

**Investigating the Impact of Facility and other Specialist Dogs on Victims, Witnesses and
Professionals in the Criminal Justice System: A Paws-ible Intervention?**

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Abstract

Facility dogs are a novel form of emotional support for victims and witnesses with very little empirical examination into their use. This thesis explores their potential impact on victims, witnesses, their support, and the professionals using them. An issue often raised is that facility dogs could bias juries, a concern that is explored in this thesis.

A mixed methods systematic review was conducted to investigate the potential impact of dogs supporting victims and witnesses. Findings included that dogs help victims by creating a calm environment and providing companionship that helps victims to feel safe and experience positive emotions. In turn, victims' coherency when providing evidence is strengthened, and their engagement with criminal justice processes improves.

To understand these findings better, a survey and interviews were conducted inviting opinions from professionals internationally. Results showed no correlation between the amount of time a person worked with facility dogs and perceptions regarding their impact. There was a correlation between perceived benefits for professionals and perceived benefits for victims. Findings also yielded that the US viewed facility dogs more positively compared to the rest of the world (namely, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, and the UK). Qualitative data detailed perceived benefits and issues around using facility dogs, including concerns of jury bias.

A randomised controlled study was conducted to investigate possible jury bias. Participants were allocated to one of four conditions to deliberate a fictional court case. Conditions varied by the visibility of the dog supporting the victim and instructions from the judge. Findings suggest that the influence of facility dogs on juries is negligible.

This thesis creates and enhances knowledge of the impact facility dogs have in the criminal justice system, demonstrating benefits for victims' wellbeing and engagement as well as for professionals' emotional and occupational wellbeing, all while potentially causing no jury bias.

Dedications

For Madge, without whom I never would have conquered my own cynophobia

And for Minnie and Maisie, who read this thesis first

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Chapter One: Introduction

Facility dogs are working dogs that normally undergo specialised training to work for specific organisations, such as for the police or in courts (Jalongo et al., 2022; Spruin & Mozova, 2018). The use of facility dogs is relatively modern, particularly within the criminal justice system. Their use is currently concentrated in North America (Jalongo et al., 2022; Race, 2022), although they are beginning to be adopted in other parts of the world such as Australia, Belgium, France and Italy (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024; Howell et al., 2013). Before applying facility dog programmes to the criminal justice system, it is important to examine their potential impact on the people they work with and assess how they can be applied in such a setting. There is currently minimal research in this area and building an evidence base is necessary to understand if, when, and how they should be used. This thesis, therefore, aims to contribute to what little research currently exists. It is important to note that this thesis focuses largely on the impact of facility dogs on victims and professionals only; their potential impact on suspects and defendants is not within the scope of this thesis.

The current chapter will begin by providing an overview of contemporary issues within the UK criminal justice systems, including issues around resource. An examination of crime in the UK will take place, focusing on crimes against the person, and demonstrating how people are impacted by crime, particularly vulnerable victims and witnesses. As the mental health and wellbeing of vulnerable victims and witnesses can be adversely impacted by engagement with criminal justice processes, support for them will be explored, in terms of what is currently available, what the benefits and issues are with existing support, and where there are gaps that need to be addressed.

The penultimate section of the current chapter will examine the use of therapy dogs and facility dogs by illustrating how they have been suggested to be impactful while emphasising

differences between the two types of dogs and the importance in this distinction. The history of the use of facility dogs inside and outside of the criminal justice system, including how they first came around, will then be explored. Finally, an overview of this thesis will be provided, ending with the rationale and aims of this thesis, highlighting the necessity of the present research.

Section 1 – An Overview of the UK Criminal Justice System

The UK criminal justice system consists of three separate criminal justice agencies: England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland (Davies et al., 2005). Much of the literature will refer to the criminal justice system in England and Wales, but this thesis hopes to contribute to changes in the UK criminal justice systems as a whole. This section will begin with an introduction of the criminal justice systems in the UK and will explore issues with the policing and judicial systems, before providing an overview of crime in the UK.

1.1 The Criminal Justice System

The UK criminal justice system consists of four systems that work collaboratively, aiming to deliver justice (Barclay, 1993; Crown Prosecution Service, 2022b; Garside & Grimshaw, 2022). These four systems are the police, prosecution, courts, and prisons. It is important to understand that as these systems are independent, they may not necessarily work the same both between and within systems (Garside & Grimshaw, 2022). Therefore, although best practices might exist, individual police forces and courts may operate in different ways (Garside & Grimshaw, 2022).

The criminal justice system in England may go as far back as a millennium ago, following the conquest of England by Duke William of Normandy in 1066 (Barclay, 1993). Since then, the criminal justice system has generally changed in response to political and socio-economic dynamics, and continues to do so (Garside & Grimshaw, 2022). A recent example of this is given in the Policing Vision 2030 (National Police Chiefs' Council [NPCC], 2024) which aims to adopt an 'inclusive, fair and anti-racist' policing service to protect vulnerable people and to better provide

support for victims. Such development is welcome, particularly in light of the negative experiences people have shared about the criminal justice system (e.g., Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2024a). The need for change is highlighted through a survey that investigated victims' experience of the criminal justice system which found that, above their perpetrator being arrested, victims emphasised the importance of having their crime fully investigated by the police and feeling supported by the police (Victims' Commissioner, 2021a). Respondents also indicated that court is largely a negative experience for victims, with almost a quarter of respondents feeling as though courts did not take their individual needs into account (Victims' Commissioner, 2021a). From these responses, it can be gleaned that changes need to be made in the policing and judicial systems to encourage and support victims and witnesses who report crimes and proceed with cases. It is for this reason that the present research largely focuses on the police and courts aspect of the criminal justice system, as these are the systems in which facility dogs, the main focus of this thesis, are most likely to be used to support victims and witnesses (e.g., Kelly, 2022; Spruin et al., 2020a).

1.1.1 Policing in the UK

The police system is considered the largest part of the criminal justice system, and police forces have a substantial amount of power both in society and within the criminal justice system itself, as the process begins often with a disclosure, an investigation, and the subsequent collection of evidence (Garside & Grimshaw, 2022). Thus, the initial stage in which police are most involved can set the tone for the rest of the criminal justice process, whether police can collect enough evidence for the suspect to confess, or if they are able to collect enough evidence to charge, which can lead to subsequent prosecution. This subsection will delve into issues faced in policing that can then have a negative impact on victims and their experience of the criminal justice system, further demonstrating the need for change.

Some difficulties for police forces have arisen from a lack of resourcing. While the relationship between police cuts and increase in crimes is not clear cut (Muir, 2018), reductions in funding have been linked to an increased number of crimes reported where investigations have not been pursued by the police (Unison, 2018). This could be a deterrent for victims who already struggle to report crimes to the police for a plethora of reasons, including the fear that they will not receive an adequate response from the police upon reporting crime (McCarthy-Jones, 2018; Pettitt et al., 2013). It might also be discouraging for victims how rates of arrests and charges for some crimes, such as domestic abuse, have historically been quite low (HMICFRS [His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service], 2019). Arrest rates and charges appear to be increasing, although there has been a noticeable downward trend in the prosecution rates for domestic abuse since 2017, which could also be discouraging for victims (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2023b). The number of cases going to court that are dropped due to a lack of resources where police have been unable to pursue investigation could also deter victims from reporting crimes (Unison, 2018). Given the pressures on police forces and the aforementioned issues that could act as deterrents for victims seeking to report crime, it is important for the police to appear approachable and proactive to encourage people to come forward about crime (HMICFRS, 2019).

It has been suggested that 20% of police time is spent dealing with mental health crises (College of Policing, 2015), and police report finding themselves busy engaging with non-police demands such as mediation (Boulton et al., 2017), again demonstrating the pressures faced by police that could affect resources. This figure is thought to have increased by now given the increased prevalence of mental health conditions, partially due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis (Baker & Kirk-Wade, 2024). There is an acknowledgement that provisions need to be put in place to ensure people experiencing mental health crises receive more appropriate

care and to redirect police resources (Home Office, 2023b), which could save around one million hours of police officers' time (NPCC, 2023). Since half of English police forces fail to meet standards of crime investigation (Jayanetti & Townsend, 2022), any strategy to release pressure from the police is a welcome development. Particularly given the lack of resource in police systems and the pressures they face, it is important to improve the service that victims receive and how their crimes are responded to if they choose to report (Jayanetti & Townsend, 2022).

Although the police are set to receive more funding (Home Office, 2023a), it is thought that a greater amount of funding is needed (McAnea, 2023) and that it will take time for police forces to recover from austerity, partly due to the loss of experience as a result of police cuts (Dodd, 2024). This demonstrates how current issues in policing, specifically regarding budget cuts, could impact victims of crime and how more needs to be done to change police systems both in their function and in public perceptions to encourage victims to come forward.

Further issues have been identified that have affected public perceptions of the police. Solar and Smith (2020) posit that policing policy is misattuned with the current social and economic climate as a result of austerity that has seen public services cut time and again since the 2008 financial crisis. Indeed, police forces in the UK face challenges related to building trust in their local communities (Garside & Grimshaw, 2022; Moroz, 2023). Tensions may be increased within racial, political and religious communities, who may receive disproportionate attention from the police (Garside & Grimshaw, 2022; Moroz, 2023). Although the Policing Vision 2030 (NPCC, 2024) aims to address existing issues and place victims at the heart of policy and practice, it could be speculated that there is a significant amount of work and resource that needs to be allocated for these issues to be met.

