

Introduction

The role of the chaplain has traditionally been to provide spiritual or religious support for people within their target population and their families (Timmins et al., 2018; Visser et al., 2023). There are many definitions of chaplaincy, but a broad consensus includes the following: *“a practice of care involving the intentional recognition and articulation of the sacred by nominated individuals authorised for this task in secular situations”* (Swift et al., 2015). Chaplains practice in various institutional settings (Carey, 2015), such as healthcare (Timmins et al., 2018), the military (Davie, 2015), at sea (Cadge et al., 2023) and across the criminal justice system, including in police custody (Gouse, 2016), courts (Carey, 2015) and prisons (Denney, 2018).

The provision of religious services in prisons has often been aimed at the moral rehabilitation of people who are incarcerated, helping to steer them away from a life of crime (Dammer, 2013). In the United States, the term for prisons, “penitentiary”, derives from penitence (i.e., repentance over wrongdoing) which developed from the early Quakers in the 1800s, who sought to reform the purpose of prison and treatment of incarcerated people (Adamson, 2001; Denney, 2018; Thibaut, 1982). While the relationship between religion, prison and reoffending has been the subject of extensive research (Dodson et al., 2011; Yin, 2020), the distinctive responsibilities and impact of prison chaplains remains an understudied area. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Prison Act (1952) made it a legal requirement for prisons to employ a Church of England chaplain. And in England and Wales there were reported to be 474 prison chaplains in 2019 working at 120 institutions (Ministry of Justice, 2019; UK Parliament, 2023). Today, prisons in the UK provide multifaith chaplaincy services and the role of the prison chaplain has expanded to include a wide range of spiritual and pastoral duties including cell visits, family liaison, involvement with education, running libraries, and prevention of extremism (Todd & Tipton, 2011; Todd, 2020). This growing remit of prison chaplains has been mirrored in many other places around world, with prison chaplains helping to address the mental health needs of incarcerated people (Forrester et al., 2018),

problems with substance use (De Andrade et al., 2018), self-harm and suicidal ideation (Stijelja & Mishara, 2022), and in establishing links with the community for housing and employment (Ellison et al., 2017; McKernan, 2017).

Much of this expansion in the size and responsibilities of prison chaplains is likely due to the significant increase in the global prison population over the last three decades. The current prison population is estimated to include 11.5 million people (Penal Reform International), an increase of 25% since 2000 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). The US currently has the largest prison population of more than two million people, followed by China with 1.7 million and Brazil with 811,701 people incarcerated (Fair & Walmsley, 2021). Whereas, England and Wales currently have 87,063 people in prison (Ministry of Justice, 2019). When the number of people incarcerated are measured within a 100,000 of the general population, the US has the highest incarceration rate of 629 people per 100,000, followed by Rwanda (580), Turkmenistan (576), El Salvador (564) and Cuba (510) (Fair & Walmsley, 2021). The data available on incarcerated populations around the world also suggests changes in the characteristics of the prison population. Since 2000 there has been a 60% increase in the female prison population (Fair & Walmsley, 2022). The prison population is also ageing as incarcerated people over the age of 55 are the fastest growing incarcerated population, whilst the numbers of young people incarcerated has declined (Penal Reform International; Sovereign et al., 2019; Young et al., 2017). In terms of religion, the UK has seen an increase of Muslim people in prison from 8% in 2002 to 17% in 2022 (UK Parliament House of Commons Library, 2023) and in the US the number of incarcerated people identifying as Muslim has more than doubled (U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General). Other European countries report Muslim populations in their prisons having grown to anywhere between 10% to 50% of all incarcerated people (Furseth & Aa Kühle, 2011; Trujillo et al., 2009).

While the remit of the prison chaplain has expanded with the expansion and diversification of prison populations around the world, empirical data on the specific roles of prison chaplains and impact of prison chaplaincy is limited, and discussion of these topics is often speculative and anecdotal, as is

much of literature in chaplaincy studies more generally (Roberts & Dunlop, 2022). Whilst not dismissing theoretical, experiential, and anecdotal accounts, in this systematic literature review we sought to focus our attention exclusively on peer reviewed empirical research on the topic.

Aim

Our systematic literature review aims to summarise and synthesise the extant international peer reviewed empirical literature concerning two core issues; 1) The roles, duties and day-to-day responsibilities of chaplains in prison settings and 2) Any reported and/or measured impact of chaplains and chaplaincy services specifically (distinct from provision of religious programmes and services in general).

