**Chapter One**

1. **Introduction**

The Sex Offenders Register (SOR) came into existence in the United Kingdom on 1 September 1997, which placed a legal obligation on those persons convicted or cautioned for a sexual offence to register certain details, otherwise known as the ‘register’. This ‘register’ was later strengthened by *Part 2 Sexual Offences Act 2003*. *Section 80-92 Sexual Offences Act 2003*, states that those convicted or cautioned of a sexual offence have to comply with certain notification requirements while they are formally placed on the register. This is said to act as a form of community protection and allow for preventative action and for necessary risk assessment, management and planning to take place (Thomas 2010).

The *Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000* placed a statutory duty jointly on police and probation service to establish arrangements for assessing and managing risks by those persons known as Registered Sexual Offenders (RSO). The introduction of *Section 325 Criminal Justice Act 2003*, further strengthened these arrangements by extending this responsibility to include the prison service and in addition, a duty to co-operate on a range of agencies and organisations to assess the risk posed by relevant sexual or violent offenders. *Section 327 (2) Criminal Justice Act 2003* defined relevant RSO’s as those subject to the notification requirements as set out in *Part 2 Sexual Offences Act 2003*. Given the limited statutory responsibility of both the probation service and prison service in terms of ‘managing’ RSO’s over the long term the majority of RSO’s will be managed by the police as a single agency (personal communication College of Policing February 2019).

Risk assessment serves a vital function and is an essential tool to effectively manage RSO’s. In order to effectively risk assess and manage this type of offender, there have been various risk assessment tools employed through the criminal justice system. The main tool that was adopted by police service in England and Wales to risk assess registered sexual offenders was known as Risk Matrix 2000 (RM2K) (Hanson & Thornton, 2000) which is a static risk assessment tool and demonstrated a high level of predictive accuracy (Thornton *et al,* 2003; Craig *et al,* 2007; Grubin, 2008; Kingston *et al,* 2008; Barnet *et al,* 2010; Grubin, 2011; Wakeling *et al,* 2011; Helmus *et al,* 2013) and allowed police personnel to score offenders based on a low-high score range. However, this tool left little room for police input or judgement and was viewed unfavourably by officers (Nicholls & Webster, 2014). As such, this tool allowed for a lessening of police officers sense of control and increasing possible vulnerability if the offender re-offended on their watch (McCartan *et al, 2*019).

Also, despite the positive support for RM2K, there was academic support to incorporate a dynamic risk assessment tool (Wakeing *et al,* 2011; Helmus *et al,* 2013; Tully & Brown, 2015) which would allow police to place the offender into the appropriate risk category and establish the necessary risk management plan. This eventually allowed for the introduction of a new risk assessment tool used in England and Wales which is known as Active Risk Management System (ARMS).

ARMS was introduced by the police service and National Offender Management System (NOMS). Not only does ARMS allow for a dynamic risk assessment to take place, it also allows police to increase or decrease the offender’s risk level and allows police to use greater judgement and flexibility when completing the necessary ARMS assessment (College of Policing, 2014). ARMS was first introduced in 2013 and is said to provide for a new style of policing and risk assessment compared to RM2K (College of Policing, 2014). All police officers that use ARMS are now known as Management of Sexual or Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) and have had to undergo the necessary training to enable them to carry out the required ARMS assessment.

* 1. **Justification for Thesis**

Since the implementation of ARMS, there have been a number of evaluation studies (Nicholls and Webster, 2014; Kewley, 2017; Mann & Lundringan, 2020) as to the effectiveness of the risk assessment tool. These studies have reviewed the effectiveness of the training; participants views of the training; reliability of the risk tool and the implications that the training has on practice. More recent studies have also included an examination into the quality of completed ARMS assessments (Kewley *et al, 2*019) and officers use of ARMS in understanding sex offender risk management (McCartan *et al,* 2019).

This thesis aims to address gaps in the existing literature. As stated above, there is literature available regarding the development and effectiveness of ARMS, yet there is a gap in the literature regarding the effectiveness of the home visit process when conducting an ARMS assessment. This thesis investigates the training across three police forces, showing the similarities and differences in the training at different forces and provides data from a sample of recordings of risk assessment taking place during the home visit, to ascertain which parts of the MOSOVO training are effective in practice i.e. the home visit.

Kewley (2017) provides a valuable account of MOSOVO’s views of ARMS, with particular reference to the training that MOSOVO undertake and MOSOVO’s views of this style of risk assessment. This thesis is supportive of this study and provides further data to show that the MOSOVO training is unrealistic in practice i.e. the home visit; the training is incomplete as it is only suitable to a certain type of practical home visit; there are challenges for the home visit and risk assessment not covered in training and further resources should be available for the home visit to enable effective risk management.

Finally, this thesis will contribute to knowledge by providing an account of RSO’s views of the home visit and the ARMS assessment process. This study also provides data as to the questions that are asked to the RSO during the home visit; RSO’s feeling towards the police and the different types of home visit that are conducted.

As the data provided evidence for the above aims of the thesis, all three forces are anonymous and are not identified in this thesis and are provided with anonymity using the terms ‘force 1’, ‘fore 2’ and ‘force 3’. Likewise, the RSO’s are also afforded anonymity and reference is made to the police force area that the RSO was from, their risk category and the number of visits that the RSO had been subject to previously.

* 1. **Research Aims**

This thesis therefore has four research aims, which links to studies 1-3:

1. To examine what training is provided for police officers to conduct risk assessments and home visits of RSOs and to ascertain the differences in training at each force.
2. To examine whether there is an alignment between policy (as per police training) and practice in conducting risk assessments and home visits of RSO’s.
3. To examine police officers’ views on the effectiveness or otherwise of training processes and procedures for risk assessments and home visits.
4. To explore RSO’s experiences of the home visit process.
   1. **Structure of Thesis**

The structure of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1 Introduction which provides the legislative background to the thesis, together with justification and research aims of this thesis.

Chapter 2 Literature review which provides a review of the literature relevant to each of the research aims.

Chapter 3 Research approach that was employed for this thesis.

Chapter 4 Study 1 being an observation of Police Training and recordings of Home Visits. This chapter also includes an analysis of the findings and a discussion of those findings.

Chapter 5 Study 2 being MOSOVO’s views of the effectiveness of training for the purposes of risk assessment and home visit process. This chapter also provides an analysis of the findings and a discussion of those findings.

Chapter 6 Study 3 being RSO’s experiences of the home visit process. This chapter provides an analysis of the findings and a discussion of those findings.

Chapter 7 This chapter provides a discussion of chapters 4-6 together with recommendations for future research. Reflection of the PhD journey is included at the end of this chapter

Chapter 8 Final conclusions

**Chapter Two**

1. **Literature Review**

In the UK, the general term ‘offender’ is used to cover many types of ‘risky groups’ (McCartan, 2014). Those who are deemed to pose a risk of serious harm are usually placed within the Multi Agency Public Protection Authority (MAPPA) framework: Category 1 offenders being RSO’s and a person falls within this category if they are subject to the notification requirements of *Part 2 Sexual Offences Act 2003* (Williamson & Nash cited in McCartan, 2014). Currently, there are around 60,294 RSO’s in England and Wales (Ministry of Justice 2018 cited in Mann & Lundringan, 2020) that undoubtedly cause a great deal of concern to the general public. The management of this ‘risky group’ has therefore led risk to become a central component to the criminal justice system (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997) and central to this risk culture is the Sex Offenders Register (SOR) (Maguire *et al,* 2010; Kemshall & McCartan, 2014; Kemshall & Maguire, 2014; Kemshall & Maguire, 2015).

2.1 History of Sex Offences Legislation

The introduction of the *Sex Offender Act 1997*, began with what could be argued as a significant cultural shift in policing across England and Wales (Thomas, 2010), as the Act introduced a lawful obligation on certain individuals post-conviction or caution to ‘register’ with the police and was seen as a form of public protection as the police would be able to monitor those persons subject to the register (Thomas 2008; Thomas 2009; Thomas 2010). Due to public concern over paedophile activity (Logan 2003; Socia & Stamatel, 2010), these requirements were later strengthened following the introduction of the *Sexual Offences Act 2003* which allowed for further management of RSO’s by allowing other orders to be made available, such as notification orders and sexual offence prevention orders in order for the authorities to better manage the RSO rather than the RSO simply ‘register’ their whereabouts.

To further strengthen the management of RSO’s, the introduction of *Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000, s.67* placed the police under a duty to establish arrangements for the purpose of assessing and managing the risks posed in that area by relevant sexual or violent offenders. Risk assessment was central to this police work to try and ‘predict’ the likely future offending of the RSO (Thomas, 2010). Following the introduction of *Criminal Justice Act 2003, s.325*, the police are further under a duty to risk assess and manage any RSO and are responsible for placing the RSO into one of four possible risk categories namely, low, medium, high or very high risk., to allow the police to carry out regular risk assessments on registrants. These developments in policy legislation can therefore be seen as a form of public protection (Hebenton and Thomas, 2001; Thomas, 2008; Thomas, 2009; Brewster *et al,* 2012; Sullivan *et al,* 2016; McCartan *et al,* 2018) from this group of offenders.

In order for police to carry out this public protection role, Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offender (MOSOVO) teams now operate in each of the 43 police forces across England and Wales (Kewley, 2017 p.3). As stated by Thomas (2010), ‘*there has been a cultural shift in policing and this has led to the introduction of an increasingly important new type of policing which is referred to as ‘offender management’* (Nash, 2014). The aim of this type of policing is to reduce re-offending, to promote desistance in offenders and to keep the public as well as communities safe (McCartan *et al,* 2010). The role of MOSOVO is therefore an Offender Management role as it is their role to assess risk by conducting the necessary home visit in order to promote desistance in RSO’s.

**2.2. Risk Assessment, Management and Planning**

Due to the developments in policy legislation, it is imperative that risk assessment is carried out in the correct way, ‘*rigorous risk assessment is crucial to the effective identification and management of offenders*’ (Kemshall *et al,* 2005 p64). The term risk assessment has been defined as ‘*the process of evaluating individuals to (1) characterise the risk that they will commit violence in the future, and (2) develop interventions to manage or reduce the risk*’ (Boer *et al,* 2009p.19).

The risk assessment is designed to identify those persons to be targeted for risk reduction services, to inform case planning, community supervision, and the implementation of other specialised risk management resources to prevent new acts of sexual violence (Nicholaichuk *et al*, 2014). The ability to measure risk factors that are likely to raise, or reduce an individual’s likelihood of committing further crime is crucial if the Criminal Justice System is to be successful in reducing recidivism (Beech *et al*, 2016). To aid this, there are two factors to consider in risk assessment, being static and dynamic risk factors (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Static risk factors are relatively fixed factors which cannot be deliberately changed and have found to have a reliable relationship with sexual re-offending (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009), such as criminal history and age. However, due to the fact that such tools are based on fixed static factors, they cannot tell us whether a psychological or behavioural change on other ‘changeable’ risk factors is meaningful in terms of reducing or increasing the chances of further offending and as such, some argue lack practical utility in assessment (Douglas & Kropp, 2002). Therefore, dynamic factors have been incorporated into risk assessment (Beech & Ward, 2004; Crassaiti and Beech, 2003). In contrast to static factors, dynamic risk factors do have the potential to change and are associated with a reduction or increase in recidivism rates (Hanson, 1998) and are often referred to as criminogenic needs (Ward, 2015).

When the appropriate risk assessment has taken place, effective risk management of the RSO is an essential process for reintegration and rehabilitation into society.Risk management planning helps criminal justice agencies assess a client’s risk and need, which enables them to effectively deploy appropriate resources; provide targeted treatment interventions; and administer necessary controls (Bonta and Wormith, 2013). Successful risk management planning thus, serves to protect the public from harm, support the client, while also maintaining public resources efficiently (Hilder and Kemshall, 2013). Risk management further refers to any actions taken by a panel as a whole, or by the police, probation service or other agency, to attempt to reduce the RSO’s risky behaviour (Thomas, 2000).

The effective risk management of offenders is therefore central to public protection through the prevention or reduction of harmful behaviours (Police research paper 139). Risk management is not, and should not be, a one size fits all model. Different individuals pose different risks and need different responses, additionally, over time, the same individual’s risk can change and so too will their risk management needs (McCartan & Prescott, 2016) and effective risk management allows for a diverse range of management plans to be put in place to meet the offenders needs.

**2.3 Previous Risk Assessment Tools**

As stated above, historically, within the criminal justice system, there have been different risk assessment tools used to assess risk posed by RSO’s, so as to be able to place the offender into a low, medium, high or sometimes very high-risk category. The Sexual Violence Risk-20 (SVR-20) was designed by Boer *et al* (1997) and is a set of structured professional judgement guidelines for conducting SVR assessments. 20 factors were gleaned from a systematic review of the scientific and professional literature and allowed for three domains: psychosocial adjustment, sexual offence and future plans. SVR-20 is not a quantitative test that yields norm-referenced or criterion-referenced scores, rather it acts as an aide memoir to help systemize the risk assessment of individuals who (allegedly) have committed an act of sexual violence. More importantly, the concept of risk assessed by SVR-20 is not limited to likelihood of a new offence, as is commonly the case in actuarial tests. This risk assessment tool has been subject to evaluation (Litwack, 2001; Craig *et al,* 2008; Boer & Hart, 2009; Rettenberger *et al,* 2011; Kanters *et al,* 2017) whereby the tool was criticized because its items vary greatly in terms of the extent to which they are associated with the probability of recidivistic sexual violence.

This criticism led to the introduction of the Structured Anchored Clinical Judgement Scale (SACJ) risk tool was designed by Grubin *et al,* (1998) in an attempt to combine the expertise of clinical professionals with the numerical advantages of actuarial measures. This tool was subject to evaluation (Rogers, 2000; Hanson *et al,* 2000; Litwack, 2001; Craig *et al,* 2004) where it was found that the predictive accuracy of clinical judgement threatens the risk based legal sanctions for sex offender actuarial risk and is less effective at prediction of sexual recidivism. This led to the implementation of the Rapid Risk Assessment for Sexual Offence Recidivsm (RRASOR) which was designed by Hanson (1997) and is a 15 item scale which was developed in an attempt to change the manner by which people conduct risk assessment and to act as a stepping stone for the development of a second generation actuarial instrument. However, it soon became apparent that the tool also had low predictive validity for predicting sexual offence recidivism (Hanson & Bussiere, 1998; Hanson & Thornton, 2000)

The Sex Offender Risk Appraisal Guide (SORAG) was developed in an attempt to address the failures from previous risk tools, which is a 14 item actuarial scale (Quinsey *et al,* 1998), with factors such as history of alcohol; history of sexual offending; age of index offence and number of previous convictions and with each factor being provided a score. Again this tool, was subject to evaluation and was also found to have low predictive accuracy of sexual recidivism and also allowed for indifferent risk levels to be apportioned to the offender (Rice *et al,* 2006; Barbareee *et al,* 2006; Rettenberger *et al,* 2017). This led to the introduction of Static 99 and Static 2003 risk assessment tools, both of which were developed by the same academics (Hanson & Thornton, 2000; Hanson & Thornton, 2003). Static 99 is a combination of RRASOR and SACJ and is an actuarial risk assessment which consists of ten static items resulting in numerical risk scoring. When combined with appropriate table of norms (Phoenix *et al,* 2016) it characterises individuals risk for sexual recidivism. Despite this risk tool being received more positively in respect of predictor of sexual recidivism, limitations were also noted in that it requires assessor judgement and decision making and was therefore described as an impossible tool to establish risk assessment (Reeves *et al,* 2017; Donaldson *et al,* 2012) as the introduction of such judgement obviates the very point of actuarial assessment (Singer *et al,* 2013).

**2.4** **Current Risk Assessment Tools used by Police**

As can be seen, the previous risk assessment tools were not without its problems or limitations, mainly due to previous risk tools allowing for a low predictive accuracy of sexual recidivism. Risk Matrix 2000 (RM2K) (Hanson & Thornton, 2000), was developed to assess risk of sexual and violent reoffending of adult males convicted of sexual offences and was adopted by the police service of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (National Policing Improvement Agency 2007). RM2K utilises a stepwise approach to risk classification. In assessing risk for sexual aggression, offender age, number of sexual appearances and number of criminal appearances are considered. Next, four aggravating factors (male victim, stranger victim, marital history and noncontact offence history) are examined, with the presence of two to three risk factors elevating risk by one category and the presence of all four risk factors raising the risk rating by two categories (Kingston *et al,* 2008; Craig *et al,* 2006). The risk scores and categories are: 0 (low risk), 1-2 (medium risk), 3-4 (high risk), and 5-6 (very high risk). If two or three of the second step items are present the initial risk category is raised one level and if all four of these factors are present, the initial risk category is raised by two levels e.g. from low to high (Thornton, 2007).

There have been various studies, which actively support the use of RM2K (Thornton *et al,* 2003; Craig *et al,* 2007; Grubin, 2008; Helmus, *et al* 2013), which found that RM2K unlike its predecessors, had significant and moderate to high predictive accuracy. Although the use of the RM2K is widespread and empirically supported, certain academics were of the opinion that assessment practices could be improved with structured rules for combining the Risk Matrix 2000 with a dynamic risk scale, which would allow for a more comprehensive risk assessment (Wakeling *et al,* 2011; Helmus *et al,* 2013) and would improve practical utility (Tully & Browne, 2015). These dynamic risk factors can be used to track change in risk status in individual offenders over time. Once the risk assessment has been completed, the offender will be given a score and that score will allow the police to ascertain which category of risk to place the offender into and will allow for a risk management plan to be put in place.

The incorporation of dynamic factors into the risk assessment process has been subject to academic debate as it is thought that dynamic factors would help to predict the likelihood of recidivism but to also support practitioners in developing effective risk management strategies (Ward and Fortune, 2016). Kewley (2017) argues that criminal justice practitioners ought to engage in supervision regimes that respond not only to the risk a client presents but also their needs. The Risk Need and responsivity Model (RNR) developed by Andrews and Bonta (2010) states that the allocation of resources and intensity of treatment should be led not only by risk, but also the deficits clients face, practitioners should manage needs in a way that responds to the unique learning style and motivation levels of the individual (Kewley (2017). Likewise, the Good Lives Model developed by Ward & Stewart (2003) assert that a more strengths based approach to working with clients convicted of sexual offences is far more effective and indeed complementary to the RNR approach. That is, by helping people develop a capacity to achieve personal goals and access meaningful opportunities in their life, their risk of reoffending is inevitably reduced as they begin to strive to live good lives (Kewley 2017).

This therefore led to the introduction of a dynamic risk assessment tool known as Active Risk Management System (ARMS): ‘Active’ in the sense that it focuses on information that is currently evident in an ‘offenders life’, and a ‘Risk Management System’ in the sense that it enables the assessor to recognise, prioritise and organise information into a framework that assists risk management planning (Kewley 2017). The main driving force behind ARMS was that frontline staff wanted a risk assessment system that they saw as flexible and fit for purpose that they could use in their day to day activities (McCartan *et al,* 2011). Allowing police who manage RSO’s to increase or decrease the risk level, allows for greater judgement and flexibility by the police and enables them to adapt their offender management strategies better (Nicholls and Webster, 2014).

The development team comprised of academics and practitioners with extensive expertise in the assessment, treatment and management of people with sexual convictions, included in the team were four senior representatives from NOMS and an experienced police professional (Kewley, 2017 p.6). The ARMS development team began by examining the landmark meta-analysis studies into those dynamic factors that appeared to trigger the onset of recidivism and the emerging literature regarding those factors that demonstrated a relationship to encourage desistance from offending (Hanson & Brussiere, 1998; Hanson *et al,* 2003; Mann *et al,* 2010). By including these so-called protective factors into the assessment process, the development team argued would allow for a more defensible approach to analysing the risk posed by such offenders and address some of the limitations of deficit focused assessments by arriving at a more balanced risk assessment (Kewley 2017).

Whilst much has been written regarding the role of risk factors in predicting future recidivism less was known about the role of protective factors at the time ARMS was developed (Farmer *et al,* 2015; Vries Robbe *et al,* 2015). This led the developers to review desistance literature in an attempt to determine what protective factors to include within ARMS (Kewley 2017). The development team were of the opinion that protective factors do play a significant role in encouraging the offender to desist from offending (College of Policing, 2014) and were therefore incorporated into the ARMS factors. The factors are detailed and listed in the table below, together with examples of supporting evidence that is required for each risk and protective factor:

**2.5. ARMS Factors**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Factor** | **Details** | **Evidence Examples** |
|  | Opportunity to Offend – Risk Factor | Offender having access to his preferred victim type | Offender making decisions/engaging in behaviour to increase access to victims |
|  | Sexual Preoccupation – Risk Factor | Sex is the offenders sole interest or carries a disproportionate significance in his life | Intense interest in sex; sex is used as a means of coping with negative mood; excessive use of pornography |
|  | Offence related sexual interests – Risk Factor | Risk involves sexual interests that are more easily gratified through offending than through legal consensual sexual activities | A sexual interest in children; forced sex; pleasure from causing pain or humiliation |
|  | Emotional Congruence with Children – Risk Factor | Emotional intimacy and romance with children. | Feeling in love with a child; desire to spend large amounts of time with a child; pursuing child orientated employment or hobbies |
|  | Hostile Orientation – Risk Factor | Negative orientation to others or rules | Negativity or hostility to others; oppositional reaction to law, rules and supervision |
|  | Poor Self Management – Risk Factor | Chaotic and impulsive lifestyle resulting in stress, boredom or reckless choices | Random lifestyle; always in a crisis; misuse of drugs or alcohol; financial difficulty; associates and support network |
|  | Social Influences – Protective Factor | Pro-social support network in individuals life that could influence him in a positive way | Positive individuals whom he values/respects; his support network encourages him to change |
|  | Commitment to desist – Protective Factor | Identifies a non-offending sense of who he is or becoming | Accounts of his offending past; can explain why he is different now; seeks out change opportunities |
|  | Intimate relationships – Protective Factor | Having close relationship with a pro-social other person | Current positive relationship with others |
|  | Employment or positive routine – Protective Factor | Employment that brings him into contact with non-offenders | Current employment or any meaningful activity that provides a sense of purpose |
|  | Social Investment – Protective Factor | ‘Giving something back’ | Showing empathy and concern to victims; contribute to future generations and are more likely to desist |

Carrying out an ARMS assessment consists of five key stages which are discussed in detail by Kewley (2017:9-14). The five stages include the assessment of a range of risk factors, assessment of a range of protective factors, an overall priority assessment of the case, a risk matrix assessment, a combination assessment of RM2K and ARMS priority assessment to arrive at a General Level of Risk Management (GLM) and finally a risk management plan. Once each factor has been assessed, each factor is given a priority rating, being low, medium, high or very high, which is in line with previous risk assessment tools. The assessor is then required to consider the Risk Matrix 2000 assessment of re-conviction and by combining these two assessments arrives at the general level of risk management.

The literature regarding the developments in policy and risk assessment, management and planning process have been discussed. The researcher will now provide a discussion as to the literature that is relevant to this thesis, namely, police training to carry out the home visit and risk assessment, the home visit process; MOSOVO’s views of ARMS and RSO’s views of the ARMS risk assessment.

**2.6** **Police Training of MOSOVO**

As the police have a legal duty to risk assess the offender at home (*Criminal Justice Act 2003*; National Police Improvement Agency, 2010), the risk assessment has to be undertaken by a ‘suitably trained’ officer of Detective or Superintendent Rank. If such an officer wishes to undertake the role of MOSOVO, then that officer is required to undergo MOSOVO training as discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis.

Prior to ARMS being piloted (Ministry of Justice, 2010), an examination team was appointed to establish whether to implement a risk tool known as ‘Stable and Acute dynamic risk assessment tool’ (S & A) (Nicholls *et al,* 2010). The S & A was piloted in 2008 across 22 force areas, with selected police and probation services adopting the tool into their assessment practice. The training lasted for two days and consisted of an overview of the theory and evidence for the assessment and a number of practical exercises. Training was provided by an accredited S & A trainer and on completion of the training officers adopted the S & A into their practice. This study conducted qualitative interviews with 30 operational staff using S & A in their routine assessments across ten case study areas, 15 police officers and 15 probation officers. Thirteen strategic staff overseeing the pilot were also interviewed and 7 RSO’s that had been assessed using the S&A in their routine assessments across ten case study areas One aspect of the evaluation was to make recommendations about staff training.

The key conclusions from this evaluation were that joint police and probation training was positively received; the balance between theory and practice was appreciated. Further training outcomes were reported which included: enhanced operational skills such as interviewing techniques; increased substantive knowledge such as greater awareness of dynamic factors and an awareness of implementation challenges. Role play was highlighted as being particularly useful and these could be developed in further training. However, participants report limitations to the use of the S & A tool: that two days was not adequate time to be trained for this role and that a one size fits all training approach struggled to meet their diverse needs and experiences. Further, the assessment took one to two hours to complete and participants felt they did not have the requisite interview skills to complete the assessment and as such participants felt unsure of the value and practical implementation of the S & A into their assessment regime.

The findings from this evaluation therefore led NOMS to discontinue the use of S & A and a further pilot into the use of ARMS was undertaken in 2012 (Nicholls & Webster, 2014). Like the S & A pilot, this pilot contained participants from probation and police forces, albeit the sample of participants in the S & A pilot was larger and from a more diverse geographical area. (The ARMS pilot was only from three probation trusts and two police forces). Further the S & A pilot focused the training to include theory and evidence for risk assessment, whereas the ARMS pilot focused on the case study element in the training. The ARMS pilot consisted of 20 officers from three probation trusts and two police forces using the tool as part of their routine supervision of 37 RSO’s. Part of this evaluation was to incorporate a case study design into the training, in order to provide a contextualised understanding of the pilot. In this pilot, NOMS asked officers involved to use ARMS to rate risk and protective factors in two hypothetical case studies. ARMS developers were provided with the same case studies by NOMS and together agreed a ‘gold standard’ (which is now referred to as the developers standard) rating for each case to be compared with ratings produced by officers involved in the pilot. Participants used a range of information to complete their assessments. The main source of information tended to be an ARMS interview with the offender. Participants also used observations to help them complete the ARMS assessment.

The findings from this pilot (Nicholls & Webster, 2014) were that participants would have welcomed more and longer role play exercises to practice their assessment skills. Participants also felt that it was important that the trainers were ARMS experts drawn from both police and probation backgrounds. However, from this pilot, participants generally found the training relevant and engaging, with a good balance between theory and practice and participants felt that ARMS was appropriate for use with a range of RSO’s and participants described the ARMS risk assessment tool as promising and ARMS was therefore rolled out as a risk assessment tool across forces, despite the ARMS pilot only being piloted across three probation trusts and two police forces.

Kewley (2017) has provided a valuable and insightful focus group study (n=28) from four police forces and the sample consisted of 57% male (n=16) and 43% female (n=12) which examined the attitudes of MOSOVO officers working with the ARMS tool and was the first empirical evaluation of ARMS since the 2012 pilot. One participant was a senior officer with strategic responsibility for ARMS and although did not have operational experience of the tool, did play a key role in its implementation and resourcing. All remaining participants were either serving police officers or police staff and were all employed as MOSOVO officers. Their time in service and as a MOSOVO officer varied with a mean of 17.2 years in service and a mean of 3.74 years as MOSOVO officer.

One of the areas where data was received from Kewley (2017) was that of MOSOVO training. Participants from Kewley (2017) voiced mixed feelings about the training received to date. On one hand, participants felt that ‘*MOSOVO training gave a lot more information’ but on the other hand participants felt ‘the training was difficult because you are just doing it off a DVD and it is not realistic.*’ (Kewley, 2017 p.10). Participants found the assessment a challenge as they ‘*really struggled to do it in two and a half hours’* (Kewley, 2017 p.11), while participants recognised that this part of the training was important, they did not feel the training gave them the confidence to apply this knowledge to a live interview. Kewley (2017) further found that training and supervision of MOSOVO is insufficient, in that participants described a lack of training to carry out the role, in particular, participants described a lot of information was provided at the training but that a lot of the practical side to the training was participants simply repeating the exercises off the DVD.

A more recent two year evaluation (Mann & Lundringham 2020) of ARMS was carried out in order to provide an evidence base to inform decision making on the future use of ARMS by both police and probation services. As the focus of this thesis is offender management by the police, only the data from the evaluation that is relevant to the police is included. The two year national evaluation intended to inform policy-making about the development of ARMS in such areas as training, joint agency use and applicability across different offender types and to assess its reliability. Three inter-related work packages were used across the evaluation and 224 practitioners took part in this study who provided both quantitative and qualitative data. The three inter-related work packages consisted of:

1. A comprehensive up to date national overview of ARMS delivery and a rapid evidence assessment of current practice and real challenges to effective use. This aimed to document the current national picture in relation to ARMS usage and perceptions of utility. A two part telephone interview was designed and administered to the MOSOVO lead across all 43 forces. The police forces also replied to a data collection form on the range of organisational characteristics.
2. Reliability and process effectiveness of ARMS. This consisted of telephone interviews with 74 practitioner’s (45 of whom were police practitioner’s) to explore in depth, ARMS usage in their force or division;
3. Investigate practitioner’s views on the utility of ARMS reliability, decision making and planning. This intended to examine inter-rater reliability of ARMS and explore frontline practitioner’s views on the practical utility of ARMS in day to day offender management, of which 14 MOSOVO teams took part in.

With regards to training, the evaluation found that training has been delivered in differing formats with differing content across the 43 police forces, which has created inconsistencies in practice and there were limited opportunities for continued professional development and in some instances the use of non-approved, external trainers by some forces. However, participants did report positively on the practical nature of the initial ARMS training and the content of the MOSOVO course provided a behavioural context which aided their understanding of ARMS but did feel that the ‘gold standard’ ARMS assessments could be improved. The areas for improvements were that it should represent the workload of offender managers and to decrease the level of detail included in the assessment as participants felt that such detail was difficult to achieve in a real world setting. Participants gave further recommendations to training in that refresher training for front line staff would be highly beneficial and further training designed for Detective Sergeants who supervise ARMS assessors and sign off the completed ARMS assessments. One of the main aims behind ARMS was for assessors to assess the here and now and participants reported that the meaning of that is not always clearly communicated.

With regards to the ARMS assessment, one of the original key functions of the ARMS tool was the more accurate prioritisation of offenders that would, in turn, allow for the targeted use of resources to those who posed the most significant risk. However, this evaluation (Mann & Lundringham, 2020) found that due to the increasing workload of MOSOVO, ARMS has had little impact on prioritising workload and has in-fact increased workload, with participants describing one assessment takes between 6-8 hours to complete and in some instances participants were unable to comprehensively complete the assessment. Further participants felt that ARMS has changed the Offender Management role from one of proactive detective work to a more reactive desk based role, the main reason being the amount of time it takes MOSOVO to complete the ARMS paperwork. Participants also reported that there was a level of repetition across the 11 factors within ARMS and certain factors could be amalgamated, such as sexual preoccupation and offence related sexual interests without losing the detail necessary for a good arms assessment. Participants further felt that these terms require an understanding of sexual offending that is not within the scope of the average police officer, which led participants to feeling out of their depth. There was also consensus that the ‘social investment’ factor was very difficult to evidence, brought very little information to the overall understanding of an offender and was the one factor which could be easily removed without negatively effecting the overall assessment.

Participants further reported that the assessment is written in a style more conducive to the role of probation practitioner who have experience of working with offenders on a more psychological level and the phrasing of some factors has led many participants to feel their role has changed not just from a policing role to offender manager role but also to a psychologist and sex therapist role which correlates previous findings (Kewley 2017). With regards to the quality of the ARMS assessments, the data from the evaluation correlates Kewley *et al,* (2019) in that the quality of the assessments varies significantly across the 43 police forces, in particular, the assessments have lost the ‘here and now’ focus of the assessment, which was the very reason why ARMS was implemented.

The above studies have reviewed and evaluated the effectiveness of the ARMS training for the role of MOSOVO. This thesis adds to literature, as it provides data as to what the MOSOVO training entails and shows exactly how MOSOVO are trained to enable them to carry out the home visit. This thesis also shows what the differences and similarities in training are at each force, which shows how the training allows for inconsistencies in practice on the home visit. Finally, this thesis provides data to show that a clear lack of distrust from participants towards the MOSOVO trainers, results in participants not focusing on certain parts of the training. This lack of focus has allowed MOSOVO who have completed the training to only focus on investigative questions in practice such as opportunity to offend, which defeats the purpose of the training and the ARMS assessment.

2.6.1 **Home Visits**

In order to carry out the risk assessment, the Public Protection Unit of the police visit the individual concerned at home and carry out the necessary risk assessment (National Policing Improvement Agency, 2010). As the police have a legal duty to risk assess the offender at home (Criminal Justice Act 2003; ACPO Guidance 2010), the risk assessment has to be undertaken by a ‘suitably trained’ officer of Detective or Superintendent Rank. When conducting the risk assessment during the home visit, MOSOVO will need to use their own judgement and discretion when making decisions for the ARMS assessment (ACPO 2010 1.13; Black, 1980; Bridge, 1982; Klockars, 1985; Walklate, 1988; O’Neill & Singh, 2007; Waddington, 2008) and at times challenge the RSO (College of Policing, 2012) in order to place the RSO into the correct risk category (College of Policing, 2017).

The most common form of risk management by police officers has been periodic unannounced visits to their homes in order to check that they were actually residing there, to look for any warning signs that they might be planning to offend and, indeed, to act as a deterrent (Poltnikoff & Woolfson, 2000; Maguire *et al,* 2001). The fact that home visits should be unannounced was also found by Kewley (2017).

Plotnikoff & Woolfson (2000) conducted a study to examine the police perspectives of the SOR and whether it was useful in the detection, prevention and deterrence of further sexual recidivism. This study involved conducting research with all 43 police forces in England & Wales which allowed for 86 telephone consultations and 50 interviews as to police officers views of the effectiveness of the SOR. Although this study was largely an investigation regarding the SOR, data was received regarding the home visit process, whereby participants explained that local divisions (units of each force) are responsible for conducting home visits in order to carry out the home visit, yet there was little standardisation of approach and there appeared to be inconsistent practices across each force.

A study by Maguire *et al* (2001) examined the range of multi-agency procedures for the risk assessment and risk management practices between six police force areas. 147 interviews were carried out with practitioners, ranging from very senior managers to front-line staff, including 64 police personnel, 53 probation staff and 10 social services staff, 12 housing staff, 5 psychiatrists and 3 prison staff. Although the focus of this research was to ascertain which risk assessment and risk management practices are in operation across the 43 police forces, participants did provide data with regards to the home visit process, as this forms part of the risk management process and participants described the home visit process as the most common form of risk management practised by the police. Participants that were subject to this study felt the home visits were effective as they provided a check that a person was actually residing at the address in the police records; could yield information about anybody else living in the house who might either be at risk or a potential to be a co-offender; gave an opportunity for officers to look for any warning signs that the offender may be active, such as children’s toys etc. Also, Maguire *et al* (2001) provides an in-depth study into the different practices for risk assessment and risk management, the home visit being part of that process., which participants described as a useful process.

There is very little literature regarding evaluation of the home visit process or the offender management process. Nash (2014) provided a qualitative research study involving eight structured interviews with two or three Offender Managers (n=21) whose work involved a large sex offender caseload and the aim of the study was to examine the reality of this role from a practitioner perspective. Nash (2014) confirmed that the home visit process is unannounced and that Offender Manager’s in this study regarded gaining entry into the homes of RSO’s as a major achievement. The police cannot demand entry into the home unless they believe a crime is in process and Offender Managers could also not compel the RSO to speak to them. This was a unanimous agreement in this study among all Offender Managers, that the purpose of the home visit was to gather risk related information or intelligence ‘*the whole object of the home visit, in my opinion, is to see subtle differences in their behaviour and their presentation’*. There was a very clear focus on risk assessment from all Offender Managers. In essence, all RSO’s were regarded as posing a continuous risk. However, when participants were asked about the minimum guidelines for the frequency of visits, participants stated that for those assessed as low risk, it was generally felt that the minimum guideline visiting requirement (once per year) was a waste of time with Offender Managers reporting that they preferred to be flexible in their visiting arrangements.

Furthermore, Nash (2014) stated that the element of surprise on unannounced home visits was regarded as a useful technique; the use of weekend visits regarded as a good way to catch out offenders as they were not expected. Participants also described that two person visits were essential as the potential for grooming by the RSO was a major issue. The second person would look around the premises while the other would engage in conversation. However, when conducting observations around the RSO’s property, Offender Manager’s felt unaware or ill-informed especially in the computer field and on the whole felt ill-trained for monitoring of computers and that the RSO’s had far greater knowledge in this area and felt that additional training in this area was required. This piece of research provides a detailed insight into the Offender Manager’s view of the home visit process and is the only piece of research on the home visit process to date.

When an RSO is subject to an unannounced home visit and ARMS assessment, this is done in the form of an interview, inside the RSO’s property. It is police force policy that the PEACE model of interviewing is adopted when interviewing any type of offender and this model is used to train officers in investigative interviewing (College of Policing 2012) together with the suspect management model (Fisher *et al*, 1987; Baldwin, 1993; Snook & Keating, 2010) which is known as ‘basic interviewing’. The aforementioned studies provide data as to how to interview a suspect at the police station and each state that this basic interview should allow the suspect to provide their own account; the interviewing officer should use excessive use of questioning and repeating of questioning in order to obtain the most accurate and detailed account from the suspect and is therefore interrogatory in nature. Although the aforementioned studies do provide strong evidence that PEACE and the suspect management model are the most effective interview model when dealing with a suspect, there is no data as to whether this model is effective in the role of Offender Manager.

There is ample literature available to support the use of PEACE during an investigative interview (Clarke & Milne, 2001; Walsh & Milne, 2008; Walsh & Bull, 2010; Clarke *et al,* 2011; Williamson, 2013). These studies do show that PEACE is the appropriate model when interviewing suspects as PEACE allows for continuous and repetitive questioning in order to provide the most accurate and detailed account from the suspect but, as stated above, do not provide data as to the use of PEACE during the home visit interview conducted by an Offender Manager. Although the Offender Manager role is not unique in its difference from the so called traditional policing, the management of RSO’s is unusual in that it requires officers to form close, almost personal relationships with offenders in the intimate settings of their home (Nash 2014 p3), as has been reported, it is ‘*more touchy feely kind of thing’ (*Kewley 2017 p.12) and is therefore a shift from the normal policing style (Nash 2014; Thomas 2010; Kewley 2017).

The line of questioning that is posed to the RSO during the home visit is indeed sensitive in nature and this has led MOSOVO to use their own judgement or discretion (ACPO 2010; College of Policing 2012) to be able to carry out the risk assessment effectively. Therefore it is important that MOSOVO should consider rapport, structure the interview and present the questions they wish to ask. Research regarding effective rapport building has shown that an interview which follows an empathetic style will result in good rapport building and as a result of this will result in the offender being compliant during interview. Two such studies are Holmberg & Christianson, (2002) and Oxbrough *et al,* (2006). Oxbrough *et al,* (2006) study was a review of literature regarding interview style with RSO’s, whereas Holmberg & Christian’s (2002) study was a research study, whereby 83 offenders who had been convicted for either murder or sexual offences were interviewed to ascertain their views as to whether interview style had an effect on their ability to confess to criminal activity. Interestingly, both studies provided the same conclusion in that offenders are more likely to respond to questioning that uses an empathetic approach whereas a hostile interview style would amount to large amounts of denial. Furthermore, a non-judgemental open-ended (non-interrogative) questioning style are deemed critical to offender engagement (Powell et al 2014). As one participant stated:

‘*showing a bit of empathy is important. We let them know that we know it is embarrassing for them to come in and empathise that it must be hard for their family and friends to know….We just show them that we understand. You still have to go in and explain this is what we’re going to do and this is how were going to do it, but initially its best to just engage with them and have a chat and let them know that were not here to bastardise them.*’ (Powell *et al* 2014 p.19)

Powell *et al* (2014) conducted a focus group study with 24 police personnel regarding their perceptions of the register and interviewing RSO’s around the register. This research found that advantages of interviewing offenders during mandatory visits was that such interaction provided an opportunity to identify and correct misunderstandings about the rules and requirements of the register and the use of rapport and empathy allowed for a non-accusatory interview approach which allowed offenders to provide more information than they would in a normal suspect interview. Secondly, Powell *et al* (2014) found that the content of the interview was recognised to be potentially sensitive, in-depth and lengthy. Therefore, completing interviews in the offender’s home environment was perceived as making people feel comfortable and enabling greater rapport as the assessment questions were discussed. Further in depth interviewing enabled the officers to develop a greater understanding of the offender’s motivations, beliefs, personal coping mechanisms and reactions to stressful experiences. Although this research did provide data as to the style of interview on the home visit process, this research was primarily focused on police officers perceptions of the register and not the risk assessment process.

A further benefit was establishing a relationship based on trust assists the officer proactively to support the offender in his or her attempt not to re-offend. Police officers interviewed stated that ‘*as the conversation gets on, they give you some insight into their risk factors without realising it*’ (Nicholls & Webster, 2014 pilot p.23). When discussing the interview procedure, officers emphasised the importance of genuine engagement and establishing a strong relationship.

However, as this style of interview is different to the normal police interview under PEACE, where officers are not trained to build rapport and are trained to interrogate a suspect and elicit information from them, Nash (2014) found that this style of interview and befriending role did not come easy to some of the Offender Manager’s, either because they struggled to get close to a RSO or because they did not enjoy having to reveal aspects of their lives to find shared interests with the offender. Kewley (2017) found that participants expressed concerns and difficulties when questioning RSO’s in relation to their sexual interest and or sexual pre-occupation. Further, participants in this study went onto describe that they felt disengaged with this type of interview style as it appeared to be ‘*more a touchy, feely kind of thing.*’ With participants describing that when it comes to processing issues around sexual fantasy, participants feel lost and unable to respond to these types of disclosures and felt that this was more a role for probation. However, Nash (2014) further found that Offender Manager’s spoke a great deal about the development of rapport as a means of gaining trust and they believed this skill or attribute replaced the need for specific interview training and there was a suggestion that what was needed was not more police training but rather to allow participants to use their gut instinct as a way of working.

To support the literature above, this thesis will provide data from a sample of recordings of home visits, to show which elements of the training are incorporated into practice on the home visit and whether the training is effective during the home visit. Furthermore, data shall be provided to show the different types of home visits that MOSOVO are required to undertake i.e. Initial visit, first visit and revisit and that the MOSOVO training is inadequate for each type of visit, leaving MOSOVO ill-equpped to deal with each type of visit. Finally, the style of questions that are posed to RSO’s during these visits will be shown, showing that to some extent, this type of interview is a move away from the traditional policing interview and is more of a general chat.

2.6.2 **MOSOVO’s views of home visit and risk assessment**

Since ARMS was piloted and subsequently rolled out across all 43 police forces there have been evaluations of the use of MOSOVO’s use of ARMS. As stated previously, Kewley (2017) conducted a focus group study (n=28) from four police forces and the sample consisted of 57% male (n=16) and 43% female (n=12) which examined the attitudes of MOSOVO officers working with the ARMS tool and was the first empirical evaluation of ARMS since the 2012 pilot. The focus group discussion centred around participants experiences of the following: interviewing clients using the tool as a guide; their experiences of gathering and analysing the data needed for the tool; a comparison of previous forms of assessment with this current process; their experience of making clinical judgements using the framework; their experiences of developing risk management plans; their feelings in relation to the approach used in the tool and the purpose of the tool in relation to their role as a MOSOVO officer.

From Kewley (2017), many participants described their role as that of a support person, whilst also having to maintain sufficient authority to ensure that offenders actually abide by requests to meet legal obligations. Many participants raised concerns of being ‘groomed’ or manipulated by offenders and felt they did not have the adequate training to identify this if it arose. A general observation was that people with investigative backgrounds probably have better skills to manage RSO’s than those that do not. Kewley (2017) also found that principles and practices of the ARMS tool are incongruent with traditional policing. There was a real disconnect between how participants view their role and the skills, knowledge and experience needed to use the new tool. Participants reported that although their role had changed over recent years, the implementation of ARMS meant their role had changed significantly. As a result of this change, there appears clear skills, experience and knowledge gaps on the part of the police. Also due to the time consuming nature of ARMS participants felt that it decreases the amount of hands on management that you do with the people and the ARMS tool demands particular skills and knowledge which participants feel deficient in.

Kewley (2017 p.12) further found that participants did not fully embrace the ARMS tool, in particular, the strength based elements of it. Whilst participants did recognise the value of protective factors, they do not perceive themselves to have the skills or access to resources and therefore feel limited as to what support they can give to the RSO. Although participants did understand the theory and benefits of developing the strengths of the RSO, they did hold some cynical attitudes that perhaps interfere with opportunities to develop strengths, for example, participants described that protective factors was the RSO’s view and not theirs. Participants did not feel it was their role to develop the strengths of the clients as they do not have the authority to enforce participation of voluntary work for example. This does create a tension in practice as participants feel that ARMS is watering down the enforcement element of their role. As participants did not engage with the ARMS strength based factors, this allows MOSOVO to revert to more control and monitoring mechanisms to manage their clients which does undermine the value of the ARMS tool.

This led Kewley *et al* (2019) to conduct further research into the practicality of ARMS, which focused on the assessment of the quality of the completed ARMS assessments by examining its four key areas: the 12 risk and protective factors; the use of RM2000; the risk management plan; and the supervisor review. Four police areas participated in this study and provided 104 ARMS assessments, however after the removal of duplicates and incomplete assessments this allowed for a reduced sample (n=91). The findings from this study show that the level of detail documented by practitioners on the ARMS assessment was found to be of a poor standard overall, with only poor self-management (risk) and employment/positive routine (protective) factors being coded as acceptable in more than 50% of the 91 cases. The weakest factor in terms of detail was anti-social influences (risk) as it was only coded as being of an adequate level of detail in nearly 9% (n=8). The quality of evidence provided by practitioners was also to a poor standard overall with only the poor self-management (risk) and Employment/Positive Routine (protective factors) being coded as adequate in more than 50%. The weakest factors were anti-social influences (risk). The quality of evidence provided by practitioners was also to a poor standard overall with only poor self-management (risk) and employment/positive routine (protective) factors being adequate.

Kewley *et al* (2019) did find that in terms of the degree of detail and appropriate actions documented across the 12 police force areas, that risk was acceptable, however the ratings and actions was found to be low. This study also analysed the RM2K scoring on the ARMS assessments and found that 16% (n=15) did not document the relevant scoring and only 13% provided detail as to the general level of risk management. Also, 33% (n=30) did not include a review period or provided one that did not match the level of risk. With regards to supervision sign off, 31% (n=21) were not reviewed by a supervisor and 51% (n=35) were not signed by a supervisor. Within the sample that was analysed, 11% (n=10) were identified as high priority and 1% (n=1) as very high and as such it was expected the risk management strategy would provide a comprehensive case summary, a list of source material and a realistic risk prediction as required by guidance set out in College of Policing (2014). One failed to provide a summary and the remaining assessments did but six did not provide enough context to understand the strategy. This study further found that the practicality of completing the ARMS assessment is lengthy and time consuming (a view supported by McCartan *et al,* 2019) and also the ARMS assessment does not cover every eventuality from the visit and MOSOVO do not have sufficient time to complete the ARMS assessment.

