

The Experiment: the planning so far, with illustrations:

Data:

For this Experiment no personal data re people on probation is needed at all. All cases would be anonymised by allocating either reference numbers or pseudonyms. As the researcher I would not necessarily need any 'key' to correlate the anonymous cases with real people. Furthermore, the only individual data being collected about each person on probation will be 'what is being achieved with that pseudonymised case' during the course of the current supervision period. The app's database(s) will then organise the cumulative pseudonymous quantitative data collected.

As for the Probation practitioners (PPs), again no personal data would be collected, except any notes or recordings of interviews with me; PPs would certainly not be named in any report. On the app's database, they would be allocated either a pseudonym or a reference number. The 'key' to correlate each PP with their disguised identity would of course need to be kept separate and securely – on paper, in a locked location, and shredded once the Experiment is completed.

Participants:

For this project I will aim to recruit, as volunteer participants, 20+ Probation practitioners (with the approval of their line manager(s)) who will, as part of an agreed 'experiment', be undertaking a 'self-assessing' of their work with each of their cases, using the "*How'm I doing*" tool designed by me, for a period of at least six months – preferably 12 or 18 months – with the focus being on the 'Three Purposes of Probation'. The objective is that each individual practitioner will be able to ***tell for her/himself, and in real time***, how far they are on course to achieving the specified Three Purposes of Probation, namely:

- "Am I helping to Reduce this individual's Likelihood of Reoffending?"
- "Am I helping to Implement this individual's Court sentence, or Licence?"
- "Am I helping to Contain this individual's Risk of Harm to others?"

- and also, at the end of the case, tell whether or not the Three Purposes have been achieved.

Any and all participants in this Experiment would need to be PPs who have volunteered after the initial information, and then a full briefing, as to what is involved. There is standard University material for managing that recruitment ethically – I would be required to use that. (Clearly, if I fail to recruit volunteers, the Experiment will fail at an early stage.)

Scope:

My initial plan is that the app's database will only collect and correlate the Questions relating to the achievement of the Three Purposes (see below). It is possible that this could be extended to collect and correlate more detail in relation to Reduction of Likelihood of Reoffending, i.e. which 'criminogenic factors' did the PPs work on, and with which ones was identifiable progress achieved? (This could be a potentially useful secondary benefit from this research.)

I would not want any 'later modifications' to the Experiment to detract from the principal purpose of the Experiment, which is to see if the creativity of the participant PPs is liberated as they strive to achieve the Three Purposes of Probation supervision.

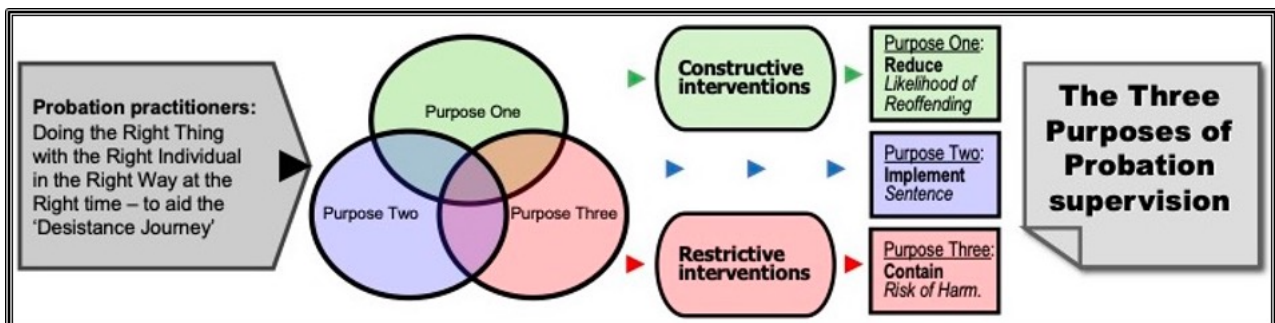
Overall, the key elements of this Experiment are not negotiable as far as I am concerned; but some aspects of detail, and of implementation, could of course be subject to some negotiation. After all, the aim of the Experiment is to aid the enabling of good Probation practice.

The Three Purposes: Defining ‘What Good Looks Like’ – and deploying this on the app

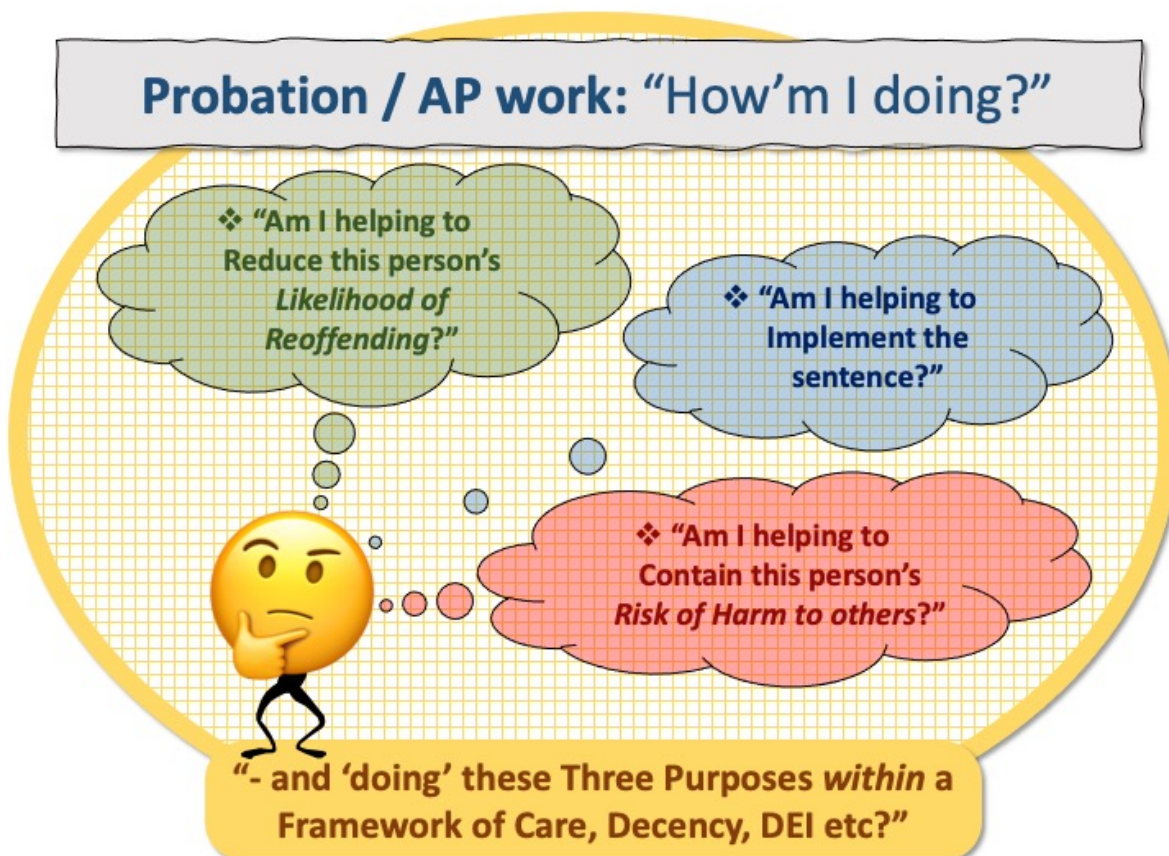
The Definitions of success discussed in the Introduction to Modern Probation Theory were derived from Inspectorate methodology (which in itself was partly derived from earlier research methodology), and do not need to be expounded at length here. But this Experiment required that they be presented in a form suitable for practical deployment on the “How’m I Doing?” app.

The app therefore references two graphics from MPT in its introductory and reference ‘pages’, both of which depict The Three Purposes:

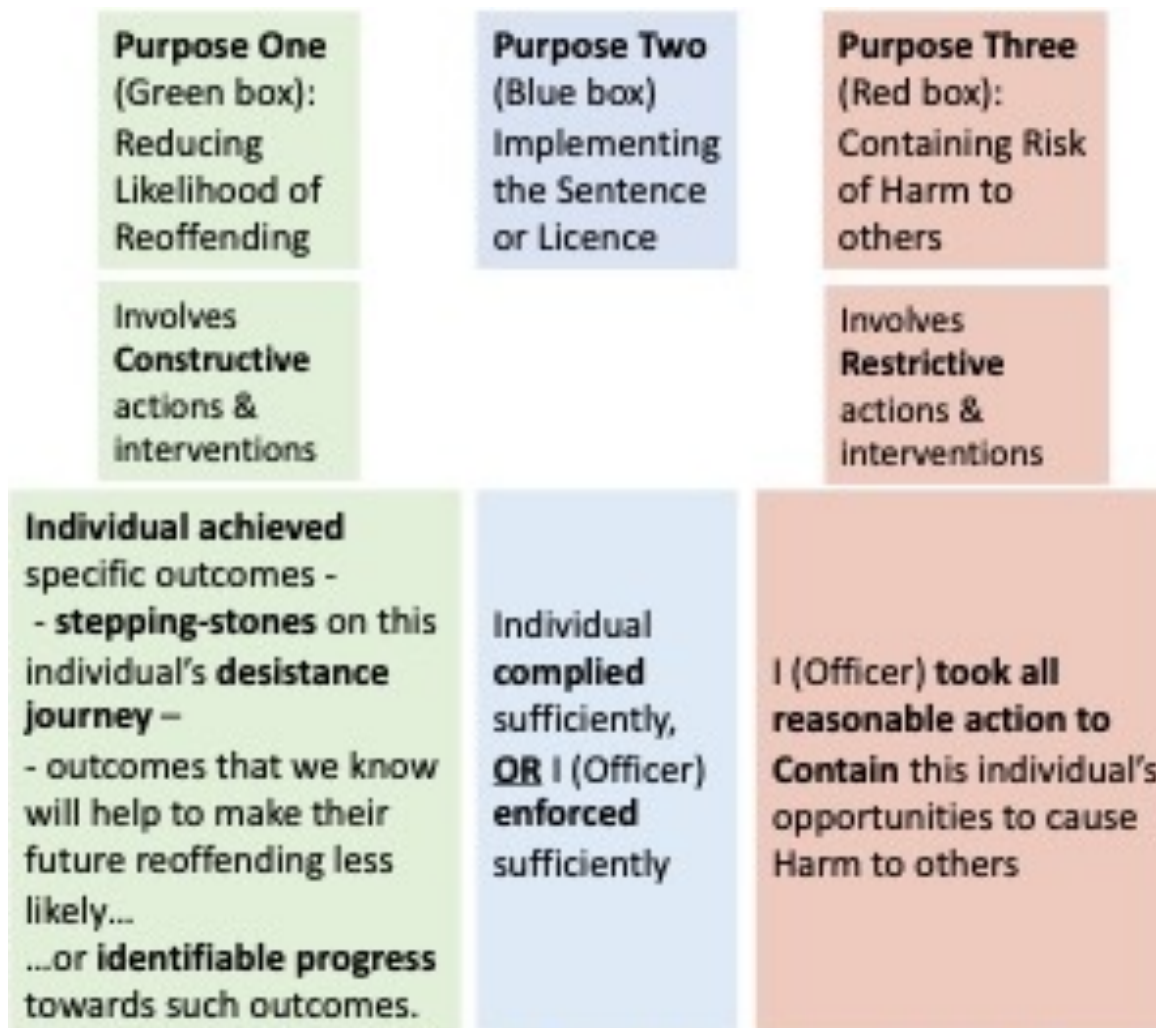
1. The first is the strategic picture, ‘from above’ so to speak, illustrating that probation practice involves working to all three Purposes, each of which is separate, although they **also overlap**. It also shows that Constructive interventions are used to achieve Purpose One, while Restrictive interventions are used to achieve Purpose Three.



2. The second graphic is The Three Purposes from the point of view of the PP, or indeed of anyone working for Probation directly with people on probation (such as in Approved Premises).



The 'Overall' page of the app then goes one stage further, by including one more graphic. It retains the terminology, and also emphasises the intended colour scheme, as it goes on to Define what success looks like with each of the Three Purposes:



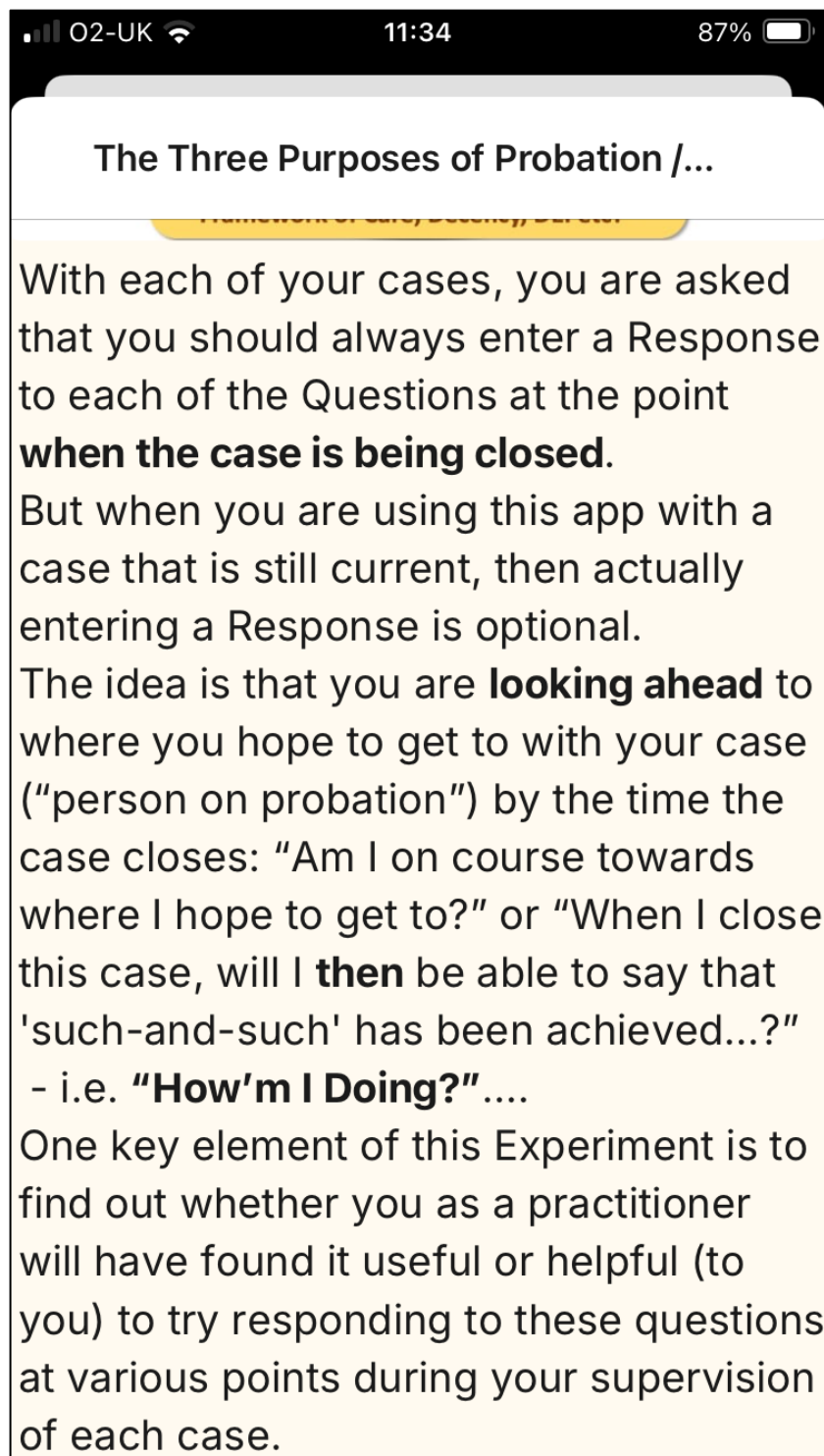
The entire remainder of the app is based on this structure. There is a scrollable page for each of the Three Purposes: Likelihood of Reoffending, Implementing the Sentence, and Risk of Harm to others, each following the same colour scheme as a visual reminder.

Purpose One is probably likely to be of most interest to a criminologist, employing the concept of identifiable “stepping stones on a desistance journey” by the person on probation; then, at the point of closing the case, a number of different Questions are posed to explore what progress may have been made by that individual, but in terms that can be quantified.

Each of the three scrollable pages invites the PP to consider, “Am I on course towards where I hope to get to - ? [by the time this case closes]”, and it also asks the PP to respond to all the Questions when the time comes to close the case. There are 38 Questions altogether, and all involve checking just one box in response; I’m expecting to prune some of the Questions in the light of experience, since that experience may prove some of them to be superfluous, or unnecessary or even unproductive.

By way of illustration, I can show a few screenshots here from the app. Inevitably they can be no more than a taster, since many Questions need to be scrolled.

The page that provides the graphics on the Three Purposes (above) goes on to describe for the user the object of the whole exercise:



Both of the next screenshots come from the LoR scrollable page. The one on the left is from the 'supervision planning' phase, and the one on the right from the 'closing supervision' phase. Any Yes's to the 2nd Question automatically show in the left column shown in the second screenshot.

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20:17
91%

< Home Purpose One: Reducing Lik...

List of potential 'criminogenic' factors, as per OASys, that can make some people more likely to reoffend:	1st Question: "Was/is it a factor that made this person more likely to reoffend?"	2nd Question: "If YES, do I plan to attempt to work on this factor now with this person?"
Accommodation	☐ No ☐ Yes	☐ No ☐ Yes
Employment / Employability	☐ No ☐ Yes	☐ No ☐ Yes
Financial management	☐ No ☐ Yes	☐ No ☐ Yes
Relationships	☐ No ☐ Yes	☐ No ☐ Yes
Lifestyle & associates	☐ No ☐ Yes	☐ No ☐ Yes
Drug misuse	☐ No ☐ Yes	☐ No ☐ Yes

☆ Case
☆ Overall
☆ LoR
☆ ItS
☆ RoH

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< Home Purpose One: Reducing Lik...

"The list of 'criminogenic' (key) factors, TICKED where I earlier planned to attempt work with this person."	3rd Question: "Has this person achieved an identifiable outcome in relation to this factor (whether directly planned or not)?"	4th Question: "If not an outcome, is there evidence of some interim progress towards an outcome re this factor?"
Accomm ☐	☐ No ☐ Yes	☐ No ☐ Yes
Employ ☐	☐ No ☐ Yes	☐ No ☐ Yes
Finance ☐	☐ No ☐ Yes	☐ No ☐ Yes

☆ Case
☆ Overall
☆ LoR
☆ ItS
☆ RoH

By way of variety, this screenshot, from the 'continuing actions' phase of Purpose One, shows that the app continues to function perfectly correctly should the phone be rotated.

< Home Purpose One: Reducing Likelihood of Reoffending (LoR)

1.2.1: "Are my constructive interventions, aimed at reducing this individual's LoR, being delivered in line with my sentence plan?"

PRESS for more...

☐ N/A
☐ No
Yes ☐

1.2.2: "Are my constructive interventions encouraging and challenging the individual to take responsibility for their actions and decisions related to offending in the community?"

☆ Case
☆ Overall
☆ LoR
☆ ItS
☆ RoH

These two screenshots illustrate SOME of the Questions to be answered at the point when the case is being closed. The app only accepts one checkbox to be checked for each Question.

Of course, because a screenshot cannot show the scrolling, it is not easy to show many Questions in their complete form.

This screenshot shows the 'Purpose One' section of the app. At the top, it says '< Home Purpose One: Reducing Likelihood of Reoffending (LoR)'. Below this, there are three checkboxes with labels: 'DETERIORATION in the key factors', 'INSUFFICIENT progress on the key factors', and 'PROGRESS on SOME but not all key factors'. Further down, there is a section titled '1.3.5: "Overall, in my opinion, to what extent has there been an identifiable reduction in this individual's Likelihood of Reoffending (LoR)?" (i.e. through achievement of identifiable outcomes that thereby reduce LoR, or through progress towards such outcomes) - My honest opinion!'. Below this text are three checkboxes labeled 'NO reduction of LoR', 'SLIGHT reduction of LoR', and 'STRONG reduction of LoR'. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with five stars: 'Case' (grey), 'Overall' (yellow), 'LoR' (green), 'ItS' (blue), and 'RoH' (red).

This screenshot shows the 'Purpose Two' section of the app. At the top, it says '< Home Purpose Two: Implementing Requirements'. Below this, there is a large text area with blue text that reads: 'complied with the requirements without the need for a full breach/recall to be taken (though it may have involved other action taken by me to promote compliance)". Below this text are four checkboxes with labels: '1. Not Properly Implemented', '2. Individual Complied', '3. Properly Enforced', and '4. Not Properly Enforced'. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with five stars: 'Case' (grey), 'Overall' (yellow), 'LoR' (green), 'ItS' (blue), and 'RoH' (red).

The last two screenshots show some of the Questions from the 'closing supervision' phase of the Purpose Three page, Containing Risk of Harm to others.

The buttons, 'Press for More', appear beneath each of almost all the Questions. In each case, this brings down (or will bring down when completed) a page – called a 'modal' - with additional text in which the meaning of the Question is discussed, and/or its significance and the considerations to be borne in mind when responding to the Question. I would expect some PPs to use this facility a lot in the early days, but these modals will stay 'out of the user's way' when no longer needed.

The screenshots show a mobile app interface for 'Purpose Three: Containing Risk of Harm to others'. The interface is divided into sections for different questions, each with a 'PRESS for more...' button and a set of response options (N/A, No, Yes).

Left Screenshot:

- 3.3.2: Victims:** "If there is an identifiable victim, or an identifiable potential victim, is there evidence that I have done all that I reasonably could to Contain the Risk of Harm to them?"
Response options: ☐ N/A, ☐ No, Yes ☐
- 3.3.3: General:** "Overall, have I taken sufficient reasonable action to keep to a minimum this individual's Risk of Harm to others (RoH)? – i.e. to 'Contain' this individual's RoH?"
Response options: ☐ N/A, ☐ No, Yes ☐

Right Screenshot:

- 3.3.4: The Crunch:** "If an SFO or other catastrophe were to happen with this case tomorrow, might a reasonable reviewer be able to identify a 'reasonable action to Contain RoH' that I failed to take? – or find an error in my RoH management that I could reasonably have avoided?"
NB This one time, YES is the 'negative' response!
Response options: ☐ Yes, No ☐

At the bottom of each screenshot is a navigation bar with five icons: Case (star), Overall (star), LoR (star), ItS (star), and RoH (star).

Such is the state of the planning of this Experiment as of October 2025.

NB: Caveat for the future:

As per MPT (pp21-1): If and when the time comes to consider any aggregated quantitative data from this approach, it is essential that it be treated solely as 'performance' by *the organisation as a whole*. Performance Measures (PMs) can be employed constructively and usefully at 'whole organisation' level, but it is strongly recommended that at team and individual level any aggregated results should NOT be used as a mistaken way of 'ranking' local teams or individuals.

"A system of measured performance will work to the extent that the people being measured believe in its worth.... Metrics works best when those measured buy into its purposes and validity."
(Jerry Z Muller, *The Tyranny of Metrics* (Princeton University Press) Kindle edition, 176-83)

AMB October 2025