Methods

Following preferred reporting for systematic reviews guidelines (PRISMA) (Page et al., 2020), we conducted a systematic search and narrative synthesis (Ferrari, 2015). Given the breadth of the potential role of chaplains and the wide range of journals that may publish relevant papers across the social sciences and health, after a scoping review to identify relevant search terms, our search consisted of three elements. First, we conducted data base searches, exploring PsychInfo, CINAHL complete, PsychArticles, MEDLINE, the Cochrane library of systematic reviews, Scopus and JSTOR. Following this, we searched specific journals, not indexed in databases such the Journal of Contemporary Religion, Social Compass, Journal of Religion and Health and Critical Research in Religion. Finally, we carried out backward and forward citation searches of all included papers, which involved searches of the reference lists of included papers and their citations. Our search strategy was supported by a subject specialist university librarian. To ensure a comprehensive set of included papers we kept our search terms broad as follows:

Chaplain* or pastor* or priest* or vicar* or minister* or rabbi* or reverend or rector* or
imam

AND

Prison*, imprison* or jail* or incarcerat* or “correctional facilit*” or inmate* or criminal* or offender*

Our inclusion criteria were empirical, peer reviewed research from any country, relating to chaplains of all faiths and non-faith-based chaplaincy, published between January 2003 and January 2023, published in the English language, to achieve a comprehensive yet contemporary understanding of the role of the chaplain in prisons. Where authors considered prison and other environments these were included as long as we were able to extract data specific to the prison setting. Our exclusion criteria included papers, which considered religious programmes (due to the role of the chaplain not being made explicit and this area has been well investigated) and papers, which considered the religiosity of incarcerated people when there was no reference to engagement with prison chaplains or institutional religious structures. After downloading all citations to Microsoft Excel and removing duplicates, titles, abstracts, and full texts were independently screened by at least two reviewers and then discussed with the full author team. A summary of the study selection process at each stage is presented in figure 1.

Figure 1: Study selection process

Data were extracted using a bespoke spreadsheet which captured aim, participants, methods and results (according to i) role and ii) impact). Table 1 summarises all included papers. Included studies underwent critical appraisal for methodological quality using the relevant CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme) checklists (Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine Critical Appraisal tools).

Exceptions to quality are presented in table I. For comprehensiveness all studies were included irrespective of quality. Quality appraisal identified some papers did not report recruitment processes, ethical issues and, in some of the qualitative papers, the relationship between researcher and participants was not clear (table I). Due to methodological heterogeneity, we combined all data through a narrative synthesis, a dynamic process consisting data extraction and visualisation, description and interpretation (Ferrari, 2015). Our focus was the role and impact of prison chaplains.

Results

Characteristics of included papers

There were 10 papers included in the review; included papers reported the chaplain role and the *perceived or expected* impact of chaplaincy (Becci, 2011; Carey & Medico, 2014; Chui & Cheng, 2013; Denney, 2018; Deuchar et al., 2016; Shaw et al., 2019; Sundt & Cullen, 2002; Sundt et al., 2002; van Dijke et al., 2022; van Herpen & Kruizinga, 2022). Studies were conducted in Europe (Becci, 2011; Deuchar et al., 2016; van Dijke et al., 2022; van Herpen & Kruizinga, 2022), Australia (Carey & Medico, 2014; Shaw et al., 2019), China (Chui & Cheng, 2013), and the USA (Denney, 2018; Sundt & Cullen, 2002; Sundt et al., 2002). The total number of participants across all studies was 571 (chaplains n=536) with the remainder being people who were incarcerated (n=35). Where authors stated, chaplain participants were, both men and women (Carey & Medico, 2014; Denney, 2018; Shaw et al., 2019; Sundt et al., 2002) or “mainly” women (Chui & Cheng, 2013). Incarcerated participants were all men (Becci, 2011; Deuchar et al., 2016; van Herpen & Kruizinga, 2022). The religious denomination of chaplain participants was not always stated (Shaw et al., 2019; van Dijke

et al., 2022). When it was, some studies included a wide range of different denominations (e.g., African Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Quaker) (Denney, 2018) or Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Islamic (Sundt et al., 2002), one had Salvation Army chaplains (Carey & Medico, 2014), one involved Christian chaplains and Buddhist volunteers (Chui & Cheng, 2013) and one with Humanist chaplains (van Dijke et al., 2022). Nearly all included papers used qualitative methods, mostly interviews (Chui & Cheng, 2013; Denney, 2018; Shaw et al., 2019; van Dijke et al., 2022; van Herpen & Kruizinga, 2022) with two surveys (Sundt & Cullen, 2002; Sundt et al., 2002), one focus group (Carey & Medico, 2014), and one case study (Becci, 2011).

Table 1: Summary of included papers

Findings

Two overarching themes were identified, the role of prison chaplains and the impact of prison chaplains. We identified four themes relating to chaplain role, i) pastoral and emotional support and counselling, ii) religious services or ministration, iii) education and practical classes, iv) material support and administration and four themes relating to chaplain impact (or intended impact) v) rehabilitation and prevention of reoffending, vi) creation of community, vii) calm, peace and associated behaviours, and viii) forgiveness and atonement. Each theme is presented in turn. Where there are differences between the views of incarcerated people compared with chaplains or between religious denominations these are explicitly reported in the narrative. Figure 2 illustrates themes and subthemes in relation to the study question.

Figure 2: Themes and subthemes

The Role of the Chaplain

Pastoral and emotional support and counselling. All papers with people who were incarcerated (Becci, 2011; Deuchar et al., 2016; van Herpen & Kruizinga, 2022) and most with chaplain (Carey & Medico, 2014; Denney, 2018; Shaw et al., 2019; Sundt & Cullen, 2002; Sundt et al., 2002) participants cited pastoral and emotional support and counselling as key to the chaplain's role. Incarcerated participants described chaplains as "a person you can trust", "a good friend", and someone they talk to (Becci, 2011). They emphasised the importance of the non-judgmental approach of the chaplain, particularly with regards to the nature of their crime (Becci, 2011; Deuchar et al., 2016; van Herpen & Kruizinga, 2022). A participant in one study said they preferred chaplain support over the prison psychologist as they did not ask questions the person who was incarcerated did not wish to answer, they simply listened (Becci, 2011). At times incarcerated people referenced support that appeared to go beyond pastoral and emotional care and suggested support with mental health problems, for example, after a bereavement (Deuchar et al., 2016). In one study incarcerated people spoke of the value of being able to discuss feelings of guilt and regret and their personal responsibility regarding the offence they had committed (van Herpen & Kruizinga, 2022). Chaplains identified key times they sought to visit people who were incarcerated to deliver pastoral and emotional support and counselling. This included when they arrived, when they asked, at times of crisis and prior to release (Carey & Medico, 2014). One paper reported chaplains had been trained to "make contact with every client" (van Dijke et al., 2022). In some papers, chaplains reflected more on indirect (rather than prison facing) support such as seeking to secure community acceptance for the incarcerated person on their release (Carey & Medico, 2014) or supporting visitations with family (Denney, 2018). In one paper chaplains considered the religious service the only structured activity available to support older people in prison (Shaw et al., 2019). Participants

considered the service supported those with memory loss, for example, with the hymns deliberately chosen to give older people a link to the past.

Similarly, beyond pastoral care, humanist chaplains in one study spoke of support relating to death, grief and other losses and support with relationship and emotional problems such as anxiety, sadness and anger (van Dijke et al., 2022). A survey paper focusing on the rehabilitative role of chaplains identified support orientated toward the emotional problems that “*caused prisoners to break the law*” (Sundt & Cullen, 2002). However, in a second paper reporting the same survey, when asked about the aim and intent of their counselling, the majority of survey respondents (>90%) said it was to support adjustment to prison life as well as the incarcerated person’s successful reintegration into society (Sundt et al., 2002). There was little reported on the approach to pastoral and emotional support and counselling. One study cited Cognitive Behaviour Therapy as a means of changing the way incarcerated people thought (Denney, 2018) and a second paper listed a range of approaches taken, including, reality therapy, group, client centred and eclectic counselling, Behavioural, Gestalt and rational-emotive methods (Sundt et al., 2002). There was only one study where a pastoral, emotional or mental health support role was not explicitly identified (Chui & Cheng, 2013).

Religious services or ministry. Two papers reported the views of incarcerated people on the role of chaplains involving religious services (Becci, 2011; Deuchar et al., 2016). Often they said their involvement with religious services had started or increased during their time in prison (Becci, 2011; Deuchar et al., 2016). Incarcerated people offered a range of reasons for engaging in religious activities including the enjoyment of singing (Becci, 2011), as a way of seeking peace (Becci, 2011; Deuchar et al., 2016) or as a way of seeking forgiveness (Deuchar et al., 2016). Some incarcerated people acknowledged their use of chaplaincy services was for more practical benefits, such as dealing with the drudgery of prison life, the need for social contact or simply a way of getting out of their cells and having a coffee (Deuchar et al., 2016).

The religious element of the role was acknowledged more often by chaplains than incarcerated people. Several papers reported religious ministrations in groups (Carey & Medico, 2014; Chui & Cheng, 2013; Denney, 2018; van Dijke et al., 2022). Sometimes groups were multi-denominational (Carey & Medico, 2014), other times delivered by chaplains with a range of faiths (Shaw et al., 2019) and in the case of Buddhist volunteers, with a focus on ethical living rather than ritual or worship and on a one-to-one basis (Chui & Cheng, 2013). Some of the reasons chaplains gave for providing such services were similar to reasons people who were incarcerated gave for attending, for example, to support seeking peace (Carey & Medico, 2014; Chui & Cheng, 2013). However, in most cases chaplain rationale for this provision was very different to incarcerated peoples' reasons for attending. The most widely expressed aim was that religious belief would stop a person reoffending (Chui & Cheng, 2013; Sundt & Cullen, 2002; Sundt et al., 2002). Some chaplains expressed the view that morality is only possible through engagement in faith-based activities (Denney, 2018). However, others considered the adoption of religion to be less important for rehabilitation (Sundt et al., 2002).

Education and practical classes. In some studies, chaplains, but not incarcerated people, identified a role in delivering education and practical classes. The emphasis and importance on this role varied. Only one study reported frequent and wide-ranging classes for incarcerated people, these included, religious (e.g., praying, reading scripture, worship) and secular (e.g., videos, playing games, general interest topics, sign language, beauty classes) and other activities (Chui & Cheng, 2013). Another study emphasised educating the church and wider community as they reported some people could be intolerant toward "ex-cons" (Carey & Medico, 2014). In one survey paper, providing incarcerated people with a good education was the least frequently delivered activity (Sundt et al., 2002).

Material support and administration. Material help was reported by people who were incarcerated in one study where two participants reported the chaplain giving them clothes such as underwear and socks (Becci, 2011). Three studies with chaplain participants cited their role in provision of material support, this included glasses, not only to support reading but to maintain health and safety (Shaw et al., 2019) and provision of help when incarcerated people were released (Carey & Medico,

2014; Chui & Cheng, 2013). Post release from prison, support for food, bedding, utilities (Carey & Medico, 2014), accommodation and meals (Chui & Cheng, 2013) were easier to provide than money for rent and clothing (Carey & Medico, 2014). One paper reported the significant amount of administration relating to the chaplaincy role including correspondence and referrals and arranging accommodation (Carey & Medico, 2014).

The impact of the chaplain

Rehabilitation and prevent reoffending. Only one of the three papers representing incarcerated people's views identified rehabilitation as an outcome or potential impact of the chaplain's role (Deuchar et al., 2016). In this case participants considered their involvement with chaplains had led them to decisions not to return to a life of crime post release. Most papers representing the views of chaplains identified rehabilitation and prevention of re-offending as the *intended* impact of their role (Carey & Medico, 2014; Chui & Cheng, 2013; Denney, 2018; Sundt & Cullen, 2002; Sundt et al., 2002). In one case preventing reoffending was presented as the *"ultimate goal"* for chaplains (Chui & Cheng, 2013). In another paper 90% of chaplains agreed rehabilitation was important (Sundt et al., 2002). Although a minority case, in one paper, some chaplains expressed *"disdain"* at the word rehabilitation, saying this suggested a re-learning, when for some they had never learnt in the first place (Denney, 2018). Links were made between instilling religious values and rehabilitation (Chui & Cheng, 2013). In other cases, this was less clear, for example, in a survey asking about the best way to rehabilitate offenders, responses such as education, skills acquisition and emotional support were more frequently selected than *"through religion"* (Sundt & Cullen, 2002).

Creation of community. Creation of a community both within and on release from prison was frequently cited as an impact of the chaplain's role by chaplains themselves (Carey & Medico, 2014; Chui & Cheng, 2013) and less frequently by incarcerated people (Becci, 2011). One participant described the chaplains' input in prison led to them feeling *"a part of society . . . makes you feel good"* during their prison sentence (Becci, 2011). Some chaplain participants linked education in

prison with inclusion post release (Carey & Medico, 2014; Chui & Cheng, 2013). One chaplain gave an example of how an incarcerated person entered an art competition in prison and on release was able to earn a living selling their own paintings (Chui & Cheng, 2013). In some studies, explicit links were made between the religious element of the chaplains' role and subsequent integration into the community, for example, one chaplain said "*religion acts as a bridge between prison and society*" (Chui & Cheng, 2013).

Calm, peace and associated behaviour. Two papers representing the views of incarcerated people reported calm, peace and associated behaviours as an impact of the chaplain's role (Becci, 2011; Deuchar et al., 2016). Within the prison setting, one incarcerated person said the chaplain made them feel more relaxed, others said the chaplain made them consider their personal prejudices and values and as a result they had become more tolerant of others (Deuchar et al., 2016). Participants considered this would continue post release, reporting they saw new possibilities for "*coping with life on the outside*" and being less volatile (Deuchar et al., 2016). Some chaplains made similar observations (Carey & Medico, 2014; Shaw et al., 2019; van Dijke et al., 2022) with one describing their impact as having an "*amazing effect*" on how "*accepting and co-operative they were with each other*" (Carey & Medico, 2014), others stating it as an aim rather than an observation, to "*assist inmates in finding peace and understanding within the self*" (Chui & Cheng, 2013) and "*to help people find peace of mind*" (van Dijke et al., 2022). In one paper chaplains reflected on how rarely they observed behavioural problems when older, sometimes confused, people who were incarcerated attended services (Shaw et al., 2019).

Forgiveness and atonement. An opportunity for forgiveness and atonement was cited by both incarcerated people (Deuchar et al., 2016; van Herpen & Kruizinga, 2022) and chaplains (Sundt et al., 2002). In the case of chaplains this was always cited as an *intended* impact rather than as an observation. Chaplains reported using therapeutic approaches to help an incarcerated person "*grapple*" with their own reality, whatever had brought them to prison (Sundt et al., 2002). One

participant described how the chaplains provided support to put his crime into context which helped him with self-forgiveness (van Herpen & Kruizinga, 2022).

Discussion

This literature review aimed to identify the role and impact of chaplains working in prison settings. We identified ten papers with empirical evidence addressing this focus. The literature indicates that the role of the prison chaplain (using a broad definition of faith-based practitioners but not limited in this review to any specific faith) reaches beyond religious services and ministration and encompasses pastoral support and counselling as well as education, financial and material support for incarcerated people or those just leaving prison. The perceived intended impact differed at times between those delivering the services and those receiving them. For chaplains, prison presented a window of opportunity to engage with individuals who may find themselves struggling with meaning and purpose of life, grappling with feelings of guilt and regret and facing multiple losses (freedom, autonomy and social contacts). In prison many people discover their faith for the first time or develop stronger beliefs and increased religious activity. Our literature review found chaplains' aims remain somewhat tied to the original notions of penitence which in turn may lead to offenders' desistance from crime. For incarcerated people, at least part of the appeal of engaging in faith practices is so they can gain a source of emotional support, a way to pass the time of a sentence and a sense of belonging.

Rather than religiosity being central to notions of desistance from crime, our review found chaplains role focused mainly on pastoral care and support to achieve this aim, as well as for the sake of bringing comfort and supporting mental health and wellbeing. There is an increasing interest in the idea that interpersonal interactions are important ways of helping offenders to become reflective, self-aware and relationships themselves facilitate shifts in behaviour and identities in offenders (McMurrin & Delight, 2017; Wong & Gordon, 2017). Two of our included papers reported going beyond offering pastoral care and support to delivering formal (usually qualified health care

practitioner led) psychotherapies (e.g., Gestalt and Rational-Emotive methods (Sundt et al., 2002)). There is some evidence to support the impact of therapies such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) (Pearson et al., 2002) and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) (Debidin & Dryden, 2011) on reoffending in general prison populations. But this raises the question of the qualifications needed by prison chaplains.

In our review, pastoral care and support was more likely to be linked, by both chaplains and incarcerated people, with mental health and wellbeing than re-offending, including for bereavement, (Deuchar et al., 2016), in crisis (Carey & Medico, 2014), for mental health problems such as anxiety and sadness (van Dijke et al., 2022) and confusion in older people (Shaw et al., 2019). The role of chaplains in the provision of pastoral care and support is unsurprising since spiritual and psychological, or mental health needs, are rarely, if at all, discrete needs, more so in a prison setting. In the limited available evidence presented, the historical role of the chaplain appears to have shifted from that of moral rehabilitation to a primary purpose of pastoral support and care of mental health and wellbeing, including in some cases the delivery of direct psychological interventions such as CBT. This could arguably be considered “mission creep”. The same could be said of chaplaincy involvement in education activities. These potentially relate to rehabilitation but not necessarily to faith. This is not specific to prison chaplaincy. A review of healthcare chaplaincy found that of 19 specific interventions delivered by chaplains in hospitals, just nine were categorised as religious or spiritual (Timmins et al., 2018). Whether resulting from perceived need, poor access to mental health services or a conscious change in practice and intention, this shift in role is not recognised in chaplains’ role descriptions (e.g., Anglican guidelines (HM Prison and Probation Service, 2021)).

There are significant gaps in the literature which suggest recommendations for future research. This review did not identify any papers that explored or discussed the role and impact of chaplaincy in women’s prisons. There is a dearth of official statistics outside of the UK on reported faith among incarcerated people which includes the number of Muslims held in Western prisons. This is despite a widespread acknowledgement that there has been an important increase in these populations in

prison. There is a literature which discusses the role of imams in prisons (Khosrokhavar, 2015) but this literature, offering an understanding of the challenges that imams may face, does not include any studies either involving imams or incarcerated Muslim participants. Acquiring faith or converting to a different faith is recognised and discussed in the literature but again there is little research on the topic. The little research available explores religious extremism (Silke & Veldhuis, 2017; Williams & Liebling, 2023) and does challenge some dominant media narratives which in their cynicism fail to address the brutalities of prison life (Gooch & Treadwell, 2015; Pennarola, 2019). This literature suggests that prisons are settings which provoke “*intense religious change*” (Wilkinson et al., 2021). Any evidence of impact in our review was based only on observation and opinion. Spiritual care and impact may not easily lend itself to measurement. Lack of clear role definition confounds this further. However, in an era of funding constraints and ever-increasing needs of incarcerated people, evidence relating to the value of chaplains is needed to deliver evidence based, effective, and efficient care. There is no specific literature relating to older people who are incarcerated and spirituality given this is an important social need (Brooke & Rybacka, 2020; Maschi et al., 2021). The increasing mental health and wellbeing needs of incarcerated people are well documented (Al-Rousan et al., 2017; Tyler et al., 2019) but, beyond what we report here, there is no consideration in the literature of the chaplain’s role in supporting these.

Recommendations for practice

The changes in the prison population, the needs of incarcerated people and the drift in what chaplains deliver suggests a need for explicit, consideration of the spiritual needs of modern-day people in prison. Although the incarcerated people in studies included in this review engaged with religious services, this was as likely to be as a means of simply leaving their cells as it was for spiritual satisfaction. This suggests a need to redefine the spiritual needs of incarcerated people. Similarly, the diversification of the chaplain role (including counselling, education, provision of practical support) suggests a need for redefinition of role consideration of the alignment of current training.

Although chaplains receive Clinical Pastoral Education, this programme does not include instruction for psychotherapy (Clevenger et al., 2021).

Strengths and limitations

This is the only review to our knowledge that considers the role and impact of the prison chaplain. It is not possible to guarantee we have captured all relevant empirical research relating to this subject, but our search processes were extensive and robust. There was a lack of research investigating role and most reports of impact were based on intention or perception in the case of chaplains and experience in the case of incarcerated people.

Conclusion

The nature and needs of the prison population has changed significantly in recent years. The role of the chaplain from anecdotal accounts and the studies reported here, appears also to have changed considerably. Whilst there remains some focus on reduced re-offending this is no longer tied firmly to the notion that religious belief is the only means of achieving this. Religious ministrations whilst still a clear part of the chaplain's role is just one of many, and subsidiary to pastoral care and support.

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