Kewley (2017) also reported that there is clearly an issue with officers responsible for the safe integration and risk management of RSO’s back into the community as they hold such hostile views about clients. This study found that participants believe that all clients are liars, cannot be trusted, and will try to manipulate you and the situation to their own end. This fear is extended to other criminal justice agencies, for example, participants worry that when on the sex offender programme with probation, clients are given the answers to the ARMS questions. This led participants from Kewley (2017) to report finding it difficult to accept the value of what clients told them during interviews. While MOSOVO have no powers to search a client’s house, their fundamental belief that ‘sex offenders’ lie, leading them to ask the client to show them around the house in an effort to find evidence of offending. Participants further stated that the fact that the RSO does lie and manipulate, means that turning up unannounced increased the likelihood of catching the RSO committing an offence. This lack of transparency was further reinforced when participants described they will not share the clients risk management plan or risk level with the RSO. This study further reported that if a client has been on sex offender treatment programme, the RSO would be given answers to the ARMS assessment which further enforces MOSOVO’s views that all RSO’s are liars and are manipulative which undermines the value of ARMS. This in turn encourages participants to operate on high alert and ready to ‘catch them out’. Participants describe personally struggling to accept the information clients give to them and as such air on the side of disbelief. This type of approach not only goes against the principle of the ARMS tool, it also prevents the development and exposure to factors needed to foster a process of desistance and reintegration. Although the evaluation for this study was only across four forces, the data received did provide a valuable foundation in which to warrant further research which has recently been undertaken (Mann & Lundringham, 2020).

It appears from Kewley (2017) that police officers have a preconceived view or belief as to how RSO’s will act and answer questions during the interview and risk assessment process. This is consistent with the literature around police culture and police attitudes and perceptions towards RSO’s, which indicates that, due to the nature of the police role, police officers will be unduly suspicious of offenders and this suspicion appears to be embedded in police training: ‘*One of the purposes of police training is to develop the craft of suspicion’* (Skolnick, 1999 p.44). Also, as stated by (McLaughlin 200 p.38) ‘*Officers become hyper-sensitive to and suspicious of aspects of routine daily life. The experienced officer is alert to signals that something is not right.’* A lot of literature in the area of police culture (Banton, 1964; Manning, 1977; Reiner, 1978; Smith and Gray, 1983; Skolnick 1994; Waddington, 1999; Reiner, 2010; Crank, 1998 cited in Cockroft 2013, p.56), has suggested that police officers tend to be suspicious of behaviours that do not readily accord with their idealized description of a particular social world, in particular Skolnick (1994) argues that this police culture allows for officers to revert to coercive behaviours in their practice. At present, there is no UK study on police officer’s attitudes towards RSO’s, but the aforementioned studies do seem to support the notion that police officers hold negative values towards RSO’s as referred to previously (Kewley, 2017).

It therefore appears to be a common way of thinking, throughout police culture, that officers hold a biased view of RSO’s. As academics have reported (Craig, 2005; Weekes *et al,* 1995), criminal justice agencies tended to express the most negative attitudes towards sex offenders. Both of the aforementioned studies received data from the criminal justice sector and forensic sector but did not receive data regarding police officers views of RSO’s, although there is academic literature to support this negative view of RSO’s (Hogue (1993); Weeks *et al* (1995); Hogues and Peebles (1997); Lea *et al* (1999) and Craig (2005)) who stated that police officers had more negative attitudes than other professions, in particular, Lea *et al,* (1999) conducted research with 23 criminal justice personnel (including police officers) and reported that most stereotypical and negative views of sex offenders were held by police officers. As can be seen from this literature review, the previous studies were not directly specific to police officers’ views (although Lea *et al*, (1999) provided some data of police officers views) and were more specific to the negative view held by criminal justice agencies (such as Probation and Prison Service) of sex offenders generally. Johnson *et al,* (2007) sought to focus on this aspect and conducted a study on attitudes towards sex offenders. As part of this study 75 probationer police officers (50 men and 25 women) completed the Attitude towards Sex Offender Scale (ATS). This study reported that police officers were found to present with lower overall empathy levels. 42% stated that you never know when a sex offender is telling the truth and 49% stated you have to be constantly on your guard with sex offenders. This data received from Johnson *et al* (2007) was from officers who were very early into their career as participants were probationary police officers, yet this study still found that officers at this level with very little policing experience did have negative views of sex offenders, which further correlates with Kewley (2017) in that police officers believe that all sex offenders are liars.

This thesis will contribute to the above literature as data is provided to show MOSOVO’s views of the training and risk assessment process and corrobates with findings from Kewley, 2017 and Mann & Lundringham 2020. This thesis will further add to literature in this area as data is provided to MOSOSVO’S views as to whether the training is beneficial on the home visit, the types of home visit and the challenges and benefits to the home visit process. Finally, data will be provided to support the findings in Kewley (2017) in that MOSOVO hold a particular negative viewpoint towards RSO’s which supports literature around police culture.

2.6.3 **RSO’s views of Home Visit and Risk assessment process**

As with police officers perceptions of RSO’s, there is very little literature regarding RSO’s views of the home visit and risk assessment process, particularly in the UK. However, there is literature available from a Canadian study (Murphy and Frederoff, 2013) with regard to RSO’s views of the home visit process. Murphy & Frederoff (2013) conducted an interview study with 30 participants from the Ontario Sex Offender Registry in Canada, to ascertain participants’ views of the register, their offence history, compliance and the impact the sex offenders register has had on them. 40% of participants reported that when police do attend their property for the purpose of a home visit, police attempted to ensure their privacy where possible during visits which shows that their does appear to be some form of empathy on part of the police. Measures taken to include privacy include: showing up in an unmarked police car and wearing plain clothes, asking to come in the residence before they talked with the individual as opposed to asking questions outside their home or in the doorway and making sure that the participant was alone or that those present knew about their status as a registrant prior to questioning him.

Participants from Murphy & Frederoff (2013) reported that where officers arrived in plain street clothes and an unmarked police car, were much more likely to report that the visits were a positive experience and reported less anxiety about future visits and considered officers in plain clothes to be more ‘personable’. This is supportive of further literature (Tewksbury & Lees, 2007; Alison and Hurren, 2008; Kebbell *et al* 2008; Kebbell, *et al,* 2010) from where there is an overriding theme in interviews with RSO’s in that they have a desire to be treated with dignity and respect. However, 15% of participants (Murphy & Frederoff, 2013) reported negative experiences of the visit, whereby the police would ask them registry related questions on the door-step before entering the residence, where other persons could possibly hear the conversation.

As stated by Nash (2014) ‘*the purpose of the visit is to gather risk-related intelligence and is a useful tool to ‘catch offenders out*’. Further Nash (2014) reported that offenders felt the home visits reminded them they were being ‘watched’. It is therefore unsurprising that RSO’s view the visits as a means to check up on them, which results in RSO’s being suspicious and hostile towards the home visit process. As stated previously, this also results in MOSOVO being unduly suspicious towards the RSO on the home visit (Reiner, 2010; McLaughlin, 2007) as the very nature of traditional policing is to be suspicious of offenders (Waddington 1999).

Not only is there very little literature of RSO’s views of the home visit and risk assessment process, there is also very little literature around RSO’s views of police interviews. Holmberg & Christianson (2002) conducted a study around sexual offender’s experience of police interviews. This study found that, in order to obtain an admission and a good rapport, police officers need to understand the offender’s mental world. Langfeldt (1993) emphasised that in the first meeting with a sexual offender it is important to establish an empathic relationship if a fruitful, professional contact with a sexual offender is to be achieved. Research by Williamson (1993) has shown that British police interviewers who obtain rapport and subsequent confessions from suspects show a positive attitude towards the suspect and behaved in sympathetic and co-operative manner. These studies show that offenders and RSO’s in particular will respond to questions posed when the interviewer has a good rapport and empathetic approach.

Westwood *et al* (2011) conducted a study with 56 criminal justice practitioners including, probation officers and police officers. This study investigated the ways in which sexual offenders will make disclosures during interviews. Although, this study primarily focused on disclosure, there are relevant aspects to this study regarding police officer skills and rapport during interview. A recurring theme in the study was the importance of the relationship between supervisor and offender. This is in keeping with previous research that has highlighted the importance of effective relationships as key to increasing compliance in offenders (Prochaska & Levesque, 2002; Wood & Kemshall, 2007).

Key themes such as ‘trust’, ‘honesty’ and confidence were cited by practitioners as important elements in developing effective working relationships with an offender and four elements that would ensure compliance by the offender were: empathy, warm, directiveness and rewardingness. This is supported by the work of Marshall and Burton (2010), which emphasised the importance of warmth, support and the quality of the relationship. The Good Lives approach (Ward & Maruna, 2007), has made reference to this, specifying the importance of the style, attitudes and relational approach of practitioners towards their clients. Powell *et al* (2013) study found that when discussing the interview procedure, officers emphasised the importance of genuine engagement and establish a strong relationship. In addition, good rapport and non-judgemental open-ended questioning was deemed crucial to engagement (NPIA, 2010; College of Policing 2012).

Kebbell *et al* (2008) conducted a study with 44 convicted sex offenders in two state Correctional Centres in Australia, to ascertain participants views of their ability to respond and confess to crimes during police interview. Although the study focused primarily on offender’s ability to confess, it does have some implications for this thesis as it does refer to police officers interview style and offenders’ views of this. Kebbell *et al* (2008) focused on questions such as ‘Did your interviewer show sympathy and empathy’; ‘Was your interviewer aggressive or impatient’. The study found that participants stated that with officers who demonstrated an understanding of the offence and who were not hostile and did not pass judgement on the individual, would more likely make the offender talk and open up to possibly confess during the interview. Kebbell *et al* (2008) found that during interviews where officers took time to get to know offenders and were understanding and sympathetic, offenders would open up more and be more responsive to officers. The study found that offenders were more likely to respond and confess if treated with humanity which is consistent with Holmberg and Christianson’s study (2002) as well as various field studies that have stated the importance of empathy, humanity and a non-judgemental approach (Bull & Milne, 2004; Milne and Bull, 1999; Moston & Engelberg, 1993; Williamson, 1993). This study also found that offender’s perception of feeling more comfortable of disclosing details of their offence when they were afforded respect by the police.

This thesis will contribute to the above literature by providing data from a small sample of RSO’s as to their views of the risk assessment that is undertaken using ARMS and their views of the home visit process. Further data will be provided to show that RSO’s who are managed at different levels risk, respond to police questioning differently, but that building rapport is crucial to the management of RSO’s, which further supports the view that this is more of a general chat style interview rather than a PEACE style interview.

**Chapter Three**

**Methodology**

**3. Chapter Overview**

After briefly recapping the research aims, this chapter will describe the epistemological approach taken to the current research, provide an explanation as to why qualitative methods were adopted and give a brief overview of each of the studies in this research.

As this thesis provides data from three separate studies, being observation of MOSOVO training and recording of home visits; focus groups of MOSOVO’s views of the home visit and risk assessment process and finally, RSO’s views of the home visit and risk assessment, this chapter also provides detailed information on the methodological approach and design that was adopted for each of the three studies. This chapter closes with a description of the police forces involved in the research.

**3.1 Research Aims**

As stated at page 4 of this thesis, this thesis comprises of four research aims:

1. To examine what training is provided for police officers to conduct risk assessments and home visits of RSOs and to ascertain the differences between such training.
2. To examine whether there is an alignment between police (as per police training) and practice in conducting risk assessments and home visits of RSOs.
3. To examine police officers’ views on the effectiveness or otherwise of training processes and procedures for risk assessments and home visits.
4. To explore RSO’s experiences of the home visit process.

**3.2 Description of Epistemology**

There have been various definitions provided by academics as to the nature of epistemology. Carter & Liddle (2007) argue that epistemology is the study, theory and justification of knowledge. It is an examination of ‘how we make knowledge’. Epistemological questions seek to answer what Klenke describes as the second paradigmatic question ‘*how do we know what we know’*? (Klenke, 2008). Thus, epistemology is concerned with ‘*the very base of knowledge – its nature and forms, how it can be acquired, and how [it is] communicated to other human beings.*’ (Klenke, 2008 p.16). It denotes the nature of the relationship between the knower, or would be knower, and what can be known, the researcher and the researched. (Dillon & Walls, 2006)

**3.3 Epistemological Positions**

Within qualitative epistemology, there are three positions; realist, contextualist and social constructionist (Bryman, 2016). Contextualism is the position that all knowledge is provisional and situation dependent (Jaeger & Rosnow, 1988). Hence, this perspective contends that results will vary according to the context in which data was collected and analysed. For example, Pidgeon and Henwood (1997) identify four main dimensions which may affect the production of knowledge: (1) participants’ own understandings, (2) researchers’ interpretations, (3) cultural meaning systems which inform both participants’ and researchers’ interpretations, and (4) acts of judging particular interpretations as valid by scientific communities. Within a contextualist framework there is a desire to find some kind of grounding for results. This may be accomplished by an onus on the researcher to represent the perspectives of participants through basing findings in participants’ actual descriptions (Tindall, 1994).

**3.4 Justification for Contextualist Position**

The researcher adopted a contextualist position. The essence of this research was to explore how MOSOVO are trained to carry out the role of home visits and risk assessments and which parts of the training are used in practice i.e on the home visit, together with MOSOVO’s views of the training for the home visit and risk assessment process and also the views of RSO’s who are subjected to the home visits and risk assessment process. Therefore, following Pidgeon and Henwood (1997), this research recognises the importance of speaking to the police and RSO’s and exploring their understanding of the issues within this thesis. Contextualism also recognises how the researcher plays an active part in interpreting what the police and RSO’s say. Furthermore, contextualism recognises that the police’s and RSO’s understandings, as well as the researcher’s interpretations, could all be affected by wider cultural and social issues and norms. There is a strong commitment in this thesis to present the different perspectives of each participant.

Adopting a contextualist framework allowed the researcher to collect the data in different ways for each of the studies and to allow for different themes to emerge, for example, observation of training, recordings of home visits, focus groups with MOSOVO and interviews with RSO’s. This allowed the researcher to observe the training and gain an understanding of the training at each force and allowed each participant in the focus group to discuss their own understandings of their role, practices and logic and to also allow the sample of RSO’s to freely discuss their views of the home visit and risk assessment process. This discussion allowed the researcher to interpret and analyse the key themes that arose from the research, using thematic analysis. However, it should be noted that using a contextualist framework recognises that findings vary according to the context in which the data is collected and analysed. Therefore, the findings from this data may differ from data of any further research done in this field, if the data is collected in different ways or in different settings to this research.

**3.5 Methodology**

Methodology is a research strategy that translates ontological and epistemological principles into guidelines that show how research is to be conducted: ‘*the choice of research methodology should not be predetermined by the researcher, but instead reflect what the researcher is trying to discover i.e. the question or questions they are seeking to answer*.’ (Punch & Robson, 1998 p.23) As the researcher wished to gain an understanding of the training of MOSOVO, and MOSOVO’s and RSO’s views of the home visit and risk assessment, the researcher felt that this research should undertake a qualitative approach to all three studies. A description of a qualitative approach will now be provided, together with justifications as to why a qualitative approach was used rather than a quantitative approach.

**3.6 Qualitative approach**

It is proposed that ‘*the primary purpose of qualitative research, is to seek to identify, analyse and explain a given situation or phenomena, within a given field or frame of reference*’ (Bryman, 1989). Qualitative research methodologies lend themselves to descriptive, correlational, explanatory, or exploratory research. The approach is primarily inductive in nature and provides the researcher with the ideal opportunity to ask questions as to ‘how’ and ‘why’.

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world, they turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

As per the literature above, a qualitative approach allowed the researcher to explore the relationship between policy (as per the training of MOSOVO) and practice (as per the home visits and risk assessment). This was the preferred approach for this research rather than a quantitative approach which is described as ‘*any information that is recorded, coded and stored in numerical form*’ (Remler *et al,* 2011 p.18). This study did not seek to generate data in the form of numbers which would then be subject to further statistical analysis, but rather to explore the relationship between policy and practice of the home visit and risk assessment process and to ascertain ‘how’ and ‘why’ these processes take place and this research is therefore an exploratory and explanatory piece of research.

Throughout each of the studies employed in this thesis, the researcher also collected observation notes from discussions that took place before and after data was collected and those research notes are incorporated into this thesis.

**3.7 Overview of studies within this research**

For this thesis, the researcher undertook three studies and all three studies were conducted across three police forces, which are described at the end of this chapter.

Study 1 involved: (a) observing police training of MOSOVO officers to gain an understanding of the training and (b) listening to the audio-recordings of MOSOVO officers undertaking home visits over a two-week period with RSO’s of different risk levels to ascertain which parts of the training are used in practice i.e on the home visit and whether all parts of the MOSOVO training are used during the home visit and risk assessment. The field notes from these activities were then written up, and transcripts of the audio-recordings prepared, in order to examine and draw out differences by police force and level of risk, on the policy (i.e. police training), the practice (i.e. the home visits) and the alignment between policy and practice.

From study 1, the researcher was able to understand the training that takes place to enable MOSOVO to carry out the home visit and risk assessment and which parts of the training are actually used during the home visit. This then informed the design of study 2, which was a focus group study, where nine focus groups were conducted across three forces, to ascertain MOSOVO’s views of the training, home visit and risk assessment process, and why different aspects of the training may or may not be implemented in practice. At each force, three focus groups were conducted, which allowed for, one focus group for new MOSOVO, one for MOSOVO with 3-5 years’ experience and the final focus group for MOSOVO of sergeant and management level. The focus group consisted of asking MOSOVO questions around: (a) their views of the training programme, (b) their views and experiences of the home visit process and (c) their views and experiences as to the ARMS and risk assessment process. The focus groups were recorded using a dictaphone and were transcribed verbatim and were then analysed used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), allowing for the themes in this study to be discussed.

To complement study 2, study 3 was an interview study with a sample of RSO’s from each force that took part in this research, to ascertain views of the home visit and risk assessment process from the perspective of the person being visited and assessed. Each force was asked to select a RSO of each level of risk namely, low, medium and high risk to take part in this study. One force had a RSO of very high risk and therefore 10 participants took part in this interview study. The interviews consisted of questions around their views and experiences of (a) the home visit process and (b) the risk assessment process, as per the focus group study for study 2. The rationale for this was to ascertain whether the responses between MOSOVO and RSO’s were similar or whether there were any discrepancies between the two different groups of participants. The interviews were recorded using a dictaphone and transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis (Braune & Clarke, 2006), as per the focus groups described above.

**3.8 Method for each of the three studies within this research**

**3.8.1 Study 1**

This study is in two parts. The first part of the study was an observational study, with the purpose of examining what training is provided to MOSOVO to enable them to be able to carry out the risk assessment during the home visit process. The rationale for the observations was to ascertain what training takes place at each of the forces that took part in this research and to observe the similarities and differences in training at each force and to observe how the police officers who are subject to such training respond to the training whilst it is taking place. The second part of the study involved listening to audio recordings of home visits to examine similarities and differences between police training and practice. The rationale for this was to ascertain which parts of the training are used in practice i.e. the home visit and what questions are posed by the police to the offender’s to identify which risk category they are placed in and how the home visits are carried out in practice.

**3.8.2 Methods**

In order to carry out this study, the researcher submitted full ethical clearance through Leeds Beckett University Research and Ethics Committee (appendix 1). The ethical considerations were, informed and voluntary participation, distress/sensitive topic and anonymity and/or confidentiality. Once ethical clearance was granted, this was then forwarded to the police national lead of all MOSOVO officers who has overall responsibility for assessment of risk in RSO’s, to allow this research to continue.

**3.8.3 Design**

This study involved two parts: The first part of the study was an observational study, with the purpose of examining what training is provided to MOSOVO to enable them to be able to carry out the risk assessment during the home visit process. The rationale for the observations was to ascertain what training takes place and to observe how the police officers who are subject to such training respond to the training whilst it is taking place.

An observation form (appendix 2) was designed by the researcher, which the researcher made brief notes onto during the training. The observation form asked brief questions such as: how many officers delivered the training; number of officers who attended the training; any concerns officers had with regards to any aspect of the training; how officers were told to conduct themselves during the home visit and what observations to make during the visit and how to place offender into the appropriate risk and priority rating.

The second part of the study involved listening to audio recordings of home visits to examine similarities and differences between police training and practice. The rationale for this was to ascertain what questions are posed by the police to the offender’s to identify which risk category they are placed in and how the home visits are carried out in practice.

Three police forces were chosen to ascertain whether the training is the same or different across each of the three forces and to be able to compare the similarities and differences between the training. The geographic nature of each force was carefully selected to allow for one urban, one rural and one semi-rural force to take part in this research.

Initially, the researcher requested access to attend the home visits but all forces thought this risk was too great to the researcher so it was therefore agreed that each force would record the visits over the same two week period in May 2017. A stratified random sample was taken from the recordings, with the researcher selecting one recording at random for each level of risk [low, medium and high] for each police force.

The researcher took notes whilst observing the training sessions (appendix 3) and with the permission of the police, the training sessions were audio-recorded to check her notes for accuracy. The researcher also took notes whilst listening to the recordings of the home visits, and transcribed the recordings, with the police officers’ and offender’s consent (appendix 4) and these notes are incorporated into this thesis. To enable the researcher to describe the nature of the sample, participants were asked at the end of the training and home visits to complete a short background/demographic questionnaire (appendix 5), covering for example, age, gender and experience.

**3.8.4 Participants and Procedure**

There were 42 participants who took part in the training across three police forces: force 1 (n=13), force 2 (n=12); force 3 (n=17). In order to recruit participants for the observation of training, the researcher made initial contact with the MOSOVO lead at each force by telephone, to provisionally discuss the research with them and determine whether their force would be interested in taking part in the study. The researcher explained the participant information sheet (appendix 6) and reiterated that participation is voluntary. Once it was agreed that the force would be interested in taking part in the research, the researcher then emailed a copy of the participant information form to the trainers, as well as a copy of the consent form.

With the agreement of the trainers, the researcher then emailed a copy of the participant information sheet and consent form to the MOSOVO who were to attend the training. Once it was indicated that they were happy for the observation to take place, the MOSOVO lead would ensure that each participant would bring two copies of the signed consent form to the training session. At the beginning of the training session, the researcher counter signed the consent forms, the researcher retained one copy of the signed consent form for her records and each participants kept the other signed consent form as a record. At the end of each observation of training, each participant was asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire and were provided with a debrief (appendix 7) of the study.

Within each police force, the MOSOVO training sessions are the same and are repeated at each police force as and when the need requires. Therefore, the researcher attended the next available training at each force. At the beginning of each training session, the researcher assigned each participant a number to enable the researcher to be able to identify participants for data analysis purposes and to ensure and maintain anonymity of participants.

* + 1. **Demographic Table of Participants on Training**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Total** | **Force 1** | **Force 2** | **Force 3** |
| Male | 19 | 8 | 4 | 7 |
| Female | 20 | 5 | 8 | 7 |
| **Age** |  |  |  |  |
| 18-25 | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 26-35 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| 36-45 | 14 | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| 46-55 | 14 | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| 55+ | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| **Level of Officer** |  |  |  |  |
| New | 21 | 5 | 6 | 10 |
| Experienced | 13 | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| Management | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| **Ethnicity** |  |  |  |  |
| White British | 34 | 10 | 11 | 13 |
| White British (Scottish | 2 | 1 | - | 1 |
| White British (Welsh) | 2 | 2 | - | - |
| Black British Caribbean | 1 | - | 1 | - |

The demographics of this table shows similar numbers of male and female officers attended the training and most were aged 36-55 and White British. Over half of the officers were new MOSOVO officers.

**3.8.6 Demographic Table for Trainers**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Total** | **Force 1** | **Force 2** | **Force 3 (Mosovo)** | **Force 3 (ARMS)** |
| Male | 3 | 2 | 1 | - | - |
| Female | 5 | - | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| **Age** |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18-25 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 26-35 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 36-45 | 3 | 1 | - | 2 | - |
| 46-55 | 4 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 |
| 55+ | 1 | - | 1 | - | - |
| **Level of Officer** |  |  |  |  |  |
| New | - | - | - | - | - |
| Experienced | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Management | 3 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 |
| **Ethnicity** |  |  |  |  |  |
| White British | 8 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Black | - | - | - | - | - |
| Asian | - | - | - | - | - |
| Mixed | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Nationality** |  |  |  |  |  |
| English | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Scottish | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| Irish | - | - | - | - | - |
| Welsh | 1 | 1 | - | - | - |
| **Total number of Years in Police** | 190 | 58 | 42 | 34 | 56 |
| **Total number of Years as Trainer** | 50 | 12 | 8 | 12 | 18 |

The demographics of this table show that the gender of trainers was slightly higher for female participants, with the majority of trainers in the 36-55 age range and White British. The level of experience of trainers was either at experienced or management level.

The demographics of this table also shows that the trainers across the three forces had a considerable total number of years in the police as a police officer with a reduced number of years as trainer. It should be noted that in order to deliver training, each officer has to have undertaken ‘Train the Trainer’ course (College of Policing, 2014).

With regards to examining the practice of the home visit, with the consent of each of the forces, each force agreed to audio record all home visits over a two week period; force 1 (n=183); force 2 (n=167); force 3 (n=224). The consent forms were given to MOSOVO prior to the recordings taking place and each MOSOVO handed a consent form to the RSO whilst the recording was taken place. These consent forms were placed in a room with the recordings at each police station headquarters. The recordings were placed in order of low risk, medium risk and high risk. The researcher randomly selected one recording for each level of risk for each police force and took notes on these and transcribed them.

**3.8.7 Demographic table for Police Officers who undertook home visits**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Total** | **Force 1** | **Force 2** | **Force 3** |
| Male | 10 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Female | 10 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| **Age** |  |  |  |  |
| 18-25 | - | - | - | - |
| 26-35 | 3 | 1 | - | 2 |
| 36-45 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| 46-55 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 55+ | 2 | 1 | 1 | - |
| **Level of Officer** |  |  |  |  |
| New | 3 | 1 | - | 2 |
| Experienced | 14 | 5 | 6 | 3 |
| Management | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| **Ethnicity** |  |  |  |  |
| White British | 15 | 6 | 3 | 6 |
| Black | 2 | - | 2 | - |
| Asian | - | - | - | - |
| Mixed | - | - | 1 | - |
| Other | - | - | - | - |
| **Nationality** |  |  |  |  |
| English | 9 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Scottish | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Irish | 3 | 1 | - | 2 |
| Welsh | 2 | - | - | 2 |
| Multi-Nationality | - | - | - | - |
| **Combined Number of Years in Police** | 361 | 121 | 132 | 108 |
| **Combined Time as MOSOVO officer** | 154 | 53 | 58 | 43 |
| **Combined Home visits previously undertaken** | 532 | 211 | 132 | 189 |

The demographics of this study show that gender of MOSOVO conducting home visits was equal across all three forces, with most participants being within the 36-45 age group, with slightly more being in the 46-55 range. The majority of officers were in the experienced range, with a large majority of ethnicity belonging to the white British category. The nationality of participants was predominantly in the English and Scottish category. Number of years in the police and number of years as MOSOVO was slightly higher in force 2, with number of home visits undertaken by MOSOVO being higher at force 1.

**3.8.8 Analysis**

For the observation of training sessions, the researcher did not transcribe each training session verbatim, as the training sessions ranged from 5 days to 10 days and the researcher felt it would take too much time to do this. Rather, each training session was audio recorded and the researcher listened back to the recordings and made notes on the observation form to supplement field notes and to obtain supporting quotations. The researcher typed up the notes of each training session and compared the similarities and differences for each training session.

For the recordings of the home visits, once the recordings of the visits had taken place, the researcher attended the headquarters of each force, where she sat in a room and selected which recordings to use for the data. The researcher listened to the recordings and then completed the observation form. The recordings were typed up verbatim so that the researcher could supplement her field notes and obtain supporting quotations. The police at each force requested that the recordings were not to be taken from the room. The researcher reviewed what questions the officers posed to each of the RSO’s to explore the relationship between training and practice.

**3.9 Study 2**

This study was a focus group study, to allow the researcher to gain an understanding of different ranks of MOSOVO’s views and experiences of the training for MOSOVO, the home visit and the risk assessment process using ARMS.

**3.9.1 Methods**

In order to carry out this study, the researcher submitted full ethical clearance through Leeds Beckett University Research Faculty prior to recruitment (appendix 10). The ethical considerations were informed and voluntary participation; anonymity and/or confidentiality. Once ethical clearance was granted, this was then forwarded to the national police lead of all MOSOVO officers and who has overall responsibility for assessment of risk in RSO’s.

**3.9.2 Design**

This study used semi-structured focus groups to collect data. Focus groups were chosen as they were considered the best method for investigating research aim three, which was to explore different participant’s opinions in relation to ARMS and to allow participants to promote and encourage each other’s responses. Focus groups were deemed appropriate as ‘*focus groups typically involve 6-10 participants typically talking about a shared experience………the focus group functions to promote and encourage collaborative responses.’* (Sullivan, Gibson, Riley, 2012 p.23).

The use of focus groups facilitated a range of participants in the study, to allow for group dialogue and not just one to one interview. An important part of this research was that focus groups would take place in an environment that was familiar to participants, to allow participants to be able to discuss the topics freely and in a supportive, group environment:

*‘In a focus group a moderated group discussion is held in a permissive environment in order to extract opinions and share ideas and perceptions.’* (Fern, 2001 p.54)

The researcher planned the questions for the focus group from the findings of the previous study and ensured that participants of the same rank and experience attended each focus group:

*‘As the group dynamic is fundamental in focus groups, they need to be planned so that the potential for dialogue and debate is enhanced. For this reason focus groups typically feature participants deemed to be similar on some variable.’*  (Sullivan, Gibson, Riley, 2012 p.56).

For this reason, focus groups with officers of different ranks were carefully selected and planned, to allow each officer to freely participate in the discussion in the focus group.

The focus groups consisted of three parts:

1. The first part of the focus group looked at participant’s views of the MOSOVO training, discussing topics such as what participants’ expectations of training were; whether training assisted them in the role of MOSOVO; whether the theory included on the training was useful and more importantly whether the training was useful to participants when completing the ARMS risk assessment.

The aim of this discussion was to ascertain participants views of the training generally. As all participants had now put the training into practice on the home visit and completing the ARMS risk assessment, participants views were important to ascertain whether the training, in particular the theory and the training around risk assessment actually assisted participants in practice.

1. The second part of the focus group consisted of a discussion around the home visit process and whether the training assisted officers in the home visit process. This part was deemed important as the home visit allows participants to place offenders into the appropriate risk category and complete the ARMS risk assessment.

The training in relation to the home visit at each of the three forces observed, consisted of role play and mock home visits, together with sessions around interview style and rapport. The aim of the study was to ascertain whether this part of the training assisted participants in carrying out the home visit and whether this part of the training was used in practice.

1. The third part of the focus group concerned a discussion on participants views of completing the ARMS risk assessment and whether the home visit assisted in this process and whether participants felt offenders were honest in their responses.

Each focus group schedule was to allow the questions to be adapted to the different ranks of officers (appendix 11). For newly trained officers, the questions centred around their views of training, home visit and risk assessment generally, to ascertain whether the training had any impact on the way the officers conduct home visits and risk assessments.

For officers of experienced level, the majority of the questions remained the same, to allow officers to give responses to their views of training, home visit and risk assessment. However, the questions were slightly adapted to allow for officers views as to whether they conduct the visit differently now that they have attended the training.

For officers of sergeant level, the questions around visits remained the same, to ascertain whether an officer of this level conducted any visits and if so, if they were carried out in the same way as new and more experienced officers. For training, the questions were adapted to ascertain whether the training assisted in the role of sergeant, in particular the management part of that role and what training this level of officer had been on to be able to carry out this role. With regard to risk assessment, the questions were slightly adapted to allow this level of officer to give insight into whether the training assisted their role in reviewing the ARMS assessment and completing the Line Management Review part of the ARMS assessment.

The researcher made use of questions as cues to prompt the conversation, but generally the participants led the conversation and were only ‘reigned in’ when the conversation went out on a tangent.

The focus groups were intended to be small in size (approximately 6-8 individuals in each group). However, some of the groups were slightly smaller in size due to staffing issues on the scheduled day and one force had to deploy officers to deal with a local emergency and therefore some focus groups only contained 5-6 participants.

**3.9.3 Participants and Procedure**

All three forces were asked to recruit participants to take part in the focus group based on their experience of MOSOVO. The criteria for the study was that there were to be three focus groups per force with officers of differing experience of MOSOVO, the first group for newly qualified officers, second for officers with 3-5 years’ experience of MOSOVO and the third with officers of management level.

50 participants in total took part in the study, force 1 (n=16), Force 2 (n=16), Force 3 (n=18) and participants from each force had varying levels of experience. The aim of this was to give a broad understanding of the training of MOSOVO and whether this assists in the risk assessment process during the home visit.

The researcher made contact via the telephone to discuss the research with the MOSOVO lead, to ascertain whether that force would be interested in taking part in the research and once each force stated they would be happy to take part in the research, each force selected which participants would take part in the study, based on their experience of MOSOVO and conducting home visits and which officers had stated they would be interested and available to take part in the study. Selection of participants in this way allowed for opportunity sampling, ‘opportunity *sampling is taking the sample from people who are available at the time of the study is carried out and fit the criteria the researcher is looking for.’ (*Hektner et al, 2007 p.34)

The researcher then made contact again with the MOSOVO lead at all three forces via the telephone, talking through the participant information sheet (appendix 12) and reiterating that participation is voluntary.The researcher then forwarded participant information sheet and written consent form (appendix 13) for the participants to complete prior to the focus group taking place. Once participants had agreed to the focus group, a date, time and location was arranged. The participants were asked to bring two copies of the signed consent form to the focus group at the beginning of the focus group, the researcher counter-signed the consent form and retained one copy for her records and the participant retained the other copy. Each participant was given a debrief (appendix 13) once the focus group was complete.

The researcher started every focus group by explaining a set of guidelines in order to minimise any risk/psychological harm. The guidelines including speaking clearly/calmly, letting another one finish speaking, respect one another’s opinions. The researcher also had a plan in place, although never executed, for pausing or stopping the focus group in the situation that a participant seemed upset in any way. Upon completion, the participants were given a debrief form (appendix 14). The focus groups were carried out at police headquarters of each police force. As the table below shows, each focus group had a mixture of male and female participants. The age of participants ranged from 28 years to 58 years. The majority of participants ranged from 28 years to 58 years. The majority of the participants were white British. The participant group did not have a large amount of diversity, which is worth considering when interpreting the results of the study.

**3.9.4 Demographic and background information about participants in study 2**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Total** | **Force 1** | **Force 2** | **Force 3** |
| Male | 25 | 8 | 7 | 10 |
| Female | 25 | 6 | 8 | 11 |
| **Age** |  |  |  |  |
| 18-25 | - | - | - | - |
| 26-35 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 36-45 | 14 | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| 46-55 | 23 | 8 | 6 | 9 |
| 55+ | 9 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| **Level of Officer** |  |  |  |  |
| New | 16 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Experienced | 16 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| Management | 18 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| **Ethnicity** |  |  |  |  |
| White British | 47 | 14 | 12 | 22 |
| Black | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Asian | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Mixed | - | - | - | - |
| Other | - | - | - | - |
| **Nationality** |  |  |  |  |
| English | 31 | 14 | 5 | 12 |
| Scottish | 8 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Irish | 3 | - | 1 | 2 |
| Welsh | 4 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Multi-Nationality | 4 | - | 2 | 2 |
| **Total number of Years in Police** | 814 | 289 | 269 | 256 |
| **Total number of years as MOSOVO Officer** | 105 | 24 | 30 | 51 |
| **Attendance at Training** | 50 | 14 | 15 | 21 |
| **Total number of Risk Assessments previously undertaken** | 1970 | 815 | 825 | 330 |
| **Total number of Home Visits previously undertaken** | 1822 | 550 | 970 | 302 |

As the table shows, officers across all three forces had considerable amount of years in the police force, with slightly higher experience in force 1, whereas years of experience as MOSOVO officer was considerably lower across all three forces, being slightly higher at force 3.

Participants across all three forces had experience of conducting risk assessments which was even at force 1 and 2 but considerably lower at force 3 and all participants had experience of conducting home visits, which was considerably higher at force 2.

**3.9.5 Analysis**

All focus groups were recorded using a dictaphone and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was thought to be the best approach to analysis as ‘*this can easily be applied to focus group data’* (Sullivan, Gibson and Riley, 2012 p.17).

The data was analysed using a semantic approach in which the researcher explored the dataset in search for reoccurring patterns as ‘*the analysist is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said’* (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.6). An inductive approach was also taken as the researcher was guided and informed by the data rather than being guided and informed by the theory.

For phase 1 of analysis, the researcher familiarised herself with the data from all focus groups: ‘*immerse yourself in the data to the extent that you are familiar with the depth and breadth of the content’* (Braune & Clarke 2006, P.7). Once the data was transcribed, the researcher read through all of the transcripts multiple times in order to obtain a high level of familiarity with the dataset.

For phase 2 of the analysis, the researcher ‘*read and familiarized yourself with the data, and have generated an initial list of ideas about what is in the data and what is interesting about them.’* (Braune & Clarke 2006, p.7). The datasets were coded by giving every meaningful piece of text a ‘title’ indicating the meaning of the sentence. The researcher worked systematically through the entire data set, giving full and equal attention to each data item and identified aspects in the data that would form codes.

For phase 3, once all of the data were coded the researcher made a list of all of the codes and started searching for patterns or themes. This ‘*involves sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes’* (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.8)

For phase 4, the researcher reviewed all themes and it ‘*became evident that some candidate themes are not really themes’* (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.8) and some themes collapsed into other themes.

For phase 5, the researcher created 5 initial themes from looking over all the codes. The researcher then matched codes to themes until there were only non-meaningful or very infrequently occurring codes left. The non-meaningful and infrequent codes were disposed of. The researcher then scrutinised the 5 initial themes in order to determine whether there were subthemes within them and subsequently subthemes were created within some of the overarching themes.

For phase 6, once the researcher had a set of fully worked out themes, the final analysis of the data took place which was incorporated into the findings.

**3.10 Study 3**

This study was an interview study, to allow RSO’s of different level of risk assessment, namely, low medium and high risk, to discuss freely without pressure from other participants their views of the home visit and risk assessment process.

**3.10.1 Methods**

In order to carry out this study the researcher submitted full ethical approval through Leeds Beckett University Research Ethics Faculty prior to recruitment (appendix 15). The ethical considerations were to ensure participants did not feel under any pressure to take part in the study, participants may become distressed due to the nature of the questions, to ensure anonymity and/or confidentiality on the part of the participants and to ensure the researchers safety and welfare at all times whilst the interviews were taking place.

**3.10.2 Design**

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as it allowed the researcher to employ an interview schedule (appendix 16) which contained a number of open ended questions, whose wording and order could be changed if the researcher so desired and to provide flexibility: *‘The interviewer acts freely in this context on the basis of certain research points (re)formulating questions as required and employing neutral probing.’* (Sullivan *et al,* 2012 p.33).

The researcher designed the questions for the study with registered sex offenders on the basis of the findings of the previous studies. The interview schedule for this study consisted of two parts. The first part of the study with RSO’s focused on questions around participant’s views of the home visit, their expectations of the home visit and what happened on the first visit. Participants were then asked to describe whether subsequent visits were similar or different to the first home visit and whether their expectations of the home visits have now changed.

The aim of the first part of the study was to ascertain participant’s views of the first home visit and subsequent home visits and to compare RSO’s responses with MOSOVO’s responses and enable the researcher to identify any similarities and differences from both groups of participants. Also, participants were asked for their views on how the home visit process could be improved.

The second part of the study consisted of questions around whether the visits were unannounced or whether participants were notified in advance of the home visit. This part of the study was deemed important as unannounced visits are an integral part to the home visit process and is key to placing offenders into the appropriate risk category. The aim of this part of the study was to ascertain whether participants receive any notice that the visits will be taking place or whether the visits are indeed unannounced and whether this has an effect on how the participants feel and respond to questions during the interview. As per above, the rationale for this was to compare RSO’s responses with MOSOVO’s responses.

The third part of the study concerned questions around risk assessment and whether participants were aware of the term ‘risk assessment’ and what their understanding of this was. Further questions around risk assessment were put to participants such as, did they understand the term ‘priority rating’; were they aware of ‘risk category’ and how do they feel about the police monitoring them to conduct a risk assessment.

The researcher made use of questions (appendix 17) as cues to prompt and develop the conversation, but generally all participants were responsive to the questions which led the participants often taking the lead in the interview and participants were only ‘reigned in’ if the conversation went out on a tangent.

**3.10.3 Participants**

The aim of this study was to undertake twelve, semi-structured interviews, four at each force, namely one for low, medium, high and very high risk. However, only ten interviews took place as only one force had a participant that was in the very high risk category, therefore, at force 1 and force 2, there were three interviews conducted with participants of low, medium and high risk and at force 3 there were four interviews conducted with the addition of one participant being of very high risk.

The researcher had already made contact with each force for the previous studies in this thesis to take place and had developed good relations with the MOSOVO lead at each of the forces. Therefore, for this study, the researcher had discussions over the telephone with the MOSOVO lead of each force to ascertain whether their force would be interested in taking part in the research and whether they would be prepared to provide participants to take part in the study. Once each force stated they would be happy to take part in the study, each force selected an opportunity sample of participants to take part in the study. Each police force did this by selecting participants that have been compliant throughout the ARMS assessment, regardless of their risk category, and who the police felt would not pose a threat to adult women.

Once participants had been selected, the researcher forwarded the participant information sheet (appendix 18) and consent form (appendix 19) to the police force, for each force to forward to the participant. The police would contact the participant by post, outlining the study and containing the participant information sheet and consent form, making it clear that the study is independent to the police and that participation is voluntary. The participant information sheet clearly states that participation is voluntary and provided the researcher’s University e-mail address should the participant have any questions. As some participants may not be able to use the internet as part of their notification requirements, the participant sheet also included the University’s postal address, should the participant wish to raise any questions.

The information sheet was also sent in advance to the participant via post, to give the participant time to think about whether they would like to participate and minimise any feelings of pressure to participate. Once participants had agreed to take part in the interview study, a date time and location was arranged by the MOSOVO lead at each force and the participant was informed as to the time date and venue of the interview.

The table below shows the demographic characteristics of the participants that took part in the study:

**3.10.4 Demographic Background Characteristics for RSO’s**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Total** | **Force 1** | **Force 2** | **Force 3** |
| Male | 10 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Female | - | - | - | - |
| **Age** |  |  |  |  |
| 18-25 | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 26-35 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 36-45 | 2 | 1 | - | 1 |
| 46-55 | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| 55+ | 2 | - | 1 | 1 |
| **Ethnicity** |  |  |  |  |
| White British | 7 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Black | - | - | - | - |
| Asian | 3 | - | 2 | 1 |
| Other | - | - | - | - |
| **Nationality** |  |  |  |  |
| English | 5 | 3 | - | 2 |
| Scottish | 1 | - | **-** | 1 |
| Irish | - | - | - | - |
| Welsh | 2 | - | 1 | 1 |
| Multi-Nationality | 2 | - | 2 | - |
| **Total number of convictions for sexual offences** | 28 | 13 | 7 | 8 |
| Participants with 1 conviction | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Participants with 2-5 convictions | 15 | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| Participants with 6+ convictions | 12 | 6 | 1 | 5 |
| **Total number of Home visits by Police** | 62 | 23 | 9 | 30 |
| Participants who have had 1 home visit | O | - | - | - |
| Participants who have had 2-5 home visits | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Participants who have had 6+ home visits | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 |

The demographic table shows that all participants were male. With regards to age of participants, participants varied in age, although the participants in force 1 were all under the age of 46. Most participants were of white British ethnicity and whose nationality was English. With regards to number of convictions for sexual offences and number of home visits by police, this was significantly higher in Force 1 and also Force 3.

**3.10.5 Demographic table for RSO’s subject to Home Visits**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Total** | **Force 1** | **Force 2** | **Force 3** |
| Male | 10 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| **Age** |  |  |  |  |
| 18-25 |  | 1 | - | - |
| 26-35 |  | - | 2 | - |
| 36-45 |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 46-55 |  | - | - | 1 |
| 55+ |  | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **Ethnicity** |  |  |  |  |
| White British |  | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Black |  | - | 1 | - |
| Asian |  | - | 1 | 1 |
| Mixed |  | - | - | - |
| Other |  | - | - | - |
| **Nationality** |  |  |  |  |
| English |  | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Scottish |  | - | - | - |
| Irish |  | - | - | - |
| Welsh |  | - | - | - |
| Multi-Nationality |  | - | 2 | 1 |
| **Number of Convictions for Sexual Offences** |  | 11 | 12 | 7 |
| **Number of home visits as a registered sex offender** |  | 19 | 43 | 37 |

The demographics of this table show that all participants were male (as at time of research, ARMS was only currently available to Male offenders). The age range of participants was fairly spread throughout the three forces, with slightly more participants in 36-45 age range and 55+ age range. Across all three forces, the majority of participants were of White British ethnicity and nationality

The demographics show that participants had a similar number of sexual convictions, with slightly less at force 3. Also, previous number of home visits that participants had been subject to was highest at force 2 and significantly lower at force 1.

**3.10.6 Procedure**

On the day of the interview, the researcher travelled to the interview by car and ensured that interviews would only take place during the day and each interview would take approximately one hour. The researcher arrived at each interview one hour before the interview was scheduled to allow the researcher to be able to prepare and liaise with the staff member who would be waiting outside the interview room whilst the interview takes place. Each interview took place in an interview room at each force’s headquarters.

Participants had already received the participant information sheet via the post and the researcher therefore asked if each participant had read and if they understood the purpose of the study. Each participant was then asked to sign a consent form (appendix 19) and were instructed that they could withdraw at any time, which is clearly stated in the participant information sheet (appendix 18). Each participant was also asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire (appendix 20) with details such as age, nationality, risk category and how many home visits they had been subject to.

The researcher explained to each participant that they could ask for the interview transcript and/or demographic form to be destroyed after the interview. This would be achieved by the researcher giving each participant a number on top of their participant information sheet and will also be on top of their demographic form and interview transcript so that the researcher would know whose data to destroy.

The researcher started each interview, offering each participant tea, coffee and biscuits in an attempt to create an informal atmosphere to allow the researcher and participant to strike up a rapport before the interview starts. The researcher began with a general welcome to the interview and highlighted the purpose of the interview and re-capped points from the participant information sheet.

The researcher began every semi-structured interview by explaining a set of guidelines to minimise any risk/psychological harm. The guidelines included speaking clearly/calmly and allowing the participants to ask for clarification on any questions if they did not understand them. The researcher also had a plan in place, although never executed, for pausing or stopping the interview in the situation that the participant seemed upset in any way. Upon completion of the interview, the participants were provided with a debrief form (appendix 21), which further explained the purpose of the interview and a contact address if they had any questions after the interview. A risk assessment setting out and minimising the potential risks of this study was also completed (appendix 22).

One police officer was in a room directly outside of the interview room, this ensured that the interview was conducted in private and participants did not feel under pressure to participate or respond to the questions in a certain way and to ensure the information provided was correct and accurate, but also ensured that an officer was on hand if the researcher required their assistance.

In order to ensure anonymity, no names of participants were recorded in the researcher’s notes or the transcript of the recording and if the participants referred to others by name, these names were not added to the researcher’s notes or the transcript of the recording and the audio recording was destroyed once the study had been written up. Access to the notes, transcripts of the recordings and audio recordings was restricted to the researcher and the researcher’s supervisory team.