These issues are compounded by the attention drawn to the use of force in policing which has resulted in an obligation for police forces to report data on the number of deaths in custody,

although there have been issues with the recording of this data (His Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, 2021). Policing in the UK has been impacted by international instances such as the murder of George Floyd in the United States which had an effect across the world through social media, triggering marches for the rights of black people in the face of police brutality (Wu et al., 2023). Around the same time, the murder of Sarah Everard caused widespread distress, particularly after it was revealed she was murdered by a Metropolitan police officer who was being investigated at the time for other crimes (Lowerson, 2022). Tensions further increased after her vigil in March 2021 which was thought to be mishandled by the police (Lowerson, 2022). These instances highlight issues between police forces and their local communities, the everchanging landscape of policing, and the need for further changes to build trust and improve relationships. Instances like these could affect perceptions people have of police in the UK, and this could, in turn, increase difficulty for victims to turn to the police. Where victims already hold negative perceptions of the police (e.g. Moroz, 2023; Pettitt et al., 2013) it is important to improve the image people have of the criminal justice system to ensure victims feel able to report crimes.

Current issues in policing do not end here. Although improving, the police response to crimes has been criticised for many reasons, such as the amount of time taken to respond after a crime has been reported, the impact this has in exposing victims to risk, and how these cases are managed (HMICFRS, 2019; Pettitt et al., 2013). There is also confusion regarding where the police duty of care ends, which, as a worst-case scenario, may be reflected in crime statistics and the experiences of victims of violent crimes after failing to be protected by the police (Vallins, 2017). To ensure victims are well-supported, collaborative working is important, including between police and judicial systems (HMICFRS, 2019).

1.1.2 The Judicial System

The UK criminal justice system consists of three separate systems in England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland (Garside & Grimshaw, 2022). They all have slight differences, some of which are apparent in courts. For example, in Scotland, serious offences are taken to Sheriff Courts, presided over by a professional judge with extensive legal training and experience, and a jury of 15 members of the public decide on the verdict (Garside & Grimshaw, 2022). More minor offences are conducted in the Justice of the Peace courts with legally trained advisors present to advise on the law (Garside & Grimshaw, 2022). Contrastingly, with judicial systems in Northern Ireland, and England and Wales, serious offences are taken to Crown Court which, akin to Sheriff Courts in Scotland, are presided over by a judge with extensive training, and, dissimilar to current practice in Scotland, a jury of 12 members of the public, rather than 15, decide on the verdict. Minor offences carried out in England and Wales are taken to Magistrates Court where normally two or three magistrates preside over a case with legally trained advisors on hand, and no jury is present (Courts & Tribunals Judiciary, 2024; Garside & Grimshaw, 2022). This subsection will illustrate issues with the judicial system in the UK and how this impacts victims.

Crown Courts in the UK currently face challenges overcoming the backlog of cases that have been referred (Victims' Commissioner, 2022) which only appears to be growing with time (The Law Society, 2024). There have been criticisms that some crimes, such as rape, are least prioritised as it can take around three to four years for these cases to be heard at court after a charge is made (Victims' Commissioner, 2022). Such delays can have a negative impact on victims' wellbeing due to the anxiety and distress caused by waiting for justice to be served so they can begin to move on (e.g., Hunter et al., 2013; Victims' Commissioner, 2021a). Some even describe the lengthy waiting process for their court case as frustrating and revictimising, in part due to the lack of closure while they wait for their court case, but also because victims have to retain details

of the crime for testimony (Hunter et al., 2013; Rosetti et al., 2017). Lengthy waiting times for court also have the potential to affect victims' testimonies as crucial details can be affected by the passing of time, increasing the possibility of testimonies becoming less persuasive (Rosetti et al., 2017). Sometimes, victims and witnesses are given little warning to attend court, or the opposite, they are given late notice that their trial has been postponed (Hunter et al., 2013). Even once in court, there are concerns regarding how long a person might have to wait before they can provide evidence (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). Issues within the judicial system do not end here; it is frequently heard that people have little to no contact with the prosecution barrister (e.g., Hunter et al., 2013; Rosetti et al., 2017) and this, coupled with information about the progress of a trial or explanations for the delay, increases victims' feelings of marginalisation during the process (Hunter et al., 2013). This reinforces the negative experience of and perception regarding courts. Such experiences also taken an emotional toll on victims who choose to report their crime and proceed with their case in court, if the lengthy waiting times have not deterred them from doing so, which is, in fact, the case for many (Rosetti, 2015; Rosetti et al., 2017; Victims' Commissioner, 2022).

Anecdotally, delayed court hearings have been linked to absences of witnesses and defendants when the cases are eventually heard (Rosetti, 2015). Delayed court hearings can have other effects such as difficulties in arranging interpreters when a case has been adjourned several times (Rosetti, 2015). Although a certain amount of stress is to be expected when engaging with the criminal justice system (Bornstein et al., 2012), it could be argued that current issues cause too much stress, dissuading people from pursuing cases (e.g., Victims' Commissioner, 2021a).

Once actually in court, the experience of victims is seemingly quite negative, with only half of court users indicating they would attend court again, and less than a quarter of respondents feeling their needs were taken into account by the courts (Hamlyn et al., 2004; Victims'

Commissioner, 2021a). These findings are supported by a large plethora of research demonstrating how court can be an exhausting and unpleasant experience for many, and for various reasons which will be explored later in this chapter (Bunting, 2008; Campbell, 2008; Christensen et al., 2014). It can therefore be argued that there is an apparent lack in courts meeting victims' needs, which suggests that more research needs to be carried out to understand and help meet the needs of victims and witnesses. Prioritising victims' needs will help the criminal justice system to meet its aim to place victims "at the heart of the criminal justice system" (Ministry of Justice, 2023), providing support that has been lacking (Victims' Commissioner, 2022).

1.2 Crime in the UK

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2023a), there were over eight million reported crimes in England and Wales in 2022/23. Of this, over two million crimes recorded were violence against the person, crimes that often leave behind distressed victims and witnesses (ONS, 2023a).

There are different ways of measuring the impact of crime. The Crime Severity Score (CSS) measures the impact of crime by taking into account factors relating to custody, community order, and fines (Stripe, 2023). The data set is illuminating, indicating that, in England, sexual offences have increased almost by 500% in 2022/2023 in the last two decades, and crimes categorised as violence against a person have almost doubled in the same timespan (Stripe, 2023). These types of crime are of interest in this thesis as victims of these crimes are automatically considered to be vulnerable victims (e.g., Ministry of Justice, 2020), which will be explained in the next section. Regarding the scores that are allocated to these types of crimes, sexual offences and violence against a person are both given a score of 5.1 (Stripe, 2023). Where the CSS of all crimes in total is 16.4, this means that sexual offences and violence against a person account for the most severe crimes with the largest impacts, with a combined score of 10.2 (Stripe, 2023). This highlights the

severity of these crimes and the necessity for further investigation to support victims of these crimes.

Another way of measuring the impact of crime is using the Cambridge Crime Harm Index (CCHI; University of Cambridge, 2020). This is calculated using the minimum number of days an offender would spend in prison for that crime, as per sentencing guidelines. Again, violence against a person, including murder and attempted murder, warrants the highest scores on the CCHI, followed by sexual offences, such as rape and attempted rape. Once again, this highlights the severity of these crimes and the harm caused by them, yet victims of serious crimes, such as rape have the longest to wait before their cases are heard in court (Victims' Commissioner, 2022). This reinforces how victims are currently being let down by the criminal justice system, necessitating action on part of these systems to ensure victims are at the forefront of improvements to service provision.

Finally, another way of calculating the impact of crime is by analysing the cost of crime. Crime is incredibly costly, although there is not one single approved method of calculating the cost of crime so it can be difficult determine just how costly crime can be. Some define the cost of crime as any cost that may be incurred that would not have existed if the crime did not take place (Wickramasekera et al., 2015). Other estimates might not necessarily include the suffering of the victim and how expensive it can be to resolve the suffering (e.g., Cohen, 1988; McCollister et al., 2010). While acknowledging these flaws in the calculation of the cost of crime, Heeks et al. (2018) estimate that the cost of the crime on society, victims, and the criminal justice system is incredibly high although variable, with the cost of violence with injury being around £14,000 per crime, and rape costing a staggering £40,000 per crime. These figures are calculated accounting for the cost of emotional support for the victim in the aftermath of the crime (Heeks et al., 2018), which the current research will focus on. Despite how costly crime is, there is very little in the way of

emotional support for victims, and with proposed cuts to statutory services in a landscape where systems are still recovering from austerity (e.g., Dodd, 2024), the impact of crime on victims could become worse (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2024a). Focusing on emotionally supporting victims is therefore important and will help to ensure victims are placed “at the heart of the criminal justice system” (Ministry of Justice, 2023). To do this effectively, it is important to understand who victims and witnesses of crime are, what their needs are, and how these can be met.

Section 2 – Victims and Witnesses of Crime

The current section will focus on victims and witnesses of crime and the difficulties they face in the criminal justice system. Existing support for victims and witnesses will be explored, and gaps in support will be identified.

