



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland

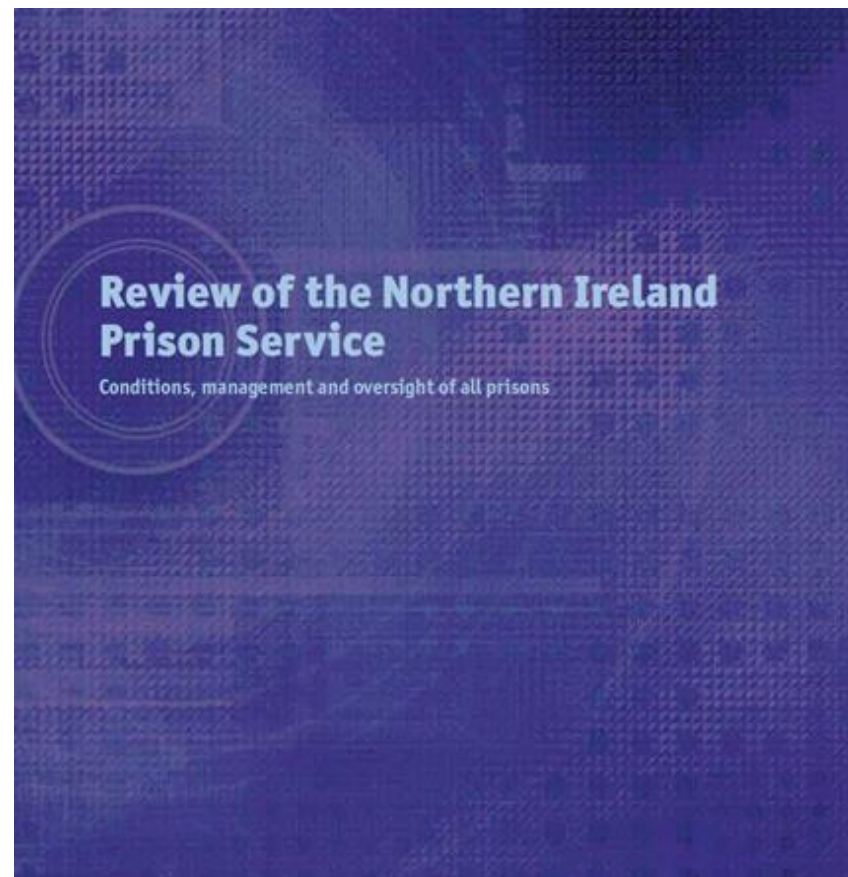


The N.I. Prison Reform Programme: Progress Made and Challenges Remaining

18 January 2017

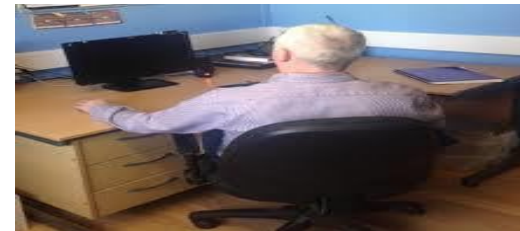
Dr Michelle Butler
Queen's University Belfast

Prison Reform Programme



Achievements

- Greater focus on rehabilitation, resettlement and desistance.
- Increased cooperation and engagement with outside agencies to support change.
- Reduced numbers on remand, fine default, young males and females.
- More cost-effective.
- Prison estate improvements and planned reconfiguration.