**3.10.7 Analysis**

All interviews were recorded using a dictaphone and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Thematic analysis (Braune & Clarke, 2006) was thought to be the best approach to analysis. The data was analysed using a semantic approach in which the researcher extracted information and data from the dataset and explored the dataset in search for reoccurring patterns. An inductive approach was also taken as the researcher was guided and informed by the data rather than being guided and informed by the theory.

For phase 1 of analysis, the researcher familiarised herself with the data from all of the interviews. Once the data was transcribed, the researcher read through all of the transcripts multiple times in order to obtain a high level of familiarity with the dataset.

For phase 2 of the analysis, the researcher generated a list of ideas about what is in the data and what is interesting about them. The datasets were coded by given every meaningful piece of text a ‘title’ indicating the meaning of the sentence. The researcher worked systematically through the entire data set, giving full and equal attention to each data item and identified aspects in the data that would come from the codes. This phase led the researcher to having several codes such as offenders not aware of risk assessment; offenders feel improvements can be made to the home visit; police always question the initial offence and offenders prefer routine and familiarity, to name a few codes that transpired from the data set.

For phase 3, once all of the data were coded the researcher made a list of all of the codes and started searching for patterns or themes, by putting codes that were connected together in some way into the same theme. This initially led the researcher to have 3 themes from the data set. Theme 1 was participant’s views of the home visit process, whereby participants described the home visit process and discussed the style of questioning. Theme 2 was participant’s feelings of the home visit and theme 3 was participant’s views of the risk assessment process.

For phase 4, the researcher reviewed all themes, to which it soon became apparent that some themes were not really themes and some themes collapsed into other themes. For example, the data on participant’s views of risk assessment was initially a theme on its own but then it became apparent once the researcher had reviewed the data that this code belonged into another theme.

For phase 5, the researcher therefore created 2 initial themes from looking over all the codes. The researcher then matched codes to themes until there were only non-meaningful or very infrequently occurring codes left. The non-meaningful and infrequent codes were disposed of. The researcher then scrutinised the 2 initial themes in order to determine whether there were any subthemes within them. The researcher then clearly defined what the themes were about by describing the scope and content of each theme at the beginning of the theme.

For phase 6, once the researcher had a set of fully worked out themes, the final analysis of data begun which was incorporated into the findings.

**3.10.8 Selection and description of Police Forces**

In England and Wales, there are 60,294 Registered Sexual Offenders (Ministry of Justice, 2018 cited in Mann & Lundringham, 2020) across 43 police forces. Three police forces were selected as the basis for this research.

Force 1 was selected as this is a rural force, where the national training for all MOSOVO takes place and any officer within any police force in the United Kingdom is eligible to attend this training. Force 2, was selected as this was a large semi-rural force and the trainer of MOSOVO from this force, attended the training at force 1 which the researcher observed. The trainer stated he intended on adapting the national training to suit the needs of his force, as they had larger numbers of RSO’s than force 1. Force 3 was selected, as this was also a large urban force and this force has the highest number of RSO’s throughout all of the three police forces that took part in this thesis. The researcher wished to gain an understanding of their training and practices and to ascertain whether there were any differences in the training due to the number of RSO’s in this area.

For each of the forces that took part in this thesis, the researcher had to undertake considerable negotiations to allow the researcher access to and participation of each of the forces. This included that the researcher would only sit at the back of the room and observe and would not play an active part in the training programmes. For recordings of home visits, the researcher initially sought access to attend on the home visits, but each force thought that the risk to the researcher would be too great. It was therefore agreed between the researcher and each force that a sample of visits would be audio recorded over the same two week period at each force instead. For interviews with RSO’s it was agreed that the RSO would attend the police station and each force would select which RSO’s that would take part in this study based on their previous compliance and only RSO’s would be asked that would not pose a threat to an adult female researcher.

**Chapter 4**

**Observational study of police training and analysis of recordings of home visits**

4. **Introduction**

As stated in chapter 3, this study is in two parts. The first part of the study was an observational study, with the purpose of examining what training is provided to MOSOVO to enable them to be able to carry out the risk assessment during the home visit process. The rationale for the observations was to ascertain what training takes place at each of the forces that took part in this research; to observe the similarities and differences in training at each force and to observe how the police officers who are subject to such training respond to the training whilst it is taking place.

The second part of the study involved listening to audio recordings of home visits to examine similarities and differences between police training and practice. The rationale for this was to ascertain which parts of the training are actually used in practice i.e. the home visit and to further ascertain what questions are posed by the police to the RSO’s to identify which risk category they are placed into and how the home visits are carried out in practice.

The researcher felt it necessary to carry out the observation of training first, to allow the researcher to gain knowledge as to what training is provided on the MOSOVO training course at different forces and to ascertain any differences and similarities on the training at different forces. Once the researcher had an understanding of the MOSOVO training and the similarities in the training at each force, this enabled the researcher to be able to listen to the audio recordings of visits and decide which parts of the training are actually used in practice i.e. the home visit. The researcher felt that gaining an insight and understanding into the home visit process would particularly contribute to knowledge in this area as there is no UK study on this at present and as such, the study emerging from this thesis is the first to elevate its importance. Once the researcher had an understanding of the training and home visit process, this then guided the researcher with a structure for the following two studies, chapter 4 being MOSOVO’s views of the home visit and risk assessment process and chapter 5 being a sample of RSO’s views of the home visit and risk assessment process.

As stated above, the researcher attended the full MOSOVO training at each force that took part in this research. The researcher was then provided access to recordings of home visits from each of the forces that took part in this research to ascertain which parts of the training are used in practice i.e on the home visit. This chapter will now provide a brief overview of the training and a brief summary of the recordings of home visits to ‘set the scene’ for the reader before discussing the key themes across the whole dataset, with a focus on similarities and differences between police training and practice.

4.1 **Overview of training at each force**

4.1.1 **Force 1**

The training for this force took place at the force’s headquarters training school and is where the national training for MOSOVO takes place. This training course was provided by two senior detectives, one of whom was part of the implementation team for ARMS and a police trainer who is experienced in the area of sex offender management. The trainers at this force were experienced trainers, having delivered sessions on MOSOVO, Risk Matrix 2000 and VISOR previously.

At the time this observation of training took place, the national training was an eight day course (which has now been extended to 10 days to allow for a more advanced interview course). As this force is where the national training takes place, participants from any of the 43 police forces could attend which allowed for participants from different forces with a range of experience (n=13) to attend the training.

The training observed at this force essentially focuses on the role of the police managing RSO’s, the purpose of the home visit and how to conduct the risk assessment from the home visit i.e. ARMS assessment. The trainers emphasised that throughout their role, it is imperative that MOSOVO use their judgement by employing the National Decision Making Model (NDM) which allows MOSOVO to justify their decision making and is incorporated in ACPO principles (NPIA, 2010). This led to the following responses:

‘*Yeah, we know what that is, we get trained in that from day one, we want to know about this not the old stuff’* (Particpant 3, Male)

‘*Your going over new training officer stuff, that’s not right for us experienced cops.’* (Participant, 6, Male)

Information was provided to participants regarding the home visit requirements, in that all visits should be unannounced and the time frame for visits is based on the RSO’s risk category, namely, very high risk should have monthly visits; high risk should have 3 monthly visits; medium risk should have 6 monthly visits and low risk should have 12 monthly visits. However, it should be noted that at the time of writing this thesis, the police no longer actively manage low risk offenders if they have been low risk for the last 3 years and have also been compliant, a process known as reactive management.

The training then delivered a very brief introductory session on the legislation around sexual offending, in particular, the notification requirements and civil orders. This training provided a brief overview of these orders insofar as these orders and requirements are available to assist sexual offender management by showing participants the detail contained in these orders and how RSOs should comply with such orders.

The trainers then introduced criminological theory, the rationale for this was to show participants that they need to understand why people choose to offend in this way and the theory behind this type of offending. Different theories were introduced such as Kemshall (2013); Finkelhor (1984); Ward & Hudson (1998); Marshall & Barbaree (1990); Hall & Hirshman (1992). The preferred criminological theory to be borne in mind should be that of Ward & Hudson (1998) as this considers how RSO’s might have approach or avoidant goals. The trainers stated that RSO’s will be one or the other i.e. they will either actively approach their victims or they will actively attempt to avoid situations which will lead them to offend.

The PEACE model of interviewing is introduced as this is the model that the police are trained in and it is force policy that all interviews shall be conducted using the PEACE model (College of Policing, 2012). This model allows for MOSOVO to plan, engage, account, clarify and evaluate on an interview and trainers reinforced to participants that this is the interview model to use and should be used when conducting the home visit interview with particular emphasis on the challenge aspect, as trainers were of the opinion that this type of offender will try to manipulate officers and try to control the interview. Trainers further stressed that participants must dress, down, wear gloves and not shake hands with RSO’s when conducting the home visit. The rationale for this was due to the fact that if MOSOVO attend in uniform or a suit this would make the RSO feel uncomfortable and the trainers appeared to be of the opinion that this type of offender’s hygiene standards are considerably lower, therefore wearing of gloves and not shaking hands was to protect the officers hygiene.

A case study is then introduced, in the form of a DVD, where participants are asked to watch the DVD, make notes and have a group discussion around each section of the DVD. The DVD focused on a repeat RSO who was subject to a home visit and explored his background to offending; the life event that led to his offending; the impact of this event and his offending history. Participants were asked to use Ward & Hudson’s (1998) theory to discuss each element of the DVD to ascertain whether the offender was approach or avoidant active. Trainers emphasised throughout this DVD that the RSO in the DVD was a repeat offender who had no morals and went to great lengths to groom his victims. The trainers also stated that the offender in the DVD was a prolific serial offender who attempted to manipulate the home visit and displayed negative (referred to as ‘wonky’ thinking) thoughts throughout.

The training then moved onto risk assessment, where previous risk assessment tools were introduced (SARN; RSVP and Risk Matrix 2000) to provide participants with an understanding of factors that have been used to indicate risk in RSO’s. The risk assessment that is now used by the police known as ARMS was then introduced, where trainers explained the rationale for this new style risk assessment, in that it focuses on dynamic factors and looks at what is going on in the offenders life at the moment.

Trainers explained that within this risk assessment there are risk factors and protective factors. Risk factors are: opportunity to offend, offence related sexual interests, sexual pre-occupation, emotional congruence with children, hostility, poor self-management and anti-social influences. Protective factors are: commitment to desist; an intimate relationship; positive routine/employment and social investment. The trainers spent considerable time on what participants should look for on the visit for each factor and also how to pose questions for each factor.

Training then moved onto completing the ARMS paperwork, in that, each of the above factors should be discussed on the visit as each factor is of equal importance. Participants should then give each factor a ‘priority’ rating which would give an overall rating of high, medium or low and that should form the basis of the risk management plan.

The final part of the training allowed participants the opportunity to complete an ARMS risk assessment, whereby, participants observed another case study in the form of a DVD and had to complete the ARMS assessment based on this DVD. Participants were then placed in groups and were given a role play exercise, in the form of a home visit. Participants were asked to carry out a mock interview of a home visit to test their knowledge and skills that they had gained from the training and were then provided with feedback on their performance from this exercise.

4.1.2 **Force 2**

The training at this force also took place at the police force’s training school and is a condensed version of force 1 training being a 5 day training course. There were two trainers at this force who had worked together previously and both had experience of sexual offender management. The police trainer who led the training had previously attended the national training at force 1 and had also observed the training at force 3 and as such, designed the course based on what he felt was required on MOSOVO training. Further, the trainers at this force were still very active in practice in that they still conducted home visits and as such this led to participants being engaged and respectful throughout the training. The training at this force was only for officers that were specific to this force and as such allowed for a smaller number of participants than force 1 (n=12).

Like force 1, this training focused on how to carry out the home visit and how to conduct the risk assessment from the home visit. Trainers at this force spent considerable time on how to plan for a home visit, in that, participants should check POLKA, VISOR, any new ‘intel’ and participant’s should use their own judgement (National Decision making model 2010; NPIA, 2010) when conducting the home visit and risk assessment. Trainers placed emphasis on the fact that this interview is different to the normal policing style interview and participants should be prepared to challenge more during the home visit.

Unlike force 1, this force introduced a guest speaker from MAPPA who discussed the role of MAPPA and when participants should refer work to MAPPA. The rationale for this was that the trainers at this force felt that MAPPA is an integral part of the MOSOVO role, in that participants will need to refer high risk cases to MAPPA for consideration.

As with force 1, criminological theory was then used at this force, but rather than using different examples of theory, this force focused purely on Ward & Hudson’s (1998) theory, namely, the approach versus avoidant theory with trainers reinforcing that the RSOs will be either one or the other.

As with force 1, legislation requirements were then introduced such as civil orders that are available and when to apply for such orders and also a brief introduction as to the notification requirements, insofar as how they can assist participants in managing offenders. Risk assessment was then introduced, but rather than look at previous risk assessments, this force focused on RM2K and ARMS as this is the risk assessment tool that is currently used by police. Participants were provided the same information as force 1, vis-à-vis the factors to look for on ARMS and how to pose the questions when conducting the interview.

Rather than spending a considerable amount of time on the first DVD, this force focused training on how to conduct the ARMS assessment from this DVD and how information from the home visit should be incorporated into the ARMS assessment. The second DVD was then incorporated into the training, where participants were asked to complete the ARMS assessment.

The training then focused on how to conduct a home visit with a focus on interviewing skills and an emphasis on the PEACE model of interviewing. The trainer stated although participants should follow the PEACE model, participants should not interrogate the offender but rather keep it as a simple chat, which was a divergence from what was told to participants at force 1.

Participants then took part in a role play/mock visit exercise of a home visit interview, where participants were provided with a short debrief of the scenario and had to carry out the visit based on information they had been given throughout the training and were then provided with feedback on their performance from this exercise.

4.1.3 **Force 3**

This force conducts training differently to that of force 1 and force 2. There are two separate training courses, one being MOSOVO and the other being ARMS. The MOSOVO part of the training is a two week course which was carried out by two police trainers, neither of whom had experience in sexual offender management or conducting home visits, which led to the following concerns:

‘*So you have never done a home visit then?’* (Participant 5, Female)

‘*How do we know what to do then?’* (Participant 8, Male)

‘*How can we trust what you are saying works if you aint done it yourself (laughs)’* (Participant 9, Female)

As with force 1, this led to a lack of distrust from all participants and the researcher observed a lack of engagement throughout the training because of this. The training at this force had a focus on informative training by the use of guest speakers rather than allowing participants the opportunity to take part in a role play exercise. The rationale for this appeared to be to provide an insight into how these agencies help support MOSOVO in their role. The training at this force was specific to officers from this force (n=17) with officers attending of differing levels of experience.

As per the training at force 1 and 2, the first part of this training delivered a session on the different legislation requirements such as civil orders and in particular the notification requirements, although this was very brief. Trainers then quickly moved onto criminological theory and focused purely on Ward & Hudson’s (1998) theory, as, like force 2, they were of the opinion that RSOs will be either avoidant or approach active.

A different DVD was used at this force than was used at force 1 and 2. This was an example of a ‘bad’ home visit taking place, the rationale of this being to show participants how not to conduct a home visit. Participants were asked to explain what was wrong with the visit and what would they do to improve the visit in the future. The remainder of the training introduced guest speakers from different agencies such as MAPPA, Probation, Prison, the court system and an experienced officer in the Automated Number Plate Reader (ANPR). The rationale for this was to allow the guest speakers to provide information as to how these agencies can assist in the management of RSO’s.

The ARMS part of the training was a separate course (at the same training school) which focused on the ARMS factors and how to conduct an ARMS home visit and risk assessment. The training was delivered by two different trainers who did have experience in the area of sexual offending.

The trainers introduced the ARMS risk assessment, informing participants that the aim of this risk assessment was to look for dynamic factors rather than static factors. The trainers then gave an informative PowerPoint presentation as to both the risk and protective factors, advising participants how to ask the questions and what observations should be carried out on the home visit. The trainers spent considerable time on the priority ratings, advising participants what they should look for to place a RSO in high, medium or low category.

The second DVD that was used at force 1 was then introduced to the group, where participants simply had to watch and observe and make notes from the DVD. Rather than provide participants with a role play opportunity, this force simply asked participants to complete the ARMS risk assessment and were then provided with feedback.

4.2 **Overview of Recordings of Home Visits**

As stated in chapter 3, with the consent of each of the forces, each agreed to audio record all home visits over a two week period. Once the recordings of the visits had taken place, the researcher attended the headquarters of each force to assess the recordings. The recordings were placed in order of low risk, medium risk and high risk. The researcher randomly selected one recording for each level of risk for each police force and took notes on these and transcribed them to use as the data for this study. The recordings were typed up verbatim so that the researcher could supplement her field notes and obtain supporting quotations. The police at each force requested that the recordings were not to be taken from the room. The researcher reviewed what questions the officers posed to each of the RSO’s to explore the relationship between training and practice.

For force 1, three visits were randomly chosen from the recordings of home visits that had taken place, one recording for each level of risk, namely, low medium and high risk. All three visits ranged from 40 minutes to one hour and 25 minutes in length and all were ‘subsequent visits.’ There were two police officers on each of the visits. At each visit, one officer had conducted the visit previously and appeared to have a good rapport with the offender, but the other officer was different on each visit and had not met the RSO previously. On each visit, one officer appeared to take the lead with the interview and make notes of the conversation, while the other officer appeared to conduct general observations around the house and ask any questions on things such as pornographic magazines or children’s toys.

For force 2, four visits were randomly chosen from the recordings of home visits of RSO’s that had taken place, one recording for each level of risk, namely, low medium, high and this force offered a recording of a very high risk offender too. The four visits ranged from 45 minutes to one hour and 35 minutes in length. As with force 1, there were two police officers present on each of the visits. For the low, and medium risk, both officers were new to the RSO, not having visited the RSO previously, whereas for the high and very high risk, the two officers had conducted visits with each RSO on numerous occasions. On each visit, one officer appeared to take the lead with the interview and make notes of the conversation, while the other officer appeared to conduct general observations around the house and ask any questions from such observations.

For force 3, 3 visits were randomly chosen from the recordings of home visits that had taken place, one recording for each level of risk, namely, low, medium and high risk. All three visits ranged from 30 minutes to one hour and 45 minutes in length. On all three visits, the officers had not conducted a visit previously with the offender and therefore did not have any rapport with the offender. As with force 1 and force 2, there were two police officers present on each of the visits. However, unlike force 1 and 2, both officers appeared to conduct the interview questions and both appeared to conduct general observations around the house. As with force 1 and 2, officers would introduce themselves and state why they were there and proceed to general introductions.

An overview of the training at each force that took part in this thesis has been provided, showing the differences and similarities in the training at each force as well as an overview as to how the researcher selected each recording with a brief background of each recording that the researcher listened to and which form part of this study. In the next section, key themes across the whole dataset (i.e. field notes and transcripts from the training and recordings of home visits) are presented with a particular focus on similarities and differences between police training and practice. The themes and subthemes were identified using thematic analysis (Braune & Clarke, 2006).

4.3 **Findings from comparing the training and home visits**

The findings from this study allowed for three primary themes to be identified:

1. Police officer distrust towards police trainers.
2. Similarities between training and home visits according to MOSOVO.
3. Differences between training and home visits according to MOSOVO.

Each of these themes will now be discussed in turn.

* + 1. **Police officer distrust towards police trainers**

This was the first theme to emerge from this part of the data and was the smallest of the three themes, however, this theme proves important in the context of the subsequent themes. This theme identified that participants on the training (both new and experienced participants) were distrustful towards the trainers, due to the fact that the trainers either did not have any practical experience of home visits or had not had experience of home visits for some time.

‘*When was the last time you done a home visit?’* (Participant 7, Male, Force 1)

‘*So you have never done a home visit then?’* (Participant 5, Female, Force 2)

‘*How can we trust what you are saying works if you not done it yourself (laughs)’* (Force 3, Participant 9, Female)

From this, it appeared as if the participants felt a sense of distrust towards the trainers due to the fact that the trainers did not have any recent practical experience of home visits or did not have any experience of sexual offender management. Also, the researcher did have conversations with participants throughout the training at each force (notes were made in the researcher’s observation diary) where participants at each force felt as if the trainers were not just inexperienced, but did not have enough experience in MOSOVO to be able to deliver the course to a confident or competent level. It was further noted that the trainers, particularly at force 3, often made mistakes regarding the legislation and notification requirements (researchers own notes) which participants did pick up on, which again led to participants feeling distrustful and dissatisfied with the trainers.

This sense of distrust also allowed participants to almost ‘switch off’ and not be focused on the training, particularly on the protective ARMS factors, as participants did not appear to understand how these factors work for managing this type of offender:

‘*I don’t understand what you are saying….these factors are looking for a positive finding?...no I don’t get it and won’t be able to ask that….i’m just too confused why we ask these things.’* (Force 3, Participant 5, Female)

From this, it appeared as if participants were unclear as to why these factors required discussing on the home visit, particularly commitment to desist, social investment and intimate relations, as is shown in theme 3 and the trainers were unable to provide answers to their questions on these factors:

‘*How will we know that [commitment to desist] though from his home…..we are trained to always be on the look’* (Force 1, Participant 4, Male)

‘*[Social investment] absolute waste of time man (laughs)’* (Force 2, Female, Participant 5)

‘*You need to look for a change, try to help them that’s it…that’s all we can tell you’* (Trainer 1, Force 1)

However, as is further shown in the subsequent themes, participants did focus on certain risk factors such as opportunity to offend, initial offence and any negative social influences that were in the RSO’s life:

‘*Yeah this is what we are trained to do and what how we know to interview [opportunity to offend]* (Force 1, Participant 4, Female)

‘*We always question this [initial offence] that’s just what we do’* (Force 2, Participant 3, Male)

‘*Most people who offend hang with their own type though*’ (Force 3, Participant 6, Male)

From the above it appears as if participants were unclear as to the rationale as to why the protective factors were incorporated into the training which led to participants feeling confused and losing interest on this part of the training and the trainers were unable to respond to their concerns. This could be due to the fact that the trainers did not feel confident in this new style of risk assessment but could also be due to the fact that police are trained to investigate and be cautious of the offender, rather than look for any positive pattern in the RSO’s life, and as such, this led participants to focus on parts of the training that they are familiar with such as opportunity to offend, as these factors allow the police to use their investigative mind set.

Further, the National Decision making model (NPIA, 2010) is incorporated into standard police officer training and allows police officers to use their own decision making and own judgement when the situation arises. This model is incorporated into the MOSOVO training, as MOSOVO will undoubtedly have to use their own judgement and decision making when attending on the home visit and more importantly when placing the RSO into the appropriate risk category. During the training, participants described this role as being so different to the normal police officer role and findings from this thesis show that participants did not understand the rationale as to why traditional police officer training such as the NDM was incorporated into MOSOVO training as this is such a different style of policing:

‘*Your telling us stuff we already know* (Participant 5, Female, Force 3)*’*

‘*Yeah, we know what that is, we get trained in that from day one, we want to know about this not the old stuff’* (Particpant 3, Male, Force 3).

However, it could be seen from the recordings of home visits, that this sense of distrust and lack of understanding led MOSOVO to revert to using methods they are familiar and trained in such as the NDM and PEACE model of interviewing during the home visit which may not be beneficial to offender management:

‘*Okay, I’m not happy with what I have seen I’m taking you to the station’* (Force 1, Participant 5, Female)

‘*You have been speaking to under age girls…..your in breach I’m taking your phone’* (Force 2, Participant 3, Female)

‘*You know you are not allowed abroad…why have you been to Spain…you need to come to station’* (Force 3, Participant 4, Female)

The findings from this theme show that participants were confused and unclear as to why they were being asked to discuss protective factors during the home visit, but did accept that this style of policing was different to the normal style of policing that they are traditionally trained in. However, despite this, participants were not open to any training or information regarding this new style of policing and appeared to still be of the opinion that this type of offender will require investigating and led to them focus on ARMS factors that are of risk in nature rather than the protective factors. This in turn allowed participants to revert to traditional policing using the NDM and PEACE model in their style of questioning during the home visit, which defeats the very purpose of the MOSOVO training programme and the ARMS assessment.

* + 1. **Theme 2: Similarities between training and home visits**

This theme identified that parts of the training are put into practice on the home visit, in particular policy legislation and theory such as: the NDM Model; ACPO (2010) principles and Ward & Hudson’s (1998) Self-Regulation Model. Further, data is provided to show that no visit is completely the same and as such there is no ‘standard visit’ but certain elements of the visit are the same such as rapport building and interview style. Next it is shown how MOSOVO are directed to employ the PEACE model of interviewing and data is provided to show that at times, particularly for high risk offenders this model is reverted to during the home visit. Finally data is provided to show that during the home visit, MOSOVO tend to pose questions around factors for the ARMS assessment that focused on psychological situational or relationship factors.

4.3.4 **Adoption of National Decision Making and Self-Regulation Models**

MOSOVO training at each force incorporates both the NDM (NPIA, 2010) and Ward & Hudson (1998) Self-Regulation Model. All participants at the training were aware of the NDM model as this is incorporated into standard police officer training (College of Policing, 2018) and as such did not raise any questions on this. However, participants did raise concerns regarding Ward & Hudson’s (1998) theory:

‘*How will we be able to identify that [approach vs avoidant offenders] on a visit?’* (Participant 4, Male, Force 1)

‘*We won’t be thinking of theory on the visit, we got enough to think about’* (Participant 5, Male, Force 2).

‘*How will we be able to do that with the time scale we work on?’* (Participant2, Female, Force 2)

Participants appeared particularly concerned regarding this theory as traditionally police officers are not trained in criminological theory, they are trained to investigate and are expected to be familiar with legislation such as Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) (1984) and are trained in the PEACE model of interveiwing and as such this was a new concept and a new way of thinking which seemed daunting to participants.

Trainers at each force responded to these concerns by stating:

‘*The reason you need to be aware of the theory is that you need to be able to look for any signs that the offender is trying to groom you….if you don’t understand why you are doing this then your risk assessment will be flawed.’’*  (Standard response from trainers at each force)

‘*You need to know what risk you are facing before you enter the offender’s home and you need to be thinking what the risk might be that you are going to face.’* (Standard response from each force)

‘*You should always be aware of what their background is and how they think as that is crucial to your risk assessment.’* (Standard response from each force)

From the above, it can be seen that participants were directed from the outset that the RSO is still posing a risk based on previous behaviour and as such participants were directed to be suspicious and cautious of the RSO from the outset. Whilst it is accepted that MOSOVO do carry out an investigative role to some extent, by carrying out the home visit and conducting the risk assessment, this role is aimed to be an offender management role with an emphasis on helping the RSO to reduce the cycle of offending and reinforcing that the RSOs still pose a risk does not assist with the offender management role.

Despite participant’s concerns regarding NDM and criminological theory, when the first DVD was introduced to the training, participants were able to understand why theory was so important:

‘*He is approach active and he displays cognitive distortion or wonky thinking’.* (Participant 8, Male, Force 1)

‘*Yeah I can see how the theory fits better now and what to lo*ok *for to place him in that theory’* (Participant 7, Male, Force 2)

‘*Yeah, he is encouraging an opportunity and he is getting over his external inhibitors, like what you spoke about before.’* (Participant 4, Female, Force 3)

From this, it is evident that participants were able to make a clear link from Ward & Hudson’s (1998) theory but participant’s responses show that they felt the RSO on the DVD was approach active. This shows that participants are trained from the DVD that the RSO is a risk and will be looking for an opportunity to reoffend which only enhances suspicion.

Following the NDM model, participants were advised at each force to use their own experience and judgement when placing the RSO into the risk and priority rating and if unsure they should place them higher to be on the safer side, a view echoed by the findings below:

‘*If unsure place them into the higher risk category’* (Trainer 1, Force 2)

Again, this finding is consistent with the above in that participants are trained to be cautious of the RSO.

Participants were given the opportunity to place the RSO into the relevant priority rating based on the DVD exercise. In instances where all participants had placed the RSO into different levels of priority, this led to concerns from participants. This led to the trainers reverting to the NDM:

‘*It is irrelevant where you place them as long as you can justify it in your risk assessment’* (Trainer 1, Force 1).

Despite participants concerns above, it appears from this research that both the NDM model and Ward & Hudson’s (1998) Self-Regulation model are both incorporated into the home visit process. The NDM allows MOSOVO to justify their decision making which clearly takes place during the home visit, as MOSOVO have to use their own judgement and justify the risk category they place the RSO into from their findings and observations of the home visit:

‘*I’m not happy with what I have seen today, so I am coming back in a week ok?’* (Force, 1, Participant 7, Male)

*‘Look, we have been through this, you know you can’t see your niece...I need you to come to the station now.’* (Force 2, Male, Participant 5)

*‘’Right’ I’m placing you up a level, you are in breach of your requirements again.’* (Force 3, Female, Participant 2)

Also, it was clear from the line of questioning on the home visit recordings that MOSOVO do look to see if the RSO is approach or avoidant active based on Ward & Hudson’s (1998) Self-Regulation Model. However, from the line of questioning it appears that whilst MOSOVO do use this theory, the approach is on an approach active view point, as the questions that were posed were around issues such as opportunity to offend, sexual interests and initial offence:

‘*You know you are not allowed to go on holiday, what were you doing in Spain?’* (Force 1, Participant 4, Male)

‘*You are meant to disclose all devices…you have been looking at the internet when you are not meant to….your offence was for internet offences.’* (Force 2, Participant 5, Female)

‘*Who is this you are speaking to, there is a lot of conversation here….she is only 15, you know you are not allowed to do that...I need her number to speak to her.’* (Force 3)

These findings show that MOSOVO do see the RSO as approach active from the line of questioning as there was an emphasis on factors such as opportunity to offend and sexual pre-occupation. Also, as this interview is not like the traditional investigative interview, where the ‘suspect’ would be continuously questioned and in some instances interrogated, and is aimed at being an ‘offender management’ style interview based on rapport and support, these findings show that in some respects, especially where the RSO has to be challenged, MOSOVO have to revert to the justification approach, using the NDM model, which further allows MOSOVO to revert to employing the PEACE model of interviewing.By employing both of these models and from the line of questioning that MOSOVO use, this clearly shows that MOSOVO are suspicious of the RSO and see them as a ‘risk, which further allows MOSOVO to revert to traditional style of policing rather than a offender management style. This suspicion that MOSOVO have towards the RSO is discussed further in the preceding chapter.

* + 1. **A Standardised Visit**

From the observation of training and listening to the recordings of home visits, it was apparent to the researcher that no visit is completely the same, as each visit will largely depend on the MOSOVO conducting the visit, the responses to the questions and observations during the visit.

However, there were some aspects of the visits that were the same each time or standardised in accordance with the training. The trainers advised participants that all visits should be unannounced; they should not give the RSO any prior notice that they will be attending their property to conduct a home visit or risk assessment; when doing the visit, to keep it like a ‘general chat’ and to make observations of the home. Also, trainers advised that MOSOVO should explain the purpose of the visit but not to use the term ‘risk assessment’ during the home visit as this will cause anxiety to the RSO. Trainers provided further guidance in that notification requirements should only be discussed on the first two visits, the first being to inform the RSO of the requirements, and the second to reinforce those requirements and to ensure the RSO has a sound understanding of the requirements.

Trainers also advised that there should be a certain order for the visit:

‘*You should conduct the visit in a certain way, such as legal requirements, reasons, roles, routines and expectation and the interview should follow a certain structure such as future, employment, social, friends, hobbies, relationship, drink, drugs, mental health, health, finance, education and transport.’* (Force 1)

With regards to the home visit being unannounced, the majority of participants accepted the rationale for this. However, two participants did raise some concerns:

‘*What happens if they are not in when you turn up?’* (Force 1, Male, Participant 5)

‘*What if they don’t let you in when you get there?’* (Force 2, Female, Participant 2)

These two participants were new to the role of MOSOVO and also very inexperienced in the area of policing generally and were raising general questions regarding the home visit, whereas the more experienced participants simply accepted this.

Further, trainers advised that if the RSO did refuse access to the property this should be recorded as the RSO being negative which further reinforces that MOSOVO are trained to interpret RSOs actions in a negative or suspicious light.

For interview style, all participants at each force raised concerns with the fact that the interview should be in the form of a general chat:

‘*This isn’t how we are used to doing things though, we are cops we don’t do that when we interview’* (Force 1, Male, Participant 3)

‘*How can we have a general chat with this type of offender though?’ (*Force 2, Participant 4, Male)

‘*You are asking us to do what we are not trained to do,,,we don’t interview this way…this is a probation role.’* (Force 3, Participant 5, Female)

This shows that MOSOVO clearly feel that they do not have the adequate skills to carry out this role and they almost feel out of their depth when conducting this role and feel ill-equipped to conduct an interview in this way. This might be due to the fact that police are trained under the PEACE model of interviewing College of Policing, 2012) which follows the suspect interview model (College of Policing, 2012)which allows for MOSOVO to be suspicious and cautious of offenders from the outset.

Participants did not raise any concerns when trainers advised them not to use the term risk assessment or regarding notification requirements, however, when trainers advised to explain the purpose of the visit, the following was raised:

‘*How much detail do we go into on this then, what if they want more information?’ (Force 2, Male, Participant 4)*

‘*But after time they will know why we are there won’t they….they will figure it out.’* (Force 3, Female, Participant 4).

Although MOSOVO are advised not to discuss or disclose the risk category on the training programme, these findings show that participants felt that RSO’s will raise questions regarding the risk category and will in some instances be able to gain an understanding of which risk category they are placed into. This could allow the RSO to gain an insight into when future visits may take place and may allow the RSO to be somewhat prepared for the interview which could allowthe RSO will attempt to manipulate or control the interview.

It was clear from the recordings of visits that the visits are in fact unannounced, as the RSO was either unaware MOSOVO would be attending or were not expecting MOSOVO to attend:

‘*’We are from the police, we need to come and talk to you today to see if you are complying with your requirements.’* (Force 2, Medium risk, 3rd visit)

‘*Hi Steve, its Dan from the Police….it’s that time of year again [laughs]* (Force 1, Low risk, 3rd visit)

It was evident from the introduction to the home visit, where MOSOVO were gaining access to the property and the initial conversation on entry to the property, that a ‘general chat’ approach was being used by MOSOVO. It was also apparent to the researcher that when MOSOVO were trying to gain further information from the RSO their challenging techniques were more informal than what would be used under the PEACE model of interviewing:

MOSOVO: ‘*Are you happy at this house*?’

RSO: ‘*No, someone egged my house last week, I want to move*.’

MOSOVO: ‘*When did it happen…did you report it to police…why do you think it happened*?’ (Force 1)

Also, all recordings showed that MOSOVO do conduct observations, which initially are discussed as an attempt to build rapport:

‘*See you have a scooter, you like scooters then…which model is it….do you go out on it?* (Low risk, force 1, 4th visit)

Once this ‘general chat’ had taken place, MOSOVO would explain the purpose of the visit. For example:

*\‘There will be lots of questions, some personal, some not so, but it’s important that you answer as honestly as possible and not just say what you think you should say.’ (*Force 2, Participant 5, Female*)*

‘*So remember last time we went through the notification requirements, this visit we are looking at doing the risk assessment ok?’ (*Force 2, Medium risk, 3rd visit*)*

*‘So what we need to do is look at how to protect you and get you back into a good place but also protect the public, okay? (*Force 2, Male, Participant 5*)*

However, it could be seen from recordings that despite such an empathetic approach, RSO’s are aware that some form of risk assessment is being carried out on the home visit:

‘*Are you putting me up a level then*?’ (Force 3, Low risk, 2nd visit)

‘*Are you keeping me low then, I’ve done well today haven’t I*?’ (Force 1, Low risk 4th visit)

‘*So what risk are you putting me on then?*’ (Force 1, Medium risk, 6th visit)

These findings show that RSO’s are actually aware of the purpose of the risk assessment and that there are ‘levels’ of risk for them to be placed into following the home visit. This may allow the RSO to be better prepared for the next home visit as the RSO would be aware as to the time scale for the next home visit.

From each recording, it was apparent that MOSOVO covered the notification requirements. Notification requirements were used in different ways on each of the recordings, however, from each recording that was either an initial or a first visit, MOSOVO discussed and explained the notification requirements in detail so the RSO was aware what the notification requirements were:

‘*So these are called notification requirements, I’m going to go over these really slowly and simply and if you don’t understand you must say….these are important as they tell you what you can and can’t do’* (Force 1, Participant 2, Male)

‘*So these tell you what you can do….you can’t go near the park or the school okay, that’s really important.’*  (Force 2, Participant 5, Female)

‘*So are you sure you understand these? Right now I need you to sign them so we are clear you understand them and you know what you’re allowed to do.’* (Force 3, Participant 6, Female)

If MOSOVO had any intelligence that the RSO may not understand the notification requirements (second or subsequent visit) the notification requirements would be further reinforced at the beginning of the visit. For example:

‘*Remember we discussed these last time and you signed them…well you can’t walk that way as there is a school there so you need to find another walk to go on when you go out.’* (Force 1, Male, Participant 7)

‘*Look we talked about this last time…you cant leave this area or you are in breach of your notifications…remember…do we need to go over again as at the minute your in breach of those requirements.’* (Force 2, Female, Participant 5)

From the recordings of home visits at each force, notification requirements were discussed on each recording at different stages of the visit. In some instances MOSOVO introduced the requirements to advise the RSO of them and in other instances the requirements were reinforced if it appeared the RSO were to be in breach of the requirements. At the training, very little attention is provided to notification requirements only so far as MOSOVO are required to know about them but are not provided with any detail as to how to incorporate them into the home visit. These findings show that MOSOVO appear to use these requirements first as an introduction on the first visit but thereafter as a tool to reinforce their investigative powers **o**ver the RSO and would often talk in terms of ‘breach of requirements’.

4.3.6 **PEACE informed interview style**

Trainers directed participants to use the PEACE model of interviewing and explained how to interview the RSO, plan, engage, account, challenge and evaluate. Trainers further elaborated on this point:

*‘A good interview should follow the PEACE model in that you should plan; look at what is already known about the offender; explain why engagement is necessary and build up rapport; look at past social and sexual history; look at the present (ARMS); closure in what happens next; evaluation where the officer should reflect on the interview; contextualise the interview into something meaningful; manage such as how you will do this and record evidence and plan effectively.’* (Standard response from each Force)

The PEACE model led to concerns from participants:

‘*We all know how to use the PEACE model but this type of interview is so different…what is the difference between a normal interview and this interview then?’* (Participant 2, Female, Force 2)

There were also concerns regarding challenging the RSO during the interview:

‘*How much do we challenge on the interview?’* (Participant 2, Female, Force 2)

‘*How far do we go before we bring them into the station?’* (Participant 5, Male, Force 1)

The trainers at each force referred back to the NDM model and reinforced that officers needed to use their own experience and judgement to be able to make appropriate decisions, and be guided by what they find on the visit and how hostile the RSOs are. Referring this to previous findings in this thesis, participants do appear to revert back to the NDM, as this is the model that is familiar to them.

These findings show that participants might be anxious due to the fact that they have been told that the home visit should be more of a ‘general chat’, which does not follow the PEACE model, but have also been told that the home visit should follow the PEACE model, where it is normal to challenge the suspect at every opportunity which is confusing to participants. Also, whilst participants are familiar with employing the NDM model and justification approach, this is not to a suspect interview but an offender management interview.

Trainers also reinforced throughout the training that this type of offender will manipulate officers and be dishonest in their answers, echoing findings earlier in this chapter. For example:

‘*The offender will try to manipulate you so don’t interrogate them just keep it as a simple chat*’ (Force 2, Male, Participant 5)

Furthermore, trainers at each force advised:

MOSOVO should be aware of ‘buzz words’ that RSO will give if they have been on treatment and to challenge the RSO more if they use these buzz words during the interview and try to implement ‘change talk’.

This shows that as MOSOVO are directed to interpret RSO’s using terms that they learnt in treatment as something negative, this further encourages suspicion of them, which is in line with a PEACE interview approach. Yet MOSOVO are directed to implement change talk and reinforce positive thinking which is not part of the PEACE model of interviewing and does appear to allow MOSOVO to use interview skills that are different to PEACE and are more like a ‘general chat’.

From the PEACE model, it is evident that preparation is a key factor to a good PEACE interview. It should be noted that this research did not take into account the preparation that MOSOVO undertook prior to the visit, however, it could be seen from the recordings of visits that MOSOVO do refer to notes from the last home visit:

‘*So you were doing well last time, is there any changes you want to talk about?’* (Force 1, low risk, 4th visit)

‘S*o last time you said you were masturbating three times a day, now twenty times...’* (Force 2, high risk, 3rd visit)

‘*Last time you were drinking a lot, have you got that under control or do you still need help with that?’* (Force 3, medium risk, 2nd visit)

The findings also show that the previous visit was discussed but no other information was discussed such as any previous findings from VISOR or any new INTEL. This may be due to the fact that the researcher selected a small sample of recordings to listen to and transcribe but it could also be that to discuss any previous findings, such as VISOR or intel, is not in the nature of an ARMS visit as it is said to focus on the ‘here and now’ and also the fact that this is an OM role and not a routine investigative PEACE interview.

Trainers also advised participants that observations should be conducted at each and every visit they attend:

‘*For this I presume we can check phone and devices?’* (Participant 9, Male, Force 1)

Trainers advised that they should check devices on every visit, but INTEL will be able to answer a lot of this and they should always do their research on the RSO prior to carrying out the visit. This further corroborates with police suspicion in that MOSOVO are being directed to look from the outset for any new offending and refer to this in the ARMS discussion. Also, MOSOVO raised concerns as to how far they could go on checking devices, which further shows that MOSOVO do not feel fully trained in this new and different role. These concerns were echoed again by the younger or inexperienced participants after the mock visit/role play exercise where participants interviewed an officer playing the role of an RSO:

‘*I don’t feel like I have enough experience to be able to do this.’* (Participant 12, Male, force 1)

Referring to the demographic data for this study, there was a significant number of participants on the training who were new to the MOSOVO role and this supports the above findings in that participants felt they lacked the necessary experience to carry out this role, in that they did not have the necessary policing or Offender Management experience.

It was evident from each recording of the home visit that this style of interview, to some extent, does attempt to incorporate the PEACE model during the visit. Aside from the preparation stage discussed above, there was also evidence of MOSOVO using explanation and engagement and building up rapport; holding RSO to account by discussing the initial offence and their current sexual preoccupation and also challenge, whereby MOSOVO did at times challenge responses by using appropriate questioning in an attempt to build up rapport:

‘*So how are you getting on? Are you still working*?’ (Force 1, low risk, second visit)

‘*How are you getting on? We had a good visit last time, are you still doing okay?* (Force 2, medium risk, Third visit)

‘*So we need to discuss your offence….you know that is why you are on the register coz of what you done right?’* (Force 1, Low risk, 1st visit)

‘*So what have you been doing with yourself since last time then….you still feeling okay?’* (Force 1, Male, Participant 7)

However, as can be seen from the below, the challenging techniques that are employed during the home visit interview are not as challenging as those that would be employed during a PEACE interview:

‘So *last time you had managed to keep off the drugs, how is that going now?* (Force 2, female, participant 5)

‘*I’ve noticed there are lots of alcohol bottles around….how often are you drinking?* (Force 3, High risk, Participant 6)

A PEACE interview challenges and interrogates the suspect continuously **ref??** and often repeating the same questions, whereas if any evidence was found during general observations, this would be challenged but in the style of a general chat, which still allowed a good level of rapport to remain between MOSOVO and the RSO.

Dependent upon responses by the RSO, MOSOVO would more strongly challenge the RSO as and when required. This only tended to happen on the medium to high risk home visits and when the RSO had contravened their notification requirements:

‘*Why have we been notified you have been to Spain when you know your notification requirements say no foreign travel….how did you get a passport when we have your passport?’* (Force 1, Medium risk, 3rd visit)

*‘We need to know who these people are you are speaking to and we need to let them know about your convictions and if you don’t, we will tell them ok?* (Force 2, Medium risk, first visit)

‘*These [notification requirements] say you are not allowed any devices…..why when we came in did you try to hide that laptop under the table then?...let me see it so I can see what you are doing on it.’* (Force 3, High risk, 4th visit)

‘*Why are you seeing your niece when you know you are not allowed to? How often are you seeing her? Who brings her and are you alone with her?*’ (Force 3, high risk, second visit)

The above shows that more hostile challenging techniques would be employed to the medium and high risk offenders and this would be more in line with a PEACE model of interview, where evidence was presented and the offender was provided with the opportunity to respond. Further challenging techniques would be employed if it was evident the RSO might be attempting to manipulate the interview by not answering any questions, which was again evident on high risk home visits:

RSO: ‘*What do you think?...do you think I am drinking?….do you masturbate’* (high risk, force 3, 2nd visit)

RSO: ‘*Do you think I’m chaotic?...do you expose yourself?’* (High risk, Force 3, 3rd visit)

MOSOVO: ‘*Look this isn’t about us, I’ll ask again, why are you drinking so much…I’m not leaving this point okay, I will keep asking….why are you not coping…I want an honest answer or I’m holding you in breach of your requirements.’* (High Risk, Force 1, 3rd visit)

In the training it was discussed how the RSO will attempt to manipulate the interview and the above responses show that these high risk offenders did seem to be attempting to manipulate the interview to some extent.

Other situations that led to a challenging approach by MOSOVO included any changes in the RSO following treatment, any negative thoughts experienced by the RSO, and findings arising from the observation of the property. For example:

‘*Why have you got all these Disney DVD’s in the cabinet?’* (Force 2, Medium risk, 3rd visit).

*‘Right we went over this last time, you are not allowed any contact with children, here it says it here, look at this, you see? So why are there child protectors on the table and why are you watching kids’ TV when we came in?’* (Medium risk, force 2, 2nd visit)

This would then lead MOSOVO to enforce positive thinking into the home visit:

‘*You need to move on….it was a while ago now, you need to think that you can change.’* (Force 2, medium risk, 2nd visit)

Although it can be seen from the above that MOSOVO will use challenging techniques from PEACE mostly in the medium or high risk cases, challenging techniques would be used across all levels or risk if the RSO appeared to be in breach of his notification requirements. In general, the low risk and sometimes medium risk offenders did not appear to be challenged in the same way as the high risk offenders were being subject to. Also, as MOSOVO are attempting in some instances to implement change talk, this does not conform to a PEACE interview and does conform to the ‘general chat’ style interview that MOSOVO are also directed to use.

4.3.7 **Psychological, situational and relationship factor in ARMS**

Along with other risk assessment tools, (SARN, RSVP, RM2K) trainers focused on the fairly new dynamic risk assessment tool known as ARMS, stating that ARMS is a risk tool designed for adult male RSO’s with a focus on dynamic factors which are changeable such as relationships and employment. Trainers also stated that all ARMS factors should be discussed on each visit as each factor was equally as important.

However, the researcher found that not all ARMS factors are discussed on every visit. The factors discussed depended on the type of visit i.e. initial, first or subsequent visit, as expanded upon in chapter 5 and whether MOSOVO had dealt with the RSO previously and any findings from that visit. The factors that were mainly discussed on each recording were the more static, internal or psychological factors including: sexual preoccupation, offence related sexual interests, emotional congruence with children, hostile orientation and poor self-management. Other factors discussed were situational and relationship factors: opportunity to offend, employment, social influences and intimate relationships. Thus, this subtheme will discuss the information provided to MOSOVO at training on these factors and how this was implemented in practice on the home visits.