2.1 Profile of Victims of Crime

The previous section provided an overview of the harm and cost of crime. This subsection will extend on this by providing a general understanding of who crimes happen to and the impact of this. This thesis will largely focus on crimes against a person and sexual offences, as victims of these crimes are automatically considered vulnerable victims (Ministry of Justice, 2020) and vulnerable victims are of particular interest in this thesis. As mentioned previously, crime against a person can be incredibly costly to both victims and wider society, costing anywhere between £14,000-£28,000, with rape costing the most at £40,000 (Heeks et al., 2018). These figures may indicate the intensity of resources needed in the investigation and the prosecution of such cases, as well as the extra support victims may need. It has been identified that crime impacts victims’ emotions amongst all other aspects, including interpersonal relationships and finance (Moroz, 2023). Support most sought by victims is immediate advice, and emotional support is the second

most common support sought (Moroz, 2023), emphasising the need to focus on the provision of emotional support for victims.

Research has suggested that certain populations, such as people living in higher deprivation areas, are unlikely to report crime (Fohring, 2014), People living in higher deprivation areas also appear likelier to retract complaints (Sleath & Smith, 2016), illustrating how some victims of crime may have fewer means and greater need for support. Research has also suggested young people are only 28% likely to report being a victim of violent crime compared to 48% of adults (Finkelhor et al., 2001), which highlights how young people, as well as people who have experienced violent crime in general, are vulnerable and need encouragement to come forward about crime and support when they do.

Domestic violence is the least likely of all crimes to be reported (Commissioner for Victims of Crime, 2024). Although there may be numerous barriers in place that impact a person's ability to report a crime, this could imply a need for more support at the initial point of contact, which could, in turn, encourage people to report crimes in a landscape where the fear of not feeling supported deters some people from coming forward (e.g., Pettitt et al., 2013). Improved community links could also help to raise awareness about police processes and improve the image police forces may have. Indeed, positive interactions with the police in formal and informal capacities can enhance the way people perceive the police (Nordberg et al., 2016; Pettitt et al., 2013), which could also potentially encourage people to report crimes.

2.2 Vulnerable Victims and Witnesses

In the criminal justice system, vulnerable victims and witnesses are defined as anyone with a physical or learning disability, a mental health problem, a victim of sexual or violent crime, an intimidated witness, or a child (Ministry of Justice, 2020). They could be made vulnerable by the crime committed to them (Ministry of Justice, 2020), or their vulnerability could make them more at

risk of being victimised (Dinisman & Moroz, 2019; Majeed-Ariss, 2020; Rosetti et al., 2016). Some victims' pre-existing conditions can potentially make them more vulnerable to crime. For example, around 70% of victims of sexual violence had a mental health condition prior to the crime taking place (Brooker et al., 2019), and 8.2% of people who attended a Sexual Assault Referral Clinic (SARC) were found to have a learning disability (Majeed-Ariss et al., 2020). People with mental health conditions are also more likely to be victimised (Dinisman & Moroz, 2019), further emphasising the need to provide adequate emotional support for victims and witnesses to ensure they feel able to engage with the criminal justice system.

Generally, vulnerable victims and witnesses face different, complex issues compared to the rest of the victim population. For example, their vulnerability could diminish the quality of evidence they can provide (Victims' Commissioner, 2021b). It has been well-documented how vulnerable victims and witnesses are likelier to receive poor responses from the criminal justice system, particularly for victims of serious crimes, and this is sometimes directly linked to their vulnerability (e.g., Majeed-Ariss et al., 2021; Pettitt et al., 2013). Some people have reported being told by the police that they are unreliable witnesses because of their vulnerabilities, and others experience a lack of empathy, understanding, and inadequate responses to their distress (Pettitt et al., 2013). The lack of support and understanding for vulnerable victims and witnesses necessitated a response from the criminal justice system to, firstly, ensure vulnerability is correctly identified, and, secondly, that support for vulnerable victims will be strengthened to reduce the stress and anxiety they can experience when engaging with the criminal justice system (Ministry of Justice, 2014).

2.2.1 The Experience of Vulnerable Victims and Witnesses

The increased stress and anxiety vulnerable victims and witnesses are prone to experiencing warrants the need for additional support, especially if they are to provide testimony in

court (Bowden et al., 2014; Brooker et al., 2019; Khadr et al., 2018). Vulnerable victims are significantly likelier to encounter barriers to justice for reasons pertaining to their vulnerability (Maddox et al., 2011), hence the necessity for extra support so these people can provide the best evidence and increase the likelihood of the verdict being in their favour (Christensen et al., 2014; Victims' Commissioner, 2021b).

Depending on factors such as the type of crime, the victim's existing support network, and their emotional wellbeing prior to the crime taking place, the emotional impact of crime on victims can be quite severe (Hanson et al., 2010; Langton & Truman, 2014; McCart et al., 2010; McLeod et al., 2010). Victims can go on to experience mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Graham-Kevan et al., 2015; Hamlyn et al., 2004; Hanson et al., 2010; Khadr et al., 2018; Langton & Truman, 2014; McCart et al., 2010). Moreover, people with pre-existing mental health conditions are likelier to experience exacerbated symptoms when coming into contact with the criminal justice system (McLeod et al., 2010; Pettitt et al., 2013). Due to these experiences, it is important to ensure victims and witnesses are emotionally supported when they engage with the criminal justice system, to reduce severe negative emotional reactions and potential mental health conditions as a result of their engagement.

Some people experience revictimisation during the criminal justice process, partly due to the lack of control victims may experience throughout the process which reinforces the lack of control experienced when the crime was committed (Campbell, 2008; Hunter et al., 2013; Smith & Skinner, 2012). Victims of rape have reported experiencing a 'second rape' or revictimisation when they are questioned, which for some can cause a sense of powerlessness and terror reminiscent of the crime they experienced (Campbell, 2001). Negative experiences after coming into contact with the criminal justice system can have a detrimental impact on victims, who have been found to

experience mental health crises and even admission to inpatient facilities as a result of victimisation (Pettitt et al., 2013).

The experience of revictimisation in the criminal justice system is not a new phenomenon and remains an area of interest for research. Some use terms such as 'litigation response syndrome', which describes a set of symptoms similar to PTSD, but instead is caused by participation in the criminal justice system (Miller & Bornstein, 2012; Ritchie & Long, 2021). This can include symptoms such as reliving the experience of the criminal justice system, like when providing evidence, and avoiding things that are associated with the criminal justice system (Cohen & Vesper, 2001). These symptoms demonstrate how stressful and traumatising the criminal justice system can be for people, particularly for vulnerable victims and witnesses who could have pre-existing physical or mental health conditions that might impact their ability to give evidence on top of the not uncommon stress and traumatisation experienced in the criminal justice system (Brooker et al., 2019; Graham-Kevan et al., 2015; Majeed-Ariss et al., 2020; McLeod et al., 2010).

Vulnerable victims and witnesses are also less likely to express satisfaction with and respectful treatment from the police; some report being told they were an unreliable witness due to their mental health condition (McLeod et al., 2013; Pettitt et al., 2013). This is important to draw attention to as vulnerable victims can find themselves targeted for crime due to their vulnerabilities (Dinisman & Moroz, 2019; Majeed-Ariss, 2020; Rosetti et al., 2016), and previous victimisation increases the risk of repeat victimisation (Graham-Kevan et al., 2015). Therefore, it is important that vulnerable victims have positive experiences of the criminal justice system, so they are likely to report a crime again if they needed to, as is often the case when people have positive experiences with the police (Pettitt et al., 2013). Where vulnerable victims worry about police perceptions if they come forward about a crime, an empathetic, compassionate and respectful

response could help encourage victims to report a crime and continue to engage with the criminal justice system (McLeod et al., 2010; Pettitt et al., 2013).

Research has suggested that having mental health issues and/or learning difficulties could make victims and witnesses more likely to receive a decision of no further action by police (Hohl & Stanko, 2015; Maddox et al., 2011). This could be the case for many reasons; for example, some vulnerable victims feel their cases were dropped by the police only because they chose to disclose their mental health condition and they felt the police were prejudiced against them for this reason (McLeod et al., 2010; Pettitt et al., 2013). Having a mental health condition such as PTSD or a learning disability can cause individuals to experience numbness or can stop them showing overt signs of distress (Bowden et al., 2014; Maddox et al., 2011). Mental health conditions can also impact memory recall (Campbell, 2008) therefore potentially making vulnerable victims and witnesses less believable in the eyes of legal professionals. Both the impact of mental health conditions and perceptions of people with mental health conditions could have a detrimental impact on victims' cases and implies more needs to be put in place to support vulnerable victims and witnesses, so as to encourage them to feel more comfortable and less distressed while providing evidence (Dinisman & Moroz, 2019). Such support could, in turn, help make vulnerable victims and witnesses equitable to the defendant.

Where not showing overt signs of distress can have a negative impact (Bowden et al., 2014; Maddox et al., 2011), victims also feel showing signs of distress can be detrimental to their case as well. Indeed, some report receiving an insensitive response from the police when they showed signs of distress (Pettitt et al., 2013), which can further discourage people from reporting crime to the police. Hyperarousal can make victims appear to be an unsympathetic witness (Graham-Kevan et al., 2015), which further demonstrates the need for victims to be emotionally supported to ensure their presentation does not impact how they are perceived.