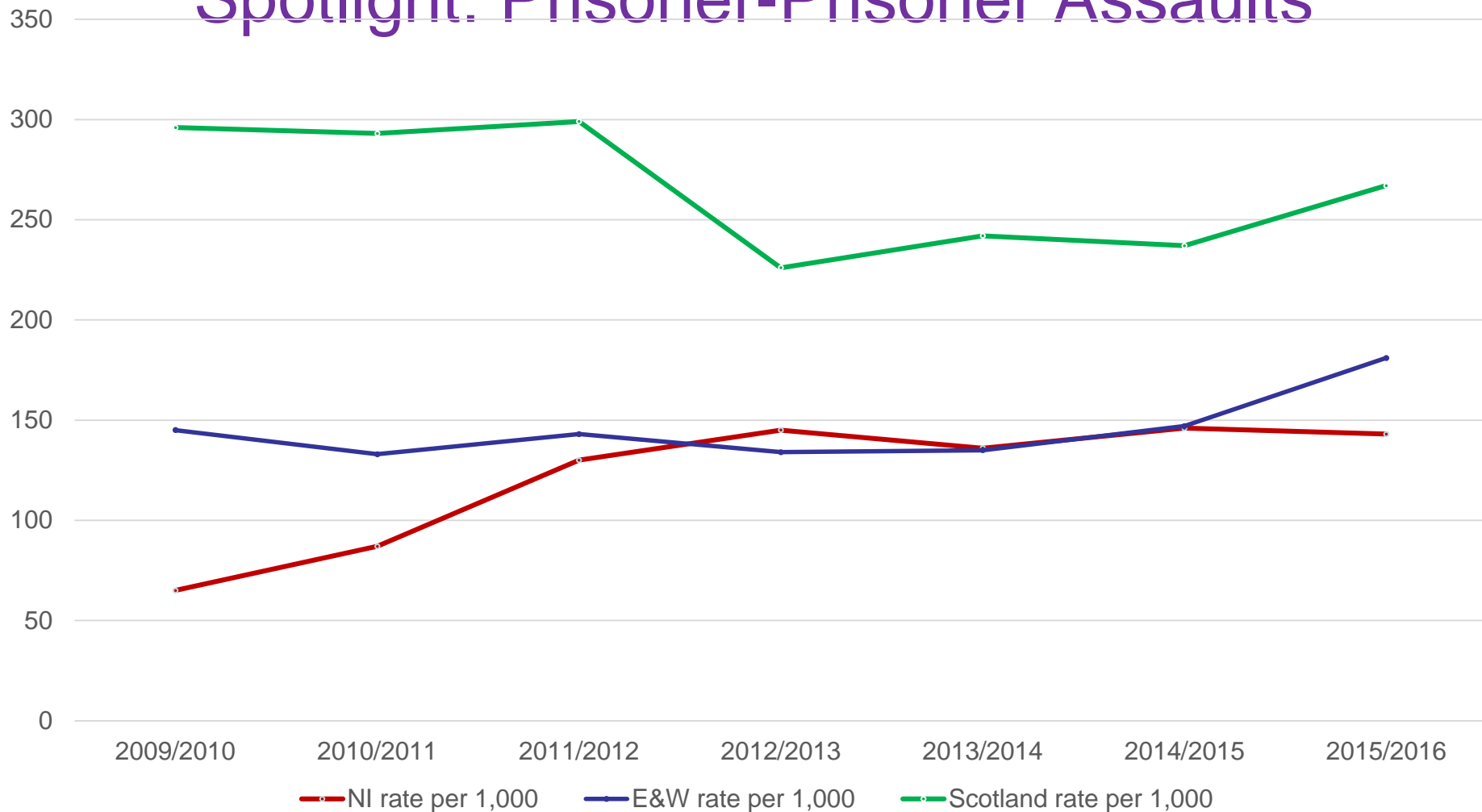


Challenges Remaining

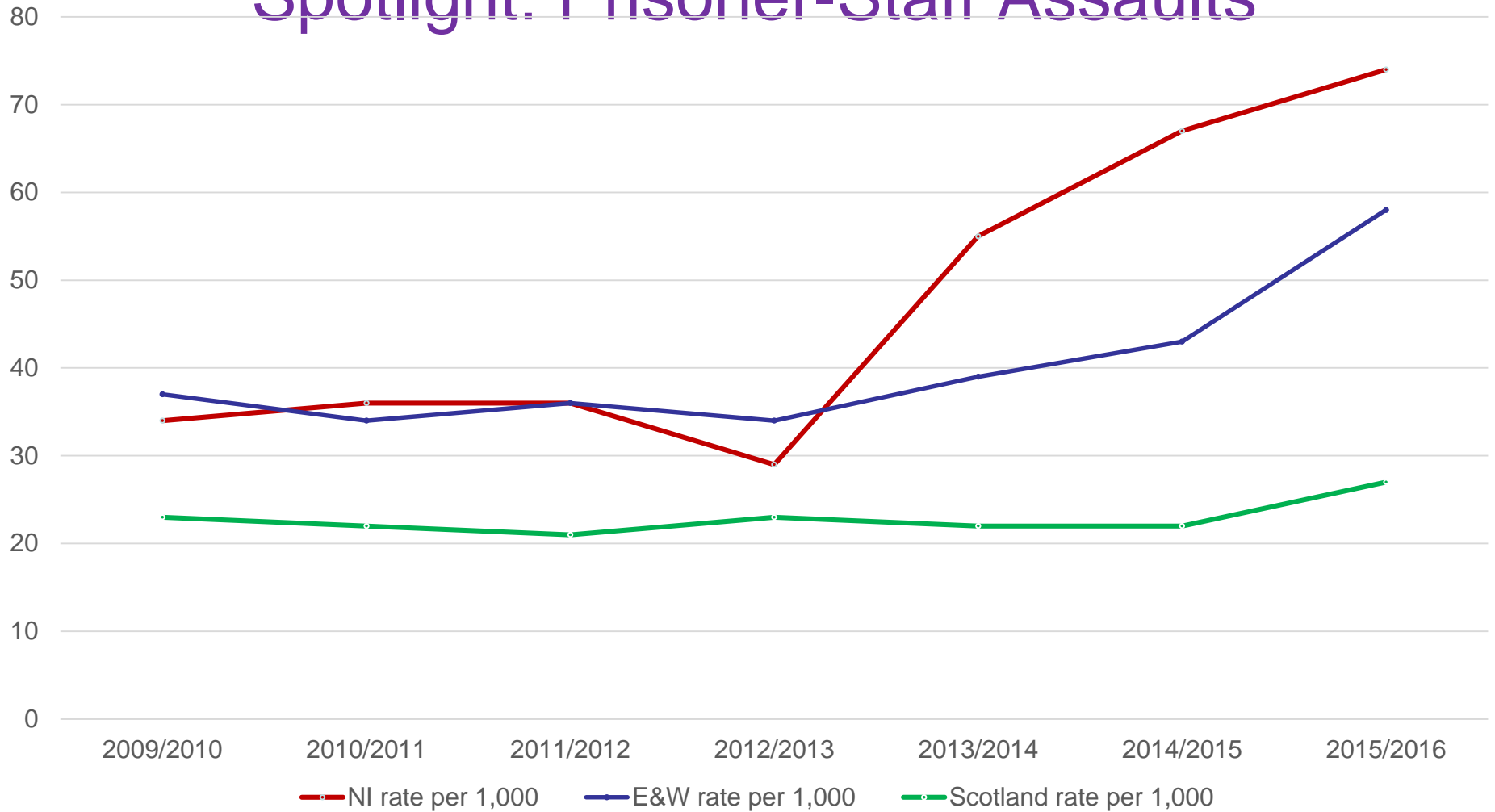
- Ongoing resourcing difficulties due to wider fiscal situation.
- Managing 'separated prisoners', severe mental ill health and personality disorders.
- Strengthening relationships between staff and management as well as enhancing leadership.
- Ensuring Northern Ireland Prison Service and outside agencies work effectively together and recognise how all contribute to the culture, environment and prison reform programme.
- Greater use of data to judge performance.



Spotlight: Prisoner-Prisoner Assaults



Spotlight: Prisoner-Staff Assaults



Spotlight: Deaths in Custody

Year	Northern Ireland	England & Wales*	Scotland*
2009/2010	0.7	2.1	2.6
2010/2011	2.0	2.4	2.0
2011/2012	3.5	2.2	2.8
2012/2013	4.5	2.3	2.6
2013/2014	1.6	2.7	3.1
2014/2015	1.7	2.9	3.1
2015/2016	1.3	3.8	3.1
Average	2.2	2.6	2.8

* These figures refer to the calendar year rather than the financial year

Penal Reforms: Research Evidence

- ‘Paradox of Reform’ – can lead to periods of instability, friction, tension and violence until a new equilibrium and predictability of regime is found.
- Reforms may falter if the following are not recognised and addressed:
 - The cost of reforms (expense and efficiency of system)
 - Limitations of the penal institutions (e.g. design, size, etc.)
 - Political reality of imprisonment
 - Institutional interests and the experiences of those working in prisons
- Tendency to view change management as universal rather than a specific process, contributing to a lack of ‘buy in’ and cultural applicability.

Recommendations

- If using outcomes based accountability:
 - Consider including outcomes focused on communication, consultation and engagement with those working and detained in prison.
 - Appreciate how fiscal challenges restrict reform efforts
 - Allow time for 'paradox of reform' effects to be overcome
 - Ensure outcomes for different organisations are complimentary, compatible with the overall reform programme and promote interagency cooperation and efficiency.
 - Outcomes should be within the control of the organisation e.g. should prisons be judged on re-offending rates?
 - Data should take account of the prison population and facilitate comparisons with other jurisdictions.
 - Need for qualitative measures as well as quantitative.
 - What gets measured gets done so choose carefully.

Thanks for your attention.

Questions?

Email: michelle.butler@qub.ac.uk

Telephone: 028-90973956

Twitter: @MichelleBQUB





Northern Ireland
Assembly



Queen's University
Belfast



The Open
University



Ulster
University

Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland