hospital till I am out.' |
| Support | Lonely | |
| | Voice | <p>'I feel that I've been supported as much as I should have been with comfort including clothing, cushions and housing.'</p> <p>'3 Geoamey staff coming to appts makes it look as though the public needed to be protected more than me. 2 of them came into the room with me while personal things were talked about.'</p> <p>'Prison medical staff have supported me very well i.e., mother and baby nurse + GP and other hospital staff.'</p> |
| | Uncertainty | 'For my release and general support there seems to have been a breakdown in communications which leaves me feeling that I'm being set up for failure for getting out as I've got someone willing to support me and I am eager to receive this because it is vital for what happens to me and baby when I am released and where I stay.' |

Attitudes towards overnight stays in CCUs coding

| | |
|----------|---|
| Agree | Improve relationships |
| | Reassure child mum is safe |
| | Allow mum to be more involved |
| | Should not stay overnight |
| | Hard for mum when child leaves |
| | Hard for child when they leave |
| | Best interest of the child |
| | Children's views and rights are important |
| | Longer day visit would be better |
| | Visit timetable should be more flexible |
| Unsure | Improve relationships |
| | Reassure child mum is safe |
| | Allow mum to be more involved |
| | Should not stay overnight |
| | Hard for child when they leave |
| | Best interest of the child |
| | Longer day visit would be better |
| | Children should not have contact |
| Disagree | Should not stay overnight |
| | Best interest of the child |
| | Longer day visit would be better |
| | Children should not have contact |

Attitudes towards overnight stays in CCUs theme coding

| | |
|----------|---|
| Agree | Improve relationships |
| | Reassure child mum is safe |
| | Allow mum to be more involved |
| | Should not stay overnight |
| | Hard for mum when child leaves |
| | Hard for child when they leave |
| | Best interest of the child |
| | Children's views and rights are important |
| | Longer day visit would be better |
| | Visit timetable should be more flexible |
| Unsure | Improve relationships |
| | Reassure child mum is safe |
| | Allow mum to be more involved |
| | Should not stay overnight |
| | Hard for child when they leave |
| | Best interest of the child |
| | Longer day visit would be better |
| | Children should not have contact |
| Disagree | Should not stay overnight |

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| | Best interest of the child |
| | Longer day visit would be better |
| | Children should not have contact |

Attitudes towards overnight stays in CCUs theme and category coding

| Themes | Categories | Quotes |
|----------------------------|------------------|--|
| Attachment | Promote | 'I think it's important for mothers and kids to maintain a close relationship even when in prison.' |
| | Night-time | 'Being able to fall asleep together feeling content.' 'Benefits of overnights would be getting to have 'normal' night-time routines.' |
| | Reassurance | 'I never told my children I was going to court.' |
| | Involvement | 'Being involved in helping children with homework etc.' 'Making meals for your children.' |
| | Access | 'Having longer to spend time together than just the average visit times.' |
| | Separation | 'My son's dad is making contact difficult, and he also has a new girlfriend.' |
| Best interest of the child | Views and rights | |
| | Contact | 'As a mum in custody I personally know how much it would mean to me to be able to have that opportunity and how much my kids would love it.' |
| Support | Confidence | 'I think it would be amazing for mums to have the opportunity to have their children stay overnight.' |
| | Contact | 'I didn't expect a sentence, so I never told my children. I thought I would be back home from court.' |

Appendix C: Example interview questions and extract of interview transcript analysis



Indicative Interview Questions

Common Questions

- Job role/experience of MBUs.
- How long in role/MBUs?
- What support is offered to pregnant women are while in custody?
- How supported do you feel mothers are when they are separated from their babies and or child/ren?
- How important are MBUs and CCUs?
- Role of SPS in the units. Discuss.
- Role of external agencies. Discuss.
- Should children be able to have overnight stays in CCUs?
- What would be the advantages/challenges of this?
- Discuss the continued use of MBUs and their role in community justice on release.

SPS Specific Questions

- What are your views/experiences of the use of MBUs?
- Should they be used in the future custodial estate?
- New strategy moving towards mentors rather than officers. How confident do you feel that staff are aware of and are equipped to deliver trauma informed services?
- Should other children stay overnight in CCUs?

External Agency Questions

- Do you think MBUs are in the best interest of the child?
- When considering preparation for release how could MBUs and CCUs support mothers, babies and children reintegrate back into the community?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of children staying overnight in CCUs?

Extract of interview transcript analysis

| Attachment | Support | Best Interest |
|---|--|--|
| <p><i>It can be incredibly disruptive, and I think that is why you hear a lot of people say it's better for kids if they don't visit, but it's about trying to recognise what children want.</i> (Mary, CEO)</p> <p><i>I think it's really important and I wish there were more opportunities for women to be involved in their children's lives as it is important for bonding.</i> (Jane, EYP)</p> <p><i>The first priority would always be, can we get mum out and back into her home environment and if that wasn't possible then can baby stay for a period once assessments have been carried out by social work.</i> (Liam, SPS).</p> <p><i>Mums just don't feel confident enough to move through the process and just give up.</i> (Jane, EYP)</p> <p><i>Maybe they feel so guilty about the way they have treated other people that they don't trust themselves to be a good mum, so they avoid, they withdraw from the process. I have met women who keep their kids at a distance and don't want to see them whilst they are in custody because of their own experiences or lack of trust in themselves.</i> (James, SPS).</p> <p><i>There is always more than one person serving a sentence when someone comes to prison, the kids never did anything wrong to anyone and neither did their partner but because of what the courts decided to do with the other half, everybody is affected.</i> (James, SPS).</p> <p><i>It's recognising that there is a different context and a different behaviour that the rest of the family will experience with the mum in prison.</i> (Mary, CEO)</p> | <p><i>Be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem... We want to build relationships between staff and residents with real levels of trust, respect, honesty, integrity, and openness to facilitate people supporting each other.... That's a good foundation to build something more sophisticated, around relational engagement and becoming more trauma informed.</i> (James, SPS)</p> <p><i>Staff who can understand trauma and who can provide support to an individual they have a relationship with.... Ultimately the job of a prison officer needs to be to upskill mum... Women tell us time and time again that relationships are essential to them so if we can get the community partners, they need to engage with identified and tied in pre-release they are far more likely to engage post release.</i> (Liam SPS)</p> <p><i>The idea being if a women needs to attend an external appointment and needs a bit of support in the community it would be he personal officer who would be able to support her.....We are trying to break down barriers and we know that even lanyards can act as a trigger for people who have suffered trauma.....The hub will be a busy dynamic area. It will be the same space that women interact with their families, engage and service providers.</i> (Liam, SPS)</p> <p><i>It's also recognising that parenting from prison is quite a different context and recognising what that means for people in prison, and how they can maintain those relationships, it's not just about plucking a programme from the outside and putting it in a prison.</i> (Mary, CEO)</p> | <p><i>If having to say goodbye to the child for 3 or 4 days negatively impacts on mums' mental health, then it may be in the best interest of the child to go to someone else to have more stability.</i> (Liam, SPS)</p> <p><i>Mums could be desperate to see their kids but not necessarily wanting to see them in a custodial environment, therefore, it would all depend on how it looks and feels.</i> (Mary, CEO)</p> <p><i>It's about recognising that the best interest of the child is by definition a bigger picture. Also, what will be the processes of asking children what they want to see happen? There needs to be a recognition to listen to children and the ability to change their care plan, based on their views and needs. SPS need to consider UNCRC focus on the children who are coming in and out of prisons every day.</i> (Mary, CEO)</p> <p><i>In some case when mums know early on that it is likely that baby will go into foster care they aren't willing to put the work in, even with support from the social work team....They feel like they are going to be put through all of that for baby to be taken so they just decide in those early stages to sign the papers and put the foster case process in motion.</i> (Jane, EYP)</p> <p><i>I can see the benefits, but even the CCUs are still a custodial environment. Our difficulty is there is no legislative framework for us to allow anyone, including a child in a prison overnight voluntary. There would need to be new legislation to make this happen and that would take time and would ultimately be a government decision.</i> (Liam, SPS)</p> |

Appendix D: Phase 1 and Phase 2 full coding

| Themes | Categories | MBU Questionnaire | CCU Questionnaire | Interviews |
|---------------|---|--|---|--|
| Attachment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separation. - Involvement. - Avoidance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of attachment and the role of MBUs to help with bonding. - Mum would rather baby was in MBU yet unsure if baby may be better off outside. - Would benefit from improved prison bonding visits, use of MBUs should continue. - General uncertainty. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved resources provision and longer day visits. - Unsure or disagree that children should not maintain contact. - Involvement for mum in child's life. - Importance of night-time routine and flexibility with visit times. - General uncertainty. - Importance of maintaining a close relationship. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abandonment. - Avoidance/prison a safe space. - Unstructured visit timetable. - Home visits. - Complicated process for mothers. - Feeling inadequate. - Contact visits. - First option to get mum home - Importance of milestones. - Technology used in visits. |
| Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The new estate and the need for change. - Trauma Informed Practice. - Parenting Programmes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mums may be lonely and may struggle when baby leaves. - Level of support from family on the outside. - General comfort and support from mother and baby nurse. - Procedures and policies around attending hospital visits and involvement from other professionals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard for mum when child leaves. - May be hard for child when they leave. - Reliance on family on the outside. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programmes. - Trauma Informed Practice. - Reflective practice/personal development model. - Community hub within CCU. - Importance of relationships. - Personal officer model. - ACES. - SPS facilitating contact visits. - Avoidance to interact with services/stigma. - Equivalence. - Community access. |
| Best Interest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rights and views. - Voice. - Equivalence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MBUs may be in the best interest of children. - Mums unsure if baby would struggle when leaving. - Mixed feelings that baby may miss out by being in MBU. - mums unsure on shared care. - Concerns on release from custody. - Unsure on what is best for baby, feel that it might be best for baby to stay outside but do not feel they should. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree importance of views and rights of children. - Mixed feelings on if children should have overnight stays. - Mums looking for more information on the structure and process for overnight stays for children before deciding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women treated as individuals. - Children's voice and UNCRC. - Person centred. - Decision making. - Legislation. - Risk assessments. - Local and flexible. |

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