Children, who are automatically considered vulnerable victims and witnesses (Ministry of Justice, 2020) are also adversely impacted by their involvement with the criminal justice system. Children from a household where domestic abuse is happening may be reluctant and even fearful to contact emergency services, either as a result of previous negative experiences with the police or due to the somewhat intimidating image that police forces may have, especially for minoritised communities (Elliffe & Holt, 2019; Garside & Grimshaw, 2022; Överlien & Aas, 2016; Rodriguez et al., 2018). Additionally, research suggests that children who have previously contacted the police feel there was a lack of empathy towards their experiences, both at the point of reporting and longer-term (Elliffe & Holt, 2019; Överlien & Aas, 2016; Rodriguez et al., 2018). This is particularly concerning as, in households where domestic abuse happens, the physical and/or sexual violence that children may witness could lead to them experiencing symptoms of trauma (Birkeland et al., 2021). It could be suggested then that the immediate response upon reporting an incident of domestic abuse is incredibly important in encouraging the child's engagement with the investigation and supporting them with their mental wellbeing at the same time. However, as mentioned previously, the current political and economic climate has led to police cuts which may in turn impact the quality of work police forces carry out (Solar & Smith, 2020), and responses to domestic abuse have been identified as an area for improvement (HMICFRS, 2019; Pettitt et al., 2013).

It is generally agreed that children are never just witnesses of domestic abuse, as they experience the abuse as well, in that they see and hear what is happening and must cope with the trauma both in the immediate moment and in the long-term (Callaghan et al., 2015; Katz, 2016; Stark, 2012). This is now reflected in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which dictates that children affected by domestic abuse will be included automatically as victims regardless of whether they were present during instances of domestic abuse (CPS, 2022a). Children can also become injured

themselves in domestic abuse households if, for example, they move to protect their family (Fantuzzo & Fusco, 2007), or sometimes they may be involved in the abuse by the perpetrator (Mullender et al., 2002). Yet when children relay instances of domestic abuse to the police, they have reported feeling dismissed and alone (Millar et al., 2021). It could be argued that change needs to be implemented to ensure children, as vulnerable victims and witnesses, feel better supported by the criminal justice system at all stages.

Millar et al. (2021) identified that police officers felt there was a gap in their knowledge in terms of how to appropriately address child victims and witnesses of domestic violence, even though engagement with police is crucial in providing a sense of safety and support to children (Elliffe & Holt, 2019). Part of the reason could be because 20% of police investigator positions are either vacant or filled with what the police inspectorate described as 'untrained' police officers (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). Once again potentially highlighting how issues in policing could be impacting victims and witnesses, it is apparent that reform is necessary to ensure children, and other vulnerable victims and witnesses by extension, are provided with additional support by the police, to improve their experience and potentially give them better outcomes.

It is not just in the police system where vulnerable victims and witnesses face challenges. Court processes and the length of time they take can also be a source of frustration (Barrow-Grint, 2016; Bunting, 2008; Hamlyn et al., 2004; Hunter et al., 2013). This is witnessed in particular where delays and cancellations prior to a trial commencing becomes traumatising for victims (e.g., Hunter et al., 2013), and this delay can work in favour of the defence as the more time passes, the less likelier the charge will result in conviction (Rotenberg, 2017; Smith & Skinner, 2012). Additionally, research has suggested that child victims of sexual abuse are more likely to decline to prosecute than adult victims of sexual abuse (Bunting, 2008), again demonstrating that they are a vulnerable population who need additional support to what is presently being offered. Thus, there

is overwhelming evidence compounding the importance of victims and witnesses needing more emotional support throughout the process of their case going to court.

Further issues with the judicial system include the stress people experience when attending court. Victims can become distressed when encountering their perpetrator or the perpetrator's support (Hamlyn et al., 2004; Hunter et al., 2013; Pettitt et al., 2013). As touched on previously, cross-examination can also be difficult for victims, with some feeling attacked, mocked, or not believed and frustrated when they cannot convey their version of events (Hamlyn et al., 2004; Hunter et al., 2013; Pettitt et al., 2013). The formal or legal language during cross-examination can also be challenging (Hunter et al., 2013). Some even feel revictimised due to having to relive the experience while providing testimony while also experiencing the powerlessness that can accompany cross-examination where they might be made to feel like a liar, their recollections questioned, or their history raised (Campbell, 2008; Cohen & Vesper, 2001; Hamlyn et al., 2004; Pettitt et al., 2013; Smith & Skinner, 2012). Indeed, interviews and cross-examinations are widely acknowledged as difficult experiences (e.g., Christensen et al., 2014), and it can be particularly frightening for children, especially if they are being asked the same question in different ways as though they are not telling the truth (Bowden et al., 2014; Campbell, 2008; Christensen et al., 2014; Rosetti et al., 2017). Reports have found that only a quarter of judges intervene if the defence's arguments are based on stereotypes (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019), again demonstrating how court can be a difficult experience.

It has been recognised that more needs to be done to enable vulnerable victims to feel safe and relaxed when giving evidence in court (Dinisman & Moroz, 2019). To achieve this, it could be argued that there needs to be some reformation in the criminal justice system to enable vulnerable victims and witnesses to give evidence to the best of their abilities under more controlled circumstances (Christensen et al., 2014; Stern, 2010). One such way that this can be done is by

providing vulnerable victims and witnesses with the emotional support they need to cope through the oftentimes gruelling process of the criminal justice system, to help achieve best evidence and mitigate the risk of their court case being overturned for reasons pertaining to their vulnerabilities.

The emotional experiences of vulnerable victims engaging with the criminal justice system have significant impacts. As mentioned previously, vulnerable victims often experience poorer outcomes, with many reports of serious crimes not resulting in a charge or conviction (e.g., Victims' Commissioner 2022). Reasons for low levels of charges or convictions are varied; for example, frustrations with court processes have been linked to attrition rates, whereby sometimes victims withdraw their complaint as a result of the stressors they experienced (Barrow-Grint, 2016; Bunting, 2008). This is particularly the case when there are court delays, which has long been an issue that does not seem to be improving (e.g., The Law Society, 2024; Victims' Commissioner, 2022). Even judges have reported concerns regarding the backlog of cases (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019), emphasising the severity of the issues the criminal justice system is facing, how this could be impacting victims, and that more needs to be done to reduce attrition rates.

Attrition rates are very high for many serious crimes, such as rape, child abuse, and domestic abuse (Barrow-Grint, 2016), with research estimating that up to two-thirds of victims may discontinue the judicial process prior to referral to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), and after this, only around 6-8% of cases relating to sexual violence and child abuse are successfully convicted (Bunting, 2008; Maddox et al., 2011; Murphy et al., 2022; Rotenberg, 2017). Such figures have given rise to the argument that some serious crimes, such as rape, are effectively 'decriminalised' (Gregory & Lees, 1999; as cited in Hohl & Stanko, 2015). Attrition rates have been noted as the most significant factor leading to a poor conviction rate (Maddox et al., 2011; Murphy et al., 2022). To reduce attrition rates which could, in turn, improve conviction rates, it is important to provide the emotional support needed for vulnerable victims, so they feel able to pursue cases.

If these needs are addressed, it could help to instil confidence in the criminal justice system, which is somewhat lacking (Pettitt et al., 2013). A realignment of values and strategies is necessary to ensure victims are prioritised (NPCC, 2024).

2.3 Existing Support for Vulnerable Victims and Witnesses

Thus far, barriers to justice vulnerable victims and witnesses experience have been explored (e.g., Rosetti et al., 2016; Smith & Skinner, 2012; Victims' Commissioner 2022). This subsection will delve into what support currently exists to help vulnerable victims and witnesses engage with the criminal justice system.

2.3.1 Special Measures

Special measures are available for vulnerable victims and witnesses to use. Special measures constitute part of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, also known as the Victims' Code (Ministry of Justice, 2020; Smith & Skinner, 2012). This entitles vulnerable victims and witnesses to assistance in providing evidence in court with the hope of them providing evidence to the best of their abilities (Majeed-Ariss et al., 2021; Rosetti et al., 2017). Special measures include video-recorded interviews, pre-recordings of cross-examination and re-examination completed using a live link, screens to hide the victim from the defendant and the public gallery, the removal of wigs and gowns (commonly used in youth courts), providing evidence in private, registered intermediaries, and the use of communication aids, often in the form of a communicator or interpreter (Majeed-Ariss, et al., 2021; Smith & Skinner, 2012). Implemented correctly, special measures could help to reduce anxiety and stress in victims and intimidated witnesses, thus making them more able to give best evidence (Majeed-Ariss et al., 2021; Victims' Commissioner, 2021b). Many vulnerable victims and witnesses can struggle with their communication as a result of their vulnerabilities, hence the necessity for special measures to support vulnerable victims and

witnesses in court to deliver the best evidence and increase the likelihood of the verdict being in their favour (Christensen et al., 2014; Victims' Commissioner, 2021b).

Special measures are viewed as being effective by some, with most Crown Court judges and magistrates viewing them positively (Victims' Commissioner, 2021b). Victims who receive special measures also view them favourably, reporting that not having to face their defendant made their court experience less negative (Rosetti et al., 2017). People who used intermediaries detail how helpful they were in aiding their communication, which many vulnerable victims and witnesses could struggle with as a result of their vulnerability (McLeod et al., 2010).