4.3.8 **Sexual Pre-Occupation and Offence-related Sexual Interests**

Trainers provided information on what to look for in sexual preoccupation:

‘*For sexual pre-occupation the focus of this factor is the offender’s needs and where did it go wrong for the offender and when did they develop strong sexual pre-occupation or how their life was dominated by sex. You should ask questions such as ‘what are your fantasies’ and ‘how often do you masturbate’*

Trainers advised participants to be extremely blunt when it comes to this line of questioning and if the RSO does not respond then this is an area that should be challenged further. There were some queries from participants:

‘*How do we word the questions around sex?’* (Participant 1, Male, Force 1)

‘*How can we not judge someone who is masturbating all day?’* (Participant 3, Female, Force 2)

‘*This is the same as offence related interests though isn’t it? Why do we ask this as well it’s the same thing?’* (Participant 5, Female, Force 1)

It can be seen from the responses that MOSOVO can feel unsure and possibly also uncomfortable when discussing sexual questions as this is not a familiar discussion to them in a professional capacity and MOSOVO did not have the requisite experience to be able to deal with this type of discussion.

Trainers also provided information on what to look for in offence-related sexual interests:

*‘For offence related sexual interests, look for whether interests are easily gratified through offending, such as sexual interests in children; interest in pain, terror or humiliation; exposing genitals to non-consenting others; sexual interest in viewing non-consenting others naked or undressing.’* (Force 1, Trainer 1).

In practice, although, the training advised participants that each factor should be discussed separately, sexual preoccupation and offence related interests appeared to be discussed together on the home visits. This ties in with the training participant’s comments above that they saw these two factors as assessing the same issue. Also, this line of questioning appeared to be a very direct form of questioning by MOSOVO:

‘*We need to ask you this, there is no easy way round it…are you thinking of sex? What kind of sex and who with?* (Medium risk, Force 2, 3rd visit)

‘*Do you see prostitutes? How often are you masturbating at the minute?’* (Low risk, Force 1, 1st visit)

*‘Do you still think of your victims when you get aroused?’* (Force 2, Male, Participant 5)

On the majority of recordings, this would be answered in an open and honest way by the RSO:

‘*I don’t know how many times I masturbate, I do it all day long’.* (High risk, force 3, 2nd visit)

‘*I don’t think that way anymore, was long time ago.’* (Force 1, low risk)

‘*I was doing it couple times a week but more so since my mum died’* (Medium risk, force 2, 5th visit)

If MOSOVO felt that the amount of sexual pre-occupation, or offence related sexual interest was a significant increase since last time, or the RSO disclosed any personal circumstances as to an increase in sexual preoccupation, this would be challenged further:

‘*So last time it was 3 times a day, now all day long. Okay what has changed, has something happened that you are not telling us?’* (Force 3, Male, Participant 4)

‘*When did your mum die, have you any support? So how often you masturbating and what are you thinking about when you are doing this?’* (Force 2, Female, Participant 7)

‘*So do you think of your offence every time you masturbate…..how do you satisfy that urge then?’* (Force 2, Male, Participant 5)

These findings show that although MOSOVO do challenge responses around this factor, the challenging techniques that are used are more friendly than would usually be used under the PEACE model of interviewing and is more in line with a general chat focusing on rapport building. However, this could be because MOSOVO feel uncomfortable with this line of questioning and as such do not challenge the RSO any further on this point. The findings also show that MOSOVO are attempting to ascertain if the RSO does have any need or support that is not being met and in some cases attempting to offer any support with this, which further shows that this is more in line with an Offender Manager role rather than a police officer or detective role.

4.3.9 **Emotional congruence with children**

Trainers provided information on what to look for:

‘*For emotional congruence with children, participants need to look for evidence that the offender feels more comfortable with children under the age of 14 or describing they feel in love with a child.’*

From the recordings of home visits, this question was only asked if the initial offence was on a child or there was intelligence that the RSO may be having contact with any children:

‘*Any contact with children at the minute?’* (Force 2, medium risk, 5th visit)

**‘***Do you find it easier talking to kids?’* (Force 2, medium risk, 3rd visit)

The majority of RSO’s did respond to this line of questioning:

*‘Kids don’t let me down, I don’t cope well with adults…my dad abused me then got his mates to so yeah I prefer being round kids.’* (Medium risk, Force 2, 3rd visit)

However, some RSO’s were hostile towards this line of questioning:

‘*Why you asking me that, I’m no kiddy fiddler?’* (medium risk, force 2, 5th visit)

‘*I don’t do kids anymore, you have told me I’m not allowed’ (Medium risk, force 2 5th visit)*

MOSOVO would then refer back to the notification requirements and reinforce it was part of their requirements as to why these questions were being asked.

These findings show that this factor is discussed on home visits only if the initial offence was on a child, or if there is further intelligence that the RSO may be having contact with children and some RSO’s in particular, medium or high risk RSO’s would require further challenging around this factor where MOSOVO would refer to the notification requirements which shows that MOSOVO do use the notification requirements as an investigative tool.

4.3.10 **Hostile Orientation**

Trainers provided information on what to look for:

*‘For hostile orientation, you need to look for evidence that the offender feels he has not done anything wrong, that others are responsible for his problems and the offender wants to punish those people. You can look for failure to complete treatment programme; being negative to others.’*

This led participants to respond:

‘*Do we look for general hostility towards us cops?’* (Participant 4, Male, Force 1)

‘*This type of offender can cover that up though, can’t they?’* (Participant 2, Female, Force 2)

Trainers stated that initially, some offenders will be hostile due to the nature of the offence, but this is where good interview and rapport building skills should be used.

In the home visits, there was no direct line of questioning for this factor: instead this factor was likely to have been determined via the MOSOVOs observations of the way that the RSO reacted to them:

**‘***What do you want now, I’m sick to death of you lot coming round.’* (medium risk, force 3, 5th visit)

‘*What the fuck do you want now? Fuck off I’m not letting you in.’ (high risk, force 1, 6th visit)*

*‘Here we go again, you’re always fuckin checking on me I can’t do fuck all without you poking your nose in.’* (Medium Risk, Force 2, 5th visit)

At the training, trainers directed participants to look for any evidence that the RSO feels others are responsible or a failure to complete treatment programmes. On each recording that the researcher listened to, there was no discussion around treatment programmes unless this was a positive experience, although this could be due to the fact that MOSOVO already had information on file that treatment had been completed. One recording did show that the RSO was in denial and felt others were responsible for his actions, but this was not challenged further by the MOSOVO:

‘*I was in prison for 8 years for an offence I didn’t do…how do you think I feel? I don’t blame the police, I blame the jury’* (Medium risk, force 1, 3rd visit)

These findings show that MOSOVO tend to accept that the RSO will be hostile towards them due to the nature of the offence and due to them being police officers. However, they would accept this rather than challenge the RSO on this which could be because MOSOVO appear to feel uncomfortable with questioning the RSO further on certain points or possibly because MOSOVO may be concerned that challenging the RSO on their hostility could escalate the situation.

4.3.11 **Poor Self-Management**

Trainers provided information on what to look for:

‘*For poor self-management, you should look for a chaotic and impulsive lifestyle and whether the offender is bored or has a general inability to cope and being unable to come up with solutions to his problems. You should look for a random lifestyle with no plans for the future, always in a crisis, use of alcohol or drugs; debts; problems with managing feelings.’*

Trainers explained that observations and interview skills will be used here. Trainers informed participants that they should be able to identify a lot of these factors just by having a general chat and the offender will not realise that they are gaining information from him.

On the home visits, this factor did not involve a direct questioning but appeared to be assessed based on observations on what the RSO said and whether the RSO was displaying high levels of anxiety:

‘*You have a lot of bills here that are mounting up, are you coping ok?’* (Force 2, medium risk, 3rd visit)

‘*I was in prison a long time, 8 years, I got used to it and being out here now is just nerve wrecking, I’m really nervous with everything still.’ (Force 2, medium risk, 3rd visit)*

These findings show that this is another area where MOSOVO are looking to see if the RSO has any needs that are not being met or requires support in any aspect of their daily life as part of an offender management role, rather than a routine police role.

As shown above, on each recording that the researcher listened to, many of the questions focused on more individual or psychological factors. However, questions focusing on the immediate situational and relationship context were also asked, as discussed below.

4.3.12 **Opportunity to Offend**

Trainers provided information on what to look for:

‘*For opportunity to offend the opportunity actually needs to be there and thought out by offenders. You need to know the offenders previous opportunity and whether he has access to victims. This is a hard factor to score as the opportunity won’t be in the offenders home when you are conducting the risk assessment and you therefore need to ask questions such as ‘what are you doing during the day’ and ‘what thoughts are you having at the moment’* (Force 1, trainer 1)

As stated above, this is a hard factor to rate as the opportunity will not be directly in front of MOSOVO and as such, this line of questioning was posed in the home visits through general introductions and an attempt to build rapport:

‘*What do you do with your time then*?’ (Medium risk force 2, third visit)

‘*What have you been up to since last time…..has anything changed since last time?’* (Force 2, high risk, 4th visit)

Also, as directed in the training, the initial offence and any subsequent negative or risky thoughts regarding the offence are also discussed:

‘*So we just need to go over your initial offence…..so it was internet based, how are you feeling about that now?’* (Force 1, participant 5, Male)

If notification requirements were contravened, this was challenged to determine the likely opportunity to offend:

‘*You know you’re not allowed at the park though don’t you, what have you been doing at the park? What days are you going….are you doing on your own?* (Medium risk, force 3, third visit)

Overall, the findings show that MOSOVO do question RSO’s on their daily routine to ascertain whether the RSO does have an opportunity to offend together with a discussion around the initial offence which was challenged at times.

4.3.13 **Employment**

For this factor, MOSOVO were required to ascertain whether the RSO was still in employment or was attempting to seek employment. On the home visits, this factor appeared to be linked to the RSOs initial offence:

RSO: ‘*Nobody will have me, I don’t want a job, I can’t be round adults, I’ve told you that.’* (Medium risk, force 2, 3rd visit).

RSO: ‘*I can’t get a job because of this can I, why do you keep asking me that?’* (Medium risk, force 2, 3rd visit)

MOSOVO also linked this factor to notification requirements:

*‘How long have you been at Tesco’s then...have you told them about your offence? You need to its part of your requirements and we won’t leave this.’* (Force 2, Medium Female)

Depending upon the response, this would be explored or challenged further:

‘*We could help you with this, we could help get you volunteering work, you need to start and move on’.* (Force 2, Participant 5, Male)

‘*You can’t get a job because of your convictions and notification requirements and you won’t let us help you with this.’* (Force 2, Participant 6, *Female)*

These findings show that in some instances, particularly if the RSO was negative about finding employment, MOSOVO would offer support and attempt to encourage positive thinking with the RSO which shows that this interview does not conform to the PEACE style interview.

4.3.14 **Social Influences**

Trainers provided information on what to look for:

‘*For outside influences, you should look for any criminal influences in the offender’s lives i.e are they in contact with other sex offenders that will support their behaviour and allow him to justify his offending?. Ask questions to see who he spends time with, who does he value or respect and any connections he may have.’*

Trainers stated outside influences should be discussed as should their daily routine but not necessarily together, it all depends on how the interview goes when you have that discussion but they both need to be covered.

On the home visits, this line of questioning about outside influences was discussed only if the RSO disclosed they were meeting up with anyone. There was alsoa discussion around daily activities during the general introduction/rapport section of the interview:

‘*So you say you are going to see horse racing, do you go with anyone or talk to anyone when you are there?’* (Low risk, Force 2, 3rd visit)

*‘When you go to the soul scene, are you meeting up with anyone when you are there*?’ (Low risk, force 1, 3rd visit)

If MOSOVO felt that this was an anti-social influence, this would be discussed further:

‘*So your mate Kevin is coming out of prison you say…when are you meeting him then? We will need to speak to him as he has a similar offence to you*.’ (Medium risk, force 2, 3rd visit)

From the above, it appears as if MOSOVO use this factor to ascertain whether the RSO has any opportunity to offend in his daily activities, such as horse racing and also with any other anti-social influences, such as friends that may soon be released from prison. This factor was discussed on all visits and MOSOVO appeared to challenge responses in line with a PEACE interview. It also appeared that MOSOVO were approaching this factor from an approach active viewpoint which further shows that MOSOVO see the RSO as a ‘risk’ to society and they are therefore unduly suspicious of their behaviour, which is discussed further in the following chapter.

4.3.15 **Intimate relationship**

For this factor, MOSOVO were required to ascertain whether the RSO was in any new relationship or whether they were interested in seeking a new relationship. This question was asked on the home visits and for low and medium risk RSO’s, they would fully engage with this line of questioning:

‘*No, not bothered I would rather just be on my own.’* (Low risk, Force 1, First visit)

‘*No way, no chance, not at all, relationships got me into enough trouble’* (medium risk, force 2, 2nd visit)

However, this was not the case for high risk RSOs:

‘*I can’t have a relationship can I coz of you lot.’* (Force 3, high risk, 3rd visit) **keep here??**

If the RSO gave monosyllabic yes or no answers or simply said they were not interested, this would be challenged further by the MOSOVO and would be linked to their initial offence and notification requirements, often in a negative or challenging tone:

‘*Why are you not interested…is this because your offence was against a female?’* (Force 1, Participant 5, Male)

‘*Part of your notifications say you need to disclose any new relationship to us.’* (Force 2, Participant 3, Male)

Where RSO’s did confirm that they were in a new relationship this new relationship would be further challenged as this exchange shows:

RSO: ‘*Yeah I am, Susan, she’s well nice been seeing her five months now.’* (medum risk, force 2, 1st visit)

MOSOVO: *’Does she know about your offence?’* (Force 2, male, participant 4)

RSO: ‘*No, I want to move on from that, she makes me a better person and I forget about it.’* (Medium risk, force 2, 1st visit)

MOSOVO: *‘You need to tell her about your offence as its part of your notification requirements.’* (Force 2, Male, participant 4)

*RSO: ‘No, I don’t want her knowing, you’re ruining my life, and I’ll just finish with her.’* (Medium risk, force 2, 1st visit)

*MOSOVO: ‘Can you not see why I am concerned, we have no details of her, no background on her and no protection for her…..give me your phone so I can get her number.’* (Force 2, Male, participant 4)

This line of questioning appeared to be to ascertain whether the RSO had any new opportunity to offend or any anti-social influences in their life. This questioning was also linked to the initial offence which is not congruent with ARMS, as ARMS is meant to discuss the ‘here and now’ in the RSO’s life and this is clearly not the case with this line of questioning. This could be due to the fact that police are trained to investigate and be suspicious which is why emphasis was placed on this factor.

4.4. **Theme 2: Difference between the training and home visits**

This theme identified that there are differences between what MOSOVO are informed to do on the home visit from the training and what actually happens in practice on the home visit. MOSOVO are advised to follow the PEACE model of interviewing as it is force policy that all police interviews should follow this model of interviewing, yet the findings from this study show that not all elements of the PEACE model are followed during the home visit. The purpose of an ARMS assessment is to focus on the ‘here and now’ of the RSO’s life and to provide an action plan to help them move forward and to desist from future offending, yet these findings show that during the home visit interview, despite being advised in training to only focus on the initial offence on the first visit, MOSOVO repeatedly refer to the initial offence at each and every subsequent visit and as such the home visit does not focus on the ‘here and now’ and goes against the very purpose of the ARMS assessment. Finally, one of the purposes of ARMS was to incorporate dynamic questions into the ARMS assessment, yet these findings show that MOSOVO focus on static factors throughout the ARMS assessment.

* + 1. **The missing part of the PEACE model – evaluation and closure**

As stated by one of the trainers at section 4.3.3:

*‘A good interview should follow the PEACE model in that you should plan; look at what is already known about the offender; explain why engagement is necessary and build up rapport; look at past social and sexual history; look at the present (ARMS); closure in what happens next; evaluation where the officer should reflect on the interview; contextualise the interview into something meaningful; manage such as how you will do this and record evidence and plan effectively.’* (Force 1, Trainer 1)

As discussed earlier, this study shows that the PEACE interview model would be used in some cases (medium and high risk), or if MOSOVO felt that the RSO needed to be challenged or was being dishonest or deceitful.

Although it was evident from the recordings of home visits that some aspects of PEACE were employed during the home visit interview, none of the visits that the researcher listened to allowed for evaluation of the interview, where MOSOVO should have reflected on the interview or indeed contextualised the interview, where MOSOVO should have provided the RSO with a summary of the home visit and what the next steps or action plan would be and did not provide detail as to when the next home visit would take place. For example:

‘*Right see you in 12 months then unless anything changes.*’ (Force, 1, Low risk, Visit 4)

‘*Okay that’s us done then, see you next time then.*’ (Force 2, Medium risk, Visit 3)

‘*Right, that’s everything for today then, see you in 6 months* (Force 3, Low risk, Visit 5)

These findings show that MOSOVO do not provide the RSO with an evaluation of the home visit nor do they actively discuss the risk level from the home visit that the RSO is being placed into. This could be to allow MOSOVO to retain a sense of control over the home visit but referring this to previous findings in this thesis, some RSO’s are able to figure out which risk level they are being placed into due to the frequency of the visits and as such the RSO would feel a sense of control over the home visit.

* + 1. **Repeatedly referring to the ‘initial’ offence**

Throughout the training, participants were advised to only discuss the initial offence on the initial or first visit, yet in practice, details of the offence were discussed on all of the home visit recordings regardless of the type of visit that was taking place. For example:

‘*I have never met you before so we need to go through some things. So you have been convicted of an internet offence, let’s discuss that first of all.’* (Low risk force 1, 1st visit)

‘*So your offence was some time ago now, let’s just go over it again’.* (Force 3, high risk, 5th visit)

*‘We need to discuss your offence again…..what led you to do it……have you thought about doing it since?* (Force 2, medium risk, 3rd visit)

Officers would also ask probing questions such as:

MOSOVO: ‘*Do you have any desire to commit that offence now?’* (Force 3)

RSO: ‘*I know what I done was wrong and I am devastated about it, I went and got help straight away.’* (Force 3)

Although it appeared that the purpose of this was to have a discussion around offence related interests, this would lead to a full discussion around the offence they committed. For example:

MOSOVO: ‘*So let’s just go over your offence again*’.

RSO: *It’s like I’ve told you before…my dad got cancer and there was no treatment for him and I didn’t cope with it. My wife didn’t like the way I treated my stepdaughter…I just wasn’t thinking straight and I filmed her in the shower*’

MOSOVO: *so your offence…was coz you weren’t coping, is that right…….how do you cope now then, what tools have you got in place so you don’t go there again*?’

All offenders appeared to be hostile towards this discussion:

‘*Every time you mention that it makes me think and I don’t want to be reminded of that.’ (Force* 2)

‘*When you ask me that it makes me feel really nervous’* (Force 2)

Further, the initial offence appeared to be discussed alongside the notification requirements:

**‘***Right so we know what your offence was and why you did it…..we need you to look at these [explains notification requirement]) this is to help you not to do it in the future okay and you need to understand these.’* (Force 1, low risk 1st visit)

*‘I’m just going to remind you of your requirements, you know you can’t go there, we told you before, sign these requirements again, it is so you don’t do what you did in the first place okay?* (Force 2, medium risk, 3rd visit)

*‘Probation have told us that your mum has passed away…your initial offence was when you had a bereavement…..are you having any thoughts of reoffending……okay lets go over these notification requirements again.* (Force 3, medium risk, 3rd visit)

The above findings show that despite MOSOVO being directed at training to only discuss the initial offence on the initial or first visit, their initial offence is discussed at each and every subsequent visit. Whilst it was not always discussed in detail, it was always referred to as part of broader lines of questioning about the notification requirements. This could be due to the fact that sometimes different MOSOVO attend different visits, due to lack of staffing resources and as such that MOSOVO conducts a full interview from the initial offence through to the present day, or due to the fact that MOSOVO are continuously suspicious and cautious of the RSO and as they are initially trained to investigate, the initial offence will always be discussed. Further, it is important to recognise that it is perhaps difficult for MOSOVO to ask about the ‘here and now’ in the RSO’s life and what has changed since the previous visit without referring to the past as a comparison point and as such in some ways, a discussion around the initial offence is inevitable given the purpose of the home visits. However, based on the negative reactions of the RSO’s, these references to past behaviour and the initial offence may not be helpful to them.

* + 1. **Lack of assessment on positive factors in ARMS**

Trainers directed MOSOVO to discuss all ARMS factors on each visit as all factors are equally as important and the purpose of ARMS is to incorporate dynamic factors into the risk assessment and home visit process, yet this data shows that that those dynamic factors are not given enough attention on the training and in practice, were not discussed on every visit. In particular, these factors all focused on positive change and the future, with the RSO becoming a ‘new person’, having a ‘sense of purpose’ and ‘giving back to society.’

4.4.3.1 **Commitment to Desist**

Trainers provided information on what to look for:

‘*For commitment to desist you are looking for where the offender talks about becoming a new person. You should look for evidence where he talks about the ‘old me’ and accepts responsibility and takes positive steps and you should ask where he intends to be in 6 months’ time and what actions he will take to get there’*

On the home visits, this factor was only discussed with RSO’s that were low risk and had been compliant previously:

‘*So you still seem in a good place…..you don’t seem to be thinking of offending….you have even got rid of your laptop so you can’t do any internet offences, that’s good isn’t it’* (Low risk, Force 2, 3rd visit)

Or for some medium risk RSOs:

MOSOVO: ‘*So last time we talked about your treatment programme…..you think that has really helped don’t you?’* (Medium risk, Force 2, 4th visit)

RSO: ‘*Yeah that treatment helps me think straight and why I did it, I’m not like that anymore, I’ve changed since then.’*(Medium risk, Force 2, 4th visit)

MOSOVO: ‘*So is it all to do with the treatment then? Where do you see yourself by the next time we come?’* (Medium risk force 2, 4th visit)*.*

Commitment to desist is the first dynamic factor that MOSOVO are directed to discuss on the ARMS assessment, yet little attention was given to this factor at the training, other than MOSOVO should look for a change in direction from the RSO, this was only discussed on the low and some medium recordings of RSO’s who had been compliant previously. This style of questioning is traditionally different to the routine or normal style of questioning used by both police officers and detectives, for example, police officers are usually interested in the past (I.e crimes that have been committed) not the future (i.e how people’s lives will change) and it appears that trainers do not afford enough time on how to question this factor which might ultimately lead MOSOVO not to discuss this factor at every visit. This factor in particular might not be discussed as MOSOVO can be of the opinion that RSO’s, in particular, high risk RSO’s, are not compliant and therefore do not attempt to ‘commit to desist.’ During the training regarding this factor, a participant raised concerns that were echoed by the whole group:

‘*We are dependent on him being truthful with us though and he might not be’* (Participants 7, Female, Force 1)

As with previous findings in this thesis, these findings show that MOSOVO do feel a sense of suspicion towards to the RSO and that the RSO will be untruthful and deceitful and that they continue to pose a risk to society.

4.4.3.2 **Social Investment**

Trainers provided information on what to look for:

*‘Social investment is a hard factor to rate as this is where the offender has to give something back to society such as undertaking voluntary work or taking a role in local or national politics’*

This led to a group response:

‘*Why is this factor even there for this type of offender?’* (Force 1)

This could perhaps suggest that MOSOVO do not believe that RSO’s had the potential to change or to consider people other than themselves. In practice, this was not directly discussed on any recording. However, during one recording, a MOSOVO officer was keen to help the RSO to engage in voluntary work in an attempt to help them move on with their life:

‘*We can help you get voluntary work. You need to move on now’* (Participant 4, Male, Force 2)

Whilst this factor was only discussed on one recording, it appeared to be used in more of a support role rather than trying to ascertain if the RSO feels able to give something back to society. In summary, it appears that MOSOVO do not understand why this factor is given any attention and as such MOSOVO do not feel the need to discuss this factor on the home visit.

4.4.3.3 **Intimate Relationship**

Aside from MOSOVO ascertaining whether the RSO was in any new relationship or whether they were interested in seeking a new relationship (discussed earlier), they were also advised on the training to:

*‘For intimate relationship, you should look to see if the offender is in a stable routine and whether they feel they now have a sense of purpose and feel they are in control’.*

This led participants to ask:

‘*What kind of purpose are we looking for?’* (Participant 9, Male, Force 2)

As can be seen above, this question is posed as a protective factor, but it was also seen from the recordings that this can be used as a dynamic factor:

‘*So everything still okay at home……you have a good support from your wife don’t you…..are you still in a good place together?* (Force 1 low risk, 4th visit)

On one recording, the RSO disclosed some health issues his partner had been diagnosed with which led MOSOVO to offer further support:

RSO: ‘*Yeah still together…..bit upset though since she found out she had cancer….knocked us a bit but yeah other than that okay.’* (Force 2, low risk, 4th visit)

MOSOVO: ‘*When did you get this diagnosis….are you feeling anxious about it then…are you coping with it?’* (Force 2, low risk, 4th visit)

This discussion around intimate relationship was only on one recording that the researcher listened to which shows that RSOs are very rarely asked about whether they were in an intimate relationship, were stable and whether they had a sense of purpose and control. This could be due to the fact that MOSOVO do not think that this type of offender will change and pose a continuous risk to society.

**4.5 Summary of Findings**

The findings from the first study show that in order to be able to undertake the MOSOVO role, participants are required to undertake the MOSOVO training. This training is conducted at each force headquarters, with similarities and differences at each force. Each force essentially focuses on the role of the police in managing RSO’s, the purpose of the home visit and how to conduct the risk assessment. Emphasis is placed on the NDM Model and ACPO (2010) decision making principles together with criminological theory, the preferred model being Ward & Hudson’s (1998) Self-Regulation Model, which focuses on the approach vs avoidant offender, with each force stating that the RSO will be either approach or avoidant active. The findings also show that initially participants were cautious of the use of theory but were able to identify why theory was incorporated into the training during the case study exercise. The use of case study was used at all forces, where participants had to identify whether the RSO in the DVD was approach or avoidant active and force 1 and 2 were provided with the opportunity to carry out a role play exercise too. From the training it appeared that participants welcomed the use of the case study and the role play experience.

The training also provided information as to how MOSOVO should plan for a home visit and stressed that preparation is key to a good home visit and that MOSOVO should recap notes from the last visit, review systems such as POLKA, VISOR and use their own experience and judgement when placing the RSO into the appropriate risk category. All participants felt that there is too much work involved in preparing for the home visits provide data to show that MOSOVO do review notes from the previous visit prior to conducting any new visit or risk assessment.

Trainers at each force inform MOSOVO that the visit should form a certain structure i.e purpose of visit, requirements, legislation etc. However, the findings from this study show that whilst there are some elements that are common, there is no such thing as a single or structured visit as it depends on the risk level the RSO is currently being managed at, the MOSOVO carrying out the visit and any new INTEL or observations from the visit. The similarities in each visit included that is unannounced; the purpose of visit is explained; notification requirements are covered whilst the visit often follows a general chat/rapport building style of interview rather than the usual interrogatory suspect interview from the PEACE model of interviewing.

All forces incorporated the PEACE model of interviewing into the training as per police force policy and trainers advise that MOSOVO should use this model of interviewing when conducting the home visit and risk assessment. However, the findings show that participants felt this style of interview is very different to the traditional police interview and this led to trainers advising participants to refer to the NDM model and ACPO (2010) principles when conducting the interview. Although PEACE was employed in the high risk RSO’s home visits, it was apparent to the researcher that not all aspects of PEACE are used in the home visit process, in particular, evaluate and closure. The findings also show that the home visit style of interview allows MOSOVO to have a more open-minded, less suspicious and more supportive mind-set and this is in line with more of an OM role.

Trainers at each force advised participants to only discuss the initial offence and notification requirements on the first and second visit, however the findings from this study do not support this and show that the initial offence and notification requirements are referred to throughout the home visit, regardless of what risk level the RSO is placed at.

Lastly, at the training, two forces provided detail on previous risk assessment tools and a focus on ARMS risk assessment, with ARMS being the risk assessment used by police to manage RSO’s. Forces provided detail as to what to look for in each of the ARMS factors and then provided participants the opportunity to conduct an ARMS assessment based on a DVD exercise. The findings from this study show that despite being advised at the training that all ARMS factors should be discussed on each visit, this clearly is not the case and MOSOVO place emphasis on the more static, internal psychological factors as well as situational and relationship factors rather than the more dynamic, positive, future orientated factors.

**4.6 Discussion**

There were two research aims to this study:- Research aim one was to undertake observations of MOSOVO training and to identify similarities and differences between the training at different forces, research aim two was to ascertain the relationship between policy (as per the training) and practice (as per the home visits). The discussion of the findings, interpretations and literature relevant to these aims is divided into the following sections: participants’ responses to the police trainers, learning via case study/role play, training police with differing levels of police experience, use of theory in training and practice, notification requirements, the PEACE model of interviewing and ARMS factors. This is followed by a summary of the overall conclusions.

4.6.1 **Participants responses to the Police Trainers**

Participants at different forces responded differently to the trainers that conducted the training. Although the trainers at force 1 were experienced detectives in the area of sexual offender management, throughout the training, participants began to retract from the trainers as the trainers did not appear to be able to respond to certain questions on the ARMS factors and the researcher sensed a feeling of distrust developing throughout the training. It was apparent that some participants had a general distrust towards police trainers, which has been reported in previous literature (Milne & Bull, 2011). This distrust appears to due to the pragmatism of officers in the ‘real world’ compared to the ‘training world’ expand(Terpstra & Schaap, 2013). This was evidenced in the observation of training in that although the trainers were very experienced, they had not conducted risk assessments or home visits in practice for a considerable amount of time, which also may be a reason why they were unable to respond to participant’s questions. This was also experienced at force 3, where the training is in two different parts. The first part of the training was undertaken by two detectives who were not experienced in the area of sexual offender management but who were experienced police trainers. Again, this led to a general feeling of distrust and anxiety from participants with participants often ‘switching off’ and not engaging throughout the training. Further, participants appeared to switch off from the training in areas that were not familiar to them, such as the protective ARMS factors, as traditionally police are not trained to focus on positive aspects of the offender’s life and it could be seen that participants really struggled with this part of the training.

The second part of the training at force 3 was run by two different detectives who did have experience in the sexual offender management field and who were also very experienced police trainers. Participants fully engaged with this training and were very respectful and responsive to the trainers. Force 2 conducted a condensed version of the MOSOVO training, this was carried out by an experienced police trainer and an experienced detective who had experience in the area of sexual offender management. The trainer at this force had recently attended the national training at force 1 and was very enthusiastic and focused on the way the training was delivered and also in engaging with participants on the training and this led to a lesser feeling of distrust and withdrawal of participants in this force.

In order to deliver training courses to police officers, a police trainer has to undertake **an** additional course to that of normal police training known as Police Learning Roles and Development Programme (PTRLDP). This course is referred to as ‘train the trainer’ (College of Policing, 2007) and to enable officers to attend PTRLDP, the officer has to be experienced to detective level, but they do not necessarily have to have experience in the area of delivery i.e sexual offending. PTRLDP is a four week course and is designed to ‘train’ officers to deliver sessions in a classroom environment and as such this course is divided into the following (College of Policing, 2011):

Core Skills and Values:

* How adults learn
* Supporting learning
* Reflection and professional development
* Presentation skills

Enabling learning in practice:

* Effective communication with learners
* Enabling learning: group and individual
* Facilitation of learning

Coaching and Mentoring

* Coaching and mentoring theory and practice

Design and Delivery in Practice:

* Programme and Session Design Planning
* Developing Learning Materials
* Delivering Learning Sessions

Evaluating Learning:

* Evaluation models
* Planning and conducting evaluations of own training sessions

Specialist Delivery Techniques

* Complex activities for classroom groups
* Planning and conducting role plays
* Case exercises, case studies and paper feeds
* Community involvement with training.

It is clear from the above that this course does theoretically prepare experienced officers for the role of training officers in a particular role and if the course is completed, should fully enable a person to train officers to carry out that role. However, how this ‘train the trainer’ training is carried out in practice or how the experienced officers respond to it, is not shown. As outlined in the overview of the training in each force, the MOSOVO training focuses heavily around a case study, which the police trainer course prepares officers to deliver, although this will be on a more generic basis, rather than the specific case study used in the MOSOVO training. Further, this study showed that some participants on each of the training courses did not respond well to the trainers, especially at force 1 and 3, possibly due to the fact that they had not had ‘real life ‘experience of sexual offender management for some time and also that the trainers appeared uncertain as to the rationale of some of the ARMS factors which led them unable to respond to questions from participants. Whilst this ‘train the trainers’ course does go into detail on how to train officers, the MOSOVO course is a specialist training course and arguably trainers ought to be familiar with the concepts of sexual offender management and should certainly be able to answer queries from participants. Further, participants raised concerns as to why the trainers were providing information on topics such as NDM as this is introduced to general police officer training. It may be that the experienced officers on the MOSOVO training are so embedded and used to employing the NDM and justification approach, that this part of the training appeared insulting to the more experienced participants, which in turn raised anxiety during the MOSOVO training for the less experienced participants. It could also be seen from the recordings of home visits that MOSOVO did revert to the NDM model and justification approach throughout the visits as they are traditionally trained in this approach, which is further reasoning as to why participants raised concerns and were distrustful not only to the trainers, but to the content of the training programme.

4.6.2 **Learning via Role Play/Case Study**

The use of learning by case study was observed in all three forces that took part in this research. The use of a case study and role play for training of MOSOVO has been noted in previous studies (Nicholls *et al* 2010, Nicholls & Webster, 2012) and participants appreciated the use of this. The MOSOVO training that was observed for this training, has continued the use of a case study as both a learning and a practical exercise. Force 1 and force 2 used the case study of ‘Matthew’, which showed a subsequent visit being carried out by officers. This DVD showed how theory and practice can work together. Force 1 spent considerable time on this, breaking the DVD into sections and referring to criminological theory throughout, explaining that officers need to be aware of what type of offender to look for on the visit. Force 2 were asked to make notes from the DVD, but rather than link this to criminological theory, the group were asked to link this to the ARMS factors and discuss what points from the DVD you would include in an ARMS assessment. Unlike force 1 and 2, participants at force 3 were shown a different DVD, of a case study of Brian, which was an initial visit rather than a subsequent visit and was an example of bad practice.

Participants from each force tended to fully engage with the case study and engaged well in group tasks that followed from the case study. The use of a case study in police training is widely supported (Lonsway *et al,* 2001; Christian *et al*, 2003; Nicholls *et al,* 2010; Nicholls & Webster, 2012; Silverstone *et al,* 2013) and trainers would have been familiar with developing case studies from the PTRLDP. However, participants at force 3 did not engage as well with the case study as they were shown an example of bad practice. The rationale for this appeared to be to show participants ‘how not to conduct a visit’ (researcher’s observation notes). However, it should be noted that for officers to engage effectively ‘students *should see an example of good practice and positive techniques’* (Risan *et al*, 2014).

From the recordings of home visits at each force, it appears that MOSOVO conduct different kind of visits, being initial visit, first visit and subsequent visit (discussed further in Chapter 5). Further, it appears from the recordings of home visits that the majority of visits that were undertaken were ‘subsequent visits’, and since subsequent visits by definition must be more frequent than an initial or first visit, this could be the rationale as to why force 1 and 2 focused on a case study of a subsequent visit in the training as this is the type of visit that MOSOVO will undertake most often, rather than an initial visit which was used at force 3 in the case study.

Interestingly, force 1 and 2 questioned trainers about the RSO’s the initial offence and appeared to link this to an opportunity to offend which is consistent with the case study at the training. However, although force 3 did refer to the RSO’s initial offence, this was discussed to ascertain the risk level, and this was the only force to discuss risk with the RSO. It was also found that all three forces discussed the initial offence and whilst some RSO’s engaged with this, the medium and high risk offenders were particularly hostile towards this.

ARMS is said to look at the ‘here and now’ (Kewley, 2017 p.12) of the RSO’s life and clearly by referring back to the initial offence this does not happen and would allow the RSO to feel as if they are being judged and labelled as an RSO and someone who cannot change. This supports literature around the labelling theory in that ‘*although deviant behaviour can come from conditions and causes once individuals have been labelled this will inherently cause negative reactions to themselves and also negative sterotypes’* (Bernbug 2009, p.187)

Also, the case study in force 1 and 2 allowed participants to identify whether ‘Matthew’ was an approach or avoidant type of offender, and it was reiterated in all forces that RSO would be either approach or avoidant. This is clearly borne in mind on the visits, but more from a approach active view point as MOSOVO pose questions that are approach active, which supports previous research that police are suspicious of this type of offender (Manning, 1977; Rubinstein, 1973; Skolnick, 1966; Westley, 1970). As reported by Cockcroft (2013 p.43) ‘*one of the purposes of police training is to develop the craft of suspicion.’*  A further discussion around police culture is provided in chapter 5 and 6 of this thesis as this is relevant to this style of policing and the findings from this thesis. It therefore appears that from the outset of managing RSO’s that police will hold a negative and suspicious view of RSO’s as this is embedded into the training programme and this can shape officers outlooks on their police role (Paoline iii *et al,* 2000) which will then in turn allow MOSOVO to have a negative or suspicious distrust of this type of offender (Manning, 1977; Rubinstein, 1973; Skolnick, 1966; Westley, 1970).

Role play was used by force 1 and force 2, where once participants had engaged with the case study exercise, participants were able to put the knowledge gained from the case study into practice by participating in a ‘mock home visit’. This was to provide participants with an opportunity to practice a home visit and risk assessment prior to carrying out the role of MOSOVO. All participants took part in this but there were high levels of anxiety around this which appeared due to the fact that the role play would be recorded and feedback would be provided, with participants describing they felt as if they were being ‘judged’ (Researcher’s observation notes).

Previous studies in the use of role play for training of MOSOVO (Nicholls *et al* 2010, Nicholls & Webster, 2012) found participants did engage with this but described that they would have liked more experience of role play in the training. This study showed that role play was incorporated into the training but participants were extremely anxious about taking part in this. At force 1 the role play was carried out in a classroom whereas at force 2, participants were taken to a house which was designed to be a RSO’s home. Participants from force 2 felt that this was more realistic and practical, whereas participants at force 1 stated that the role play was the ‘worst case scenario’ and did not prepare them for the reality of a home visit or risk assessment. Despite literature to support the use of role play in police training (Yuille *et al,* 1991; Fyfe, 1996; Lonsway *et al,* 2001; Birzer, 2003) role play was not used at force 3, but rather guest speakers were introduced to the training. This was received negatively by the group with participants describing high levels of concern as to why they were not provided with any practical examples. This led the researcher to have a general discussion with the trainers who stated it had not been introduced as they did not have the resources to carry out a mock home visit (researcher’s observation notes).

4.6.3 **Training police with differing levels of police experience**

Despite ACPO Guidance (NPIA, 2012) stating that officers need to be trained in MOSOVO, there is no strict criteria to state what level of experience participants must have in order to attend MOSOVO training. The demographics from this study (table 3.8.6) show that there were a higher number of new participants to MOSOVO than those that had some experience of MOSOVO. Interestingly, the researcher to made notes around this language in her observation diary, where the term ‘new’ officer implied that the officer was not only new to the role of MOSOVO but had very little police officer experience whereas the ‘experienced’ officer, although an experienced police officer/detective was also new to the role of MOSOVO.

Referring this to previous guidance and literature (College of Policing, 2012; Association of Policing, 2013), the fact that MOSOVO should be of detective level is clearly not the case. New police officers have to undertake a 2 year police academy training course which is where officers complete phase 1 of training covering issues such as crime, traffic, investigative skills, fraud and powers of arrest and phase 2 is dedicated to community engagement (College of Policing, 2015). It can be seen from the demographics of this study, that there was a higher amount of new officers on the MOSOVO training who arguably would not have the necessary skills in not only sexual offender management but also were not that experienced in the role of general policing. This study showed that there were many officers who raised concerns and questions around the training generally and it could be argued that as participants were newer to policing and the role of MOSOVO this may be why participants expressed so many concerns especially around how to prepare for the home visit and how to conduct the risk assessment. Further, referring this to findings above, as the more experienced participants raised concerns and showed a sense of distrust to the trainers, this would raise anxiety on behalf of the new participants, which in turn would allow new participants to be distrustful towards the trainers.

With regard to the recordings of home visits, the demographic data for this part of the study showed that there was a higher number of MOSOVO conducting the visits who were regarded as experienced officers. However, as stated previously, although MOSOVO conducting the visits were experienced in the police force, with considerable number of years as a detective on units such as Sapphire, which deal with general detection of crime (researcher’s own notes), officers tended to be new to the role of MOSOVO, even though they described themselves as experienced police officers. Although officers may not be as experienced in sex offender management, they do have the necessary detective and investigation skills to enable them to carry out the role of MOSOVO, but not necessarily the required amount of experience in sexual offender management. However, it could be that the less experienced officers were less suspicious and challenging of the RSO’s than the more experienced officers as they had not had the same amount of detective and investigative skills training and as such the fact that new officers did not have as much experience may be a benefit as they would be less suspicious towards the RSO’s.

4.6.4 **Use of Theory in Training and Practice**

This study provides data to show that all three forces introduce both the NDM Model and ACPO (2010) principles, which allow MOSOVO to use their experience in decision making and to be able to justify the risk level they place RSO into from the home visit. However, as stated previously, participants on the training are often inexperienced and therefore they might not be confident in applying the NDM model or ACPO principles and this could lead to poor decisions and inaccurate risk levels and subsequently the RSO being managed in a detrimental way.

All three forces, introduced criminological theory into the training programme. Force 1, relied heavily on theory, introducing various theories such as, Marshall & Barbaree (1990), Hall & Hirshman (1992); Finkelhor (1984) and Ward & Hudson (1998). Force 1 also introduced Kemshall’s four pillars of supervision which consists of monitoring & Control, Interventions and treatment and victim safety (Kemshall, 2013). Force 1 provided a general discussion on criminological theories, whereas Force 2 and Force 3, relied solely on Ward and Hudson’s (1998) self-regulation model with trainers reinforcing the fact that each offender they visit will be one or the other type of offender.

Findings from previous studies (Nicholls *et al,* 2010; Nicholls and Webster, 2012) have reported that theory was appreciated by participants, however, the findings from this study do not corroborate these findings as this study shows that participants expressed some concerns as to why the MOSOVO course was delivering criminological theory, especially at force 1, where the training included more criminological theory than force 2 and 3. Force 1 is where the national training takes place and the trainers at this force were part of the development team for ARMS. The developers of ARMS did spend 2 years fully researching criminological theory (College of Policing, 2012) and this could be why there was such in depth coverage of different theories into the training, as the developers were of the opinion throughout the observation that MOSOVO needed to understand the theory to be able to apply the principles into practice.

Despite literature supporting the use of criminological theory in police training (Agozino, 2004; Chappell, 2004; Ratcliffe, 2004; Paterson, 2011; Cockcroft, 2012),it is evident from this study that participants at force 2 and 3 responded more positively to the theory as this was a condensed version of criminological theory only focusing on Ward & Hudson’s (1998) Self-Regulation Model. Participants responded positively to this, particularly around discussions concerning whether the offender on the DVD was approach or avoidant and were able to apply the principles from the self-regulation model to the case study which the participants seemed to enjoy.

From the recordings of home visits, it appeared that Ward & Hudson’s (1998) self-regulation model does appear to be used in assist the home visit interview. For example, as highlighted in the findings section, MOSOVO would pose questions such as ‘*What are you doing going to Spain? Do you have any associates there?*’ and ‘*you are meant to disclose all devices…your offence was for internet offences*.’ From the line of questioning that was observed across the visits, it appears as if MOSOVO see RSO’s as approach active and were continuously questioning with this in mind. This accords with literature around police culture of this particular type of offender (Hogue, 1993; Hogue & Peebles, 1997; Lea *et al* 1999), which will be discussed further towards the end of this discussion.

4.6.6 **Notification Requirements**

In the training that was observed for this study, each force discussed the notification requirements, together with legislative provisions and civil orders that are available. From each of the recordings that were observed, notification requirements did play a key role in the visit, in that each force would discuss the notification requirements with the RSO, to ascertain that they understood the requirements on the initial or first visit, or would refer to them if the RSO appeared to be in breach of them. In some instances, MOSOVO had to challenge the RSO around the notification requirements if it was clear these had been discussed on a previous visit and did not seem to be adhered to. Although notification requirements were part of the MOSOVO training, they were discussed very briefly at each force and it was a simple Power-point slide stating what the notification requirements were, yet it appears from the recordings of home visits that notification requirements can be central to the home visit and risk management of RSO’s (Thomas, 2003;Jung & Nutley, 2008) by holding the RSO to account for their future behaviour.

4.6.7 **The PEACE model of interviewing**

Throughout the training at each force that was observed, there was a focus around the PEACE model of interviewing as it is police force policy that this model is used to train officers throughout the police force in investigative interviewing (College of Policing, 2012) together with the suspect management model (Fisher *et al* 1987; Baldwin 1993; Snook & Keating 2010) as police are trained to investigate crime committed by suspects. Also, each force that was observed, directed MOSOVO to follow the PEACE model of interviewing (as per police force policy) and that a good interview would follow the PEACE model, as police are trained to investigate crime committed by suspects.

Force 1 and 3 discussed the PEACE model very briefly in the training, whereas force 2 provided a more detailed discussion on PEACE and interviewing style generally. All participants were aware of the PEACE model as this is delivered at Police Academy Training (College of Policing, 2012). Each force informed MOSOVO that a successful interview will depend on how well participants challenge the RSO, which is dependent on how experienced participants are in interviewing offenders using the PEACE model. As the PEACE model of interviewing was referred to throughout the training, a discussion of that model will now be provided together with a rationale as to how this may or may not be the correct model to use when managing RSO’s effectively.

There is ample literature available to support the use of PEACE during an investigative interview (Clarke & Milne, 2001; Walsh & Milne, 2008; Walsh & Bull, 2010; ACPO principle 1.1.2 2010; Clarke *et al,* 2011; Williamson, 2013). A PEACE interview should follow the stages of planning and preparation (look at what is already known about the offender such as PNC, VISOR, POLKA, previous visits and any new INTEL), engage and explain (explain to the RSO why engagement is necessary e.g. they are now subject to a home visit as per their register requirements), account clarification and challenge (hold the offender to account for their past sexual behaviour), closure and evaluation (explain to the RSO what happens next). Also, the PEACE model of interviewing should allow for a non-judgemental and non-accusatory interview and to allow for a good level of rapport to develop throughout the interview (College of Policing, 2014). MOSOVO should also be prepared to make and justify decisions based on the national decision making model (College of Policing, 2012).

A routine investigative interview would normally challenge and interrogate the suspect in order to identify and confirm guilt and it was clear from the findings of this study that the majority of home visits that MOSOVO will attend will be more like a ‘general chat’ (Nash, 2014; Kewley, 2017) where challenging and interrogation skills from PEACE might not need to be employed. However, it could be seen from this research that during the role play part of the training, MOSOVO were directed to challenge the RSO if MOSOVO felt the RSO was being dishonest or deceitful, which does follow the PEACE model. However, this challenging style of questioning tended to only be used in the high risk role play and as such from the recordings of home visits it appears that these challenging techniques are only used with medium and high risk offenders.

From the recordings of home visits, it is clear that the PEACE model of interviewing is adopted at times during the home visit. This could be seen by MOSOVO being up to date with their preparation prior to the visit (as discussed in the previous section.) MOSOVO also engaged with the RSO through the line of questioning and at times explained why the questions were being asked (i.e due to the fact that the RSO was on the sex offender register) and RSO’s were challenged when required, especially the medium and high risk RSO’s.

Also, it can be seen from the recordings of home visits, that the PEACE model was employed when questioning RSO’s around the ARMS risk factors such as opportunity to offend, offence related interests and sexual pre-occupation, as these factors often required MOSOVO to employ challenging interview techniques. However, the challenging techniques used were not of interrogatory style and were more of repeat questioning where rapport skills were used to allow the RSO to answer more honestly. Also, when questioning the RSO around the protective factors such as commitment to desist and positive routine, the PEACE model was not employed and this line of questioning was more like a general chat (Nash, 2014; Kewley, 2017). This study also shows that MOSOVO were offering support and had a more open minded approach to the home visit interview.

The PEACE model of interviewing is traditionally used if the person in question is a suspect, which is incorporated into Principle 1 of the PEACE model of interviewing (Home Office, 2014). Also, when conducting a PEACE interview, the interview should follow the guidelines set out in the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)*, which again sets out guidelines for a suspect interview and this is further incorporated into Principle 4 of the PEACE model of interviewing (Home Office, 2014).

This study has shown that this model of policing is also adopted in the MOSOVO training, most likely due to policy requirements (College of Policing, 2012) and is subsequently incorporated into the MOSOVO training for conducting the home visit and risk assessment. It can be seen from this study that due to this police policy and training, the PEACE model of interviewing is followed by MOSOVO to an extent in practice.

However, this model of policing could be ineffective for the risk management of RSO’s. At the stage of home visit and risk assessment, the RSO is not, a suspect, they are attempting to reside in the community once a finding of guilt has been recorded against them. The aim of the home visit and risk assessment process is to actively risk manage the RSO in the community with a focus on desistance from future offending (College of Policing, 2014). Whilst the principles of PEACE do appear effective to some degree, particularly if the RSO is to be challenged around the ARMS factors or is in breach of their notification requirements, the policy clearly states that this model of interviewing should only be used for a suspect (College of Policing, 2012), which the RSO is not and the home visit entails more of a risk management or offender management interview. It was evident from the recordings of home visits, that in some instances, particularly for high risk RSO’s that there will be occasions where their responses or behaviour do need to be challenged using the suspect interview model, however, this appeared to be conducted at times in a non-friendly and judgemental way. The home visit and risk assessment should employ interview strategies that will build rapport and enable the RSO to feel comfortable when responding to questions and if the RSO is treated like a suspect, when being challenged, clearly this is unlikely to happen.

Throughout the observation of training, participants did engage with the PEACE model of interviewing and all participants seemed fully aware of this model, but participants did raise concerns that this was not like the ‘normal interview’ they were used to or indeed trained in. Kewley (2017 p.12) also reported similar findings in that participants described this was more of a ‘*touchy feely kind of interview*’. Again, as police officers are trained in PEACE from the outset and this is referred to in the MOSOVO training, this is clearly problematic for participants and it is arguable that a new model of interviewing should be proposed. This model should be for interviewing a person who is not a suspect but rather with a focus on risk management of that particular individual, to allow the RSO to clarify and discuss the ARMS factors rather than be challenged and interrogated around them.

Also, it has been argued that the concept of policing falls into two distinct categories, being high policing or low policing (Brodeur, 2005). High policing is policing based on the collection and processing of valid information based upon criminal intelligence, such as terrorism, while low policing refers to the traditional activities of police departments such as patrol and order and maintenance and are carried out by uniformed staff (Lowe, 2011). As this study shows, this style of policing is not only different in that the RSO is neither a suspect, victim or witness, but arguably this style of policing does not fit with either the high or low policing model as MOSOVO are not actively looking for new intelligence (other than intelligence recorded on file) or patrolling crimes but they are attempting to risk manage RSO’s who are hopefully ‘ex-offenders’ and residing in society. This clearly falls outside the high/low policing model and as previously stated, a new model of policing should be adopted for MOSOVO to use.

Also, from the recordings of home visits, it was evident that each visit can vary depending on the nature of the visit, any findings on the visit and the general risk principles and MOSOVO will need to use their own judgement and discretion when making such decisions (ACPO 2010 Principle 1.13) and at times challenge the RSO (College of Policing, 2012) in order to place the RSO into the correct risk category (College of Policing, 2017). This was particularly evident with the visits for medium and high risk RSO’s, where the RSO would be particularly hostile or would not respond to questions and this was where the experience of the MOSOVO and their interview skills would be challenged. From the demographic data of the recordings of home visits, the majority of MOSOVO who undertook the visits, although the majority were experienced detectives, were fairly inexperienced in interviewing this type of offender when using the PEACE model. This could also be seen in the training where participants raised concerns about interview style and were cautious about using a challenging approach during the mock home visit that was used in the training.

4.6.8 **ARMS Factors**

Each force discussed the risk and protective factors with participants and explained what to look and observe for in each of the factors. All information provided for these factors was the same at each force and all factors were presented as equal, which appeared to be taken from ARMS Practitioner Guidance Manual (College of Policing, 2014) as referred to in table 1 of this thesis.

Participants from each force raised general questions regarding overlap of some of the factors such as sexual pre-occupation and offence related sexual interests, together with concerns relating to determining a priority rating. Participants that posed these questions were the newer officers who had very little experience in interviewing. The trainers at each of the three forces stated that this should be done by using officers own judgement. Despite this being in line with ACPO principle 1.1.3 (College of Policing, 2010) which states that when officers are managing RSO’s, officers will need to use professional judgement when making a decision, and should be prepare to do so, which is supported by academic literature (Black, 1980; Klockars, 1985; Walklate, 1988; O’Neill & Singh, 2007; Waddington, 2008), some participants felt uncomfortable with this use of discretion and officers’ own judgement, particularly when they had little experience.

Protective factors play a significant role in encouraging the offender to desist from future offending (College of Policing, 2012). However, as can be seen from the findings of this study, there was less detail given in training to these factors than was given to the risk factors and as can be seen from the recordings of home visits, not every visit posed questions to the RSO on these factors. Further, the recordings of visits showed that participants tended to focus on certain parts of ARMS rather than conduct a full ARMS style interview as recommended in previous studies (Nicholls *et al*, 2010; Nicholls & Webster, 2012).

As stated above, there was less focus on the dynamic factors than the risk factors in each recording of home visit and very little attention was paid to the social investment factor. Arguably, the social investment factor is the most significant protective factor as this is the final stage in the desistance process, where the RSO begins the process by making a cognitive transformation away from further offending, this decision is strengthened when the individual begins to work or adopts a positive routine and continues when they begin to associate with pro-social others, the development of intimate relationships enhances this pathway to desistance and strengthens the commitment to desist from further offending. The desistance process is complete when they become invested in the good of society, where the RSO sees themselves as a positive stakeholder in society, they feel compassion and empathy for others and conform to the norms of society. It is disappointing to the researcher that participants in this study did not focus on more protective factors, this could be due to the fact that they are not familiar with these factors, they do not feel the RSO can change or they feel the RSO will lie and manipulate to them. However, as previously stated, the protective factors allow for transformation of future offending and as such more time should be afforded to the protective factors, where these are explained to participants on the training programme.

Lastly, in previous studies (Nicholls *et al,* 2010; Nicholls & Webster, 2012), participants reported that ARMS interviews took between one and two hours to complete, with some officers splitting the interview over two visits. This study partially supports this, in that the recordings of home visits varied from 30 minutes to one hour and 45 minutes dependent upon the nature of the visit (researchers own notes).

**4.7 Final Conclusions**

The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of the training MOSOVO undertake to carry out the ARMS assessment and the similarities and differences between what MOSOVO are advised during training as to what is actually put into practice on the home visit. This study found that the theory is incorporated into the training such as the NMD model and Ward & Hudson’s (1998) self-regulation model is used in practice with MOOSOVO following the NDM model as this allows MOSOVO to use their own judgement, also these findings show that, from Ward & Hudson’s (1998) Self-Regulation model, that MOSOVO view RSO’s as approach active and are continuously cautious and suspicious of RSO’s.

The findings from this study also showed that although the training focuses on a certain type of visit (a subsequent visit), each visit is different, depending on the risk level the RSO is currently at, how many previous visits the RSO has been subject to and any findings during the present home visit and as such there is no ‘standard’ visit as is referred to in the training that MOSOVO undertake. Further, during the home visit, MOSOVO are directed to use the PEACE model of interviewing (as per police policy) as this follows the NDM model and allows MOSOVO to use their own judgement. However, these findings show that this interview is not like the routine PEACE interview as there is more of a focus on rapport building and having a general chat rather than the routine interrogatory suspect interview and does not allow for all aspects of PEACE to be followed.

Finally, this study shows that whilst MOSOVO are directed in the training to give equal consideration to all ARMS factors, this does not happen on the home visit, with MOSOVO focusing more attention on the static factors rather than dynamic factors.

**4.8 Study Limitations**

Although, this study has provided rich data and novel findings, there are of course limitations to this study. The first being that observation was used as a means to gather data for the training programmes. The researcher, with the consent of the police, sat at the back of the room and made notes on each training session and all participants were aware of the researcher’s presence. This may have had an effect on how participants responded to the training, as they may not have responded in a truthful way as there was a researcher in the room and participants may have felt this was not a natural environment for the researcher to be placed into.

Also, with regard to the observations of training, only three forces were observed and as the observations show, the training is different across those three forces. It may be that other forces deliver the training differently and further research may identify this.

With regard to the home visits, each force agreed to record all home visits over the same two week period which allowed the researcher to then randomly select which recordings to observe and make notes from, and a sample of recordings was taken for each level of risk in each force. MOSOVO and RSOs were aware that they were being recorded and may therefore have acted differently accordingly. However, as the researcher was not present on the home visits, the researcher was not able to get a feel for the atmosphere in the room or the rapport between the officer and the offender which are crucial to the outcome of a home visit. Also, as it was an audio recording instead of a video recording, the researcher was not privy to any verbal communication (e.g facial expressions, body posture) or actions (e.g. looking at notes or around the house) which may have provided further insights and this should be borne in mind for any further research in this area if ethical clearance were to be granted for this.

**4.9 Future Directions**

Whilst this study observed the MOSOVO training that was in place at the time of research and investigated whether the training was beneficial in practice, the MOSOVO training that was observed throughout each force was in 2017 and as at the time of submitting this thesis is 2019, further research could be carried out to ascertain whether the national training has stayed the same or whether any significant changes have been made to the training. The ARMS steering group are responsible for reviewing the training programme and it is highly likely that the training has been changed or adapted to fit current practices. As stated earlier, there is now a three day extension to MOSOVO course which covers interview style during the home visit process and this is an area of training that has not been previously researched and analysed.

The notification requirements appear central to the home visit process, particularly if the offender is in breach of the requirements. Very little is known about the effect of the notification requirements upon home visits, such as what the practice by the police is if the offender is found to be in breach of the notification requirements during the home visit. Further research could be undertaken in this area to ascertain how often offenders are in breach of the home visit and how much time is taken up during the home visit discussing the notification requirements, together with police practices that are in place to deal with this during the home visit.

**Chapter Five**

**Police Officer’s Perceptions of Home Visit and Risk Assessment Process**

1. **Introduction**

As stated in chapter 3, this study was a focus group study, to allow the researcher to gain an understanding of different ranks of MOSOVO’s views and experiences of the training for MOSOVO, the home visit and the risk assessment process using ARMS.

This qualitative focus group study was designed to ascertain MOSOVO’s perceptions of their training and risk assessment process. The aim of this study was to provide some insight as to the direction to future training needs for the police and overall benefits for the police and/or offenders in using ARMS. The study will also contribute to the debate in academic and professional circles on the use of risk assessments using ARMS and help evaluate whether this is the way forward for measurement of offenders’ risk level.

**5.1 Findings from Focus Groups**

The findings from this study, allowed 5 themes to be identified:

1. Theme 1 identified that training of MOSOVO is informative but unrealistic in practice;
2. Theme 2 identified that training for MOSOVO is incomplete;
3. Theme 3 identified that MOSOVO training is not tailored to experienced officers and sergeants;
4. Theme 4 identified that there are challenges with undertaking home visits and ARMS;
5. Theme 5 identified that more power and resources are needed to enable officers to carry out effective risk management.

Each of these themes will now be discussed in turn.

**5.1.2 Theme 1 Training is informative but unrealistic in practice**

The first theme that emerged was that MOSOVO training is informative but participants felt that the training is somewhat unrealistic in practice.

All levels of officers described having no expectations as to how training would benefit them and having no expectations of the training. Participants described that they hoped the training would provide them with structure as how to carry out the ARMS assessment and how much detail to go into when conducting the home visit:

*“I was new to the role, so I didn’t have any expectations of what the training would cover. I was hoping it would give me a bit of structure on how to do the job and it did.”(New Female Officer from Force 1)*

*“I was just hoping it would show me how to do the job. I am completely new to this world and even though I shadowed an officer for a couple of weeks, I felt lost and the training helped put it all together.” (Experienced Male Officer from Force 2)*

*‘’I had shadowed for one month so I could see what was meant to be asked on the visits and how to ask the questions, but I wanted to know how much detail to go into on the ARMS.” (Management male officer from force 2)*

From the data, it appears that the new officers did not have any expectations of the training, whereas officers with some experience and of management level and who had shadowed experienced officers were aware of what the training would cover.

This theme allowed for three subthemes to develop:

**5.1.3 *Training is informative especially for new officers***

Participants of all levels found the training informative, especially those new to the role of MOSOVO and assisted in the role of risk assessment and home visits:

*‘As I was new, I knew nothing about the training, that’s why I found it really interesting.’* (New Female Officer from Force 1)

*‘The two week course was interesting, all guest speakers turned up and were quite useful you could find out what orders you can get and it was really good.’ (New Male Officer from force 3)*

A particular benefit of the training described by participants was in relation to placing the RSO into the priority category:

*‘I thought the ARMS training was brilliant, it showed you exactly how to complete the ARMS assessment, what to have as high and low and so on, I can’t fault it.’ (New Male Officer from force 2)*

*‘Yes, we were told if they are high you need to do immediate action, medium needs something doing in the next week or so and if low, nothing they are okay.’* (Experienced female officer from force 2)

Participants described this part of the training as invaluable, particularly when placing the offender into the appropriate risk category on the home visit:

*‘I thought the training you got on the risk management plan and the priority rating was brilliant and you need this to be able to do the visit.’ (Experienced Male Officer from force 2)*

*‘I don’t think you could do a visit especially if you hadn’t been on the training, you wouldn’t know what to ask or what to look for, and the training is invaluable I think.’ (New Female Officer from force 2)*

These findings indicate that new officers welcomed the training, in particular the role play element and feel as if the home visit and ARMS assessment could not be conducted without the relevant training. Referring to the demographical data for this study, it can be seen that a high number of participants from each force were classed as ‘new’ to the role of MOSOVO, as well as having relatively little policing experience. As such, it could be seen that the newer officers with very little experience welcomed the training as they had not experienced police training to the extent that the more experienced participants had. Also, new participants had very little or no experience of conducting home visits and therefore did not have any practical experience to compare the training to and as such accepted each part of the training as interesting and informative.

**5.1.4 *Role play and case study are useful but unrealistic in practice***

The data revealed that participants found the role play exercise during training useful to have in the training programme.

*‘I thought the case study was very thorough and went into a lot of detail’ (New Male Officer from Force 2).*

Furthermore, participants of all levels described that the role play was effective in assisting officers in how to carry out the home visit:

*‘The case studies have an impact on the visits as it shows officers what to do.’ (Sergeant Male Officer from Force 1).*

*‘Yeah the case study was good, it showed you what can happen on a visit and how to question them and what to look for and how to set a visit out really, yeah it was really good.’ (Sergeant Female From force 3).*

Participants also described the role play as having a positive effect on how to interview and question the RSO during the home visit:

*‘I do think the case study was useful in that it showed you how to deal with and how to interview and question this type of offender.’ (New Female Officer, from Force 3.*

‘*It really did help me, particularly when you went on to do the role play at the end of the course as to not stress about you know all the questions that you have to overload this person with but just sitting back and asking some very simple and very few questions that create the conversation, yeah that really did work for me.’ (Experienced Officer, Female from Force 2).*

One police force had adapted the training and set up a role play scenario in a ‘mock home visit’ where participants were taken to part of the police training school and the house was designed to be a RSOs home with items placed around the house. Participants fully enjoyed this experience:

‘*I thought the training was excellent, it was exactly what the officers need. It shows you how to do the visit and the role play in the house was brilliant.’ (Sergeant, Male from Force 2).*

However, participants went on to state that the case study and role play were not typical of the visits that the participants undertake on a day to day basis:

*‘Them case studies (laughs) they were the worst case and very rarely is it like that’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 2).*

*‘I thought the Nigel case study was unrealistic, it was too staged and not like the real world, it didn’t reflect what we deal with on a day to visit.’ (Experienced Female Officer from Force 1).*

This led the more experienced officers to describe that they felt the role play was not suited to officers of their level, as they had already been doing the job for a while:

*‘Because we had been doing it for a while, I don’t know why we had to do the role play, I found it quite insulting. The role play was the extreme case and it’s not like that, these guys tend to be quite compliant and the role plays were something else.’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 2).*

Some participants described that the role play does not prepare you for certain aspects of the home visit:

*‘They are not typical of what we deal with on a visit. It didn’t show you how to challenge offenders like what we have to do.’ (Experienced Female Officer Force 1).*

*‘The case study didn’t show you an ARMS being done that would have been more helpful.’ (Sergeant Female Officer from Force 2).*

*‘It doesn’t show you how to deal with breach of order and when you have to lock them up and that happens a lot.’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 1).*

Other participants stated that as the role play is not reflective of a real life home visit it actually does more damage than good having it on the training:

*‘I think the role play needs to be taken out, those last three days do the damage and don’t prepare you for what a real visit is going to be like’ (Sergeant, Female from Force 1).*

These findings show that new participants did welcome the use of role play and experienced participants (Sergeants) felt it was a good exercise for staff. Again, referring to the demographics of this study, the majority of participants were classed as new officers with little experience of MOSOVO which would be reasoning as to why they welcomed all experience of the training including the role play, as this allowed those participants to use their skills in a role play or mock home visit exercise, which would assist and prepare them for conducting home visits in practice. In contrast to the demographic data of experienced participants, who felt the role play exercise was unrealistic and did not reflect the reality of home visits, the more experienced participants did have ample experience of home visits and as such had the opportunity to put the training into practice and allowed these participants to draw the conclusion that the training did not reflect practice based on the practical experience they have gained.

With regards to interview skills, the findings from this study corroborate this works earlier findings in that the interview is more of a general chat which is not like the traditional PEACE interview. In this study participants described that the RSO would take the lead in the interview, where the RSO engages in a ‘general chat’ and does the majority of the discussion in the interview, which again does not conform to the traditional PEACE interview. However, the more experienced participants stated that although the interview is like a general chat, often the RSO has to be challenged, particularly if the RSO is in breach of their notification requirements, which the training does not prepare you for. Referring this to the previous study in this thesis, this further supports the findings from that study in that MOSOVO feel the challenging techniques employed in this interview are different to that of a PEACE interview and MOSOVO feel ill equipped as to how to challenge the RSO during the home visit interview as it is different to the traditional challenging techniques that would usually be employed under the PEACE style interview.

**5.1.5 *Unrealistic for officers to complete ARMS in as much detail as practice***

Participants went on to describe that although the training is useful and beneficial to MOSOVO, it is unrealistic to complete the ARMS in as much detail as you are shown in the training:

*‘The training gives you the tools in how to do the ARMS but you don’t have time to write them up like they told you to do on the training.’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 2).*

*‘It is unrealistic to write the ARMS up in the same time as you do in training.’ (New, Male Officer from Force 1).*

Participants went on to describe how long an ARMS takes to complete following the home visit:

*‘It takes a lot longer to complete, sometimes one assessment can take a full shift’* (New Female Officer from Force 2).

‘*I done one yesterday and it took me 6 hours and I’m nowhere near finished.’* (New Female Officer from Force 2).

*‘The ARMS can take a good few hours to carry out then the whole of the next shift or whenever you get a chance to write it up and the training needs to reflect how long it takes to write the risk assessment.’ (New Female Officer from Force 1).*

However, participants went on to state that the gold standard that they are given in training does have an impact on how the officers complete the ARMS:

‘*The gold standard definitely has an impact on how you complete the risk assessment’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 3).*

*‘We got the gold standard in the training and I still use that now, I always have that open on my screen when I am completing the risk assessment so I would say I do complete it the same even though it takes a lot longer to complete, sometimes one assessment can take a full shift.’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 2).*

Some participants felt that it would have been more beneficial to receive the gold standard before they actually started to complete the risk assessment:

*‘We got the gold standard guidance but it would have been better if we had been given that before we started to write the assessment.’ (Experienced Female Officer from Force 3).*

Other participants felt that the gold standard was ‘too much’ in terms of being unrealistic and some other document should be provided that is reflective of how much time the participants have to write up the ARMS:

*‘You can’t do it to the gold standard all the time so I think there should be something other than the gold standard’ (Sergeant, Male from Force 3).*

Participants of management level described the gold standard as being of use to new officers but not for the more experienced officers:

*‘The experienced officers don’t really use it anymore they just know what needs to go into the ARMS.’ (Sergeant, Female from Force 3).*

This led some participants to state that they have developed their own version of ARMS to use when conducting the home visit:

*‘We have formed out own little way of doing it in our office. We will take the last visit out with us and see what we discussed on the last visit, see what was found. We have the subheadings of the ARMS assessment and we kind of use that as a narrative to write things down to see if there has been any changes, but that is something we have adopted ourselves’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 1).*

These findings further support previous findings in this thesis in that participants felt as if in practice, there is insufficient time to complete the ARMS in the detail as set out in the training, in particular the gold standard. Further, these findings support the fact that MOSOVO are overworked and have an unmanageable workload as they do not have enough time to complete the ARMS in the required amount of detail as shown in the training due to the fact MOSOVO are under pressure to conduct the visits. As can be seen from these findings, this results in MOSOVO developing short cuts to the ARMS paperwork where only certain factors are discussed, which further corroborates the findings in the previous study where it was reported from the recording of home visits that MOSOVO focus on static factors rather than dynamic factors and as such this could lead to omissions being made in the ARMS assessment.

* + 1. **Theme 2 - Training is incomplete**

The findings from this theme show that the MOSOVO training is only suited to a certain type of visit that MOSOVO undertake and there is a clear lack of training on what is known as initial visits and revisits. Further participants described that there is a lack of training on interview style for the role of Offender Manager.

**5.1.7 *Lack of training on initial/revisits***

Participants provided an insight into the different types of visits that take place while managing and assessing the offender. Participants described that when an offender comes into the system for the first time, they will be subject to what is known as an ‘initial’ visit whereby initial paperwork known as the ‘descriptor’ will be completed, which is where personal information is recorded together with details of passport, bank statements and any physical features such as tattoos. Officers will ensure that the offender is fully aware of the notification requirements. Officers will then complete the ARMS on the following visits, which is known as a first visit and once the ARMS is completed, subsequent visits are referred to as a ‘revisit’ where officers are looking for any significant change in the offenders circumstances since the last visit.

Participants felt that although training does offer guidance on home visits and in particular how to carry out the home visit when completing the ARMS, the training does not provide any guidance for initial or revisits which officers viewed just as important as the ARMS visits:

‘*The training doesn’t prepare you for a first visit. The training looks at ARMS, but on the first visit it is trying to break down barriers and filling in the initial paperwork and talking them through the notification requirements. There needs to be training on that coz new officers particularly feel lost when it comes to that visit.’ (New Male Officer from Force 3).*

*‘We need further training on how to do a revisit and not just the ARMS. You don’t get told what to do on a re-visit on what to write about it.’ (Experienced Female Officer from Force 1).*

In particular, participants stated that there was no guidance on whether the MOSOVO could ask to see devices or search premises on these visits, which was proving problematic for MOSOVO:

‘*Training does not give you any guidance on how far to go on these visits, like what we can look for and how far to search.’ (Experienced Male officer from Force 1).*

These findings further support the findings from the previous study in this thesis in that the MOSOVO training focuses on a certain type of visit, namely, a subsequent visit where the ARMS assessment would take place and as such the training is only suitable for this type of visit despite the majority of home visits being a ‘re-visit’. From this data, it is evident that MOSOVO feel ill equipped and lack training to cover initial and first visits, which focus on rapport building. As previously stated, participants are trained to interview using the PEACE model of interviewing, which although does account for rapport, as this is such a different kind of policing i.e offender management, participants feel they lack the necessary rapport building skills. These findings further support the findings in the previous study of this thesis in that participants feel that this role is a move away from traditional policing and is more of an offender management role where you are ascertaining whether there is any change in the RSO’s circumstances and whether they have any needs or support that are not being met.

In the previous study of this thesis, data was provided as to the training of MOSOVO, in that the training is heavily reliant on a DVD case study and thereafter role play exercises. The DVD focuses on an ARMS assessment being carried out which should prepare participants to be able to carry out such an assessment. Furthermore, although the training does inform participants to look at any devices during the home visit, the findings show that although MOSOVO do this on every visit, participants are concerned as to how far to investigate the devices. The training does not provide information on this only in that devices should be checked and as such MOSOVO feel suspicious towards the RSO’s by this as participants were of the opinion that you would only fully be aware of how many devices they have if the Digital Investigation Unit attend on the visit.

**5.1.8 *Insufficient training on interview style***

Across the dataset, participants felt that the way an RSO is interviewed during the home visit, is so different to the normal suspect interview and there is insufficient training on this and participants would welcome further training on interview style:

*‘Even though I know how to interview a suspect, this is different, it’s more about getting the nominal to do the talking and trying to get them to open up. In any other interview you would interrogate them, but this is different.’ (New Male Officer from Force 2).*

*‘Training doesn’t show you how to challenge the nominal during the home visit and you need to know how to challenge them if you think they are not being honest, this comes down to the officer having good interview skills.’ (New Male Officer from Force 1).*

Participants described the interview technique as crucial in particular when it comes to the nominals responding to questions and participants need to be prepared to challenge the nominals on their responses:

*‘Some (pause) a lot of them, will try and say no I don’t masturbate or I only masturbate once a week, so you know they are lying and you have to tell them you don’t believe them, then they will be a bit more honest.’ (New Female Officer from Force 2).*

*‘Some of them tell you all sorts of rubbish so you have to challenge them and you can tell the people who have been on treatment, they talk about the old me and that isn’t me anymore, so you need to question that further.’ (Sergeant, Male, Force 2).*

Participants described that nominals who have been subject to sex offender treatment would respond to the questions in a certain way and this would in effect make the management of the nominal harder:

*‘If they have been on SOTP they give you the buzz words so you know they are lying so you have to challenge them on that.’ (Sergeant, Male Force 1).*

*‘When we did the course they told us that you will know the people that have done courses because they will say I’ve got this coping strategy and I’ve got that and they don’t really talk like that so sometimes you think they have got a rehearsed answer.’ (Experienced Female Officer from Force 3).*

Some participants described this as being hard to place the nominal into the appropriate risk category, if the nominal is not being honest in their response:

*‘You have to go on what they tell you and if you know they are not telling the truth you still have to put them in a risk category based on the information you get out of them, but you can put a comment on the ARMS that you have concerns’ (New Female Officer from Force 2).*

*‘You have to go on what they say, so if they are lying you can get the risk level all wrong.’ (Experienced Female Officer, from Force 1).*

*‘They tell us what they want to tell us and then we assess their risk. If they don’t tell us the right things, we get it totally wrong.’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 3).*

However, the more experienced participants described how some offenders are completely honest in the interview:

*‘’Some of them are really open, they will say, Yeah I masturbate all day long (Laughs)’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 2).*

*‘I was surprised at how open the offenders were, some want to tell you everything because they are getting something out of it and there are others who are actually messed up and especially men don’t like talking sometimes it surprises me just how much they do tell me.’ (Sergeant Female from Force 3).*

*‘*Participants went onto describe that subsequent visits and offender honesty are crucial to being able to establish a good rapport with the nominal which is crucial to risk management:

*‘It depends how often you visit them, if they are low and a yearly, you never get it (rapport) really but if they are high and are getting visits more often you can get it within a few visits.’ (Experienced Female Officer from Force 2).*

*‘I would say subsequent visits like second and third are still rapport building and getting to know them and helping with anything like housing or employment and trying to get the ARMS done’ (New Male Officer from Force 3).*

Participants stated that the interview style needed to be adapted for newly convicted offenders and challenged more for older offenders:

*‘Some really newly convicted ones are okay because they don’t know any different do they, they want to comply most of them.’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 2).*

*‘I think the nominals we have inherited as new SOM’s have been on the register for some time, their attitude is completely different to the newly convicted. The newly convicted offenders do engage, it’s the ones that have been managed in a different style and suddenly you come in and that’s when you might come across objections.’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 2).*

*‘The ones that have been on the register and you have been managing for a while will always try to manipulate you.’ (Experienced Male Officer from Force 3).*

This part of the data, further corroborates earlier findings in this thesis in that participants do not feel adequately trained in interview style due to the fact that this style of policing is so different to that of traditional policing. This supports earlier findings in that traditionally police officers are trained in the PEACE model of interviewing, where the challenging technique used is that of an interrogatory nature, whereas the challenging technique required on the home visit, is to allow the RSO to respond in a more honest way or for MOSOVO to gain further information using rapport building skills which MOSOVO are not directly trained in.

The findings in the earlier study of this thesis show that participants are directed to further challenge the RSO if they have been on treatment and provide what is known as ‘buzz words’ in their responses. These findings further support this as participants stated that if the RSO gives buzz words ‘you know they are lying’ which further corroborates the view that MOSOVO see RSO’s as dishonest and deceitful and some will attempt to manipulate the interview which supports the fact that MOSOVO are internally suspicious of RSO’s.

It is evident from the findings of this data that MOSOVO feel ill equipped to interview and challenge the RSO during the home visit. Findings in the previous study showed that PEACE challenging techniques are still employed in some cases, in particular for the high risk offenders, if MOSOVO feel they are attempting to manipulate the interview or are being dishonest in their responses. The findings from this part of the data further support this as it can be seen that MOSOVO feel rapport building is difficult to establish with high risk offenders and therefore challenging techniques that would be used in PEACE are employed for high risk offenders.

**5.1.9 Theme 3 - Training insufficient for Experienced Officers**

The next theme to emerge was that MOSOVO training is not tailored to experienced officers and Sergeants. In order to contextualise this, a summary of the training that experienced officers and sergeants have been on, in order to equip them for their role will be provided. This is followed by showing the different levels of experience that sergeants have in order to be able to carry out this role and a summary of the role of Sergeant and the experience participants had to enable them to carry out this role.

Generally experienced officers had been trained in Risk Matrix 2000 and VISOR:

*‘I had been on Risk Matrix and VISOR’ (Sergeant Male from Force 2).*

*‘I had been on Risk Matrix and VISOR and obviously other courses such as interview skills and things like that’ (Sergeant Female from Force 1).*

Participants described having a range of different experience and police backgrounds prior to becoming MOSOVO:

*‘I have been in this job for 26 years and my background was in child exploitation, but I moved onto this unit 12 months ago, so I have 12 months experience.’ (Sergeant Female from Force 2).*

*‘I have been a Sergeant for 2 years and that is all on this unit, so I have 2 years’ experience.’ (Sergeant, Male from Force 1).*

This led participants describe that the Sergeants role is to manage the unit, dealing with a range of things from officer’s welfare to general management of department.

*‘I would say that 80% of it is managing the unit and 20% on visits’ (Sergeant, Female from Force 3).*

*‘I would agree that most of our role is taken up with dealing with staff and managing the unit, so yeah I would say 80% managing the staff and dealing with their issues.’ (Sergeant, Female from Force 2).*

This led some participants to describe in more detail what the role consists of in relation to the ARMS and dealing with offenders:

*‘Obviously approve the RMP’s and deal with any disclosures. If any nominal breaches then I deal with that.’ (Sergeant, Male from Force 2).*

*‘You have to make sure all of the ARMS are right, so doing the line review and giving any guidance on that. Then most of it is dealing with welfare if I’m honest, I get some request every day like time off, sick leave, change of hours that kind of thing .(Sergeant, Female from Force 1).*

Participants described their role in relation to the home visit in that the role of Sergeant is more of a supervisory role, where Sergeants tend not to attend on home visits:

*‘I only do home visits when I need to, like if we are short staffed or something or if there is a problem with one of the nominals that needs to be dealt with by the Sergeant.’ (Sergeant, Male from Force 3).*

*‘I don’t do any home visits at all. I mainly just approve the risk assessments.’ (Sergeant, Male from Force 1).*

This theme led to one subtheme:

**5.1.10 Further training is required for the experienced officers and Sergeants**

This subtheme led participants to describe that therefore further training is required for the role of experienced officers:

*‘The training is more suited to Detective’s rather than Sergeants, it is out of date for experienced officers.’ (Sergeant Male from Force 3).*

*‘It wasn’t suited to officers of our level, it’s more for new officers.’ (Experienced officer Female from Force 2).*

*‘We don’t use the training in practice, experienced officers already know what to do’ (Experienced Officer Male from Force 1).*

This led participants to state that the training is not suited to the role of a Sergeant:

*‘The training shows you how to do the visit and how to challenge the offender’s but nothing relevant to role of Sergeant’ (Sergeant Female from Force 2).*

*‘The training doesn’t show you how to be a Sergeant and the training needs to be adopted to different ranks of officers.’ (Sergeant Male from Force 1).*

In particular, participants described that there is no training as to how complete the Line Management Review (LMR) part of ARMS when this is crucial to the ARMS assessment:

*‘There is no training on the Line Management Review that comes with experience, you are relying on staff doing their job properly.’ (Sergeant Male from Force 1).*

*‘No, nothing was shown on how to review the Line Management part of ARMS’ (Sergeant Female from Force 2).*

From this, participants went on to state that they would welcome training in particular with the Line Management Review of ARMS:

*‘I would have liked to have some training on completing the review part of the ARMS and what to put in that, there was no training on that. As a Sergeant we do know how to review the guys work coz that’s what we do but ARMS was so new at the time we should have some input on that.’ (Sergeant Male from Force 3).*

*‘No, we didn’t have any training on that, but I think it would have been useful if we had. The training doesn’t show you that because I think that the training is for the officers doing the visits and they don’t need to do LMR as that is what we do.’ (Sergeant Female from Force 2).*

*‘I think there should be something for the LMR especially if Sergeant’s are on the course, but I also think that could be a separate training course.’ (Sergeant Male from Force 2).*

This led participants to describe the role of Sergeant in reviewing officers ARMS:

*‘We look over the assessment and check it is in line with notes and that actions are complete and then we either approve it or we don’t, we usually only don’t approve it if the notes don’t match up to the ARMS, then we complete the Line Management Review. (Sergeant, Male from Force 1).*

*‘We just approve them and justify risk levels that the officers have set.’ (Sergeant, Female from Force 2).*

This also led participants to describe that reviewing officers ARMS and completing Line Management Review is time consuming and lengthy:

*‘Our role is to review the ARMS but that can take a long time. It’s not just a case of looking over it and completing the LMR, you need to do all the same checks the officers have done.’(Sergeant Male from Force 1).*

*‘To even review the RMP, we have to come out of it, look at the MO to see what they have done and then go back into the RMP to see they match and that can take 3 hours just to complete the review part of the ARMS. (Sergeant Female, from Force 3).*

Participants described that there are times where they are unable to approve officers ARMS:

*‘As a stripe, I don’t do the assessment, I just review it so I would look at the ARMS in full and discuss it with the officer and say I agree at this time and confirm the actions and time scales are fine, sometimes I don’t approve them but only if there is not enough information on the form.’ (Sergeant Female from Force 2).*

The findings above, show that the role of the Sergeant on the MOSOVO unit is one of supervision, reviewing the Line Management Review of the ARMS assessment and dealing with welfare of staff. As can be seen from the observation of training study in this thesis, MOSOVO training focuses on a certain type of visit, being an ARMS visit and thereafter provides participants with a role play/mock visit exercise and does not offer any training on the Line Management Review or staff welfare and as such participants who were experienced at this level did not find the training useful.

**5.1.11 Theme 4 - Challenges to undertaking home visits and ARMS**

The next theme to emerge was that participants felt that there were several benefits and challenges with undertaking home visits and ARMS. This theme led to the following four subthemes:

**5.1.12Preparation for visit is lengthy**

Participants described that officers need to understand the offender before they do the home visit and this involves conducting research prior to the visit such as INTEL, PNC and VISOR:

*‘Yeah, you do the checks, you look at VISOR, PNC, see if there is any breaches, look at what the last visit was like. I would speak to the other officers if they know him and see what he is like when you turn up at the house.’ (New Officer, Male from Force 1).*

*‘Yeah, you would never do a visit without having looked at INTEL before coz you just wouldn’t be prepared for the visit and you wouldn’t know what to expect.’ (Experienced Officer, Female from Force 2).*

This led some participants to state that the preparation you undertake for a visit is extremely lengthy and time consuming:

*‘Pre-visit you would check VISOR, INTEL, PNC, any ANPR if it’s available but in reality we don’t have time to do all of that it’s unrealistic and you don’t get told that in the training, in fact the training doesn’t tell you how to prepare for a visit at all, that comes with experience.’ (Experienced Officer, Male, from Force 1).*

The findings from this part of the data show that preparation is key to a home visit and that thorough checks should take place prior to attending the home visit. However, as this data shows, new MOSOVO provided detail in that they would check VISOR, PNC, notes from the last visit whereas the more experienced MOSOVO stated that you simply would not have enough time to carry out all these checks. As stated previously, new MOSOVO will have relatively little experience of policing and police training and as such would not be familiar with ‘cutting corners’ and not having enough time to conduct the necessary preparation and would therefore carry out the preparation as directed in the training.

**5.1.13 Unannounced visits are not always possible**

National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) and National College of Policing (NCOP) Guidance suggests that the home visits should be unannounced, which officers are supportive of:

*‘It has to be unannounced, catching these people on the hop, getting that picture of their lifestyle.’ (Experienced Officer, Female from Force 2).*

*‘You can find out a lot during an unannounced visit by just observing, it gives you a chance to see if they are hiding anything.’ (New Officer, Male from Force 1).*

This led participants to state that the risk assessment should take place at the offender’s home, to ensure that the offender feels as relaxed as possible during the visit:

*‘Yeah, we do always try to do the visit at home, they feel more comfortable at home and they will open up more than if you take them somewhere else.’ (New Officer, Female from Force 2).*

However, participants went on to describe situations where unannounced home visits are not always possible. For example, force 2 in particular, described that when they are presented with a nominal whose first language is not English, then an interpreter would have to be booked and this would mean that the nominal would have to be told the date and time of the visit and when the interpreter would be attending:

‘’*We have loads of people who English isn’t their first language, so actually to do an ARMS is virtually impossible, you have to do it through an interpreter so straight away you lack the rapport because of that there are cultural issues and people don’t want to open up to us.’ (Experienced Officer, Female, from Force 2).*

*‘That’s where we fall behind because we have such a mix like Romanian and we have no input into it, we always need an interpreter as well. You can use language line when you are there but generally you are just hoping they have enough English to get through. I’ve got one in particular who speaks Punjabi and nothing else, so I had to wait until one of our officers who speaks Punjabi was available and then you are relying on that the offender is going to be in when you get there. I’ve got one that I need a signer for, how do you do a visit through sign, you can’t get a rapport going and information is lost through the third person.’ (Experienced Officer, Male, Force 2).*

Some participants stated that their own welfare needed to be considered and in some instances participants described this as being more important than entering the offenders home which also made unannounced visits impossible as the officer would not feel able to enter their home and would prefer to carry out the risk assessment at the police station:

*‘If the house is in a right state you would just do the observations and take him to the police station to do the interview.’ (Experienced Officers, Male from Force 2).*

*‘If the place is a dump and it stinks of cat pee, there are fleas, we are not gonna sit there, you need to think of your own welfare so we would take them to the station to do the interview. Sometimes the risk to the officer is just too high’ (Experienced Officers, Female, from Force 3).*

Participants went onto to describe that if they feel unable to conduct the assessment in the home, they would still enter the property to conduct general observations:

*‘If the house is a state and you are going to take them to the station to do the interview you would look around the house first to look for evidence of pictures and masturbation.’* (*Experienced Officer, Male from Force 2)*.

Participants went onto describe that the MOSOVO training does not prepare you for the state of the houses they will visit and this should be incorporated into the training:

*‘The training doesn’t prepare you for what the houses are going to be like and at the end of the day you need to think of officer wellbeing.’ (Sergeant, Male from Force 2).*

These findings provide data to show the purpose of the unannounced visit is to first of all make the RSO feel comfortable in their home surroundings but also so that MOSOVO can make observations and get a feel for the daily life. However, participants further described that it is not always possible to conduct the home visit due to language barriers, which shows that MOSOVO are not able to conduct all visits in the required manner which results in shortcuts and possible omissions being made. Also, participants described that they may not be able to carry out the visit due to the hygiene of the RSO’s property which corroborates with the previous findings in this study, where MOSOVO feel that their welfare is paramount over the actual completion of the home visit and risk assessment.

**5.1.14‘Needs’ of offender should be included in ARMS**

A reoccurring theme that came out of the focus groups was that participants across the data set felt that the home visit identifies what ‘needs’ the offenders have such as housing and mental health, yet this is not covered in the training, but it does affect the risk and priority level on the ARMS assessment:

‘*The visits show you what need the offenders have, we are not shown anything to do with their needs in the training.’ (New officer, Female, from Force 1).*

*‘Training doesn’t prepare you for the state of the house, they are smelly and unhygienic and this can tell you if they have any needs or are not coping and this needs to be looked at in the training.’ (Experienced Officer, Female from Force 3).*

This led some participants to describe that although the nominals have needs and this may be apparent on the visit, you must not judge them by your own standards as they have lower standards than the person who is conducting the risk assessment:

*‘What you need to remember is that most of these guys aren’t the most hygienic anyway and a lot of them their houses stink anyway, they don’t have the same standards as we do.’ (New Officer, Male from Force 1).*

*‘Sometimes people are just having a bad day, so you need to think about that when you are doing your risk assessment.’ (New Officer, Female from Force 3).*

*‘Some people are just messy and are happy living that way, their standards are lower than ours, you can’t judge these people by your own standards.’ (New Officers, Male, from Force 3).*

This led some participants to state that it is clear if the nominal is not coping and there will be some kind of ‘need’ that needs to be addressed:

*‘If on the visit they are drinking and not looking after themselves, that tells you they are not coping and they have some kind of need’ (New officer, Female, from Force 1).*

*‘The offender’s appearance gives you an idea if they are at the right risk level. If last time you saw him and he was clean shaven, house was okay and you might have him at medium but if this time, he is a mess that indicates he’s not coping with stuff and you might need to put him up a risk level.’ (New officers, Male, from Force 2).*

*‘Yes it shows that they are not coping and that could mean something has happened like housing or money, but it can also mean they are going to think about offending, so you try to get to the bottom of it. It might mean you need to put them at a different risk level but most of the time it means they need some kind of support.’ (New Officer, Male from Force 3).*

Due to the offenders needs, some participants described asking the nominal to complete a self-assessment form or a target plan which is a day to day diary the offender is asked to complete which highlights what they are doing with their time and when they are thinking about offending to ascertain whether this could be linked to needs:

*‘If we ask them to complete the self-assessment, it is because they are not doing anything constructive with their own life’ (Experienced Officer, Male from Force 1).*

Some participants described that the self-assessment could lead to the officers setting targets for the offender to achieve by the next home visit:

*‘I had a chap whose house is a mess and it’s a funny thing now we are always telling him to tidy himself and his house up but he never does, so yes I do think we set targets for them.’ (Sergeant, Female, from Force 3).*

*‘You might tell them what you want them to do for next time like not drink as much or get them into rehab or something.’ (New Officer, Female from Force 2).*

However, some officers stated there were no point setting targets as it is likely they would not stick to them and then feel that they have failed which could result in them reoffending:

*‘There isn’t really any point setting targets as most of them are so chaotic they wouldn’t stick to it anyway and that makes more work for us’ (Sergeant, Male from Force 3).*

*‘There’s no point setting targets coz if you set them a target like right next time you need to be in employment and if that doesn’t happen, they feel like they have failed.’ (Experienced officer, Female from Force 3).*

In this part of the data, participants describe that simple observations may be an indicator that the RSO is not coping or has some kind of need that is not being met. These findings also show that if MOSOVO feel the RSO is showing signs of particular needs, they would ask them to complete a self-assessment diary and would reinforce positive thinking to the RSO. This further supports the view that the role of MOSOVO is more of an offender manager supportive role, whereby MOSOVO are looking for any change in behaviour, needs that may not be met and focusing on the ‘here and now’ in the RSOs life.

**5.1.15Difficulties determining ARMS Priority Level**

Experienced participants felt that the training was not beneficial in placing the offender into the priority rating:

*‘We did the grid and placed him into low, medium or high but there was no real guidance as to whether it should be medium, high or low, so I don’t think we got enough on that and anyway a lot of that is personal opinion.’ (Experienced Officer, Male from Force 2).*

*‘Yeah. It doesn’t really tell you what to look for. It gives you the case studies and the Nigel DVD but when you have been doing it for a while you can kind of tell where you need to place them, you know the difference between a high, medium and low.’ (Experienced Officer, Female, From Force 1).*

Whilst participants described that the training did not assist in placing the RSO in the priority rating, this data does show that participants feel that with experience you become familiar with which priority level to place the RSO into. This could be due to the fact that participants feel comfortable using the NDM model and their own judgement in justifying the priority level, as police officer training focuses on this from the outset but this justification approach could lead to the more experienced officers cutting corners and making omissions in the ARMS process.

**5.1.16 Theme 5 - More police power and resources are needed to carry out effective risk management**

The final theme from the data led all participants across the dataset to state that for the visit to be more effective, more power and resources are needed on the visit to be able to carry out the risk assessment more effectively.

This theme led to three emergent subthemes:

**5.1.17 Other Specialist resources are needed**

Participants across the data set described that for the visit to be more effective then officers need more powers. This is especially relevant to older offenders who know the system and are aware that they don’t have to let the police into their property or hand over their devices. In particular legislation needs to be changed to allow for this as the legislation only states that officers *can ask* to enter the property for the purposes of carrying out a risk assessment:

*‘I think the legislation could say that they have to let us in and answer questions because if it’s a nominal that knows the system they know we are not allowed in their house and they don’t have to hand the phone over and stuff like that, so for that type we need extra powers.’ (New Officer, Male Force 2).*

Other participants described that the visits would benefit from an increase in police powers generally:

*‘I also think we need more powers and legislation for the visit to be more effective. The notification requirements can be quite grey and I think that we need a standard order for different offenders.’ (Sergeant, Female Officer from Force 1).*

*‘If the offender doesn’t want to talk on the visit we don’t have the right police powers to be able to make them talk and old offenders know they don’t have to engage with us so if they don’t we have to put them as high risk’ (New officer, Male, From Force 1).*

Participants across the dataset described that specialist resources are needed in particular in relation to devices for the visit to be more effective:

*‘I think we need more training in devices and what to look for, they are always one step ahead of us where that is concerned’ (New officer, Female, From Force 2).*

*‘The only way you will find out exactly what they have got is if you take DIU (Digital Investigation Unit) with you and you only do that if you suspect they are hiding devices.’ (New Officer, Male, From Force 3).*

These findings further support the findings that MOSOVO do have an internal suspicion towards RSO’s in that they are deceitful and manipulative, particularly for RSO’s that have more frequent visits as MOSOVO are of the opinion that they will refuse entry to their house or they would not engage in conversation and would also not disclose all devices. This appears to be due to the fact that MOSOVO feel that the RSO would know the system and how to get around this, which supports the view that MOSOVO are suspicious towards the RSO. Further, these findings support previous findings in this thesis in that further attention ought to be given to notification requirements in the training as MOSOVO do not understand the notification requirements by stating ‘the requirements can be quite grey’.

**5.1.18 Officers case load is too large**

Some more experienced participants described that although ARMS may work for some forces, it does not work for larger forces:

*‘I don’t like the ARMS assessments, when they trialled it they trialled it in a small force with small offenders, I have 80 offenders and the ARMS assessment takes up so much time, If I was managing small numbers I’m sure it would be a great tool but with high numbers it isn’t manageable.’ (Experienced Officer, Female, Force 2).*

*‘We have high numbers and they take such a long time to do, at the minute we are in a weak position, you just pray to god that your nominal doesn’t go and offend.’ (Experienced officer, Male, Force 2).*

This led participants to state that in order for the nominals to be managed more effectively, officers needed fewer cases to manage, as some offenders are not being visited within the correct timeframe:

*‘I think for the visits to be more effective we need more staff, the officers are overworked and have nearly 100 nominals each…how can you ever manage that?’ (Sergeant, Female, Force 1).*

*‘Officers have 80 nominals to deal with and you can’t effectively manage them the right way.’ (Sergeant, Male Force 1)*

As stated previously, when ARMS was piloted it was piloted in small forces that had small numbers of RSO’s to manage than each of the force’s that took part in this research and as such the pilot did not take into account the practicality of MOSOVO having to manage large case load. Also, at present, the police force are undergoing austerity measures which in turn allows for the MOSOVO unit to be understaffed and under resourced, together with the fact that welfare of staff and long term sickness are an issue for this type of officer, allows MOSOVO to feel that they are overburdened and have an unmanageable workload.

**5.1.19 More experienced officers are needed**

This led participants to state that the role of MOSOVO requires a certain type of officer with a certain level of experience:

*‘The issue is there is a shortage of staff and younger officers are coming in due to shortage of detectives. We need people with life experience who you know can deal with people.’ (Experienced officer, Male, Force 3).*

*‘These visits need experienced officers, it’s no good putting someone on the unit with only three years’ experience. They may be academically clever but they don’t know how to police properly.’ (Experienced officer, Female, Force 2).*

Participants across the data set described the lack of guidance for the different risk levels problematic which has led MOSOVO to use their own judgement when it comes to placing the offender in the appropriate risk category:

*‘Yeah, you can tell a high but it’s the medium ones I find hard or where you sit on the fence, it can be quite hard to decide where to put them, but you just got to use your own judgement.’ (Experienced officer, Female, Force 1).*

*‘When we are putting the plan together for example, you know somebody who is coming out of prison, they have done a long sentence, they are in a hostel, no opportunity to offend, no family, sexual preoccupation is low and they are just somebody who done a bad thing 10 years ago, it doesn’t mean they are low, you just use your own judgement.’ (Experienced officer, Male, from Force 2).*

*‘You get a feeling for where they are from the visit and you can tell by the way they are acting. I went to see one guy and he was practically masturbating in front of me so I knew he was a high.’ (New officer, Male, From Force 3).*

This led some participants to discuss the new guidance issued by the College of Policing (2017) whereby officers no longer have to adhere to manage low risk offenders, if the offender has been actively managed for the past 3 years, he is not under any civil orders and there is no new intelligence on him, otherwise known as reactive management. Officers welcomed this change in practice:

‘*New guidelines issued by college of policing about when we can visit allows us to set our own timescales and use our own judgement which is much better.’* (Experienced Officer, Male, Force 1).

*‘If you on a low you don’t feel you need to visit him or you might not want to see him as often, you now don’t have to, it allows you to manage your caseload better.’ (New officer, Female, Force 2).*

*‘Yeah and it works the other way, if you want to see him more often, like if you find something you are not happy with, on the old style you might not go back for six months but this lets you go back when you want to.’ (New officer, Female, Force 3).*

These findings support the demographical data of this thesis, in that a large number of participants that took part in this thesis had very little MOSOVO experience and in some instances and participants were relatively new to policing altogether. Participants further described that experience informs participants where to place the RSO, in regards to priority level which further supports the view that not only are experienced officers required for this role but that MOSOVO do use NDM model to be able to justify their decision making.

**5.2 Summary of Findings**

The findings from this part of the data show that participants of all ranks across the data set find the training informative, in that it provides a good introduction and background as to how to carry out the role of an MOSOVO officer and is particularly beneficial to new MOSOVO officers, who found the course interesting and helped them understand the different priority ratings and how to complete the ARMS assessment. New MOSOVO officers also found the Gold Standard that is provided in training particularly useful as this acts as a precedent for new officers to refer to in the future.

However, the more experienced MOSOVO officers feel that the training is not suited to the more experienced MOSOVO, such as Sergeants and would like more training in that respect. Also, experienced participants felt that ARMS is too academic and unrealistic of a practical home visit and ARMS assessment. Also, the more experienced officers felt that the training is not reflective of every visit that MOSOVO officers undertake. This aspect of the study, allowed MOSOVO officers to describe the different types of visits that they undertake, yet the more experienced officers felt that the training is only suited to a certain type of visit and is certainly not beneficial to an ARMS visit. This led the more experienced officers to state that they would welcome further training for the different types of visits that MOSOVO officers undertake on a daily basis.

Participants of all ranks felt that the role play/case study on the training is beneficial to all officers but participants felt that the amount of detail on completing the ARMS training is unrealistic to apply in practice, with some participants stating that a ARMS sometimes takes ‘a full shift to complete.’ This led some participants to say that when completing an ARMS assessment, some of the headings do not need to be there such as sexual preoccupation and opportunity to offend as there is too much overlap and repetition between these two headings and they could be improved.

Participants went on to state that the ARMS assessment is not carried out on any particular visit and this can be an ongoing process depending upon the experience of the officer and the relationship that the officer has with the offender. This led participants to state that interview technique and rapport is crucial to completing the ARMS assessment and participants would welcome further training in interview style with this type of offender, in particular in challenging the offender on the home visit.

With regards to the home visit, all participants stated that where possible the ARMS assessment and general management of the offender should be undertaken at the offender’s home as this provides the offender with a certain level of comfort and reduces anxiety of their part. However, participants stated that this is not always possible, particularly if an offender’s first language is not English as an interpreter will be required. Also, participants described that their welfare is important and if the offender’s property is particularly unhygienic, they will not enter the property and ask the offender to either come to the police car or attend the station at a later date.

Finally, all participants described that they have a much higher workload than expected and further staff are needed on the MOSOVO unit to enable MOSOVO officers to effectively manage the offenders within the required time scale and participants would prefer more experienced staff on the unit rather than new officers with very little policing experience. Participants would also welcome more training in IT, for example, to have more insight as to what to look for when observing offenders devices.

**5.3 Discussion**

The research aim of this study was to examine police officer’s views on the effectiveness or otherwise of training processes and procedures that are in place for MOSOVO to conduct the necessary risk assessment and home visit. The findings of this study show that whilst participants feel the training of ARMS is a useful tool, it is not reflective of every day practice let alone reflective of every kind of visit that participants attend. Study 2 also showed that while ARMS paperwork is useful, this also is not reflective of events that transpire from the home visit with participants describing that there should be further training for the home visit and risk assessment that is more reflective of every day practice.

With regards to training of MOSOVO, this study shows that participants of all ranks across the three forces, had no real expectations of MOSOVO training. Participants found training informative, particularly new officers. Participants of all ranks were positive towards the role play part of the training, although all participants described the role play as not typical of a visit, with more experienced participants describing this as an ‘insult’ to their experience.

The more experienced participants felt that the theory in the training is not useful and participants who were more experienced or of sergeant level, identified a range of experience in policing, but the majority of participants at this rank, were not necessarily experienced in the role of MOSOVO and would welcome more different/practical orientated training.

Participants further described that there are different types of visit and certainly no ‘standard visit’ which the MOSOVO training prepared participants for. The data from this study therefore shows that the majority of participants felt ill-equipped to deal with the different types of visits and the different demands from each type of visit.

The views of participants from this study, can be divided into the following areas:

**5.3.1 Developments on ARMS Training**

As stated in the Chapter 5, the use of case study was incorporated into the MOSOVO training at each force that was observed for this thesis. Previous studies supported the use of case study (Nicholls *et al,* 2010; Nicholls & Webster, 2012) where participants described the case study as informative, especially for new MOSOVO and appreciated the use of case study within the training programme. The findings from this thesis support this view to some extent, in that participants of all ranks of officer described the case study as useful and beneficial to the role of MOSOVO, particularly in how to interview and challenge the RSO during the home visit. Despite this support, some participants who were more experienced, later described that the case study was unrealistic and did not prepare you for the reality of home visits. This view towards the use of case study in police training insufficiently prepares recruits for the reality of policing has been previously reported (Milne & Bull, 2011) and is also reported through literature around police culture (Manning, 1977; Rubinstein, 1973; Skolnick, 1966).

With regards to the use of role play, participants found the role play useful which is supported by literature, such as Risan *et al* (2016), who argues that it is good practice for students to see experts demonstrating good practice, through the use of training videos as modelling behaviour. Additionally Powell *et al* (2017) argue that students should undertake role-play exercises and be facilitated in discussions of alternative empathic responses or techniques in relation to a presented narrative. As stated above, previous studies (Nicholls *et al,* 2010; Nicholls & Webster, 2012) found that participants were positive towards the use of role play, however, most participants in this thesis stated that role play is not reflective of every day practice and does not prepare officers for real life visits.

Also, participants felt that the training of completing the ARMS assessment does not reflect practice in that, officers do not have enough time to write the ARMS in as much detail as in the training and the practicality of completing arms in lengthy and time consuming (McCartan *et al,* 2019) and also the ARMS assessment does not cover every eventuality from the visit, such as ‘needs’ of the offender, for example, housing or mental health issues. This has led one force in particular that took part in this thesis to create their own ‘mini-ARMS’ in order to complete the ARMS in a more speedier timescale. However, as stated in the previous chapter the use of ‘short cuts’ may lead to omissions being made in the risk assessment process. This corroborates with previous findings (Kewley, 2017; McCartan *et al,* 2019; Mann & Lundringham, 2020) in that MOSOVO describe being overworked with too large a caseload to manage to be able to complete the ARMS in as much detail as is shown in the training. Further, participants described that the Gold Standard was too detailed which also corroborates with recent findings (Mann & Lundringham, 2020) and that the Gold Standard could be improved to reflect workload and decrease the amount of material in the Gold Standard which in theory would prevent MOSOVO from having to make short cuts on the ARMS assessment and would allow them to manage their workload more effectively.

Kewley (2017) conducted a similar focus study group (n=28), which found that training and supervision of MOSOVO is insufficient, in that participants described that a lack of training to carry out the role. In particular, participants described a lot of information was provided at the training but that a lot of the practical side to the training was participants simply repeating practice from the DVD. Whilst this thesis is supportive of the findings from Kewley (2017), this thesis is somewhat different as it focused more in depth on participant’s views of training and the interview process during the home visit. This thesis also focused on the case study and role play element of the training. This led participants to describe that the training on the home visit is incomplete as it does not prepare officers for every day practice of the different types of home visits. This also led participants to describe the different types of home visits that officers undertake and what actually happens on these visits.

As stated in the previous chapter, findings from previous studies (Nicholls *et al,* 2010; Nicholls & Webster, 2012) found that although participants commented on the training being theory heavy, this was generally positively received. However, the findings from this thesis do not support this view as the majority of participants that took part in this thesis, could not understand why criminological theory formed part of the training, despite literature to support the use of theory in police training (Agozino, 2004; Chappell, 2004; Ratcliffe, 2004; Paterson, 2011). However, Reiner (2010) suggests that police officers prefer down to earth and anti-theoretical perspectives which the findings from this thesis certainly support.

As can be seen from the previous chapter, any level or rank of officer can attend the MOSOVO training which was observed throughout the training programmes, wherein it could be seen that not all participants were of detective rank despite guidance that MOSOVO should be of this level (College of Policing 2012). It was also evident from the previous study that MOSOVO training appeared more beneficial to new officers to the role of MOSOVO. The findings from this study further support this view, especially for the more experienced officers and officers of sergeant level. The role of sergeant is that of first level line management and ensuring effective daily supervision, guidance and support for staff (College of Policing 2011). This role can be challenging at times, given the nature of the work (Tift, 1971; Van Maanen, 1983), yet the role of the sergeant is critical to the success of the organisation (Engel, 2001). However, as the role of sergeant within MOSOVO is a specialist management role, this led participants of this level to describe that the MOSOVO training is not suited to officers of sergeant level, as there is no specific guidance on how to supervise and guide MOSOVO, in particular participants of this rank would welcome training in how to complete the Line Management Review (LMR) part of ARMS, where it is the role of sergeant to approve MOSOVO’s findings and actions from the home visit. This is particularly worrying, especially as performance of supervisors is measured through the effectiveness of subordinates performance (Brown, 1988; Manning, 1977; Rubeinstein, 1973; Van Maanen, 1983; Engel 2001).

As stated in the previous chapter, the training of MOSOVO does incorporate the PEACE model of training, as per police policy (College of Policing, 2012) and the suspect management model (Fisher *et al,* 1987; Baldwin, 1993; Clarke *et al* 2011) which allows MOSOVO to challenge the RSO more so than they would in a routine interview. However, participants felt that there should be further training for interviewing this type of offender. Participants described that this interview is different to the normal interview, wherein you would normally interrogate a suspect, based on evidence and an amount of planning for the interview, this style of interview is different as you are dependent on the RSO talking to MOSOVO and providing honest answers. As stated by Kewley (2017 p.12) ‘*it is more touchy feel*y’ and therefore dependent upon rapport between MOSOVO and RSO but also, dependent on findings on the home visit. Moreover, if any evidence is found of an offence being committed, then more stronger challenging skills are required on the spot rather than with the normal amount of planning that would follow from a PEACE interview.

Also, in a PEACE interview, officers are endeavouring to gather factual information for a finding of guilt based on an allegation. Whilst an ARMS assessment is investigative in nature to some extent, in that the officer is trying to gain information from the RSO, the information required for an ARMS assessment should not be based on the initial offence as officers’ are not attempting to find the RSO guilty but to ascertain which risk level the RSO should be placed at and ultimately which level of risk to form a risk management plan. From this it is clear that MOSOVO feel ill-equipped to interview RSO’s during the home visit process and an alternative model of interviewing should be proposed.

**5.3.2 Home Visits**

It is clear that in order to manage RSO’s, effective visits have to be undertaken and the purpose of this is to gather risk-related information or intelligence (Nash, 2014) and this has led to guidelines on the nature and frequency of police home visiting becoming clearer and firmer (ACPO 2010; NPA 2010). In the previous chapter, it was shown how preparation for a visit is delivered in police academy training (College of Policing, 2012) and from the recordings of visits it is clear that MOSOVO do undertake the necessary preparation as per the necessary guidance (College of Policing, 2012).

The findings from this study provided data from participants to support this, in that participants stated you would never conduct a visit without doing background research such as VISOR, PNC, whether there has been any breach and what the RSO was like on the previous visit. However, some participants did go on to describe that there is not always time to do this research due to the demands of the role of MOSOVO. As will be discussed further in this chapter, as police forces are now under a great deal of stress due to current austerity measures (Crank & Caldero, 1991; Brown *et al,* 1996; Beckers *et al,* 2008; Chatzithrber, 2009; Dembe, 2009; Turnbull and Wass, 2015) this preparation is not always possible due to a challenging work load and an increased pressure to ensure home visits and risk management are kept up to date.

With regards to the different types of home visit, this thesis shows that although the training shows an ARMS assessment taking place, all ranks of participants felt there is no guidance for a ‘initial’ or ‘first’ visit nor for ‘subsequent visits’. This has led officers to use their own judgement and discretion on the visits when placing the offender into the appropriate risk category (NPIA, 2010). This seems to be welcomed by participants in this thesis and is supported in literature, (Black,1990; Klockars, 1985; Walklate, 1988; O’Neill & Singh, 2007; Nash, 2014). Participants in this thesis, reported that this exercise of judgement and discretion has become more so, since low risk offenders no longer have to be actively managed provided they have been low risk for the previous 3 years, otherwise known as ‘reactive management’ (College of Policing, 2017) and participants welcomed this change, to allow MOSOVO to focus on the majority of RSO’s who are of medium risk. However, as stated previously, this could lead to inconsistent use of discretion and judgement in order to ‘cut corners’ and speed up the home visit process which is evident in literature around police culture (Reiner, 1992, Chan, 1997; Manning, 1989; Bass and Avolio, 1993; Engel and Worden 2003; Cockroft, 2013).

Additionally, as visits are meant to be unannounced, this is not always possible due to various reasons. Participants across the dataset in this study felt that ARMS generally is a useful tool but when the tool was piloted (Nicholls *et al,* 2010; Nicholls & Webster, 2012) it was piloted in small forces that do not have the diversity and cultural difference of offenders that larger forces have to manage and the problems that this encounters, such as the requirement of an interpreter on some of the visits. This type of visit clearly cannot be unannounced as the interpreter would have to be booked and the RSO would have to be notified of the time and date of the visit, which therefore makes an unannounced visit impossible and undermines the very principle of ARMS. There was also a view that further resources and legislation are required to ensure the visit is more effective, such as more powers to allow the officer in to the offender’s home and that the offender should have to answer all questions put to them during a home visit. However, as previously stated, police forces are facing challenging times due to current austerity measures (Crank and Caldero, 1991; Brown *et al,* 1996; Beckers *et al,* 2008; Chatzitheochari and Arber, 2009; Dembe 2009; Turnbull and Wass, 2015) which does not always allow for an increase in resources or power to be allocated.

This thesis found that all ranks of participants found the paperwork for ARMS lengthy and time consuming, with experienced participants stating they would attempt to do the ARMS as soon as possible, whereas newer participants refrained from completing ARMS on the first visit. Previous research (Loftus, 2009) demonstrates that the effective completion of paperwork is an essential feature of the police role as it provides a formal record of policing practices. However, Loftus (2009) goes on to argue that the ‘paperwork’ is an expressed criticism of the job and often officers who adopted a conscientious approach to paperwork were criticized for abandoning their ‘proper’ policing responsibilities. This study is supportive of this finding as all participants felt that the role of MOSOVO was too ‘paperwork heavy’ and this hindered them from completing the home visits on time which participants felt was more of their role, which as can be seen from the findings of this study and has resulted in some forces creating a ‘mini ARMS’ to reduce the burden of paperwork. As aforementioned, if the Gold Standard were to be decreased in detail, this would result in MOSOVO having a reduced workload and would allow MOSOVO to manage their caseload more effectively.

In the previous chapter, participants raised concerns during the observation of training with regards to the ARMS factors, with particular reference to the headings sexual preoccupation and offence related sexual interests(College of Policing, 2014).This was also evidenced in the recordings of visits, wherein these two headings were dealt with together during the home visit interview. This was further reported in the findings of this study, wherein participants stated that the headings overlap and participants felt that not all of the heading on the ARMS assessment required discussing which corroborates with findings in recent studies (Mann & Lundringham, 2020). As noted earlier, this had led one force in particular to develop a ‘mini-ARMS’ in an attempt to reduce repetition during the ARMS assessment and to reduce workload. Also, participants described that the training for placing the RSO into the correct priority rating is not useful, in that although participants are provided with the opportunity to place RSO into the necessary priority rating from the case study exercise, the training does not provide any guidance in what to look for on the home visit to ensure MOSOVO place the RSO into the correct priority rating. In a recent study (McCartan *et al* 2019), 227 members of the police force were asked to complete a survey, one question asked was the current system of risk classification of the management of RSO’s in the community effective for the purposes of registration, where 14.6% reported it was very effective, 53.5% said it was somewhat effective, 25.7% reported somewhat ineffective and 6.3% very ineffective, which also suggests police officers report inconsistencies in the current system of categorising RSO’s.

This thesis found that participants did not feel equipped to carry out the role of MOSOVO and the role is now more of a psychologist’s role, which participants do not feel adequately trained to deal with. The findings from this thesis allowed participants described that the implementation of ARMS means that the role of MOSOVO has changed and there are now gaps in the skill and knowledge of participants conducting the role of MOSOVO.This concurs with Kewley (2017), which identified that principles and practices of the ARMS tool are incongruent with traditional policing.

However, this thesis identified that participants stated ARMS allows individuals to use their own judgement and also to determine how often to visit the offender which participants are supportive of. This corroborates with Kewley (2017), where it was ascertained that participants described that ARMS does provide focus and structure around the offenders’ life ‘now’ and participants are able to focus on the strengths of the current visit. Kewley (2017) also found that ARMS has decreased the hands on management of offenders, a view supported by this work, In that this thesis supports participants described that ARMS is too detailed to be able to go into in practice which has been reported in recent studies (McCartan *et al,* 2019).

**5.3.3 Traditional Policing**

The management of this type of offender seems to accord with a shift in traditional policing (Nash, 2014). This is due to the fact that this type of management and policing is not usually where the offender is suspected of having committed another crime. The police are not investigating crime but rather assessing the ongoing risk of committing a crime, which is a shift in cultural policing (Nash, 2014). The policing of this type of offender is therefore removed from one of its traditional power bases (Stenson, 1993) and is more of an Offender Manager role. Although this role is not unique in its difference from the so-called traditional policing, the management of sex offenders is perhaps unusual in that it requires officers to form close, almost personal relationships with offenders in the intimate setting of their home (Nash, 2014) and therefore requires MOSOVO to build up rapport from the outset and as such is more of a general chat than the normal routine investigative interview.

However, as Offender Management is a type of policing, and as MOSOVO are directed from the training that RSO’s are a risk together with MOSOVO’s views and thoughts of the RSO being a ‘risk’ transpired from the findings of the data, police culture is relevant to this thesis. The idea of police culture has been variously defined. Reiner (1992) describes it as ‘*the values, norms, perspectives and craft rules which performs police conduct*’. Chan (1996) proposes a definition of police culture as the ‘*informal occupational norms and values operating under the apparently rigid hierarchal structure of police organisations’*, while Manning (1989) defines it as ‘*accepted practices, rules and principles of conduct that are situationally applied, and generalised rationales and beliefs.*’ Both these concepts are explored in the findings below.

In the normal police investigation, the investigative interview, which follows the PEACE model, is one of the most important methods that officers employ to elicit information (Risan *et al*, 2016). Police work often involves encounters with people experiencing a wide range of emotional states (Baker & Heuven, 2006), which may prevent the interviewee from providing an optimal account. However, it should be borne in mind that although the interview during the home visit is investigative in nature, it is different to that of routine policing (Nash, 2011; Kewley, 2017). Despite police policy (College of Policing 2012) and police training, MOSOVO are not investigating for any crime being committed, rather the focus is on managing the offender and looking for any significant change that may indicate they may offend. This would then lead MOSOVO to put action points in place on the ARMS to actively manage the ‘change’ and plan for the future.

Participants in this thesis reported that the home visit interview is not in line with traditional policing. Participants stated that during the first home visit, the aim of the visit is not to elicit information, but more to allow for rapport building during the home visit. Participants stated that rapport and empathy are crucial to the home visit and engaging this type of offender within the interview part of the home visit. Even though definitions of rapport in police interviews may vary (Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Kieckhaefer, Vallano & Compo, 2014), this study shows that rapport building is an important element to an effective home visit. This allows for MOSOVO to take a move away from traditional interviewing, such as the PEACE interview and to display more humanity and less dominance than in the routine suspect interview and to express positive attitudes and are friendly and co-operative to RSO’s. (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002; Oxbrough *et al,* 2006; Kebbell *et al,* 2010). Nash (2016), reported that the home visit interview, are more like discussions or conversations, with an effort being made to find out what the person is doing with their lives and if any of it can be linked to previous patterns of offending. Therefore, during the home visit, MOSOVO need to adjust their communication techniques from that of the PEACE interview, in an attempt to understand how the RSO feels, or to consider his or her psychological needs. (Risan *et al,* (2016). This in turn allows the interviewee to feel a sense of ease and comfort during the home visit.

Another factor to transpire from Kewley (2017) was that negative values officers hold conflicts with a role that supports the process of reintegration. Participants in Kewley (2017) described that all clients are liars and they will try to manipulate the interview. This study corroborates this contention in that participants describe that the RSO will tell you anything and participants believe that offenders do lie as they are unable or do not know how to respond to questions. This results, as indicated earlier, in MOSOVO being unable to place the offender into the correct priority and risk rating.

This thesis supports earlier research, where due to the nature of the police role, police officers will be unduly suspicious of offenders (Reiner, 2010). This suspicion appears to be embedded in police training, as stated by Cockroft (2013) ‘*One of the purposes of police training is to develop the craft of suspicion*’. Also, as stated by McLaughlin (2007) ‘*Officers become hyper-sensitive to and suspicious of aspects of routine daily life. The experienced officer is alert to signals that something is not right.*’ Waddington (1999 p.12) argues further that this suspicion is not embedded into training but rather is embedded into police culture ‘*it* *is not taken from training, it is taken from craft rules of experience on the street.*’ Further, Westley (1970) argues that mistrust of outsiders and cynicism is almost second nature to police officers. It is therefore not surprising that participants felt that the RSO is dishonest and deceitful, as the very nature of the police role and the way they are trained, encourages participants to think in this way. This thesis found that participants were somewhat cautious of RSO’s and this data would support the findings of the above studies, in that police officers hold negative views towards this particular type of offender. This study establishes MOSOVO act with suspicion and caution during the home visit and risk assessment process, particularly as they are trained to investigate in this way. The findings of this thesis are therefore consistent with literature around police culture and police attitudes and perceptions towards RSO’s. The data verifies that police culture around sex offenders is particularly negative (Hogue, 1993; Hogue and Peebles, 1997; Lea *et al,* 1999) and MOSOVO are suspicious of their behaviour and find them deceitful and dishonest.

**5.3.4 Discretion of MOSOVO**

Across the data set for this study, participants from all three forces stated that, due to the nature of the work, MOSOVO have to use their own judgement or discretion following the NDM model (NPIA, 2010; College of Policing, 2012) to be able to carry out the risk assessment effectively, especially when placing the RSO into the appropriate risk category and priority rating. It is therefore imperative that MOSOVO are allowed to use their discretion (Stoshine, Alpert & Dunham, 2008) when placing RSO’s into the appropriate risk category, not only to protect society but to also ensure that RSO’s are managed under the correct risk category. This allows MOSOVO to fall back on their own judgement, decisions and practices regarding the use of resources and makes them feel more confident that they could control offenders, together with gaining some control over the classification and management process. This in turn allows MOSOVO to supersede national policy and guidelines and develop what they see as more tailored strategies that allow for better control of offenders (McCartan *et al,* 2019), such as forces developing a ‘mini’ ARMS’. However, this use of judgement may lead to inappropriate discretion which can be seen from some of the findings from this study, wherein, one force had introduced their own ‘mini-ARMS’, leading to simplifications, short cuts in practice and possible omissions.

As MOSOVO, have to use their discretion and own judgement to place the RSO into the appropriate risk category, there are high levels of stress and welfare to deal with due to the very nature of the role of MOSOVO. Participants in this study, described that each home visit is different and some are particularly demanding, which shows that in order to carry out the role of MOSOVO effectively, a certain type of personnel is required for this role, in order to reduce issues surrounding welfare and stress, particularly as internal and external stress shapes police culture (Terpstra and Schaap, 2013). From this view, police culture is a mechanism that helps police officers cope with the problems, dangers and tension that confront them in their daily work (Chan, 1997; Reiner, 2010). As the findings from this study show, one of the roles of sergeant is to deal with any welfare of MOSOVO issues that may arise from carrying out the role of MOSOVO and to ensure MOSOVO are able to deal with the role firmly and effectively, especially those that are newer to the role of MOSOVO. (Weeks *et al,* 1995; Agolla, 2008). The data from this study showed that where more experienced participants expressed low concerns regarding welfare, junior participants described welfare as a serious concern. A specialist police role such as MOSOVO presents a considerable mental challenge to the most resilient of police staff which makes welfare issues more likely.

Participants in this thesis reported that due to the increase in RSO’s, officer’s case load is too large, with some officers having in the region of 80-100 offenders to manage (researchers own notes) which participants described as being ‘too caseload heavy’ which undoubtedly leaves some RSO’s not being managed in the appropriate way as effective risk assessment largely determines the amount of time and level of resources available to manage the offender (McCartan *et al,* 2019). As previously stated, due to lack of resources and increased case load, this has led some forces and participants to adopt the use of ‘mini-ARMS’ which allows MOSOVO to complete an ARMS assessment in a speedier manner, which may result in omissions being made. As recently reported (McCartan *et al,* 2019), this raises questions about the National Police Chiefs’ Council (2017) risk based approach to managing RSO’s as without an understanding of the lack of resources in managing this type of offender, policy continues to be negotiated in practice. Also, as low risk RSO’s are no longer actively managed, it is possible that MOSOVO may place an RSO into the low risk category in order to reduce their workload.

However, as this thesis shows, resources and staffing of MOSOVO is a particular issue, with current MOSOVO expressing concerns regarding their case load, due to insufficient staffing numbers (Nash, 2014). This results in MOSOVO working long hours which is detrimental to their health and wellbeing (Turnbull and Wass, 2015) and MOSOVO are therefore at serious risk of ‘occupational burnout’ (Beckers *et al,* 2008).

**5.4 Limitations**

Whilst this study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of different officers’ views to the ARMS risk assessment and the home visit process, there are of course limitations to this study.

The first limitation is that this study used focus groups to gather data, which could be seen as problematic due to the sensitive nature of the data. Whilst the researcher was aware of the need to ensure that participants felt comfortable and safe to discuss such matters, it is possible that not every participant would have felt comfortable to do so. Therefore, it is possible that further research could be required to gain understanding of participant’s views on a one to one basis.

Also, at the request of the police, the participants for the focus group study were selected by each force. While the researcher tried to ensure selection was as random as possible, it is possible that each force selected participants that would be willing to give positive responses. However, across each force and across the dataset there were differing responses, both positive and negative which should minimise this limitation.

Finally, the ethnicity of participants was largely white British participants with very few participants from other backgrounds, which could have had an effect on participants’ responses especially when it came to participants discussion around ethnicity of offenders and problems this encounters on the home visit. It is suggested that further research would benefit from a more diverse set of ethnic orientation.

**5.5 Future Directions**

This research ascertained different level of officer’s views around the training of MOSOVO and their views of the home visit and risk assessment process. Throughout this research, it became apparent that some further research would be appropriate.

This was a focus group study with three different forces. In order to gain more reliable data, a larger sample from different forces focusing on the same questions could be undertaken.

With regard to completing ARMS assessments, it is clear that MOSOVO find this a difficult and daunting task. Further research could look more in detail at this aspect and exactly how MOSOVO complete the ARMS assessment and whether this is consistent with training.

Welfare and stress was a clear factor for officers of Sergeant Level and further research could investigate, at each force, how many MOSOVO with different levels of experience are subject to stress and sickness absence.

**Chapter 6**

**Registered Sex Offenders experiences of Home Visit Process**

1. **Introduction**

As stated in study 3, this study was an interview study, to allow RSO’s of different level of risk assessment, namely, low medium and high risk, to discuss freely without pressure from other participants their views of the home visit and risk assessment process. There is very little literature regarding RSOs views of the home visit and risk assessment process, therefore, the aim of this study is to report on current gaps in the literature, providing an account of participant’s views of the home visit and risk assessment process within the UK jurisdiction only.

**6.1 Findings from Interview Study**

The findings from this study identified two emergent themes. Theme 1 reported that different offender’s reported different views of the home visit based on their experience of home visits and their level of risk; theme 2 identified offender’s understanding and reasons for the visit and risk assessment and described the purpose of the visit.

**6.1.2 Theme 1 - Offenders Experiences and Perceptions of the home visit**

The data from this theme showed RSO’s experiences of the home visit process, which included the offender describing the questions that the police pose to them on the home visit, the observations the police conducted around their property and offenders views as to why the visit was taking place together with how the offender felt about the home visit.

This theme led to the identification and exploration of 3 subthemes: the data from subtheme 1, allowed participants to describe that they felt extremely anxious about the first home visit from the police; subtheme 2, saw participants describe that they prefer routine and familiarity on the home visit and subtheme 3, allowed participants to describe that they do not like questions around the initial offence and felt the questions during the home visit should focus on the future and not dwell on past behaviour.

All participants described that on the first visit, the police would explain why they were there and the purpose of the visit. The police would also spend considerable time on the initial offence the participant was charged with:

*‘They talked about the offence I was convicted of, the requirements and the terms of the SHOPO [Sexual Harm Prevention Order] to make sure I understood everything. They also said why they were there because of what I had done and they would need to keep coming back to see me.’ (Force 1, High Risk)*

*‘They went over what I was charged with and wanted to know what led me to do it. They made me sign the court order and the notification thing, so I knew what they were.’ (Force 3, Low Ri sk)*

Participants then went onto describe that subsequent visits ask the same questions and this reduced anxiety on the part of the participant, as they know what to expect from the visit:

*‘Yeah just the same stuff, what are you doing, has anything changed since last time. It’s fine now really.’ (Force 3, Medium Risk)*

*‘Yeah, same questions that kind of thing. They don’t focus on the offence so much, it’s more what have you been up to since the last visit, checking that nothing has changed.’ (Force 2, High Risk)*

*‘’Yeah, they are kind of similar, they check your devices and just* *see how you have been doing really. I don’t mind them to be fair.’ (Force 1, Low Risk)*

All participants described that the particular time/day of the home visits are generally unannounced and they do not receive any prior notice from the police that the visit will take place. Some participants stated that if they are not in when the police attend their property, the police will ring to ascertain their whereabouts to see if they can return for the visit to take place:

*‘Yes unannounced, you don’t get any notice, they just turn up.’ (Force 3, Medium Risk)*

*‘Visits are always unannounced. Sometimes they will ring if I haven’t been in to tell me they need to see me and they always ring me to tell me about my yearly registration.’ (Force 1 Low Risk)*

*‘Yeah, always unannounced, they never tell you they are coming unless you are not in and then they ring and ask you to come home.’ (Force 2, High Risk)*

Participants did state that on each visit, there will be questions on the offender’s daily routine and whom he is in contact with:

*‘They asked what I had been up to with my day, was I drinking or doing drugs stuff like that or was l looking for work, that kind of thing.’ (Force 3, High Risk)*

*‘Yeah, they asked what I was up to and what had I been doing since last time. They wanted to know who I was spending time with, if I had a new girlfriend and who I was speaking to on the internet.’ (Force 2, Low Risk)*

*‘It was like a chat, asked about employment, what I was doing, if I was seeing anyone that kind of thing.’ (Force 1, Low Risk)*

These findings corroborate with the findings from the observation of training study findings of this thesis, in that MOSOVO are directed to explain the purpose of the visit; discuss the initial offence on the first visit and explain the notification requirements. However, some participants went on to describe that in some instances MOSOVO would conduct a detailed discussion around the notification requirements and ask questions such as ‘*why did you do it?’* As can be seen in previous findings of this thesis, MOSOVO tend to discuss the initial offence on all visits and it appears as if this is to ascertain whether they RSO is having any opportunity to offend, which further supports the fact that there is a focus on static factors during the home visit. To further support this point, participants in this study provided further detail in that subsequent visits ask the same questions as the initial and first visits, again reinforcing that there appears to be a focus on factors such as opportunity to offend and sexual pre-occupation.

Participants in this study did state that the interview is more of a general chat which further strengthens previous findings in this study that this is not like the routine PEACE interview and is more of an Offender Manager role which focuses on motivational style interview and a support role as discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis.

**6.1.3 *Participants felt anxious about the first visit***

Most participants described that they were aware that the police would be conducting a home visit as they had been informed about the visit by probation services. However, participants that had recently been released from prison were not aware of any such visit:

*‘Probation had told me the police would be coming to keep a check on me and I wasn’t going down the same road as before.’ (Force 3, Medium Risk)*

*‘No, I didn’t have a clue they were coming. I had just got out of prison and when they turned up. I was really shocked, they were the last people I wanted to see after being in that hell hole.’ (Force 1, High Risk)*

Participants described feeling nervous and anxious before the first visit as they did not know what to expect from the visit:

*‘(pause) erm, well I just didn’t know what to expect, I didn’t know why they were coming as I had been found guilty so I thought that would be it. I felt really nervous and on edge about it.’ (Force 3, High Risk)*

*‘This was the first time I had ever been in trouble with the police so I was really nervous, especially because of what it was, I thought they would judge me.’ (Force 2 Low Risk)*

*‘I was really nervous about it, I felt embarrassed more than anything about it all.’ (Force 1, Medium Risk)*

Participants then went on to describe that this anxiety was heightened during the visit and they felt extremely nervous on this visit:

*‘I felt really nervous, that first visit was really frightening.’ (Force 2, High Risk)*

*‘I was petrified if I’m honest, that was coz I didn’t know what to expect from it though. I remember thinking this is going to be horrible and it was horrible’ (Force 1, Low Risk)*

*‘I was really embarrassed and was wondering if they were going to judge me or not coz they knew what I had done, that first time was just awful.’ (Force 3, Medium Risk)*

However, some participant’s then went on to describe that although they did feel nervous during the first home visit, that MOSOVO put them at ease about the visit by being non-judgemental towards them:

*‘I was really nervous at first but the officers made me feel okay. They didn’t judge me or anything, so it was okay in the end.’ (Force 1, Medium Risk)*

*‘I felt okay in the end. These cops that come, aren’t like the normal ones that arrest you, they made me feel comfortable and they didn’t judge me.’ (Force 2, High Risk)*

*‘It was okay in the end, they were okay with me actually. I didn’t like the sexual questions but the others were fine and they were fine with me as well.’ (Force 3 Low Risk)*

Participants described that the police would explain why they were there and the purpose of the visit:

*‘They explained why there were here, coz of the register and the requirements, but I knew they were coming coz probation had told me. The first visit was the longest, there was lots of paperwork to fill in.’ (Force 3, Medium Risk)*

*‘They explained why they were here. They went over the notification requirements a lot coz there were things on there I didn’t understand. They took photos and just a general chat really and asked about what I had been doing with my time.’ (Force 2, High Risk)*

*‘They explained why they were here coz of the register and the requirements. They took my photograph and looked at my tattoos. They spent a lot of time talking about the register and the notification requirements and got me to sign them so I knew what I could and couldn’t do and after that there was just lots of questions.’ (Force 1, Low Risk)*

All participants described that there would be a detailed discussion on the notification requirements, to ensure each participant understood the terms of the requirements:

*‘They went through the notification requirements, really slowly and made sure I knew what I could and couldn’t do, they spent ages on that.’ (Force 1, High risk)*

*‘They got me to sign the notification thing so I knew what I was allowed to do. I didn’t like that bit, it reminded me of what I had done.’ (Force 3, Medium Risk)*

*‘They asked if I understood the notification requirements and then went through each part of it and got me to sign it. That was the most of the first visit, a lot of time was spent on that.’ (Force 2, Low Risk)*

Participants described that at the visit, police officers would conduct observations of the property by having a general look in all rooms, but participants described this as non-invasive and more time was spent on looking at any devices that participants disclosed:

*‘They looked in all the rooms, they spent more time in my bedroom and asked to see my phone to see who I was talking to.’ (Force 1, Low Risk)*

*‘I wasn’t sure what they were looking for, but I thought coz I was an internet offender they would want to see my computer and they did.’ (Force 2, Medium Risk)*

*‘Yeah they had a look about, not a lot though just put their head in each room, but they spent a lot of time on my devices and checking my internet history.’ (Force 3, High Risk)*

The majority of participants describe in this part of the data that they although they are aware that MOSOVO will be attending their property unannounced as they are advised of this by probation, they were not provided with any details as to the officers that would be attending or when MOSOVO would be attending which supports previous findings in that all visits are unannounced. Participants further described that the first visit essentially sets out the purpose for the visit where photographs would be taken and the descriptor paperwork would be completed, which supports findings from the focus group study of this thesis. These findings further show that considerable time is spent on the notification requirements, in particular on the first visit to ensure the RSO understands these. However, participants in this study did go on to state that although the subsequent visits focus on the same questions, MOSOVO did not spend as much time on the initial offence in these visits as on the first and initial visit, although they did refer to the initial offence. This further supports previous findings in that MOSOVO do hold a discussion around the initial offence on each visit which may be in an attempt to hold the RSO to account for their past behaviour and also to ascertain whether they are having any thoughts of committing a similar offence. This data further shows that the initial and first visit described by participants tends focus on static factors such as opportunity to offend and offence related interests. However, participants did describe that MOSOVO that attended were non-judgemental towards them which shows that the home visit interview is more of a general chat and not that of an interrogatory PEACE interview.

Participants in this study described that MOSOVO did conduct observations in the property and devices but that that was not invasive which supports findings in the previous chapter, where MOSOVO do not feel confident in conducting observations on devices and MOSOVO require further resources for this such as Digital Investigation Unit as they do not have the requisite skills and expertise to carry out extensive observations of devices.

**6.1.4 Home Visits as ‘checking up on you.’**

All participants described that they had no expectations of the first visit, other than the visit was being used as a tool for the police to ‘check up on them’ and ensure participants were coping with everyday life and were not thinking of reoffending:

*‘I don’t know really. I didn’t know they were coming so I didn’t know what to expect.’ (Force 1, Low Risk)*

*‘I wasn’t sure, I thought they would want to talk about the offence, but other than that, I wasn’t sure what to expect.’ (Force 3, Medium Risk)*

*‘I didn’t know, I thought they would be doing some kind of checking up on me, but I wasn’t sure.’ (Force 2, High Risk)*

This led participants to describe that they feel that the questions that the police pose to them during the home visit are used in the same way i.e to check up on them:

*‘To check I’m not thinking of doing anything bad.’ (Force 3, Low Risk)*

*‘To make sure I am sticking to the notification requirements,’ (Force 2, Medium Risk)*

*‘To check I’m doing okay and complying with everything. There’s no cloak and dagger about it, that’s just what they got to do,’ (Force 1, High Risk)*

This led some participants to describe that they were not aware that the observations would be taking place and felt quite shocked by the observations:

*‘I didn’t know on the first visit they would be looking about and I asked if they had to and they said this would be happening every visit. I didn’t like that and I was really shocked by it.’ (Force 2, Low Risk)*

*‘I couldn’t understand why they were looking in the rooms and I’m not an internet offender, so I don’t know why they look at my phone, I still don’t understand it really.’* (Force 1, Medium Risk)

Generally, apart from one high risk participant, participants were unaware that the home visit was to place them into a risk category and the police never informed them of this:

*‘I didn’t know anything about a risk assessment. What does that mean, they think I’m gonna do it again?’ (Force 3, Low Risk)*

*‘They never told me it was a risk assessment, they just asked lots of questions. This is the first I have heard of any kind of assessment.’ (Force 2 Medium Risk)*

*‘I’m not stupid, they visit me often enough that I have figured it out. They never said why it was but it’s to place me into a risk category, I know that much.’ (Force 1, High Risk)*

Some participants stated that, they had realised what the purpose of the visit was for, but did not like the term ‘risk’ being used:

*‘I’d just got out of prison for a sex offence on a child that I didn’t do. I wasn’t a risk in the first place coz I never done it so I don’t like that.’ (Force 1, Medium Risk)*

*‘It’s to make sure I don’t do it again. I don’t like being thinking of as a risk like you just said though, that’s not fair at all.’ (Force 2, High Risk)*

*‘Ensure I’m ok, that everything is the same, but look at me I’m 83 I’m not a risk if that’s what you want to call it. I don’t think like that anymore.’ (Force 3, Low Risk)*

All participants in this part of the data felt as the home visit was a means to ‘check up’ on them, with particular emphasis to ascertain whether the RSO ‘*is thinking of doing anything bad’.* This could be interpreted that the RSO feels that MOSOVO are suspicious of them and are continuously ascertaining whether the RSO is engaging in any opportunity to offend. This corroborates with the findings of this work in that MOSOVO are directed from the outset i.e the training to be cautious and suspicious of the RSO and whether the RSO is displaying and ‘risky or wonky’ thoughts. However, it could also be a way for MOSOVO to ascertain whether the RSO is coping or has any particular needs that are not being met which would accord with ARMS focusing on the ‘here and now’ in the RSOs life. Whilst some participants were not aware of the term risk assessment, high risk offenders were of the understanding that one of the purposes of the home visit was to place them in a risk category, which supports previous findings in this thesis that MOSOVO are directed not to discuss the term risk with the RSO as it will encourage negative thinking but the more higher risk RSO’s had come to realise that this was the purpose of the home visit. This could be due to the fact that the more higher risk RSO’s are subject to more frequent visits but could also be due to the fact that this category of RSO could be seen to attempt to manipulate the interview as can be seen from the home visit recordings of this thesis and this could be to avoid being placed into any such risk category.

**6.1.5 Participants prefer routine and familiarity during the visit**

This led participants to describe that the more visits they receive, they know what to expect and become familiar with the types of questions that will be asked during the visit:

*‘ I didn’t have any expectations, but the more visits you get the more you know what they are going to ask and what’s going to happen on the visit.’ (Force 1, Low Risk)*

*‘It gets easier each time, you know how they will start it and what questions they will ask, so it’s okay now.’ (Force 2, Medium Risk)*

*‘It’s the same every time, every single time they come to see me and they visit me a lot (laughs) the same questions every single time, I can tell you now what they will ask me next time if you want me to.’ (Force 3, High Risk)*

Participants reinforced that officers attempted to put them at ease during the first interview and that they felt relaxed after the first interview, as they knew what to expect for future home visits:

*‘I know what to expect now, the police that come are really good.’ (Force 2, High Risk)*

*‘I felt a lot better after it as they were okay with me and made me feel better about the whole thing.’ (Force 1, Medium Risk)*

*‘Yeah, like I said, they made me feel okay during the visit, so I feel alright about them now.’ (Force 3, Low Risk)*

Participants described that at each visit, one MOSOVO is always different. This means that the different officer will ask questions regarding the initial offence and questions that have been covered previously, which makes participants feel anxious and unfamiliar about the visit process:

*‘No, it’s not the same officers each time, usually one officer is different.’ (Force 3, Medium Risk)*

*‘Not all the time no, it’s different officers. One of them is usually the same but the other is different. That is the bad bit of it coz the new one wants to start from the beginning when I’ve done that already and I don’t like that bit.’ (Force 2, High Risk)*

*‘There are always two of them and it’s like good cop bad cop if I’m honest. The one that comes all the time is always nice but the other one makes you talk about why you done the offence and that’s not nice at all.’ (Force 1, Low Risk)*

This led participants to state that this part of the visit needs to be improved, to allow for the same officers to be present at each visit:

*‘It needs to be the same officers rather than different officers each time, coz you just go back to square one and I go back to feeling how I did initially.’ (Force 1, High Risk)*

*‘It could be the same officers that come so you don’t go over all the early stuff.’ (Force 1, Low Risk****)***

Participants did provide data to show that on each visit one MOSOVO is always different and as such a discussion around the initial offence will take place. This provides reasoning as to why the initial offence is discussed on every visit as the MOSOVO that has not attended on the home visit previously would want to ascertain whether the RSO had any opportunity to offend or sexual pre-occupation by linking this to the initial offence, which could also be interpreted as a control and investigative mechanism on the part of the MOSOVO, which accords with previous findings around police culture and also the PEACE interview in this thesis. This also supports previous findings throughout this thesis in that referring to the initial offence does not focus on the ‘here and now’ nature that the ARMS assessment was designed to achieve and also that further resources in the form of trained MOSOVO are required for the home visit.

Participants did go on to state that the more visits they receive, the more comfortable and less anxious they feel around the home visit process and further reinforced that the home visit is more of a general chat, with a focus on the same questions on each visit. This supports previous findings in that this is different to the normal style of policing and PEACE style interview and is more of an OM role.

**6.1.6 Participants felt questions should focus on the future and not dwell on the past**

Participants described the questions that the police put to them during the home visit, such as the initial offence, daily routine and what they were thinking at the time they committed the offence:

*‘They asked what I had been doing, how often I masturbate, what I was using to cope with the urges that kind of thing.’ (Force 2, Medium Risk)*

*‘They spent a lot of time on the offence I done and what led me to do it at the time.’ (Force 1, Low Risk)*

*‘It was just general questions really, what was I up to with my time, any hobbies, who was I speaking to, any new relationships. The asked about the offence and they spent a lot longer on that that I thought they would. They said they wanted to know my version of events, so I was okay with that, but I don’t like talking about it really.’ (Force 3, High Risk)*

Generally, participants do not mind the questions that the police put to them during the home visit, but they do not like questions around the initial offence as they feel they are still being judged on past behaviour and participants understandably want to be able to move on with their life:

*‘I still get wound up about that because I didn’t do it and I went to prison for nothing and I don’t see why I still have to talk about it.’ (Force 3, Medium Risk)*

*‘They ask about the offence and if I’m still thinking of doing it but I’m not and I won’t do it again. That bit makes me feel awful and if they are not letting me move on.’ (Force 2, Low Risk)*

*‘I was okay with the questions, but I felt nervous around the offence questions, I didn’t like it. They know what I have done and I just want to put it behind me.’ (Force 1, High Risk)*

Participants stated that MOSOVO did not focus on future behaviour or provide an action plan. Some participants described they would have welcomed this, particularly offenders that are not coping or have some need that requires addressing:

*‘No, nothing like that. They told me they would be coming back quite regular but that was it.’ (Force 3, High Risk)*

*‘No, they didn’t say anything about an action plan. That would have helped me though coz I had just got out prison and was all over the place.’ (Force 2, Medium Risk)*

*‘Nothing, about future behaviour, but they should have done coz I wasn’t coping at first and I didn’t know how to adjust to life out here.’ (Force 1, High Risk)*

Participants suggested improvements to the home visit process, whereby they reinforced the fact that they do not like questions regarding the initial offence and it does not need to be the same questions that are asked on every visit:

*‘They shouldn’t ask about the offence every visit, once is enough, I don’t want to be reminded of it, and I want to move on.’ (Force 1, Medium Risk)*

*‘They need to focus on the future more and not what has happened previously.’’ (Force 2, Low Risk)*

*‘They don’t need to ask the same questions on every visit about the offence I done. You kind of know what they are going to ask after a while.’ (Force 3, High Risk)*

These findings support the previous findings of this thesis in that MOSOVO tend to focus on the initial offence and static factors from the ARMS assessment such as opportunity to offend, sexual pre-occupation and daily routine which heightens anxiety on the part of the RSO. These findings show that there is a clear focus on certain questions and discussions during the home visits, being the initial offence and the static factors for the ARMS assessment. This could be due to the fact that to some extent MOSOVO are still looking to hold the RSO to account for their behaviour, as this is how police officers are trained using the PEACE model and also that they are internally suspicious and cautious of the RSO and do not feel that they wish to move on with their life. This further supports previous findings that the visit does not focus on dynamic factors or what is going on in the RSO’s life at the present time, which was the primary purpose of the ARMS assessment.

**6.1.8 Theme 2 - Differences in views of the home visit and Police by experience and level of risk**

The data from this theme showed that there were differences in views between offenders of the home visit process, depending upon their experience of home visits and levels of risk.

This theme led to two subthemes: subtheme 1, identified that participants that were new to home visits or who did not have as much experience of the home visit and risk assessment process, were positive towards the police and the home visit. Subtheme 2 identified that participants with more experience of home visits and risk assessments were particularly hostile towards the police and the home visit process.

**6.1.9 Offenders who are new to home visits and who are lower risk, are encouraging towards the visits and the Police**

All participants that were new to the Sex Offenders Register or who were in the lower risk category described that they were happy with the visits and the visits did not need to be improved:

*‘I don’t mind the visits, they are always good with me, no I think they are okay.’ (Force 1, Low Risk sex offender with 4 previous home visits)*

*‘I think they are okay actually, I don’t mind them coming and asking the things they do. I’m happy with them as they are.’ (Force 2, Low Risk* Sex Offender with 3 previous home visits*)*

This led participants to state that they felt the police were trying to help and offer them support during the visit:

*‘I don’t mind, I’ve nothing against the police and they are always really good when they come to visit me. They do try and help you with stuff if they can.’ (Force 3, Low Risk sex offender with 5 previous home visits)*

*‘I think they try to help you move forward. They get you thinking about the warning signs, it’s about safeguarding, so yeah I would say they try to help you quite a lot.’ (Force 1, Low Risk RSO, 3 previous home visits)*

This relationship between participant and police led participants to state that most of the time, participants felt they have a good relationship and have built up a good rapport with the police during visits:

*‘Yeah the police have really helped me with everything.’ (Force 3, Low Risk RSO with 5 previous home visits)*

*‘Yeah, it’s not like when you get arrested, they are okay with you, nice and down to earth.’ (Force 3, Low Risk RSO with 5 previous home visits)*

*‘Yeah I get on well with them. I have always been honest and open with them which helps.’ (Force 2, Low Risk RSO with 3 previous home visits)*

*‘Erm, yeah I think I have quite a good relationship with them. I’m on first names terms with them so yeah I would say so.’ (Force 1, Low risk RSO with 5 previous home visits)*

Participants in this category that were either lower risk or were relatively new to the sex offenders register and home visit process, described that the visits do affect the participants future behaviour:

*‘Without a doubt, it makes you think positively from when they have been to visit you.’ (Force 1, Medium Risk RSO with 7 previous home visits)*

*‘It definitely helps you not to offend, it kind of keeps you on your feet.’ (Force 2, medium Risk RSO with 8 previous home visits)*

*‘Yeah, it keeps you on your toes coz you never know when they gonna turn up.’ (Force 3, Low Risk RSO with 5 previous home visits)*

From the data above, it is clear that low risk offenders or those that are newer to the sex offenders register are positive towards the police and the home visits. It was apparent to the researcher, that during the recordings of home visits, the newer or low risk offenders wished to comply with the police and the notification requirements, particularly, if the offender had no previous convictions and this is the first time they had come into contact with the police. The RSO appeared to want to impress and almost please MOSOVO and were keen to establish a good rapport with MOSOVO in that they seemed to think that MOSOVO were trying to support them and were not judgemental towards them which further confirms that this style of policing is not in line with the traditional PEACE interview and is more of a general chat and support role and as such is an Offender Management role.

**6.1.10 Experienced or higher risk offenders are often hostile and suspicious of home visits and police**

Some experienced and high risk participants described being very hostile towards the visits and felt the police were trying to catch them out and send them back to prison:

*‘I don’t like it. I feel like the police are always trying to catch you out.’ (Force 3, High Risk Sex Offender with 12 previous home visits)*

*‘I hate it, all the questions they ask, they trying to trip you up to say summat so they can send you back to prison.’ (Force 2, High Risk Sex Offender with 10 previous home visits)*

This led experienced and high risk offenders to describe that visits do not have an effect on their future behaviour. This appeared to be either due to the fact that the participant had a ‘not bothered’ attitude or they were adamant that their behaviour had changed:

*‘Nothing the police will do will help me, I can’t stand the police, they sent me to prison. I’m not gonna change now anyway.’ (Force 3, High Risk Sex Offender with 12 previous home visits)*

From the data above, it seems that participants who have been on the sex offender register for a long time or who are subject to more frequent visits due to their level of risk, are particularly hostile towards the police and home visits. This appears to particularly be the case if the participant had been in prison or subject to home visits over a long period of time. These participants appeared to think that the police were always trying to ‘catch them out’, as they police were the body responsible for placing them onto the register in the first place and were understandably suspicious of the police. These participants did not seem to attempt to establish any type of rapport, especially if they had been in prison as they were particularly hostile towards the police and the prison service. However, this could be interpreted as a way of the RSO to manipulate the interview, particularly as high risk offenders will be subject to more frequent visits and will become familiar with the style of questioning

However, this was not the case for all experienced or higher risk offenders. Some participants generally felt comfortable during the visit, some high risk offenders described the visit as relatively easy compared to prison:

*‘I don’t mind, it’s what they have to do and they are not judgemental with you. They try and help you where they can.’* (Force 1, High Risk sex offender with 12 previous home visits)

*‘I don’t mind, like I said they are always okay with me and I always feel better when they have been.’* (Force 2, High risk sex offender with 10 previous home visits)

*‘Yeah, I felt okay, comfortable. I’d just got out of prison, so this was easy in comparison.’ (Force 1, Medium Risk with 7 previous home visits)*

All participants described that they were unsure of the purpose of the visit but that they were aware it was to allow the police to keep a check on them:

*‘I wasn’t sure other than to keep a check on me. I thought they would want to go over things and see how things are.’ (Force 1, Low Risk sex offender with 5 previous home visits)*

*‘I knew it was coz I was found guilty and because of the type of offence it was. I thought they would be more checking up on me.’ (Force 3, Medium Risk sex offender with 8 previous home visits)*

*‘I already knew it was to make sure I was keeping in line with my notification requirements and I was keeping away from schools.’ (Force 2, Medium Risk sex offender with 5 previous home visits)*

Some participants stated that when the police started the home visit, they would state why they were carrying out the home visit:

*‘They said it was coz I was on the register for 10 years, due to what I had done, so they will keep coming and asking the questions until I am off the register.’ (Force 3, Low Risk sex offender with 5 previous home visits)*

*‘They said as I was on the register they would be coming to manage me and make sure I was coping with everything or if I needed any help. They told me they were there to help me.’ (Force 1, Medium Risk sex offender with 7 previous home visits)*

This led experienced participants, i.e. those who had been on the register for some time along with those scored as higher risk to state that they do not like the home visits but that the visits do get easier each time the police attend, as they tend to know or become familiar with the questions that the police will ask:

*‘At first I didn’t like it. I felt they were interrogating me all over again. I’m used to it now though and it gets easier each time.’ (Force 1, High Risk sex offender with 12 previous home visits)*

*‘I don’t like them., I don’t like them turning up as they come a lot but I know what they are going to ask now so the questions don’t bother me but I still don’t like it.’ (Force 2, High Risk sex offender with 10 previous home visits)*

*‘Yeah, I don’t like it much, it reminds me of what I done, but they ask the same thing so that’s okay, I’m used to it now.’ (Force 3, High Risk sex offender with 12 previous home visits)*

These findings corroborate with previous findings in this thesis in that MOSOVO do attempt to offer a supportive role to the RSO but also that the visits remind the RSO of the initial offence which could be due to the fact that MOSOVO discuss the initial offence on each and every visit and focus on static factors rather than dynamic factors and this would further enhance the RSOs suspicion towards the police and would provide reasoning as to why RSOs feel the visits as a means of checking up on them.

**6.2 Summary of Findings**

The findings from this study show that RSO’s feel anxious about the first home visit from the police as they do not know what to expect and due to the nature of the offence, felt that MOSOVO would judge them, which led them to feeling particularly embarrassed. This led participants to feel nervous and anxious during the visit. However, participants did go on to state that MOSOVO officers put them at ease very quickly during the home visit and did not judge them like they expected them to. This led new participants to the register or lower risk offenders being very encouraging towards the police and the home visits and they seemed to welcome this style of police management. Also, participants stated that the home visits get easier each time as they now know what to expect from the home visit process.

Participants across the data set described the process of the home visit and all participants stated that there would be a detailed discussion around the notification requirements, to ensure participants were aware what the notification requirements were. This would then lead MOSOVO to explain why they were there, due to the fact they were on the sexual offences register.

Participants felt that the line of questioning put to them during the home visit by MOSOVO officers were to check up on them. Participants stated that MOSOVO would discuss the initial offence during the home visit and this would be discussed at every subsequent visit. Participants felt dissatisfied at this as they did not like to be reminded of the initial offence, as this reminds them of the offence they committed when they are trying to move on with their lives. This led participants to state that they felt that the line of questioning during the home visit should focus on future behaviour and not past behaviour such as the initial offence. Participants went on to describe that during each visit, MOSOVO officers would conduct general observations of each room in their property and would review the internet history on any devices that they had.

Generally, participants were encouraging towards the police and the home visits, particularly new offenders and offenders that were in the lower to medium risk category. Participants in this category stated that they prefer the familiarity and routine of visits as it allows them to establish a good rapport with MOSOVO officers. However, high risk offenders were very discouraging towards the police and the home visit process as they feel that the police are responsible for placing them on the sex offender register and are therefore suspicious of the police and the home visit process.

**6.3 Discussion**

The research aim of this study was to explore RSO’s experiences of the home visit and risk assessment process using ARMS. The findings of this study show that although participants understand the nature and purpose of the home visit, there are improvements that could be made. With regards to interviews with RSO’s, participants welcomed the familiarity and routine of the same questions, but all participants felt that the questions around the initial offence did not need to be discussed on every visit. With regards to risk assessment, participants described that they were unaware that the purpose of the visit was to carry out a risk assessment and did not like the use of the term ‘risk’.

The views of participants from this study can be divided into the following areas:

**6.3.1 Participant’s feelings towards the Home Visit**

The findings for this study show that participants feel nervous and anxious about the first home visit as they did not know what to expect as the purpose of the visit had not been explained. Participants who had recently been released from prison described feeling extremely anxious about the visit, as they felt the police were the body responsible for putting them into the prison system. It is clear from this finding that when an offender is released from prison, they will be hostile towards the police and the criminal justice system as a whole. While probation may inform them that the visit will be taking place, the purpose of the visit is not discussed, which only heightens participants anxiety.

This led participants to describe that they felt the home visits as a means for police to ‘check up on you’. For example, participants described not knowing the purpose of the visit other than ‘*I thought they would be doing some kind of checking up on me’.* This led higher risk offenders to describe feelings of extreme hostility towards the police. This category of participant stated ‘*the police are always trying to catch you out’.* Referring to the focus group study of this thesis, Nash (2014) states that in order to manage RSO’s, effective visits have to be undertaken and the purpose of this is to gather risk-related information or intelligence. Also, visits are meant to be unannounced as this element of policing is regarded as a useful technique to ‘catch offenders out’. Although the home visit process is to effectively manage and risk assess RSO’s, the home visit is intended to act as a means to detect any possible future offending and as previously stated, RSO’s view of the police appears to be that, the police are the body responsible for either placing them into the prison system or for their conviction and being placed onto the sex offender register.

It is therefore unsurprising that RSO’s view that the home visits are as a means to check up on them which leads to them being unduly cautious and suspicious of the home visit process. As stated in the previous chapter of this thesis, due to the very nature of the police role, MOSOVO will be unduly suspicious of RSO’s (Reiner, 2010; McLaughlin, 2007) and that this suspicion is embedded into police culture (Waddington, 1999). Although this type of policing is different to the traditional police role and is more of an offender management role (Nash, 2014), RSO’s will remain cautious due to the nature of the traditional police role and their previous experience with the police.

Although participants did not go into detail as to the reasons for their anxiety, other than they ‘*did not know what to expect*’, it appeared that participants felt worried about the prospect of the police attending their property in a marked car and in uniform (researcher’s own notes). This fear seemed to be that other persons would see the police attending their property and this would leave them feeling uncomfortable and anxious. Murphy and Frederoff (2013) conducted an interview study with thirty participants from the Ontario Sex Offender Registry in Canada, to ascertain participant’s views of the register, their offence history, compliance and the impact the Sex Offenders Register has had on them. This study found that 40% of participants reported that police attempted to ensure their privacy where possible during visits. Measures taken to include privacy include: showing up in an unmarked police car and wearing plain clothes, asking to come in the residence before they talked with the individual as opposed to asking questions outside their home or in the doorway and making sure that the participant was alone or that those present knew about their status as a registrant prior to questioning him. Participants also reported that where officers arrived in plain street clothes and an unmarked police car were much more likely to report that the visits were a positive experience and reported less anxiety about future visits and considered officers in plain clothes to be more ‘personable’.

The findings from this thesis show that all participants feel extremely anxious towards the first home visit, as the purpose and nature of the home visit is not explained to them but also participants seem to have high levels of anxiety towards the police attending their property in uniform and a marked police car. If the purpose of the visit were to be explained prior to the visit taking place and that MOSOVO would not be attending in uniform or a marked police car, this would help ease anxiety on behalf of the RSO towards the first initial home visit.

**6.3.2 Rapport and Empathy**

Despite participants feeling nervous and anxious towards the first home visit, participants went on to describe that once the visit has taken place and MOSOVO introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the visit, this reduces anxiety on the part of the participant: ‘*They explained why they were here, coz of the register and the requirements…’* Participants described that the more visits they receive, they become familiar with the types of questions that will be asked and they know what to expect for future visits, which reduces anxiety about the home visits generally: ‘*it gets easier each time, you know how they will start it and what questions they will ask, so it’s okay now.’*

It seems from the findings of this thesis that during the visit MOSOVO would attempt to make RSO’s feel at ease during the home visit from an early stage: ‘*they made me feel comfortable and they didn’t judge me.’* The findings from this thesis report that MOSOVO will attempt to establish a good rapport with participants from an early stage and participants welcomed this approach: ‘*I know what to expect now, the police that come are really good.’* In order for rapport to be developed, this requires effective policing skills and as the demographic table 5.3 shows in the previous chapter, the majority of participants employed in the role of MOSOVO, whilst they may not have had extensive experience in management of sexual offenders, the majority of participants did have many years policing experience. It is apparent from the above findings that interview style and rapport building are crucial to the home visit and risk assessment process, in particular the way in that the questions are posed to the participant in order to reduce anxiety (Murphy and Frederoff, 2013). Also, as the home visit is a shift in traditional policing (Nash, 2014), it is essential that MOSOVO develop rapport with the RSO that results in a friendly and co-operative relationship (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002; Oxbrough *et al,* 2006; Kebbell *et al,* 2010).

As stated in the previous chapter of this thesis, it appears as if due to the home visit being more like a general chat or a conversation (Nash, 2014; Kewley, 2017), this is taking a move away from the normal police investigative interview and does not employ all the principles of the PEACE interview. For example, this type of interview, although possibly investigative in nature to some extent (due to some of the questioning and observations), this is a different type of interview where MOSOVO are attempting to ascertain the appropriate risk level and effectively manage their risk level. It is also apparent from the data in this chapter that by following the PEACE model, this allows MOSOVO to hold the RSO to account for their initial offence, which appears to be discussed on each visit and is not effective in future risk assessment and risk management planning and the PEACE model is therefore flawed for this type of interview which is due to the fact that it is police training policy that this model of interviewing should be used.

**6.3.3 Non-judgemental approach**

Participants in this thesis described feeling anxious particularly towards the first home visit and felt MOSOVO would judge them due to the very nature of the offence. However, some participants stated that during the first visit, MOSOVO put them at ease by being non-judgemental towards them and by explaining the purpose of the visit and what would be discussed on the visit. This supports the earlier findings from this thesis, wherein it was reported that MOSOVO incorporate their own non-judgemental approach or discretion during the home visit (NPIA, 2010; College of Policing, 2012) to be able to carry out the risk assessment effectively, in particular when placing the RSO in the appropriate risk category and priority rating. This use of this non-judgemental approach is further strengthened by MOSOVO developing a good rapport with the RSO (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002; Oxbrough *et al,* 2006; Kebbell *et al,* 2010). As previously participants described that the more visits they receive, the more familiar they became with the visit and they would almost develop a good rapport with MOSOVO and are able to develop a relationship of trust, which in turn leads the RSO to co-operate during the home visit (Tyler, 2005). It is clear from the findings of this thesis that although RSO’s feel anxious around the first home visit, RSO’s do respond well to the relationship that is developed with MOSOVO and in particular MOSOVO that are non-judgemental (Kebbel *et al*, 2008) and who displayed rapport and empathy during the home visit. This clearly has an impact on offenders that are newly convicted or low risk as participants reported a very positive experience.

Participants in the lower risk category or who were relatively new to the home visit process, described that this non-judgemental approach to the home visit does affect the participant’s future behaviour: *‘it definitely helps you not to reoffend, it kind of keeps you on your feet.’* It appears that participants from this category are extremely supportive of the police and that the visits do have an effect on their future behaviour and risk of reoffending. Murphy and Frederoff (2013) reported that 67% of participants felt that the registry did have an impact on their risk level. 39% of participants in this study felt that being on the sex offenders register acted as a deterrent to reoffending: ‘it acts as a reminder or shot in the arm to keep clean.’ This supports findings of other research examining the impact of registration on recidivism or reconviction rates (Hudson, 2005; Tewksbury, 2005). The findings from this thesis support the above literature, in that participants described that the home visit process does have an effect on future behaviour and provides participants with a positive outlook which has an effect on future offending.

However, participants in the higher risk category, or who had been subject to many visits described that the visits do not have an effect on their future behaviour: ‘*nothing the police will do will help me, I can’t stand the police.’* This is supportive of Murphy and Frederoff (2013) wherein a small percentage of participants who were in the higher risk category reported that the registry had no deterrent on their risk of reoffending: ‘*it has nothing to do with my risk level, I will chose to reoffend if I want to and not because of the register.’*

**6.3.4 Interview technique**

It has been reported in this thesis that this style of policing takes a move away from that of traditional policing and that the home visit interview is more in the form of a discussion or a chat (Nash, 2014). The findings of this thesis in relation to the recordings of home visits certainly support this view in that MOSOVO would post questions such as ‘*what have you been doing with your time’* which would result in a general discussion taking place at the beginning of the home visit. However, the findings from this thesis also show that the line of questioning on the home visit may become challenging which leads MOSOVO to employ more challenging interview techniques from the PEACE model, particularly if the RSO would be in breach of the notification requirements, for example, MOSOVO would challenge the devices that were observed during the home visit by saying ’*you are meant to disclose all devices, you have been looking at the internet when you are not meant to’.* Also, particularly for high risk offenders, MOSOVO had to employ further challenging style of questions if the RSO was having thoughts of re-offending or would simply refuse to engage in the line of questioning, for example, in one recording the RSO would not engage in any questioning and would attempt to ask MOSOVO the questions such as ‘*do you think I am chaotic, are you chaotic.’* From these findings, it is evident that the home visit does attempt to employ a different style of policing but due to the nature of the offence and some of the RSO’s that MOSOVO are required to manage, traditional policing in the form of an investigative PEACE interview does have to be employed at times.

This thesis found that during interviews where officers took time to get to know offenders and were understanding and sympathetic, offenders would open up more and be more responsive to officers, which would reduce anxiety on behalf of the offender. This is supportive of literature in the area of empathy and an interview approach to offenders (Holmberg and Christianson, 2002; Bull & Milne, 2004; Milne and Bull, 1999; Moston & Engelberg, 1993; Williamson, 1993; Kebbell *et al,* 2008). Although this literature does not relate directly to the home visit and risk assessment process, it is relevant due to the nature of the home visit, as this is conducted in the form of an interview. This thesis supports the above literature, in that participants described that where officers were supportive and non-judgemental, this led the offender to be able to answer the questions in a way that was comfortable to them and would reduce anxiety on the part of the offender.Also the findings from this thesis show that where MOSOVO were empathetic and supportive towards the RSO and took time to understand their needs, this would allow MOSOVO and the RSO to establish an empathic relationship (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002; Langfeldt, 1993). Also MOSOVO who displayed a positive and non-judgemental attitude towards the RSO would result in a positive relationship (Williamson, 1993).

A recurring theme from this thesis was the importance of the relationship between MOSOVO and RSO, as many participants described a good relationship and rapport with MOSOVO. This is in keeping with previous research that has highlighted the importance of effective relationships as key to increasing compliance in offenders (Westwood *et al,* 2011; Prochaska & Levesque, 2002; Wood & Kemshall, 2007). In particular, Westwood *et al* 2011 reported key themes such as ‘trust’, ‘honesty’ and confidence as important elements in developing effective working relationships with an offender. This is supported by Marshall and Burton’s (2010) work which emphasised the importance of warmth, support and the quality of the relationship. Powell *et al* (2013) found that when discussing the interview procedure, officers emphasised the importance of genuine engagement and establish a strong relationship. Also, good rapport and non-judgemental open-ended questioning was deemed crucial to engagement. Westwood *et al* (2011) found the importance of establishing rapport with sex offenders in order to encourage them to talk openly about their thoughts and activities was in evidence as an element of good practice. This thesis supports the above studies, where participants reinforced the need for a good rapport and familiarity with MOSOVO to enable participants to be able to respond fully to officer’s line of questioning.

This thesis supports this finding, as participants stated that they preferred the familiarity and non-judgemental approach officers gave towards the home visit process. Participants described that at each home visit there are two MOSOVO officers present but that one of the officers is usually different and this does not help with rapport building. As the above literature states, if there is no rapport during the home visit, then participants will not respond well to the questions and may result in participants answering the questions dishonestly which will not assist in the risk assessment process. However, as reported in the previous chapter of this thesis, police forces are facing a challenging time due to current austerity measures (Crank and Caldero, 1991; Brown *et al,* 1996; Beckers *et al,* 2008; Dembe, 2009; Turnbull and Wass, 2015) which results in it not always being possible for the same MOSOVO to attend on each home visit.

All participants in this thesis described that the visits would be unannounced and would take place in their home environment which reduced anxiety. This is supportive of Westwood *et al* (2011) who also found that for offenders to disclose, a safe and permissive environment was also important e.g., during home visits, because of the feelings of safety and comfort experienced by the offender. The Good Lives approach (Ward & Maruna, 2007), has made reference to this, specifying the importance of the style, attitudes and relational approach of practitioners towards their clients. However, some participants in this thesis went onto describe that in some instances MOSOVO would contact them if they were not in which gives the RSO prior notice that the visit will be taking place, which goes against the very principle that the home visit and ARMS assessment should be unannounced.

**6.3.5 Style of Questions**

Participants in this thesis described the questions that would be asked during the home visit. Participants in this thesis described that at the first visit, there would be a detailed discussion on the notification requirements and any sexual harm prevention order, ensuring that participants understood the notification requirements and any SHOPO that may be in place. Participants described that this part of the visit made them feel uncomfortable as it reminded them of the initial offence they had committed. Murphy and Frederoff (2013) reported that on the first visit, officers would pose questions such as if they were complying with the terms and conditions of the registry and any other conditions which are in place. Although the term ‘notification requirements’ was not used in this study due to jurisdictional differences, the aim of the first study is similar to this study, in that conditions and compliance were discussed at the first visit. Participants also went on to state that a detailed discussion of the initial offence would take place during the first visit. Powell *et al* (2013) reported that in-depth interviewing enabled the officers to develop a greater understanding of the offender’s motivations, beliefs and personal coping mechanisms, reaction to stressful experiences and exposure to children. This thesis is supportive of Powell *et al* (2013) in that if MOSOVO are meeting the participant for the first time, it would be beneficial to them to conduct a detailed interview, to include the initial offence, and notification requirements, yet notification requirements are only discussed briefly during the training of MOSOVO.

Participants went onto describe that subsequent visits would ask the same or similar questions, such as daily routine or any new relationships. In this thesis, participants felt questions should focus on the future and not dwell on past behaviour or convictions. Participants felt that due to different MOSOVO attending at each visit, questions around the initial offence were often repeated and participants felt this did not need to be discussed on every visit as this led the participant to feel as they were not moving on with their life and were being reminded of the offence that they had committed. The reasoning for this type of questioning, could be due to the fact that there are different officers present on every visit and the new officer may feel the need to discuss the initial offence to gain an understanding of the offenders background and their feelings of the initial offence, to be able to conduct the rest of the ARMS assessment.

**6.3.6 Observations during home visit**

In this thesis, participants described that at the first visit, MOSOVO would conduct observations of the property by having a general look in rooms and considerable time was spent looking at any devices that the participant disclosed. Similarly, westwood (2013) also stated that general observations would be conducted on the first visit. However, this study reported that only 9% of participants were asked if they had access to the internet. In just one case, police asked the participant to turn on his computer to prove that he did not have internet access. The findings from this thesis are somewhat different as this thesis established that MOSOVO spent considerable time looking at devices and any internet history that had been observed. One reason for this could be due to the increase in internet offending in the UK which has saw levels of RSO’s increase in great numbers. However, this thesis also allowed participants to describe that they were not aware of the observations that would be taking place, in particular they could not understand why the internet had to be observed, especially if they were a non-internet offender. As reported by Kewley (2017), the purpose of an ARMS assessment is to focus on the ‘here and now’ in the RSO’s life and the observations that are carried out allow MOSOVO to gain a more detailed understanding of their current life style.

Also, MOSOVO were informed during the observation of training, that they should carry out such observations in order to be able to effectively plan and risk manage the RSO for the future. However, as some RSO’s could not understand why the observations were being carried out, this further enhances their view that the police are ‘checking up on them’ and this also further accords with the underlying principle within police culture that police are trained to investigate and be unduly suspicious of offenders and that police hold negative views towards RSO’s (Hogue, 1993; Hogue and Peebles, 1997; Lea *et al,* 1999) where police are suspicious of their behaviour and find them deceitful and dishonest.

**6.3.7 Risk Category**

Participants in this thesis described being unaware that the home visit was to place them in a risk category and that the police never informed them of this: ‘*I don’t know anything about a risk assessment. What does that mean, they think I’m gonna do it again?’* Some participants went onto state that they had realised over time that the purpose of the visit was to conduct a risk assessment, but they did not like the term ‘risk’ being used. This thesis carried out observation of MOSOVO training, where different training programmes were observed, it was observed by the researcher, that trainers informed delegates not to use the term risk, as ‘this would get their back up.’ Therefore, it seems as if this term is not used during home visits and it is only the more experienced offender that does realise what the visit is for, in that it is being used in relation to placing them in a risk category for future management. This reasoning would provide an answer as to why participants in this study did not understand or know of the term ‘risk assessment’.

Although previous literature has not discussed this, Murphy and Frederoff (2013) reported that with regard to offenders understanding of risk assessments, **66% of participants reported that they understood the rationale underlying the use of risk assessments, however some claimed that they would ‘benefit from a properly** utilizes system of reference.’ Participants in this thesis were not aware that the purpose of the home visit was to place them into a risk category. Whilst it is accepted that this may increase anxiety on the part of the offender, effective risk assessment and risk management is an integral part of the visit as it allows MOSOVO to put in place a risk management plan for future management. If explained properly to the offender, it would become clearer to them why MOSOVO have to ask the questions they do and conduct the visit in the way that they do including observations.

**6.4 Limitations**

Whilst this study aimed to gain an understanding of participant’s views to the ARMS risk assessment and the home visit process, there are of course limitations to this study.

The first limitation is that the study was a semi-structured interview study where participants were selected by each Police Force. This may have produced a less representative sample of registered sex offenders, as only compliant registered sex offenders were selected.

The demographic table shows that participants in the 18-25 and 46-55 age category were less represented as were participants of Black and minority ethnic and there were no participants selected of Irish background and this may have an effect on the composition of the sample.

Also, each interview took place at police headquarters and it is possible that participants may not have felt comfortable answering questions at the police station or may have felt they needed to answer the questions in a particular way. This study shows that participants felt more comfortable in their home environment answering questions and as the interviews took place at police headquarters, participants may not have answered the questions in the way they would on a home visit. Also, participants may have felt that they did not have a rapport with the researcher and this could have prohibited their responses in some way. However, across the data set, the responses were both positive and negative which should minimise this limitation.

Whilst the researcher guaranteed confidentiality on behalf of the participant and to ensure that participants did not feel forced into answering the questions in a certain way, it is possible that each force did select participants that would be willing to give positive responses.

This study only interviewed 10 participants across three forces and it is therefore possible that this does not represent the full picture of offender’s views and this should be borne in mind for further research.

**6.5 Future Directions**

Future research in this area, should focus on selection of participants, whereby the researcher has more of an input into the participants that are selected and that this is not in the control of the police to allow for a more representative sample. Also, a greater sample should be selected, i.e more than 10 participants and more forces could be recruited to take part in the research which would improve reliability of the study.

It is clear from this study, that the majority of participants initially feel anxious around the police and the police station and it therefore suggested that if there were to be further research in this area, the interviews could take place at an alternate venue other than the police station, or if ethics were to allow it, to take place in the participants home.

**Chapter 7**

**7. DISCUSSION**

The findings from each of the three studies that form the basis of this thesis will now be discussed under each of the four research aims for this thesis.

**7.1 Research Aim 1**

The first research aim for this thesis was an observation of the police training which allows police officers to carry out the necessary risk assessment and home visit to be able to place RSO’s into the relevant risk category and to ascertain the differences in training at each force that took part in this thesis. The findings for this research aim will now be discussed.

The training essentially covers criminological theory and how this is relevant to this type of offender, interview technique, DVD and role play exercises and an opportunity for participants to complete an ARMS assessment and a risk management plan. With regards to training of MOSOVO, research aim 1 shows that although there is national training, the training that was observed at each of the three forces is slightly different which appears to be adapted to the needs of the officers and the cohort of RSO’s that each force deals with. Also, participants responded differently to the trainers that conducted the training, as some trainers were more experienced in the area of sexual management, whereas some of the trainers were experienced trainers having completed the Police Learning Roles and Development Programme (PTRLDP) and were unable to respond to participants queries regarding certain ARMS factors. This led some participants to raise concerns regarding the experience of the trainers: ‘When was the last time you conducted a home visit?’ This appeared to be due to a general distrust towards police trainers (Milne & Bull, 2011), due to the pragmatism of officers in the ‘real world’ compared to the ‘training world’. (Terpstra and Schaap, 2013). This thesis further found that in some instances, the trainers were not confident in discussing protective factors or answering queries regarding these and as such participants did not focus on this part of the training, when arguable, this is the most important part of the ARMS assessment. Further, the findings from this thesis show that due to participants appearing confused from the training, this leads participants to revert to methods that are familiar to them such as the NDM model, which is therefore employed during the home visit.

This thesis provides demographic data to show that MOSOVO have differing levels of experience to carry out the home visit and risk assessment process. There is guidance to state that officers need to be trained in MOSOVO (ACPO 2012) and that MOSOVO should be of detective level (College of Policing 2012; NPIA, 2013), yet the data from this thesis show that this is not the case with a higher amount of new officers, who may not have the necessary skills managing this type of offender.

There have been previous pilot studies of ARMS (Nicholls & Webster, 2014) where training was well received by officers and it was felt to include good coverage of relevant theory and be ‘fit for purpose’ in terms of ensuring officers were ready to implement ARMS in their day to day work. However, more experienced officers suggested the theory should only be used for the ‘less experienced’ officers. The findings from this thesis do not support this point, as participants raised concerns regarding the amount of theory used on the training programme and were unable to ascertain how the theory would assist them in the role of MOSOVO. Force 1 relied on various theories (Marshall and Barbaree, (1990); Hall & Hirshman, (1992); Finkelhor, (1984); Ward and Hudson, (1998), whereas force 2 and force 3 relied solely on Ward and Hudson’s (1998) approach v avoidant model as it was felt by the trainers at these forces that this was the most suitable to management of RSO’s. This theory was positively received by participants and should be the criminological theory that is used in the training programme.

The use of case study and role play was first incorporated in the previous pilot studies of both Stable and Acute (Nicholls *et al,* 2010) and ARMS (Nicholls & Webster, 2014) and in a more recent national evaluation of ARMS (Mann & Lundringham, 2020) which participants in each study appreciated. The MOSOVO training that was observed for this thesis has continued the use of learning through this method, although each force employed different teaching strategies when doing so. Force 1 and Force 2 used the same case study of a certain type of visit, whereas force 3 used a different case study, being an example of bad practice which participants did not respond well to, despite literature to support the use of case study in police training (Lonsway *et al,* 2001; Christian *et al,* 2003; Nicholls *et al,* 2010; Nicholls & Webster, 2012; Silverstone *et al,* 2012). The pilot studies of ARMS (Nicholls *et al,* 2010; Nicholls & Webster, 2012) also incorporated the use of role play into the training, which has been further developed in the observation of training of this thesis. The role play was conducted differently at force 1 and force 2, force 1 conducted the role play in a classroom whereas force 2 conducted the role play in the form of a ‘mock visit’ which was more positively received than at force 1.

This research also found that participants felt that further training is required for new MOSOVO and MOSOVO of Sergeant and management level, with officers of this level asking questions such as ‘when do we know how to sign the ARMS off’. As the role of Sergeant is that of daily supervision and support for staff (College of Policing, 2011), which can be challenging at times due to the nature of the work (Tift, 1971; Van Maanen, 1983), particularly in the management of RSO’s, further training ought to be provided for officers of this rank.

All three forces discussed interview style, where trainers at each force stated that officers should follow the PEACE model of interviewing as per police force policy (College of Policing, 2012), which all participants were aware of. However, each force focused differently on the interviewing part of the training; force 1 and force 3 discussed interviewing style very briefly, where the only discussion centred around the PEACE model, whereas force 2 allowed for a more detailed discussion on interviewing, but rather than a discussion around PEACE model, a discussion on the differences between a RSO interview and a routine interview followed this.

It appears as if all three forces that were subject to this research, do focus on interview style, being the PEACE model of interviewing (College of Policing, 2012) and also the Suspect Management Model (Fisher *et al,* (1987); Baldwin, (1993); Snook & Keating, (2010); Clarke *et al,* (2011)) and due to the nature of the interview also have to employ using their own discretion and judgement making decisions (NPIA, 2010; College of Policing 2012). However, participants from this thesis went on to describe the training on interview and questioning techniques was still unsatisfactory, especially for new officers, who felt that the training needed to be adapted to include more challenging techniques, particularly for the high risk offender. Participants raised several concerns regarding questions around interview style such as ‘this type of interview is so different to what we are used to’; ‘what if they get personal how do we deal with that’, which is supportive of Kewley (2017). As the home visit is so different to that of the routine investigation using the PEACE model, it is proposed that a new model of police interviewing ought to be adopted that focuses more on management rather than investigation.

A more appropriate model of interviewing would be the motivational model (Sobell and Sobell, 2008) of interviewing which allows the interviewee to build rapport from the outset and seeks to implement change talk throughout the interview. This model allows for the interviewee to pose questions such as ‘*do you mind if we talk about…’* or *‘can we talk a bit about your…’* This model collaborates more closely with building rapport during the home visit and communicates respect for the offender. Also, the RSO would be more likely to discuss change and provides RSO with a voice during the interview. This model of policing would allow for a more successful outcome and would prevent the need for an interrogatory suspect style interview using the PEACE model of interviewing.

Interestingly, participants from force 3 stated that during the interview the RSO will try to manipulate you. This finding from the data is supportive of literature around police culture, where this suspicion appears to be embedded in police training: ‘*One of the purposes of police training is to develop the craft of suspicion.*’ (Cockroft, 2013). Also, ‘Officers become hyper sensitive to and suspicious of aspects of routine life. The experienced officer is alert to signals that something is not right.’ (McLaughlin, 2007). It is therefore suggested that it is not unsurprising that participants across the data set felt that an RSO will attempt to manipulate you during the home visit interview as historically, this is embedded into police officer’s training. As the majority of MOSOVO are experienced detectives, they will automatically have a history of thinking this way when conducting interviews.

With regards to risk/protective factors of ARMS each force discussed all the risk factors equally, which was taken from the ARMS Practitioner Guidance Manual (College of Policing, 2014). However, participants at each force within this thesis raised general questions around some of the headings, in particular, sexual pre-occupation and offence related sexual interests which corroborates with recent findings (Mann & Lundringham, 2020) and any future training should therefore seek to incorporate these two headings under one heading and MOSOVO should be allowed to use their own judgement when doing so.

Notification requirements were discussed very briefly at the MOSOVO training for each of the forces that took part in this thesis, but it appears from research aim 2 of this thesis, that notification requirements can play a central role to the home visit interview, which can result in MOSOVO having to use strong interview and challenging techniques. Any future training should therefore incorporate notification requirements into the home visit case study and role play.

**7.2 Research Aim 2**

Research aim 1 described what the MOSOVO training involved and highlighted the similarities and differences in training at each force. The second research aim of the thesis was to explore the relationship between policy (as per police training) and practice for assessing and determining risk and conducting home visits. A brief summary of what the home visits involve will now be provided together with a summary of the key differences between the training and the practice of home visits.

As previously stated, this thesis transcribed recordings of home visits, one for each level of risk that were undertaken by each of the three forces that took part in this study. The recordings across all the forces showed that each visit was between 40 minutes and one hour and 35 minutes long, depending upon the nature of the visit. In the 2012 pilot (Nicholls *et al*, 2010) officers reported that ARMS interviews took between one and two hours to complete, with some officers splitting the interview over two sessions. This research supports this factor, in that the recordings of home visits varied from 30 minutes to one hour 35 minutes dependent upon the nature of the visit.

At each of the recordings of visits, there were two officers present, one officer would take the lead in asking the questions on the visit and the other officer would conduct general observations around the property. The 2012 pilot study (Nicholls *et al* 2010) stated that at each visit two officers would be present during the home visit and that the home visit would be unannounced. This finding is consistent with the current study, as the recordings of visits show that the visits were unannounced, most offenders were co-operative and would answer questions to enable officers to place them in the appropriate risk category.

At each force, the recordings showed that the home visit would begin with general questions, in an attempt to build up rapport with the offender, such as ‘what have you been up to since last time.’ If there was significant change in the offenders lifestyle, such as a new relationship or sexual pre-occupation had changed then this would lead to further questions and more challenging questions put to the offender. From all recordings that were observed, officers would take time to have general conversation with the offender and would put questions to them such as ‘how have you been since last time’; ‘are there any changes in your life style’. This appeared to be to build up rapport and trust with the offender and supports findings from research aim 1 in that general rapport building are crucial to this type of interview.

With regards to the home visit interview technique, it was evident that MOSOVO do employ the PEACE model of interviewing to some extent, as MOSOVO are prepared for the visit, they engage with the RSO through the line of questioning and at times explained why questions were being asked and when required, MOSOVO did challenge the RSO. However, as previously stated, during the home visit interview, the RSO is no longer a suspect, which forms the basis of a PEACE interview. Furthermore, this style of interview is more of a general discussion (Nash, 2014) and is more ‘touchy feely’ (Kewley, 2017) and this home visit interview takes a move away from traditional policing and at times throughout the home visit, the PEACE model was not used. As stated above, a more appropriate model of interviewing would be the motivational interview model due to the rationale outlined above.

Each force would discuss notification requirements at some point during the visit, depending on whether the offender was aware of the notification requirements, would determine how much time was afforded to this during the interview. It is apparent from the recordings that the researcher transcribed that notification requirements play a key part in the home visit, yet during the observation of training, very little attention was paid to notification requirements. The training simply provides information on what the notification requirements are but do not go into detail on how to discuss these during the home visit.

Regardless of how many visits the offender had been subject to previously, the initial offence would be discussed, to ascertain what the offender’s feelings were now around that offence. Each recording discussed the initial offence that the offender had been charged with, regardless of how many visits the offender had been subject to previously. Research aim 1 shows that the training did not go into detail on this, other than this should be discussed at the first visit and not on any subsequent visits. However, the recordings showed that this was discussed at every subsequent visit. One reason for this could be provided under research aim 2, whereas although two officers to attend each visit, due to staffing constraints one officer is usually different and that officer would start from the beginning of the offending history and would therefore discuss the notification requirements. Another reasoning behind this could be due to the fact that MOSOVO are directed to adopt the PEACE model where the RSO is made to take account for their initial offence regardless of when this took place.

This would then lead to a conversation around the ARMS risk factors. Not all risk factors were discussed on each of the recordings and this appeared to be led by previous visits and if there was any ‘change’ on this visit as recommended in previous studies (Nicholls *et al,* 2012). For example, during one visit the offender stated he was now only masturbating three times per day when in previous visits he disclosed he was masturbating 20 times per day. This therefore led to a detailed discussion around sexual preoccupation. The ARMS factors that were discussed depended upon any police intelligence that was available, any notes from the previous visit and whether there was any significant change from the previous visit. However, as is evident in the findings for this research aim, MOSOVO did tend to focus on the static factors of the ARMS assessment rather than the dynamic factors. Finally, officers would conduct general observations around the property, which from the recordings did not seem too invasive but officers did ask to have a look at any devices such as phone or laptop that the offender had in his possession.

It is also evident that preparation before the home visit interview is vital in the risk management of RSO’s, as MOSOVO need to be aware of any previous conduct or behaviour or any new intelligence that may form the basis of the home visit and this will provide MOSOVO with a guide as to which of the ARMS factors will need addressing during the home visit.

During the 2012 pilot (Nicholls *et al* 2010), it was felt that the nature and extent of information available to officers is a key factor in how effective their assessment of dynamic factors in offender’s circumstances can be. The main source of information tended to be an ARMS interview with the offender. The 2012 study (Nicholls & Webster, 2014) also found that there is potential for flexibility to be introduced into the information gathering process. For example, an interview covering each of the ARMS factors may not be necessary in every case, such as when the offender is well known to the officer. It was suggested in the 2012 pilot (Nicholls & Webster, 2014) that rather than undertaking a ‘discrete’ ARMS interview covering all the dynamic factors in ARMS, officers could first consider what they already know about an offender in relation to each ARMS factor. This research supports the above recommendation made by the 2012 pilot (Nicholls & Webster, 2014) and shows that officers do not complete a full ARMS on each visit, but rather focus on areas that police may have intelligence on or whether there is any significant change between the current visit and any previous visits that have been undertaken. However, as previously stated, there is a strong focus on the static factors from the ARMS assessment which may be due to the fact that MOSOVO feel more comfortable asking this type of question but it could also be due to the fact that the 2012 pilot (Nicholls & Webster, 2014) suggested not to use a ‘discrete’ ARMS whereby MOSOVO did not have to cover all the dynamic factors and this may be considered by trainers at the MOSOVO training.

The 2012 pilot (Nicholls & Webster, 2014) stated that completing interviews in the offender’s home environment was perceived as making people feel comfortable and enabling greater support as the assessment questions were discussed. This study is supportive of this point as it showed that the majority of interviews took place at the offender’s home premises for the reasons outlined in the pilot. However data from research aim 3, showed that on some occasions officers would take offenders to the station to be interviewed if the state of the house or the hygiene of the offender was an issue, showing that welfare of the officer appears to be paramount.

It appears from the 2012 pilot (Nicholls & Webster, 2014), that asking offenders to complete a diary of their day to day activities is an optional source of information gathering for officers to use to highlight the need to develop meaningful activities. The consensus on the pilot for this was that this should be used as an optional tool. In this research, the ‘self-assessment’ diary did not form part of the training as such, but it was shown in the case study of ‘Nigel’ that was shown presented to the officers. The trainers stated that this should only be used if it was clear that the offender was not coping or not doing anything constructive with their time. From the recordings of home visits, the self-assessment diary did not appear to be used on any of the recordings and does not seem to form general practice at any of the three forces that took part in this research. However, referring to research aim 4 of this thesis, RSO’s reported that they would of found a self-assessment useful, especially RSO’s who had just been released from prison and were particularly chaotic with their life.

**7.3 Research Aim 3**

This research aim was to examine police officers views on the effectiveness or otherwise of training processes and procedures for risk assessment and home visit process.

With regards to the training, participants were more receptive to trainers that had more recent experience of conducting home visits, for example, at force 1 where trainers had not conducted visits for some time led to concerns from participants which resulted in anxiety from the group and led participants to retract from interaction within the group, whereas at force 2 for example, trainers were experienced and active with home visits and risk assessments which allowed trainers to respond and answer questions from a practical point of view.

Participants that were new to the role of MOSOVO, found the training engaging and interesting and found the training on ARMS assessment and priority rating beneficial to their role, with some participants stating that you would not be able to carry out an ARMS assessment without having been on the training. Newer officers to the role of MOSOVO also found the role play and case study beneficial with some participants stating that both of these exercises ‘show you what to do’ in that you are shown how to deal with interview style questions. However, the more experienced officers stated that the training does now show you how to challenge offenders, is unrealistic in practice (Kewley 2017) and the training does not show you a full ARMS being carried out and felt that this part of the training was unrealistic to practice. It can be noted from research aim two of this study, that the observation of recordings of home visits, was somewhat different across each force, but that a full ARMS does not take place on each visit and the training could be adapted to reflect this. It can be seen from research aim two that from the recordings of visits, the majority of visits focus on notification requirements and any significant change that is found during the visit.

With regards to home visits, this study shows that although the training shows an ARMS assessment taking place, all participants felt that there is no guidance for an initial, first or subsequent visit, when this takes up the majority of MOSOVO visits. This has led officers to use their own judgement (Kewley, 2017) on the visits when placing the offender into the appropriate risk category (NPIA, 2010) and allows MOSOVO to investigate the ‘here and now’ (Kewley, 2017) Whilst there is literature to support police using their discretion and judgement (Bayley, 1994; Black, 1990; Klockars, 1985; Walklate, 1988; O’Neill & Singh, 2007; Nash, 2014)), the lack of training is allowing for this to become standard practice which could be allowing for inconsistencies in ARMS assessments, in particular the priority ratings. This could also lead to inconsistent use of discretion and judgement in order to ‘cut corners’ (Reiner, 1992; Chan, 1997; Manning 1989; Bass and Avolio 1993; Engel and Worden, 2003; Cockroft, 2013) in an attempt for MOSOVO to manage their workload in a more realistic way. To further strengthen this point, the data from this study supports the view that participants felt ill-equipped to deal with the different types of visits and the different demands from each type of visit, which is supported by Harris (1978) and Bittner (1983), who suggests that official police training insufficiently prepared recruits for the reality of police work. Further, recent evaluation (Mann & Lundringham, 2020) found that the training is inconsistent across all 43 corners which further supports the fact that participants will be ill equipped to deal with the home visit.

Questions such as intimate relationships, social influences and sexual interests and pre-occupation would be discussed, supporting the fact that there is a focus on static factors, but not all ARMS factors would be discussed. This depends upon the nature of the visit, any previous or new intelligence but all participants emphasised that interview technique is crucial to this visit.

Criminal Justice guidance, states that all visits to RSO’s should be unannounced and the purpose of this is to gather risk-related information or intelligence (Nash, 2014). When ARMS was piloted (Nicholls *et al,* 2010; Nicholls & Webster, 2012) it was piloted in small forces and as this data shows in the more larger force areas , it is not always possible to conduct unannounced visits due to various reasons which led participants to state that further resources are required to enable unannounced visits to happen. Also, the training does not prepare participants for the reality of an unannounced visit, for example, quite often offenders will be hostile towards MOSOVO turning up unannounced and as the offender is not expecting the visit, the place of residence may be unhygienic, both of which the training does not prepare participants to deal with.

Participants described that the first time an offender is subject to a home visit, this is known as an ‘initial visit’. The purpose of this is for the police to introduce themselves and to complete what is known as the ‘descriptor’ paperwork, where personal details are stored. Although a first visit was not observed as part of research aim two, it is clear from the recordings that the aim of the visits is to develop a good rapport with the offender and that interview technique is crucial to this. From this, participants stated that the most important part of the initial visit was going through the notification requirements and developing a good rapport from the outset.

Participants described that you would not necessarily complete the ARMS on this visit but rather attempt to develop a good rapport. However, some participants stated that if the offender was readily open to conversation then some of the ARMS factors may be completed. Participants stated that at what stage an ARMS was completed would depend on how experienced the officer was. This can be seen by study 3 of this thesis where new officers would not engage in a full ARMS until rapport had been developed with the offender.

Participants felt that some offenders will not provide an honest answer to ARMS questions, particularly around sexual questions. Also, participants felt that if an offender has been on treatment, their responses will differ and may not be honest responses but rather be responses or ‘buzz’ words that are learned through the treatment programme. This correlates with literature around police culture (Reiner, 1992; Chan, 1996) in that police are unduly suspicious (McLaughlin, 2007; Waddington, 1999; Reiner, 2010) and negative (Kewley, 2017) towards offenders in general and that police find offenders, in particular RSO’s dishonest and deceitful (Hogue, 1993; Hogue and Peebles, 1997; Lea *et al,* 1999) and that is reinforced to participants from the MOSOVO training.

An integral part of the training appears to be how MOSOVO should conduct the interview during the home visit. Kewley (2017) saw participants describe this kind of interview is ‘*more touchy-feely kind of thing’* and Nash (2014) described it as ‘*more of a general discussion’.* This study is supportive of this as participants described they did not feel adequately trained in interview style and that this type of interview is so different from the traditional policing approach. As stated previously, police officers are traditionally trained in the PEACE model of interviewing (College of Policing (2012) and the suspect management model (Fisher *et al,* 1987; Baldwin, 1993; Clarke *et al* 2011), yet it is evident from the findings of this thesis, that the home visit interview, although at times incorporates the PEACE principles, is a move away from the traditional suspect interview.

A further integral part of the training appears to be how MOSOVO should challenge offenders’ responses to questions during the home visit. As stated previously, officers are trained in the PEACE model and suspect management model of interviewing which is referred to in the MOSOVO training. However, participants across the dataset described RSO’s as being dishonest and deceitful (Hogue, 1993; Hogue and Peebles, 1997; Lea *et al* 1999) during the home visit process and this would make officers challenge the offender in a way that is incongruent with traditional policing, which further supports the Kewley (2017) findings. This suspicion of RSO’s appears to be embedded in police training, as stated by Cockroft (2013) ‘*One of the purposes of police training is to develop the craft of suspicion*’. Also, ‘*officers become hyper sensitive to and suspicious of aspects of routine daily life*.’ (McLaughlin, 2007). Also, the training provided to challenge offenders was very brief across all three forces, yet this appears to be a key focus of the home visit in the majority of recordings that were observed and it was evident that new MOSOVO struggled with this aspect of the training and putting this into practice during the home visit.

The majority of participants responded negatively to consideration of criminological theory. Although findings in previous studies (HMIP, 2014) state that police officers working in this environment should have some knowledge of the theories and practices associated with assisting an offender to achieve desistance and training being previously positively received (Nicholls *et al,* 2010; Nicholls & Webster, 2012) the data from this research shows that participants did not find the theory useful in both the risk assessment and home visit practice.

All participants felt that the preparation that trainers advised them to undertake before the visit, was too much, namely conducting background research such as VISOR, PNC and any information from the previous home visit and this would take up too much ‘police time’. Also as MOSOVO are under a great deal of stress due to austerity measures (Crank and Caldero, 1991; Brown *et al,* 1996; Beckers *et al,* 2008; Dembe, 2009), MOSOVO do not always have time to be as thorough in their preparation as was shown in the training.

Participants felt that the training that they received in completing ARMS is also not reflective of practice, in that officers do not have enough time to go into as much detail on the ARMS as was expected of them in the training, as the practicality of completing ARMS is lengthy and time consuming (McCartan *et al,* 2019). If officers were to complete the ARMS in as much detail as the training, it is highly likely that they would then be criticised for abandoning their proper ‘policing’ responsibilities (Loftus, 2009) and would fall behind with the management of offenders and ultimately completing the home visits. Kewley (2017) found that ARMS has decreased hands on management of offenders and this research supports this view due to the reasons stated above.

This led participants across the data set to state that when ARMS were piloted, it was piloted in small forces that managed small numbers of RSO’s that did not have the diversity and cultural differences of offenders that perhaps larger forces have. Also, due to the increase in RSO’s since the pilot took place, officers case load is now too large, with MOSOVO managing high numbers of RSO’s (McCartan *et al,* 2019) which means that proper ‘policing’ responsibilities (Loftus, 2009) are being left behind, such as the management of offenders and completing the home visits. All participants said that in order to avoid this, they would welcome further officers who were experienced in the area of sexual offender management to undertake more visits and would also welcome more resources to assist with this practice. However, current police cutbacks due to austerity measures (Crank and Caldero, 1991; Brown *et al,* 1996; Beckers *et al,* 2008; Dembe, 2009; Turnbull and Wass, 2015) may not allow for further resources to be put in place.

With regards to information around ARMS factors, participants raised concerns around the questioning of the ARMS factors such as ‘how do we word the sex questions’, ‘how can we not judge someone who is masturbating’. Participants also felt that there was too much overlap between offence related sexual interests and sexual pre-occupation and social investment, with participants feeling the latter was pointless for this type of offender. It can be seen from research aim 2 that participants did feel that there was overlap between offence related sexual interests and sexual pre-occupation and from the recordings of home visits for this thesis, MOSOVO would deal with both these headings together

With regards to the priority rating on ARMS, this led to concern from all participants, who raised concern regarding if they were unsure where to place the offender and felt that it was very time consuming. Participants of sergeant level also raised concern regarding this and asked questions such as, when do we know how to sign it off. It was reinforced by trainers that it should be done by using officers’ own judgement.

**7.4 Research Aim 4**

The final aim of this research was to explore RSO’s experiences of the home visit and risk assessment process using ARMS which are carried out by MOSOVO. This aim will be discussed showing what RSO’s and MOSOVO state actually happen on a home visit, compared with the findings from the observations of recordings as to what actually does happen on a home visit. RSO’s views and MOSOVO’s views of the home visit will then be explored to highlight any agreement or disagreement between their views.

In research aim 4 of this thesis, RSO’s provided their views as to what actually happens during a home visit. Participant’s stated that visits are usually unannounced, unless the participant was not at home when the police attended their place of residence, which would lead the police to make contact with them via the phone to ask them to return to enable the home visit to be carried out. Participants then went on to describe that MOSOVO would explain why they were there and explain the purpose of the home visit. This would lead to questions such as their daily routine, who their associates were and whether they were engaging in any drug or alcohol activity, which are all static factors.

All participants stated that MOSOVO would discuss the initial offence on each visit and refer the RSO to any civil order that was in place such as SHOPO and then refer the RSO to the terms of the notification requirements to ensure they understood the same. Participants stated that on the initial visit, this visit would be longer in length and MOSOVO would fill in paperwork and take photographs of any distinctive features such as tattoos. With regards to subsequent visits, participants stated that MOSOVO would ask the same questions but would focus on whether anything had changed in their life since the last home visit had taken place. Participants described that during these visits, MOSOVO would not place as much attention on the initial offence, although this would be discussed briefly, but would focus on any change since the last visit and would be more through with their observations of any devices.

It can be seen from research aim 3, that MOSOVO’s views as to what actually happens on the visits are very similar to RSO’s views of the home visits, namely, the first ‘initial’ visit is to complete paperwork and to introduce the purpose of the visit and that subsequent visits focus on static ARMS questions such as intimate relations, social influences and sexual interests. Both RSO’s and MOSOVO stated that the questions shall remain the same on subsequent visits unless there is any significant change from previous visits or if it is apparent from the current visit that there is a change in the RSO’s lifestyle. Referring this point to research aim 2, it can be noted from the recordings of home visits that the questions on each visit to tend to stay the same, with a focus on the static ARMS factors, but dependent on what is found on the visit, how much attention is paid to each of those factors.

Also, in relation to research aim 4 of this thesis, RSO’s were asked to provide their views of the purpose of the home visit and risk assessment process. The majority of participants appeared to be suspicious of MOSOVO stating that they felt the focus of the visits was to enable MOSOVO to ‘keep a check’ on their behaviour and whereabouts, whereas other participants were unsure as to the purpose of the visits, particularly if they had just been released from prison. As stated by Nash (2014), ‘*the purpose of the home visit is to gather risk-related information or intelligence*’ and is therefore used to detect the possibility of any future offending. This led all participants to describe feeling nervous and anxious, particularly with regards to the first home visit as they did not know what to expect from this, together with RSO’s views towards the police from previous dealings. However, participants stated that during this visit, MOSOVO were quick to put participants at ease, by explaining why they were there and the purpose of the visit. This led the majority of participants in this study to say that the more frequent the visits, the more relaxed and comfortable they felt, with some participants stating that they now know what to expect from the visits and that they have a good non-judgemental relationship with the MOSOVO that attend on the home visits. Referring this to research aim 3, it is clear that MOSOVO’s skills in interviewing technique and rapport building (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002; Oxbrough *et al,* 2006; Kebbell *et al,* 2010) are crucial from the outset to enable RSO’s to feel comfortable during the home visit and to be able to respond to the questions as openly and honestly as possible.

All participants, except for one high risk participant, stated that they were unaware that the focus of the visit was to place them into a risk category and were quite hostile to this line of questioning. Referring this point to research aim 1, it can be seen that during the training, MOSOVO are told not to inform them as to which risk category they are being placed into, as this type of offender does not respond well to the term ‘risk’. The data from this part of the study supports the fact that MOSOVO do not discuss risk with the RSO and that each RSO is cautious of this term being used.

**7.5 Overall Strengths and Limitations of Research**

For study 1, the researcher observed the full MOSOVO and ARMS training at each force, which provided the researcher with an in depth understanding of the training and participant’s responses to the training. Although the researcher sat at the back of the room during each observation of training, participants were aware of the researcher’s presence and this may have had an effect on how participants responded to the training.

With regards to recordings of home visits for study 1, each force agreed to record all of their visits over the same time period to then allow the researcher to randomly select which recordings to transcribe for each level of risk. However, as the researcher was not present during the visit, the researcher was not able to get a feel for the rapport between offender and MOSOVO which from this data, appear to be crucial to the outcome of the visit.

For study 2, nine focus groups were completed, three at each force, one for each rank of officer. This provided the researcher with a valuable insight into different ranks of officer’s views as to the training and the home visit and risk assessment process. However, as only small numbers were present during the focus groups, it may be that future research could attempt to gain access to more participants to take part in the focus group. Also, each force selected which participants would take place in the focus group. This was done by each force selecting participants based on each of the risk levels and that would be compliant and not hostile to a woman. It is accepted that this selection process could have had an effect on their responses. However, there were differing responses across the data set, which might suggest this is not a strong limitation. Finally, the majority of participants that took part in the focus group were of white ethnicity, future research could attempt to gain a more diverse range of ethnicity for sampling purposes.

For study 3, the researcher conducted interviews at police headquarters with one offender from each level of risk to gain an understanding as to their views of the home visit and risk assessment process. Limitations to this could be that as the interviews were at Police headquarters, participants may not have felt comfortable in answering the questions. Also, each force selected which participants took part in the interviews which may have had an effect on the responses that were provided.

**7.6 Overall Future Directions**

This research has provided rich data set with regards to the training of MOSOVO, MOSOVO’s views of the training and home visit process together with RSO’s views of the home visit and risk assessment process. From this data, it is clear that there is room for future research to be carried out in the future.

This thesis observed training programmes for MOSOVO that were in place during a set period of time. From the ARMS working party, it is clear that this training has now been further developed based from the working party findings and further research could observe what training has been put in place together with MOSOVO’s views as to whether this training is more suited to the practical side of MOSOVO’s role.

Further research could focus on how detailed the ARMS assessments are when they are completed and whether sufficient detail is placed into the assessments to assist in future management of the offender. The reasoning for this research is that findings from this thesis, showed that MOSOVO felt that they would not have enough time to complete the ARMS in practice. This research would ascertain how much detail is placed into the ARMS and whether the ARMS that are completed assist in planning and preparation for future visits.

Another area of research could focus on interview style and technique. It is clear from this data set that this is an area that MOSOVO struggle with, particularly new MOSOVO and further research could focus on interview technique following the PEACE model of interviewing. The amended training that is now in place from the ARMS working party could be observed followed by interviews or focus groups with MOSOVO, which would be a follow on study from this thesis.

Finally, as notification requirements form a large part of the visit at each force, there is scope to research whether RSO’s are aware of the notification requirements and how do MOSOVO deal with breach of such notification requirements during the home visits.

**Reflections on the PhD and Research Process**

**Introduction**

The researcher will now present a personal reflection of the process from embarking on the PhD to completion and submission of the PhD. The PhD process was the first time the researcher had conducted research and research methods in particular was a new concept to the researcher and as such reflective writing was an unfamiliar form of writing which the researcher found quite challenging, as stated by Lazard & Macavoy (2017, P.1) ‘*reflective writing is particularly challenging to those new to qualitative methodologies*’ (Lazard & Macavoy, 2017, P.1). Furthermore, novice researchers may experience some ambivalence and nervousness about the research process and therefore, engaging in reflexive practices may prove difficult (Orange, 2016). However, it was evident to the researcher that ‘*reflection has increasingly appeared in the pedagogical debate and has been considered a central tool in experience-based learning’* (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 2000).

This therefore led the researcher to read further about this particular style of writing and the rationale behind this, as it appeared crucial to the PhD process. Reflexivity is largely practiced in qualitative research, where it is used to legitimate and validate research procedures (Steir,1995; Dahlberg *et al* 2002; Pillow, 2003) and as such, reflection is a fundamental expectation of qualitative work (Henwood & Pigeon, 1992; Tuval-Mashiach, 2016; Glesne 2006; Lichtman 2010; Maxwell 2013; Ortlipp, 2008). As such, reflexivity is important because it is perceived as an integral process in qualitative research, in which the researcher continuously reflects on how their actions impact on the research setting and affect data collection and analysis (Lambert *et al* 2010).

Reflection allows the researcher to make deeper and more instructive connections between their learning experiences, assumptions and perceptions (College of Policing, 2015). Furthermore, it is also described as the thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the intersubjective dynamics between researcher and the researched (Henwood & Pidgeon 1992). From this, it became apparent to the researcher that the aim of reflective writing is to encourage myself (the researcher) to look carefully at my actions/feelings and think about what I learnt from them.

In the following sections, the researcher reflects on three main areas: firstly, undertaking a PhD in this area; secondly gaining access to the police to complete the research and lastly, the research process and methods that were employed.

**Rationale for choosing to study for a PhD in this Area**

Prior to commencing this PhD journey, the researcher did have a successful and somewhat lengthy career of working with RSO’s in the criminal justice sector, whereby the researcher was firstly part of an international organisation investigating serious organised international criminal activity of persons known to sexually offend and groom victims and secondly whereby the researcher had a role in punishment and rehabilitation of RSO’s within the United Kingdom. The researcher appreciates that by saying that practical experience brought the researcher to this topic of learning does not create specific links to the process of doing a specific research project (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006), however, it was from the researcher’s practical experience whereby she noticed that there was a repeat pattern of returning offenders into the criminal justice system that led the researcher to conduct further research into the management of RSO’s in the community rather than from a sentencing and rehabilitation aspect as the researcher was interested in the reasons as to why so many RSO’s were returning to the criminal justice system and what management strategies were in place in the community in order to try to prevent this.

The researcher therefore read around the topic of management of RSO’s, which was a new area to the researcher in order to gain an understanding as to how RSO’s are managed in the community. The researcher was particularly interested in risk management of offenders and the researcher therefore focused on risk management of RSO’s in the community for 12 months prior to submitting a PhD proposal in order to gain a sound understanding of this area, which is where the researcher found a gap in the literature regarding the home visit process, in particular, how the level of risk is decided during the home visit and how this home visit was part of the risk management process. The researcher now realises at this point the researcher was already beginning her reflective cycle journey (Lazard & Macavoy, 2017, P.10) as she was already providing a rationale as to why research around the home visit process was required (Shields 2016).

Further, the researcher’s academic background was primarily from a Law capacity and this research was to explore the management of RSO’s from a criminological perspective which was a completely new style of learning and writing for the researcher to understand. The researcher’s Law academic background allowed the researcher to be competent in reading and analysing factual case studies and scenarios but research from a criminological perspective was an entirely new way of thinking and writing, especially from a theoretical viewpoint. This made the researcher feel particularly anxious and often wondered whether completing a PhD at this point in her life was the right thing to do. However, this is an area of extreme interest and importance to the researcher, which led the researcher to continue with the PhD process.

This preliminary work allowed the researcher to be able to apply for a fully funded Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) and PhD scholarship at Leeds Beckett University to which the researcher completely underestimated the amount of work and dedication that such a commitment required. As previously stated, the researcher did study Law at both undergraduate and postgraduate level where the researcher fully enjoyed both experiences, but both of these courses were not focused around research, which the researcher came to realise was a crucial aspect to the PhD process.

The PhD therefore came as no easy task to the researcher to which she faced many obstacles, particularly as at this point in the researcher’s life, she was unable to devote all of her time to her studies (as she had done previously) and also the researcher now had her own family and was returning to academia as a mature student after a long break in studying. The researcher found that her close family and friends were particularly unsupportive of the research due to the fact it would take her away from family life and also due to the fact that the research was around the topic of RSO’s and certain people could not understand why the researcher wished to research this area. This did not dispel the researcher and if anything provided the researcher with further motivation to complete the research.

However, the struggle to keep up with studying while managing a teaching workload and the bearings of being a mum were a particular barrier to the researcher, which the researcher did not give due consideration to before embarking on this journey. The researcher envied full time doctoral students who were privileged to spend most days on campus, focusing solely on their research project. Nor did the researcher appreciate the lack of home and work life balance or being unable to connect with other research students as the researcher’s home life tended to take precedence over her studies. However, as previously stated, this is an area that the researcher is extremely interested in and the researcher was hopeful that if she persued her PhD, that the practical experience that she had gained within the criminal justice system would stand her in good stead in negotiating and gaining access to participants and that the research would have an impact on managing RSO’s in the future.

**Gaining access to police**

Any reflexive account deals with how the researcher gained access to the field and negotiated relations in unfamiliar and at times unprecedented environment (Rowe, 2004), which will now be provided. The researcher was extremely anxious regarding conducting research with the police and was particularly nervous regarding gaining access to the police. However, the researcher had hoped that her age and experience would allow her to overcome barriers in gaining access to participants, which is discussed below. The researcher was aware that particularly the age and gender of researchers variously impacts on their acceptance in the field (Loftus, 2009; Westmorland, 2001; Rowe, 2004) as do the Importance of trust, honesty and ethical sensibility (Rowe, 2004). To some extent the researcher’s previous experience and age did assist in her preliminary discussions with the police, as the researcher was able to have a sensible discussion around her previous experience with RSO’s to which each force seemed particularly interested in. The police were very interested in the researcher’s previous experience in the prison system and also due to the researcher’s age, the police appeared to be pleased that the researcher was not straight from university and in the younger age bracket which appeared to have a good effect on the negotiations and discussions around gaining access.

The discipline of criminology can and often does involve doing research for the powerful, those social control agents and or organisations responsible for the creation and maintenance of definitions, labels and boundaries of crime and markers of criminality. According to Hudson (2000, 177):

‘*Of all the applied social sciences, criminology has the most dangerous relationship to power: the categories and classifications, the labels and diagnoses and the images of the criminal produced by criminologists are stigmatising and pejorative. The strategies of control and punishment which utilise those conceptions have implications for the life-chances, for the opportunities freely to move around our cities, and for the rights and liberties, of those to whom they are applied’.*

From this, it soon became apparent that the police viewed the researcher as a ‘new’ researcher, despite her previous experience with RSO’s and this would allow for its own obstacles, as it appeared to the researcher that the police wished to remain in control of the research at all times and that the police did have a position of power in the research in that they could approve or disapprove it at any time. Further the researcher felt that this ‘new researcher’ status allowed the police to treat the researcher in a certain way i.e. during discussions the police did seem to assert their power and it was evident that the research would only be approved if the police were entirely happy with the access that the researcher requested. It was therefore crucial that the researcher developed strong negotiation skills from an early stage in order to secure the trust of the police, to allow the researcher to carry out this thesis (the researcher felt as if her mature student status assisted with this), as it was evident that the police had the power to either restrict or deny the researcher the access that was required (Lumsden & Winter 2014). As stated by Rowe (2004):

‘*Evidence based research and engagement with the criminal justice system or other powerful institutions must be done in a tempered, critical and reflexive manner. Reflexivity in social research draws our attention to the ways in which knowledge is produced not just by the academic, but in collaboration (and often conflict) with the researched and those in positions of power who grant us access to, or seek to research on various ‘criminal’ or ‘deviant’ groups’.*

It was therefore important that the researcher developed a good rapport and strong working relationship with the police during the initial negotiations as the researcher was fully aware that the police may not assist the researcher as she was classed as an outsider to the police (Dwyer & Buckle 2009), having not conducted research with the police previously nor having any practical experience with the police. As the researcher felt that the police were particularly impressed with her previous experience, from this experience the researcher was aware that humour can assist in breaking down barriers (Cram, 2018) and this led the researcher to develop a jovial and down to earth approach in the negotiations which seemed to greatly assist the researcher in being granted the access that was requested The researcher was also fully aware that the police may have their own agendas and ideas about how the research should be constructed, disseminated and applied (Rowe, 2004). Therefore the researcher spent considerable time (6 months) in which she developed relations with different forces and also the College of Policing by having various telephone and skype calls to discuss each study within this research, to ensure that each force were completely happy with the research that was to take place.

Initially, the researcher contacted individual forces to ascertain whether they would be interested in taking part in the research to which the researcher was directed to the College of Policing to ascertain whether the research could go ahead. The researcher was required to submit an application for the research to the College of Policing and the researcher was assigned a ‘gatekeeper’ who would assist in this process. Due to the researcher’s lack of research skills and experience, the researcher did not envisage or even contemplate the fact that this process would need to be undertaken and the time that this would take, which did take considerable time. It was therefore important that the researcher became ‘accepted’ so as to secure genuine cooperation and trust from the people in the research site (Reiner and Newburn 2008) and also to speed up the process as the researcher had lost considerable time in submitting the application which the researcher had not allowed for on her GANT timeline. As previously stated, this trust and cooperation was developed during the negotiation, partly due to the researcher’s age and experience, but also due to the negotiation tactic the researcher used which was by incorporating humour into the process.

During this process of negotiation, the researcher did however, begin to forge a good professional relationship with the ‘gatekeeper’ and the College of Policing who did peruse several drafts of the research application. During this process, several negotiations regarding the required access were discussed and it became clear to the researcher that the police were of the opinion that academic research is of little use (Brown, 1996) and there was a good deal of suspicion and introversion from the police (Marks 2005, Loftus 2009). The researcher attempted to divert this by using her experience and humour but the researcher sensed that the police still felt that academics were inferior to their hierarchial structure (Rowe, 2004). The Police were clearly of the opinion that the researcher was an outsider and this left the researcher facing several obstacles in negotiating the access that was required for the research. For example, the researcher initially requested access to attend the home visits in person which the College of Policing denied outright due to the risk to the researcher. Also, the researcher requested access to more local police forces to where the researcher was based which was also denied, as these forces were not aware of the researcher and also at the time ARMS was a particularly new risk assessment and as such, some forces did not wish to take part in any research.

However, due to the relationship that the researcher had developed with the College of Policing and the ARMS development team during the preliminary negotiation stage, the researcher was able to discuss the impact that the research would have and the benefits that this would have to the police force, which did allow the researcher access to certain forces. One force that agreed to access is to be known as force 1 in this thesis, which is where the ARMS development team deliver their training. Without the negotiations and relationship that the researcher developed, the researcher doubts whether this access would have been granted. When the researcher attended the training for this force, this allowed the researcher to develop relationships with force 2, where the researcher discussed access to this force and access was later granted once negotiations had taken place. For force 3, throughout this PhD process, the researcher had attended at different conferences and developed good relations with academics in the area of policing who had existing contact with force 3 and provided the researcher with contact details for this force. The researcher therefore approached force 3 who agreed to the access that was required via the college of policing.

**Research Process and Methods**

As the researcher lacked experience in research methods, the researcher felt it necessary to undertake reading and training into the types of research methods available, in particular, which research methods tended to be used in both criminological research and research with the police. Again, as with other aspects of this PhD journey, the researcher underestimated the amount of time this would take and the researcher found herself engaged in research methods literature, together with post-graduate training that was available at Leeds Beckett University, on research methods for eight months in total. However, the researcher did feel it necessary to do this and it was time well spent in order for the researcher to gain knowledge of research methods and to be able to discuss with her supervisory team which research methods the researcher felt were appropriate to complement the research aims and questions of this thesis (Finlay & Gough, 2002). The time that the researcher did spend on reading around research methods has now allowed the research to become confident in the different aspects of this area and the researcher now feels confident as to how to undertake research in the future.

The research aims of this thesis were to explore how police are trained to enable MOSOVO to carry out the necessary risk assessment during the home visit and the researcher therefore sought access to observe the MOSOVO training at each force that took part in this thesis. It was felt important to the researcher that she gained a foundational knowledge of the MOSOVO training as this was not readily available in published literature. As stated in chapter 3 of this thesis, this allowed the researcher to contact each force (with the approval of the College of Policing) to discuss access to observing the training programme. The researcher initially contacted a local force to the researcher, where the researcher submitted an application to observe the training which was refused, as this force felt at the time ARMS was proving to be too problematic to be subject to any research. However, due to the relationship that the researcher developed with this force during these negotiations, together with the relationship with the ‘gatekeeper’ from the College of Policing, this force recommended that the researcher contact what is now known as force 1 in this thesis and this force made a recommendation to force 1 on behalf of the researcher.

The researcher therefore made contact with the lead MOSOVO officer at force 1 (who happened to be part of the ARMS implementation team) to discuss the research and undertook negotiations as to what the researcher could observe at the training. The researcher was fully expecting the MOSOVO lead to seek more information on the study by asking questions in an attempt to legitimise the research in their eyes (Lundman & Fox 1978) or to dispel concerns of the researcher as being a ‘management spy’ (Rowe, 2000). However, to the researcher’s surprise, this discussion (and subsequent discussions thereafter) led to this force agreeing to the researcher to being able to observe the full training programme and also recording the training programme and to able to make notes on the activities that were undertaken during the training. The researcher felt as if her use of humour and previous experience with RSO’s allowed this force to be particularly welcoming in their approach. The only condition that was placed by this force was that the researcher was to sit at the back of the training room, and not get involved in the activities or pass opinion on the training. The researcher agreed to this on the condition that the training would not be altered in any way and that the training that the researcher observed would be the training that is used in all subsequent training programmes.

When the researcher attended the training, the researcher was requested by the training officers to introduce herself and explain the purpose of the research, which did raise questions from some participants as to the validity of the research and one participant in particular made significant attempts throughout the training to avoid being observed, which has been described as a common occurrence in research with the police. (Cram, 2018). However, the training officer who led the training, was very keen for the research to take place, as he was part of the ARMS development team and was keen to understand participant feedback, and this seemed to diminish any doubts from this participant. Also, as this was a two week training programme, the researcher did develop good relations with each participant in the group and found that the use of humour did relax the participants around the researcher. As stated by Rowe (2004), ‘the use of humour helps to suggest the illusion of ‘normal’ conversation, with the researcher temporarily colluding as one of the ‘lads’ in an attempt to reduce power differentials’.

During this training, the researcher developed good professional relationships with participants on the training and one such participant was the training coordinator for force 2 in this thesis who agreed to allow the researcher to observe the training at this second force. The researcher was particularly keen to observe the training at this force as the participant made it clear that he would be adapting the training to what he felt was required in order to successfully manage RSO’s. During this time, the researcher had also been negotiating with force 3 via telephone and the fact that the researcher was actively observing the training at force 1 provided the researcher with credibility as to why she should be provided access at this additional force. However, force 3 did request that the researcher submit a separate application to them and then further telephone negotiations took place to allow the researcher access to the training at this force.

Once the researcher had observed the training at each force, the researcher was then able to listen to the recordings of the home visits that each force had agreed to record over the same two week period. The researcher first requested access to attend on the home visits, but each force felt that this was too great a risk to a female researcher and this led to access being refused. This was particularly disappointing as the researcher had hoped to see the home environment to ascertain what this was like and whether this had any effect on the interview style and also to understand what the rapport was like between MOSOVO and RSO. This refusal of access led to further negotiations taking place, to which each force appeared adamant that the researcher could not attend on the home visits. However, during the training, it was disclosed that one force had started to pilot home visits being recorded, using a body camera and voice recording and as such these recordings would be available. The researcher therefore used the rapport and relationships she had developed throughout the training to discuss the possibility of gaining access to these. This conversation was repeated several times until ultimately each force agreed that the researcher could be provided access to the same recordings of home visits over the same two week period.

Although the researcher was disappointed that she was unable to attend on the home visit in person, the researcher was extremely grateful for the access to recordings. During these discussions it was agreed that the researcher would listen to the recordings at the headquarters of each force, which meant that the researcher was alone in a room to transcribe the recordings. On reflection, this process worked very well as the researcher was able to listen to the recordings as many times as was required and the researcher felt she gained a real understanding of interview style of the home visit in particular. However, the researcher does also appreciate that she was unable to understand a sense of the relationship and rapport between MOSOVO and RSO.

Once the recordings of home visits had been listened to, the researcher was then able to devise a focus group schedule for study 2, based on her learning from the training. The training officer at each force, arranged for the researcher to discuss the possibility of focus group research with the MOSOVO lead at their force which made negotiations considerably easier. During the observation of training at each force, it became apparent to the researcher that participants were particularly anxious regarding the home visit and in particular the priority rating on the ARMS assessment and as such, the researcher designed the focus group schedule around the ARMS assessment and the home visit.

As already stated, this PhD journey was the first time the researcher had conducted any kind of research. The researcher was aware that the aim of a focus group was to bring a group of people together with a shared interest (Bloor et al 2001) and to allow those persons to freely discuss the questions put to them without any pressure from the researcher (Puchta and Potter 2004) and the only task on behalf of the researcher was to keep the conversation flowing and ‘focussed’ on the topic (Sim, 1998; Cote-arsenault *et al* 1999; Bloor *et al* 2001). As the researcher had already developed good relations with the police from the observation of training and had identified areas of concern for the home visit process, the researcher was particularly keen to ensure that the focus groups ran as smoothly as possible.

Therefore, the environment within which the group was held was carefully considered before conducting the focus group (Beyea *et al* 2000) and the researcher felt the focus groups should be held at each force’s police station or headquarters as this was their familiar environment. As such, during the negotiation process, it was agreed that the focus groups would be held at the headquarters of each force to allow each participant to feel comfortable and as if they were in their working environment which would allow the participants to feel a sense of being in control during the focus group, which did allow participants to have an free open discussion. The researcher requested three focus groups at each force, one for new officers, officers with some experience and then officers of management level. The reasoning for this was to allow officers of the same level to be able to discuss their experiences and also concerns without feeling inferior or superior to other participants in the group and the researcher felt as if this worked well as each participant in each of the focus groups became fully involved in the discussion and there were no dysfunctional group dynamics (Jackson 1998).

Once the observation of training, listening to the recordings of home visits and focus groups had taken place, the researcher identified that the majority of participants were of the same opinion and gave very similar responses regarding the management of RSO’s, in particular the risk assessment during the home visit process. This enabled the researcher to be able to plan for an interview study with a sample of RSO’s, whereby the researcher wished to ascertain RSO’s views as to the risk assessment and home visit process, to provide data as to whether MOSOVO’s views of this process was similar or different to RSO’s experiences of the risk assessment and home visit process. As the researcher had previous experience of working with RSO’s within a criminal justice setting, the researcher did not feel anxious regarding this study as she had dealt with this type of offender in professional capacity previously. However, the researcher was conscious that the capacity of a research interview was somewhat different to that of her previous experience, this therefore led the researcher to conduct further reading as to how this interview should be carried out. Research interviews should be conducted whereby the researcher, behaves professionally, dress in a way that was not likely to cause offence, impart the necessary amount of information about the study, gain written consent and generally conduct herself in an efficient and trustworthy manner (Finlay & Gough, 2008). This led the researcher to ‘dress down’ in a casual manner on the day of the interview, the rationale for this being that this type of offender prefer a informal approach and can become quite intimidated by a person in a suit or a uniform (Murphy & Frederoff). The researcher also employed good listening skills to ensure that the participants felt as if they would have a voice in the research and to explain to each participant the reasoning for the research and that the research was entirely voluntary. This allowed the participants for study 3 to settle down prior to the interview and to raise any questions they had on the research.

Prior to this study taking place, the researcher had to conduct the necessary negotiations with the police to allow access to interviewing the RSO’s. As the researcher had by this point developed good professional relationships with all three forces, each force did easily agree to have a conversation around this study and each force were keen to assist the researcher with this study. These conversations were discussed via telephone and the researcher emphasised that this study would provide the police with an understanding of RSO’s views towards the home visit and identify any areas of improvement for future practice and it would also allow the researcher to gain an understanding as to the RSO’s views of the home visit process. Initially the researcher asked for access to the home visit but each force said that this would not be possible as they felt the risk to the researcher was too great. Force 1 suggested that the researcher could interview the RSO’s if they came to the police station and an officer was outside the room. It was agreed that the police would select a sample of RSO’s to take part in this research and that the interviews would take place at the police station, whereby a police officer would be directly outside the room to ensure safety to the researcher. This did raise concerns for the researcher as she was concerned that the police would only select participants that were compliant or felt they had to respond to questions in a certain way. Also, the fact that the police were sending out the participant information forms regarding the study, led the police to be in control but as this was the first time that the researcher had conducted research this was accepted to allow the research to take place.

From the findings of the focus group study, the researcher was able to carefully think about and write the questions to be asked for the interview study and it was of particular importance to avoid official line answers (Rowe 2004, P.40) or something of a pre-packaged answer (Spanno 2005). Therefore the researcher developed questions that the RSO would not only be able to answer based on their experience of the home visit, but that would also provide the researcher with the opportunity to prompt each participant should this be necessary. Prior to the interview starting, the researcher introduced herself and explained the research and a general discussion took place in order to make the RSO feel at ease. Participants stated that they had chosen to take part in the study as it was their chance to have their voice heard. The researcher felt that participants were open and honest and did not require prompting, but at times the researcher did have to reign in the interview as the RSO’s appeared particularly keen to discuss other aspects that were not on the interview schedule, such as their initial offending and how that led them to be in on the SOR. The researcher felt that this led to a good level of rapport with the RSO and as such the RSO appeared to enjoy the interview and this appeared to diminish any pre-prepared answers that the RSO may have had.

As each study was completed, the researcher then began the task of analysing the data from the study, to allow for themes to be identified for each study. The researcher again had to undertake further work on how to analyse data, which involved reading literature around this area and also attending conferences on this aspect of the PhD. This part of the PhD journey did take the researcher considerable time as she was faced with large amounts of data and was at times unsure exactly how to place the data into themes, as stated by Mathner & Doucet 2003 ‘*novice students may face large amounts of data and little guidance on how to analyse it and may feel they lack the necessary skills and tools to engage in reflexivity and may feel they need more guidance*’ However, with the support of the researcher’s second supervisor, this task that started as an extremely anxious task became an enjoyable task as the researcher could identify which codes and themes could be put together and this led the researcher to understand the analysis in greater depth, despite the researcher having to revisit the data several times in order to achieve this.

This reflection has highlighted the researcher’s personal journey from commencement of PhD to submission. This has shown that the researcher felt she lacked knowledge in research methods and that the researcher underestimated the amount of work and commitment that is required for a PhD. However, as this reflection has shown, the researcher now has a solid understanding and foundation in which to carry out research in the future.

**Chapter 8**

**8.1 Final Conclusions**

Although future directions and implication of findings have been discussed within each of the separate data chapters in this thesis, these considerations will now be discussed and reinforced as final conclusions to this thesis.

Research aim 1 of this thesis, aimed to observe the training of MOSOVO at 3 different police forces within the UK. The findings from this study found that the training across those 3 forces was similar and also different in parts and it is suggested that to promote consistency in training of MOSOVO, that the training should be the same across all 43 forces in England and Wales. The trainers that deliver the MOSOVO training would benefit from having recent practical experience of conducting home visits and risk assessments, which would enable trainers to gain respect from participants and also to be able to respond to any questions that participants on the MOSOVO training course may raise.

It was apparent from the recordings of home visits that notification requirements are central to the home visit and in managing the RSO, yet the training only discussed the notification requirements very briefly. It is therefore suggested that there should be more time allocated to notification requirements in the training programme, in particular, how MOSOVO are to respond if it appears that the offender is in breach of these.

It was also evident from the recordings of home visits that MOSOVO tend to focus on static factors rather than dynamic factors of the ARMS assessment. This may be due to the fact that MOSOVO feel as if this type of offender is unable to change or move on with their life as they are internally suspicious towards them but MOSOVO should be directed that in practice the focus of an ARMS assessment should centre around the dynamic factors.

The majority of participants stated that they felt that certain headings on the ARMS assessment were duplicated and not required, such as sexual interests and sexual pre-occupation and participants felt that these headings could be merged into one heading. From the recordings of home visits, it was clear that MOSOVO deal with both of these headings together and therefore, it is suggested that these two headings could be collapsed into one heading of perhaps, sexual interests only.

Across the data set, all participants raised concerns regarding the priority and risk level on ARMS. Although both of these areas are covered in the training programme, more practical exercises could be used and more time could be devoted to this exercise.

The training does afford significant time as to how to interview this type of offender during the home visit. All participants were aware of the PEACE model of interviewing, however, the majority of participants felt that this type of interview during the home visit is so different to the PEACE model of interviewing, due to the fact that the RSO is not a suspect at this time that more time should be afforded to this in the training and the motivational interview model should be adopted.

It is clear that participants from research aim 3, felt that if RSO has been on a treatment programme, their responses would differ and they may give the ‘buzz words’ that they learn in treatment which does not assist in the risk management process. Although treatment was discussed at each of the 3 forces, some forces, in particular force 3, placed more emphasis on this. As the majority of RSO’s will have been on a treatment programme, it is suggested that MOSOVO should be more aware of this, in particular more training should be afforded as to how to challenge the RSO if they choose to give the ‘buzz words’ during the home visit.

During the national training, it was suggested by the trainers at that training, that they should not focus their time on the initial offence, yet all recordings that the researcher had access to, considerable time was spent on this, especially at the beginning of the home visit. This appeared to be due to if the MOSOVO that attended that home visit, had not had any dealing with that RSO previously. However, as ARMS is meant to be a dynamic risk assessment, it is suggested that MOSOVO should only afford time to the initial offence during the first initial visit and not any subsequent visits.

As part of the risk assessment and home visit process, when MOSOVO attend at the RSO’s place of residence, they undertake general observations of the property and any devices they may have. Although all participants confirmed that this did take place, participants with less experience described that this was not done in as much detail as the more experienced MOSOVO. Therefore more time could be allocated or a separate training course could be provided from DIU as to how to conduct general observations, in particular on devices when conducting the home visit.

Finally, from study 1, it was clear that MOSOVO of Sergeant level did not find the training useful to them and a separate training course could be provided for MOSOVO of this level, to assist them in reviewing the ARMS assessments, in particular in completing the Line Management Review of the Arms assessment.

**8.2 Further Research**

Study 1 provided qualitative data from 3 out of 43 police forces across the UK only and further research could be undertaken at other forces to allow for a larger sample of observation of training. Also, the observation of training that was observed for this research, was observed in 2016 and as the ARMS Steering Group have reviewed the training recently, further research could be undertaken to explore how the training has been adapted from this review.

As the researcher was not present at the recordings of home visits, the researcher was unable to get a feel for the atmosphere between MOSOVO and RSO and if ethics would allow, there could be further research which would allow the researcher to attend on the home visits to gain a more detailed understanding of the home visit process and the dynamics between MOSOVO and RSO.

More experienced MOSOVO felt that the training focused heavily on the case study of both ‘Matthew’ and ‘Nigel’ and felt that this style of training was ‘an insult’ to the more experienced officer. It is suggested therefore, that the training should be adapted to reflect not just those of Sergeant level, but for all different ranks of MOSOVO that attend the training.

Across the data set, all participants felt that further training should be provided on interview style for this type of offender, in particular how to challenge this type of offender when responding to questions on the home visit. Further time could be afforded to the training in respect to this, perhaps with more real life case studies that have been taken from practice.

The case studies in the training, reflect a particular style of visit i.e. an ARMS assessment, yet this is only a small percentage of the home visits that actually take place. The majority of the home visits are referred to as initial and subsequent visits. Therefore, the training could be enhanced to reflect the different types of visits that take place, in particular, initial and subsequent visits.

Across the 3 forces that took part in this research, each force afforded different time to completing the ARMS assessment during the training. All participants stated that the amount of time that was allocated for this during training was not reflective of how long the ARMS assessment takes to complete in practice. Therefore, further time could be allocated for this during training to reflect how long this takes in practice.

All participants appeared to find allocating the priority and risk level particularly challenging, which resulted in participants showing great levels of anxiety and concern around this. Although sufficient time was afforded to this in the training, participants were only provided with one opportunity to allocate the priority and risk level. Therefore, the training could be adapted to allow for more practical exercises on the priority and risk level to be incorporated, which may reduce anxiety and concerns.

From the recordings of home visits, it appears that notification requirements are a central feature of the home visit, yet very little time is afforded to these on the training. Participants felt that notification requirements could be a ‘grey area’ and would welcome more assistance with how to interpret these on the home visit. It therefore seems imperative that the training needs to be amended to allow for more detailed training around the notification requirements. The training could be improved to inform MOSOVO how to discuss these on the home visit, in particular, how to challenge the offender if he appears to be in breach of the notification requirements.

The research aim of study 3 was to allow for RSO’s views of the risk assessment and home visit process and is the first UK study of its kind. The findings from this study found that RSO’s understandably felt anxious around the first home visit, where they described not knowing what to expect from the home visit and described the visit as a means for the police to ‘check up on them’. However, once RSO’s become familiar with the home visit process, they described feeling less anxious and actually did not mind the home visit. All participants in this study, described that they preferred familiarity and routine of the home visit, in particular they would prefer if the same MOSOVO attended each visit as this would not only allow a good rapport with MOSOVO but would also reduce the need to discuss the initial offence at every visit. Although ARMS is intended to be a dynamic risk framework that should focus on future risk of recidivism, the home visit sees to focus on past behaviour in the form of the initial offence. It is suggested that there should be attempts to ensure that the same MOSOVO attend on each visit, however the researcher acknowledges that this may not be possible due to current staffing constraints and also that the home visit should only focus on the initial offence at the first initial visit.

Participants who were new to the sex offenders register or who were of the lower risk category were encouraging towards the Police, however, those who had been on the Sex Offenders Register for some time or who were in the higher risk category were somewhat hostile towards the Police. Although the training does attempt to incorporate how to challenge offenders, more emphasis could be placed on this for the higher risk offender.

This study adopted a semi-structured interview approach, where participants were selected by each police force. This may have produced a less representative sample and if further research were to be undertaken, there could be more control on the part of the researcher to allow the researcher to recruit and select participants. Also, the interviews took place at each police force’s headquarters and although the research took steps to minimise feelings of anxiety on the part of the RSO, it may be that they did not feel comfortable in answering questions. If further research were to be conducted, it would be of benefit for the researcher to conduct interviews outside of the Police Headquarters.