There are reasons to question special measures, however, including that intermediaries appear to be underused and/or under-resourced (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). Indeed, there is only a small number of registered intermediaries, and the varying demand for intermediaries around the country means that only a small proportion of witnesses benefit from their use (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). Special measures can be harmful in other ways, including the potentially negative impact they can have on perceptions of the victim or witness. For example, there are some concerns that if a victim does not present evidence in person, instead using a live link or a video-recorded interview, this could adversely impact their case as they might make less of an impression on the jury (McLeod et al., 2010). Further to this, if the quality of the evidence collected during a videorecorded interview is inadequate, this could also have a detrimental impact on the victim when this evidence is presented in court (Aldridge & Luchjenbroers, 2008).

The concerns raised with special measures are not uncommon; other evaluations and reviews have suggested the same. Indeed, video recordings are perceived as inferior compared to a live testimony by juries and prosecution, which could have a detrimental impact on a complainant's case (Fairclough, 2017; Stern, 2010). Not all research has found that screens, live-links and video-recorded evidence have a negative impact on juries (Ellison & Munro, 2014), and

more research in this area would be beneficial to clarify the potential impact on special measures. However, this could still indicate there are flaws in the use of special measures, in that they are potentially not meeting the needs of vulnerable victims and witnesses, and perhaps even working against their favour. In turn, this suggests there are further steps that need to be taken to meet these needs, particularly as none of the above special measures directly aim to provide emotional support to vulnerable victims and witnesses which is a necessity in resolving issues in the criminal justice system.

Further issues with special measures include that the need for special measures is not always identified, therefore they might not be serving all people who need them (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019; Rosetti et al., 2017; McLeod et al., 2010; Victims' Commissioner, 2021b). Further to this, the implementation of special measures does not appear consistent in courts across the country, either due to structural issues (e.g., difficulty working technology in older buildings) or due to staff training or awareness, so, for example, staff not assessing victims' vulnerabilities (Dinisman & Moroz, 2019; Majeed-Ariss et al., 2021; McLeod et al., 2010; Rosetti et al., 2017; Victims' Commissioner, 2021b). This can potentially call to question the efficacy of special measures as a means of supporting vulnerable victims and witnesses if they are not, in fact, adopted or used correctly in many places.

Even with successful implementation, there are some concerns around the use of special measures. Some would argue there needs to be more evaluation to ascertain how beneficial special measures are, particularly for victims of sexual crimes (Smith & Skinner, 2012). Although evaluations into special measures are increasing (e.g., Victims' Commissioner, 2021b), Smith and Skinner (2012) argue that if special measures are successful, attrition rates, which notably have not worsened over the years, have also largely not improved, as one might expect if special measures were effective.

In summary, special measures can be beneficial in some cases, with people finding their court experience less negative just by not having to confront their perpetrator (Rosetti et al., 2017) and having intermediaries as a helpful aid to communication (McLeod et al., 2010). They can, however, also be detrimental to victims (e.g., Stern, 2010). Regardless of the efficacy of special measures, the emotional toll on victims who engage with the criminal justice system is significant (e.g., Dinisman & Moroz, 2017) and it could be argued that, although special measures provide practical support, they might not necessarily address the emotional needs of victims and they may require additional support (Barrow-Grint, 2016; Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019; Smith & Skinner, 2012).

2.3.2 Achieving Best Evidence Interviews

Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) was first introduced in 2002 and updated most recently in 2022, providing clear guidance on how interviews should be conducted to ensure victims and witnesses are able to provide evidence to the best of their abilities (Ministry of Justice, 2022). Where adequate evidence is not collected, this can have a detrimental impact on the victim's case (e.g., Aldridge & Luchjenbroers, 2008) and convictions can be overturned (e.g., Mills & Sharman, 2017). Where strong evidence is collected, this can even result in a confession from the suspect, so the case would no longer have to go to trial (Gudjonsson, 2006). Therefore, it is crucial that this is a point of focus.

Attitudes towards ABE interviews are mixed. A review by Victims' Commissioner (2021b) found that although 42% of judges felt ABE interviews effectively reduced witnesses' anxieties about giving evidence, only a quarter of judges felt they were sufficient in achieving best evidence. This could suggest more guidance needs to be given on specific aspects of ABE interviews, and perhaps ways of improving how ABE interviews are conducted could be looked into.

There are numerous issues with ABE interviews that could impact victims, ranging from policy to practice (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). Despite how guidance on how to conduct ABE interviews emphasises the need for quality so ABEs can be used as evidence in chief, only 25% of judges, lawyers and intermediaries report being able to hear victims clearly and see their facial expressions, demonstrating how evidence collection can be poor and perhaps even detrimental to the victim (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019).

Guidance on how to conduct ABE interviews also stresses rapport building as key, as, if done well, it could help to reduce the witness's anxiety (Ministry of Justice, 2022). This is particularly important to bear in mind given the stress and anxiety people can experience when engaging with the criminal justice system (Khadr et al., 2018; Langton & Truman, 2014) and the detrimental impact this can have on the evidence they provide (Graham-Kevan et al., 2015). People might also find it harder to trust after they have witnessed or experienced a crime (Dinisman & Moroz, 2023), further emphasising the importance of building rapport, as, without trust, it can be difficult for a person to discuss their experiences (Dinisman & Moroz, 2023). In addition to the apparent need to improve how ABE interviews are conducted, this also underlines the necessity for victims and witnesses to be provided with more support to improve their engagement with the criminal justice system.

2.3.3 Victim Support and Witness Service

At present, emotional support for vulnerable victims and witnesses could be said to be lacking, and this is not helped by the reduction in services supporting victims (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). Emotional support is the second most sought-after form of support for victims, even above financial support (Moroz, 2023), therefore it is surprising that support services, particularly with regards to emotional support, are lacking.

Some organisations, such as Victim Support (2022), work closely with the police to identify vulnerable individuals who could benefit from further support (Fairclough, 2017). Victim Support are a highly accessible organisation, with a 24/7 helpline, as well as an online chat function people can use. They can help to prepare victims if they are going to court, which, as explored previously, can be an incredibly stressful experience for victims (Fairclough, 2017; Victim Support, 2022).

Varying depending on the crime a person has experienced, some services offered by Victim Support include providing victims with a place where they can talk about their experiences with people who have some expertise and are separate from the criminal justice system (Dinisman & Moroz, 2023). Caseworkers can provide psychoeducation to make victims aware about trauma and the impact this can have of them, as well as provide them with strategies that could help (Dinisman & Moroz, 2023). Victim Support can also make referrals to trauma counselling services for those who need further support (Dinisman & Moroz, 2023). This could help to provide victims and witnesses with the emotional support they need to engage with the criminal justice system.

Although existing support services for victims appear to be holistic and seem to address some need for emotional support, research suggests that employment of formal support services after a person has experienced crime is concerningly low (Campbell, 2008; McCart et al., 2010), with some research estimating that near three-quarters of people do not access support services (Moroz, 2023). Low uptake could suggest there needs to be greater visibility for existing services, or perhaps that alternative methods of supporting victims need to be introduced to ensure a variety of needs are tailored to.

There are numerous reasons why victims do and do not seek support. Pettitt et al. (2013) found that powerful motivators for seeking help included victims feeling frightened and unsafe, or if there was an escalation of violence. However, it can be discouraging when people have previously received poor responses after seeking help (Pettitt et al., 2013) and they may particularly be

unwilling to make contact if they feel ashamed or embarrassed, or if they are worried about being blamed or not believed (Elvin et al., 2022; Pettitt et al., 2013). It can also be discouraging for victims to seek help when they have previously experienced a punitive or disempowering response (Pettitt et al., 2013). Although a deterioration of mental health was also found to be a powerful motivator for seeking support, people might also struggle feeling strong enough to ask for help (Pettitt et al., 2013). Victims and witnesses may benefit from an easily accessible form of emotional support, to cater to those who may be unwilling or feel unable to seek support.

Another barrier to accessing support services includes that statutory services are not able to provide support due to being overstretched, meaning some victims are put on long waiting lists for support (Moroz, 2023; Pettitt et al., 2013). This could be made worse by statutory services experiencing funding cuts with many people unable to access vital support services (e.g., Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2024a; Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2024b). Restrictions between what different services offer mean that sometimes victims may find themselves managing several relationships with an array of services; this could further contribute to their stress, particularly when services are not perceived to be joined up, leaving victims feeling passed on from one service to another (Dinisman & Moroz, 2019; Moroz, 2023; Pettitt et al., 2013). Victims may benefit from a consistent source of support throughout their engagement with the criminal justice system that could help improve their experience and reduce any possible gaps in support that they might otherwise experience.

Another form of support for victims and witnesses includes the Witness Service. Originally launched in 1994 (Hunter et al., 2013) and then adopted by Citizens Advice in 2015, Witness Service provides an array of services, including support for witnesses on the day they attend court, answering any questions about the court process and providing emotional support where possible (Citizens Advice, 2018). They also offer pre-trial visits, which have, in the past, been appreciated by

the people who use them, particularly for the kindness shown by the volunteers (Hunter et al., 2013). There appears to be low uptake of pre-trial visits (Dinisman & Moroz, 2019). However, for the people who do have the pre-trial visit, they are more likely to attend their trial (Citizens Advice, 2018), demonstrating the usefulness and importance of the Witness Service. It should be noted that there are no known evaluations by an independent body reviewing the Witness Service nationally, however from the internal evaluations that have taken place, the service appears to be effective (Citizens Advice, 2018; Citizens Advice, 2021).

2.3.4. Independent Domestic/Sexual Violence Advocates

Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocates (IDVAs and ISVAs) provide support for victims and survivors who have experienced domestic or sexual violence (Madoc-Jones & Roscoe, 2011; Hester & Lilley, 2015). They provide advice, information, and emotional support to survivors, and their service has been described as ‘invaluable’ by service users (Madoc-Jones & Roscoe, 2011). IDVAs and ISVAs support victims and survivors throughout their ‘journey’, from securing the safety of those at risk of harm from partners or family members through to their case going to court, and support after court for a finite period (Forbes et al., 2023; Hester & Lilley, 2015).

Research into the impact of ISVAs and IDVAs is limited, with part of the issue being around the difficulty engaging survivors (Havard et al., 2023). The availability of ISVA services varies across England and Wales, meaning it may be difficult for some to access ISVA support based on their location (Hester & Lilley, 2015; Lea et al., 2015). Another issue with ISVA services includes that there is little awareness about the ISVA service amongst the general public, and key organisations within and outside of the criminal justice system (Hester & Lilley, 2015; Lea et al., 2015). At the time of the report, there were inconsistencies in ISVA training due to the lack of minimum training standards, which is concerning given the complex nature of the role and the importance of meeting the needs of victims and survivors (Lea et al., 2015). It is also unclear how specialist services

provided by ISVAs and IDVAs fit in with non-specialist services such as Victim Support (Hester & Lilley, 2015), and an unnecessary overlap in services has been noted (Havard et al., 2023).

Therefore, although ISVA and IDVA services are well received by service users (e.g., Hester & Lilley, 2015), the relative lack of research into their use, the inconsistencies in training, and the variable availability of services across England and Wales (Hester & Lilley, 2015; Lea et al., 2015) suggests more is needed to ensure victims of crime are emotionally supported.

This chapter thus far has explored the aims of the criminal justice system to engage victims better and ensure there is more support available to ease the emotional toll of providing evidence (Khadr et al., 2018). Support services appear beneficial to those using them (e.g., Citizens Advice, 2021; Victims' Commissioner, 2021b), however, the use of support services is concerningly low (Moroz, 2023). Reasons for not engaging with support services are numerous, including the fear of receiving a negative response as per the victim's past experience accessing support services (Pettitt et al., 2013). This coupled with the limited resources and funding cuts being made to statutory services (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2024a; Moroz, 2023) could mean existing support services are currently not meeting the needs of victims of crime. It would therefore be logical to examine other forms of emotionally supporting vulnerable victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system. One possible form of providing emotional support to victims in the criminal justice system includes the use of dogs.

Section 3 – Therapy Dogs and Facility Dogs

Animals have been observed to have therapeutic benefits for centuries, perhaps even as early as the 17th century when clinicians found animals could relax epileptic patients and inhibit further seizures (Snipelisky & Burton, 2014). Florence Nightingale was also reported to have posited that small animals are beneficial for those with ill-health, and chronic ill-health in particular (Halm, 2008).

Dogs have been credited with being naturally attuned to humans' emotional states and being able to turn attention away from all-consuming negative forces (Dellinger, 2009; Roby, 2015). Due to their perceived unconditional nature, they can also help to break down barriers of fear and distrust, to enable people to access the truth (Dellinger, 2009; Roby, 2015). For this reason, dogs are currently used globally to mitigate various stressful situations. In the US, for example, facility dogs have been found to improve healthcare professionals' perceived mental health (Jensen et al., 2021), and additional research found therapy dogs reduced cortisol and heart rate in veterans receiving palliative care, which again demonstrates the usefulness of AAT (Krause-Parello et al., 2018a). The current section will firstly introduce therapy dogs and some of the benefits that have been found with their use, before discussing facility dogs, the main focus of this thesis. The differences between therapy dogs and facility dogs will be explored, and finally this section will detail how the use of facility dogs is preferable for the criminal justice system.

3.1 An Introduction to Therapy Dogs

In the UK, therapy dogs are generally pet dogs who will have their temperament assessed by an experienced assessor prior to certification (Pets As Therapy, 2023a). These dogs will have a calm temperament, and will fulfil many requirements, including being able to walk on a lead without excessive pulling, take food gently without snatching, and respond appropriately to a sudden noise or disturbance (Pets as Therapy, 2023b). Pet puppies and older dogs can also attend 'Dog Training School' (Therapy Dog Training UK, 2023) where they will receive certification if they are successful. However, such training is not necessarily carried out by a qualified trainer, but instead the owner of the pet who can purchase tutorials in the hopes of successfully being able to train their pet dog to become a therapy dog (Therapy Dog Training UK, 2023). While there have been efforts to standardise the qualities therapy dogs possess, this has been difficult to implement,

although there is a consensus that therapy dogs should not be aggressive or fearful, and should be sociable with strangers (Filugelli et al., 2021).

Therapy dogs are used globally in various settings. In hospitals, therapy dogs have been linked to decreased length of stays in hospital (Abate et al., 2011) and appear to reduce anxiety in patients (Foerder & Royer, 2021). They have also been suggested to improve the quality of life for people in elderly care (Hollingsworth, 2014; Travers et al., 2013), as well as their depression, anxiety, and loneliness (Jain et al., 2020; Le Roux & Kemp, 2009), and generally increase positive affect (Lutwack-Bloom et al., 2005). In people with Alzheimer's, therapy dogs were suggested to minimise 'problem behaviours' over a four-week observation period (McCabe et al., 2002), and for people in dementia care, therapy dogs were suggested to improve social behaviour (Perkins et al., 2008). Some research has suggested that animals should be a steady presence in patients' care as benefits might not be long-term (Quintavalla et al., 2021). In psychiatric units, a communal therapy dog was related to positive emotional experiences and supporting engagement in meaningful occupation, although this was not without challenges faced revolving around dog ownership (Rothschild et al., 2019).

Therapy dogs also appear beneficial in education settings. Hall (2018) and Hall and Duke (2021) found therapy dogs reduce anxiety and improve focus in nursing students. One study even suggested therapy dog programmes are as beneficial for anxiety and wellbeing as mindfulness interventions (Spruin et al., 2021), although there are some caveats. Benefits are suggested to be short-term (Ward-Griffin et al., 2018) and physical interaction with the therapy dog appears key to reaping benefits (Islam et al., 2017). Therapy dog programmes are also suggested to be beneficial in schools. In a school that used therapy dogs, parents and staff reported increases in children's positive mood and positivity about school (Baurys, 2020). Therapy dogs were also suggested to bring stability and comfort to children (Kropp & Shupp, 2017), and, with children who have autism,

they were found to encourage social interaction (Jorgensen et al., 2020) and reduce cortisol levels (Protopopova et al., 2020).

Despite these benefits, there are some drawbacks with the use of therapy dogs that could make them unsuitable for the criminal justice system. Mueller et al. (2021) did not find therapy dogs helpful for adolescents' social anxiety, either when they interacted with the dog or did not, suggest that therapy dog programmes may be more suitable for some people than others. As interactions with the therapy dog in this study were only fleeting, this could be indicative of one drawback with therapy dogs, that they normally require shorter working hours and more frequent breaks (e.g., Spruin & Mozova, 2018). Therefore, when assessing whether their use is appropriate for the criminal justice system, they could be deemed unsuitable, as, sometimes, it can take time for evidence to be collected (Spruin & Mozova, 2018), and a dog needing more frequent breaks could be harmful to the process of collecting evidence. Additionally, there are often lengthy waiting times in court on the day of hearing (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019); if therapy dogs can only work for short amounts of time, they might not be effective where they are court delays.

Additional concerns with the use of therapy dogs in the criminal justice system include that they might not be as resilient to stress due to the short periods of around 20-60 minutes they are recommended to work for without a break before they may show signs of distress (Glenk et al. 2014; Palestrini et al. 2017), although some therapy dogs can work for up to two hours at a time if they show no signs of distress (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2018). It is important for dogs being used in the criminal justice system to be resilient; the often-emotional experience when victims provide evidence can unwittingly lead to vicarious traumatising for others in the criminal justice system (Jordan, 2013). As a result of the stressfulness of experiences with the criminal justice system, it could be argued that therapy dogs should not be expected to take on a role that could be harmful to themselves. Additionally, if they display any signs of distress, which could be more

frequent than other specially trained dogs due to their comparative lack of training and resilience, they would need to be removed from the environment, which can also be harmful to the process of collecting evidence (Spruin & Mozova, 2018).

It is ideal that dogs make themselves scarce so as not to cause a distraction; this is a frequent concern expressed by people who oppose dogs being used in the criminal justice system (e.g., Ensminger et al., 2020; Kaiser, 2015). As they are generally not trained to work longer hours and could also be more susceptible to stress (Spruin & Mozova, 2018), therapy dogs could cause a distraction, which would be detrimental to criminal justice processes if they are disruptive to the evidence collecting process.

Further to this, the rapport between the interviewer and the person giving evidence is key (Ministry of Justice, 2022). This could potentially be impacted by the presence of a third person as therapy dogs often need accompanying by their handler (Spruin & Mozova, 2018). Therapy dogs are used in different types of settings, and they might not necessarily undergo specific training before being used in the criminal justice system (Jalongo et al., 2022; Spruin & Mozova, 2018). Likewise, their handlers, who also might not have undergone training, might be less likely to understand the criminal justice system (Jalongo et al., 2022; Spruin & Mozova, 2018). This also calls to question the appropriateness of their use in courts and police stations.

The current sub-section has highlighted how therapy dogs have been used successfully in an abundance of settings, including in healthcare settings and educational settings (Abate et al., 2011; Foerder & Royer, 2021). However, due to their relative lack of training and resilience as examined above, it could be argued that alternatives should be explored. An alternative option could be using facility dogs instead.

3.2 An Introduction to Facility Dogs

Facility dogs are assistance dogs, normally trained to internationally accredited standards, so, for example, they might gain accreditation by Assistance Dogs International (ADI; Jalongo et al., 2022). Facility dogs are working dogs, not trained family pets unlike therapy dogs (Jalongo et al., 2022). They are normally assigned to an organisation and often work for a member of the organisation (Bradley, 2013). Thus, they differ from other assistance dogs who are typically assigned to support one person throughout their working life, instead of working for an organisation (Bradley, 2013; Jalongo et al., 2022). They typically have around two years of training which contributes to them being highly predictable (Spruin & Mozova, 2018).

Facility dogs are not emotional support animals (ESAs), although they can provide emotional support (Jalongo et al., 2022). ESAs do not have public access rights, unlike facility dogs (Jalongo et al., 2022). ESAs usually only support one individual and their training is tailored to supporting that one individual, which contrasts to facility dogs who give support to many people (Gerkey, 2015; Hahn et al., 2020; Jalongo et al., 2022). ESAs also do not undertake the same intensity or duration of training that facility dogs typically undertake (Jalongo et al., 2022).

Facility dogs are dissimilar to therapy dogs in numerous ways. Therapy dogs are normally pet dogs that undergo a temperament test to gain certification, whereas facility dogs are working dogs who, although they will normally be assigned to a handler in an organisation, undergo thorough training to carry out a specific role (Jalongo et al., 2022; Spruin & Mozova, 2018). Facility dogs, like any being, need breaks, but their rigorous training enables them to be more resilient in stressful environments (Spruin & Mozova, 2018). Facility dogs' training can include making themselves scarce so they do not become a distraction (Spruin & Mozova, 2018). The handler of the facility dog also typically undergoes training so they can work collaboratively, and the handler is responsible for ensuring the facility dog's training is maintained to a high standard (Jalongo et al.,

2022; Spruin & Mozova, 2018). Unlike therapy dogs, facility dogs do not have to abide by a strict leash, and they can therefore be freer in their interactions with others and are able to meet with as many people as possible (Race, 2022; Spruin & Mozova, 2018).

For the above reasons, facility dogs are preferred over other types of dogs to carry out specific roles. Although a relatively novel type of working dog, they are adopted in a few settings already. One such setting includes in educational programs for children (e.g., Jalongo et al., 2022). The small amount of research in this area has highlighted how facility dogs are beneficial for improving students' learning and enhancing the learning environment (Bradley & Maldonado, 2013; Jalongo et al., 2022). Facility dogs have been suggested to help students with their social and behavioural needs, encouraging students with social interaction, particularly as facility dogs can be a good conversation starter (Bradley & Maldonado, 2013; Jalongo et al., 2022). They can also help students with their emotional needs, and students can experience reduced anxiety and angry outbursts, and even feel happier (Bradley & Maldondo, 2013; Race, 2022). Facility dogs were even found to improve the learning environment for staff as well (Bradley & Maldondo, 2013).

In addition to education settings, facility dogs have been adopted in healthcare settings. In their capacity to reduce stress, a facility dog was reportedly used in palliative care, and it was found that after the loss of this facility dog, there was an appreciation for the dog's ability to help people in palliative care to connect with each other (Holman et al., 2018).

In one study carried out by Dvoskina and Cole (2020), therapy dogs and facility dogs were both found to be helpful in supporting emergency responders with symptoms of PTSD (Dvoskina & Cole, 2020). Facility dogs have been found to lower salivary cortisol levels and heart rate, both biomarkers of stress (Krause-Parello et al., 2018a). Other areas in which facility dogs and therapy dogs have been found to be useful includes with self-reported anxiety scores in patients in a surgical ambulatory care unit (Stevens et al., 2017). While this study did not find any difference

between the therapeutic benefits of a real dog and a stuffed dog, the implications for their use are still promising. Thus, as vulnerable victims and witnesses could experience symptoms of stress, anxiety and PTSD (Brooker et al., 2019; Hanson, et al., 2010; Langton & Truman, 2014), and facility dogs have been found to help lower symptoms of PTSD, stress, and anxiety (Dvoskina & Cole, 2020; Krause-Parello et al., 2018a; Stevens et al., 2017) the potential usefulness of facility dogs in the criminal justice system should be investigated.

3.3 Facility Dogs in the Criminal Justice System

Dogs were used in the criminal justice system in two known cases prior to the 2000s. In 1989, a retired assistance dog was used to support victims of child sexual abuse, and in 1990, a dog was permitted to sit at the feet of a young girl during a preliminary hearing (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024). In 2003, Ellen O'Neill-Stephens, started bringing her son's certified companion dog, Jeeter, to work when her son was not going to need him (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024; McDermott, 2022). Jeeter was used in the courtroom for young twin girls who were emotionally distressed at the thought of testifying, and they had benefited from using Jeeter before (Dellinger, 2009). After this, in 2004, Canine Companions for Independence placed the first facility dog in the criminal justice system, and a few years later, an organisation was created to support the placement of facility dogs in the criminal justice system (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024). As of 2024, facility dogs are used in 41 out of 50 states in the US, seven out of 13 provinces in Canada, three cities in Australia, and are also used in Belgium, France, Italy and Japan (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024; Kyodo News, 2020). Despite the growing popularity of the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system, it is surprising that there is such little research in this area.

In numerous case studies, it is often detailed how vulnerable victims and witnesses are not able to provide testimony until they have the emotional support of a facility dog, and how the dogs help vulnerable victims and witnesses feel more empowered (Dellinger 2008; Holder, 2012; Howell

et al., 2021; Roby, 2015). Although this demonstrates the usefulness of facility dogs in the courtroom, research investigating this is largely anecdotal and carried out internationally, particularly concentrated in North America. For this reason, it is imperative that empirical evidence is collected to carefully examine the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system, particularly on the emotional wellbeing of vulnerable victims and witnesses to assess their applicability within UK criminal justice systems.

Therapy dogs have previously been used in a few court cases in the UK and was found to benefit all manner of court users (Hill, 2016). However, as mentioned previously, therapy dogs and facility dogs differ in numerous ways, such as the rigorousness of their training and the amount of time they can work at any one time (Spruin & Mozova, 2018). Where therapy dogs typically do not undergo structured training, facility dogs are trained so they are able to effectively complete tasks such as lying down quietly in a witness box, and their handlers are also usually trained (Spruin & Mozova, 2018).

In terms of research carried out in the UK that has specifically looked into facility dogs, Spruin et al. (2020b) demonstrated the benefits they have in supporting vulnerable victims to feel more comfortable while giving interviews. It can therefore be suggested that facility dogs could be beneficial for the UK criminal justice systems, particularly considering the overwhelmingly negative experience people face in the criminal justice system (Bunting, 2008; Victims' Commissioner, 2021a).

As there is very little empirical evidence in this area, despite how widespread these programs are across the world (e.g., Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024), a logical first step for this thesis would be to gather what evidence currently exists in this area. An analysis of existing research will help to draw conclusions regarding what research, thus far, has gleaned with regards

to the use of facility dog programmes in the criminal justice system, and where there are existing gaps in knowledge. This will help to orient the thesis and will feed into subsequent chapters.

Another perspective from which facility dog programmes can be understood is through the lens of professionals working with them. Incorporating professionals' perspectives will help to create a holistic picture of the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system. Research investigating this area is limited and mostly conducted in North America as facility dogs are not as heavily employed in other parts of the world, despite their growing popularity (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024). Examinations of the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system appear promising in the benefits they have found for victims while also tentatively exploring concerns that legal professionals may have (Howell et al., 2021; Glazer, 2018; Spruin et al., 2020b). As research collecting the views of professionals working closely with facility dogs is highly limited and mostly confined to North America, this thesis seeks to build on existing research by collecting data both from inside and outside of North America to assess legal professionals' views on facility dogs from a global perspective. Furthermore, to gain an understanding of the far-reaching impact facility dogs could have, this thesis will extend investigations into how facility dogs could impact professionals working with them as well, thus helping to develop a more holistic picture of the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system, as well as helping to capture any concerns as well.

One concern that is often raised with the use of facility dogs in the courtroom is their potentiality to influence jurors' opinions. As mentioned previously, facility dogs are calming, in part due to their ability to distract from the present situation (Dellinger, 2009; Roby, 2015). Questions have arisen as to whether facility dogs also can distract a jury or encourage them to sympathise with the complainant more as a result of the dog's presence (Dellinger, 2009; Glazer, 2018). Such bias would be particularly detrimental to the defendant, who, arguably, already has fewer rights than a vulnerable victim or witness (Fairclough, 2017; Fairclough, 2021; Glazer, 2018). Defence

lawyers across the US have oftentimes presented the argument that dogs could unfairly influence jurors due to their 'cuteness' and the 'natural empathy' they attract, irrespective of whether a witness is telling the truth (Bowers, 2013; Burd & McQuiston, 2019; Glaberson, 2011). However, research in this area is currently limited, and mostly focuses on perceived concerns (Glazer, 2018) as opposed to exploring the legitimacy of these concerns.

There was one study that was carried out in the US that did investigate the impact of facility dogs on mock jurors' opinions, compared to a teddy bear and no intervention (Burd & McQuiston, 2019). The researchers did not find that mock jurors' opinions differed where facility dogs were present, although interestingly the teddy bear may have influenced mock jurors' opinions by increasing the perceived victimisation of the child (Burd & McQuiston, 2019). Although this research supported the use of facility dogs in the courtroom as no bias was found amongst the mock jurors', more research needs to be carried out to provide further support for these findings so that facility dogs can be adopted in courts without the barrage of appeals that may follow afterwards (Bowers, 2013). This thesis aims to investigate potential jury bias, to provide an evidence-based response to doubts that dogs can cause bias.

The current section differentiated between therapy dogs and facility dogs and introduced the use of both types of dogs in the criminal justice system. A small discussion was had around the lack and necessity of research in this area, and how the current thesis will develop this evidence base by addressing gaps that have been identified. Empirical research that has been conducted in this area will be collated to improve current understanding of the impact of dogs in the criminal justice system. Another gap this thesis will address is regarding the lack of professionals' perspectives of the impact facility dogs have on victims and the professionals themselves. Finally, this thesis will aim to address whether facility dogs can be prejudicial. The next section will orient this thesis, taking into account existing evidence and gaps in the literature.

Section 4 – The Present Research

Thus far, an overview of crime and the impact this has on victims and wider society was explored. Issues with the criminal justice system have been identified, including the perceived lack of emotional support victims receive (Pettitt et al., 2013) which can lead to retraumatisation (Campbell, 2001) and potentially lead to increased attrition rates (Barrow-Grint, 2016).

Current special measures to put victims and witnesses at the heart of the criminal justice system were also explored, and dogs were introduced as a way to provide emotional support to victims and witnesses. Issues with the use of therapy dogs were explored, and facility dogs were identified as a preferred option for supporting victims. The current section will explore how this thesis will investigate the impact of dogs in the criminal justice system.

4.1 Research Aims and Questions

Drawing from the literature review and discussions in this chapter, this thesis aims to explore and answer a few different research questions, with each new chapter building on findings from the previous chapter. As there is very little research examining the impact of facility dog programmes in the criminal justice system, literature reviews in this thesis will sometimes draw from research in related areas (e.g., the impact of dogs on professionals working outside of the criminal justice system) to address research aims and questions in this thesis. Furthermore, as facility dogs are not used in the UK, research from other countries is sometimes used.

The overall aim of this thesis is to investigate the use of dogs in the criminal justice system, and assess whether their use is viable in the UK. To achieve this overall aim, this thesis is divided into three parts, each part with its own aims and research questions. The first part of this thesis aims to clarify how dogs who are supporting victims and witnesses are currently used in the criminal justice system. Through exploration, this thesis seeks answers to the question of what

impact, if any, dogs who are supporting victims and witnesses have, and whether they are an efficacious form of support.

The second part aims to broaden the understanding of facility dog programmes by exploring the views of legal professionals who have worked with facility dogs in the criminal justice system. This research seeks to answer questions around how professionals in different countries perceive the potential impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system, both for victims and witnesses, and for themselves.

The final part of this thesis endeavours to investigate jury decision making for cases where facility dogs are being used by victims, to ascertain whether dogs can cause bias. By examining potential jury bias, current understanding around facility dog programmes can be enhanced, and, if appropriate and possible, recommendations can be made regarding how facility dog programmes can be carried out to minimise the possibility of bias. This research seeks to answer questions around what influence, if any, facility dogs have on juries, and whether factors such as the visibility of the facility dog and judicial instructions impact jury decision making.

4.2 Research Approach and Design

The present research employs a pragmatic mixed methods design to explore a relatively new and interesting area of research without the restrictions of a purely quantitative or qualitative paradigm. Pragmatism allows for this, suggesting that a single scientific method cannot be employed to help researchers and philosophers understand reality (Maxcy, 2003). Pragmatism philosophy further impresses that knowledge derives from experience, therefore meaning no two realities are identical (Morgan, 2014). Thus, employing a mixed methods approach will enable the current research to holistically capture the experiences shared by each participant to provide an enhanced answer to the research questions for the current research. Another value of the pragmatism paradigm is that it emphasises the creation of knowledge (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

The current research aims to create new knowledge, as there is little empirical data investigating the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system, as demonstrated in the literature review.

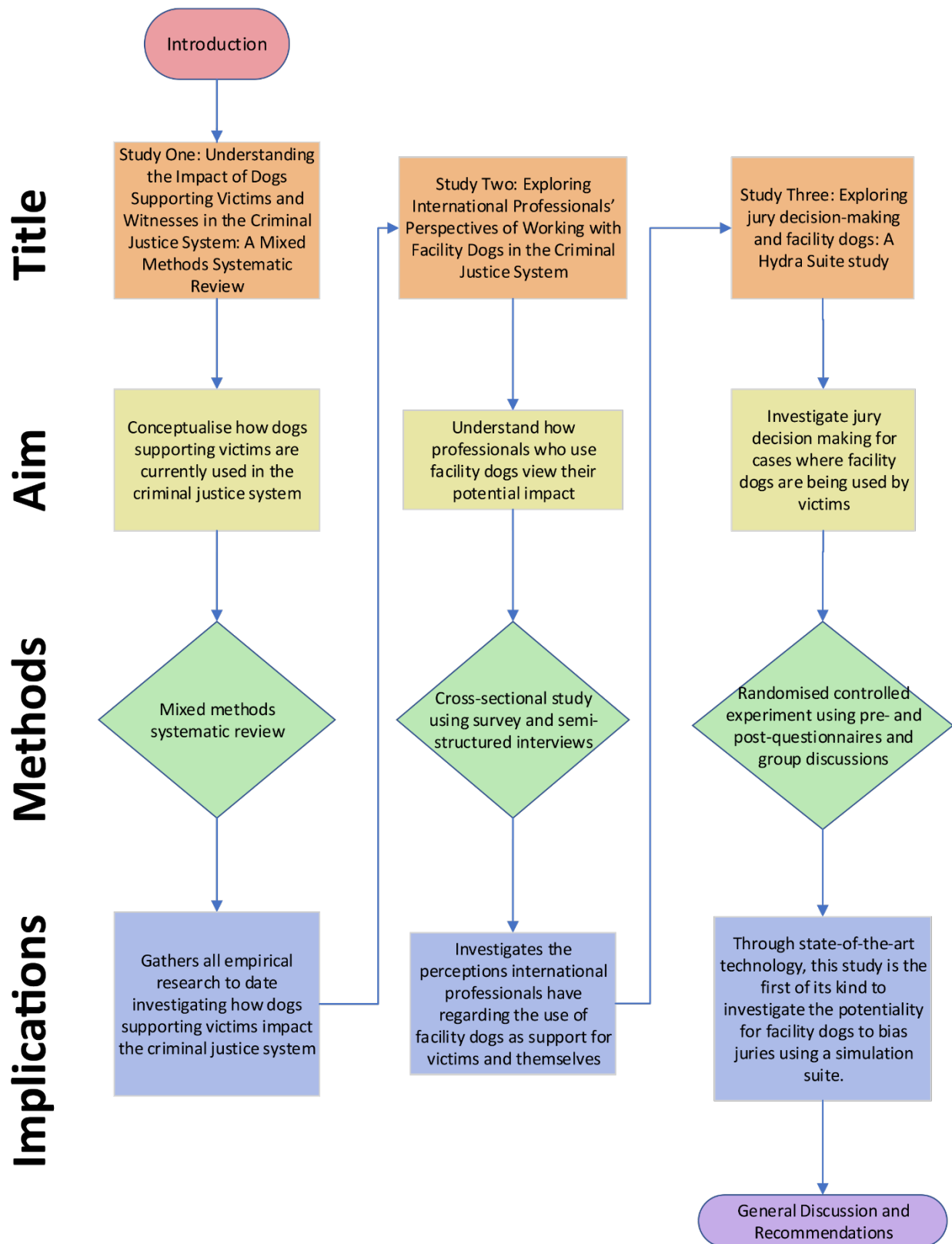
Pragmatism as a research approach seeks to ask practical questions to gain more meaningful answers, steering away from deeply philosophical questions regarding the nature of truth and instead searching for knowledge that is practical and applicable to current situations (Rorty, 1982). Pragmatism differs from positivism which postulates that real knowledge must be scientifically verifiable, logical, or mathematical (Rorty, 1982). Nor does pragmatism draw from Platonist views of the transcendental (Rorty, 1982). Instead, pragmatism abandons the idea of one truth corresponding to one reality, thus moving away from conventional philosophy, although all philosophies can agree on the existence of knowledge as power, albeit as a method of coping with reality rather than as an explanation for reality (Rorty, 1982). Pragmatism does not seek to purport one single truth, just as the present research does not aim to be generalisable to all populations in all circumstances. Instead, the current research aims to provide an understanding as to how individuals may be impacted by the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system.

The current thesis, as a whole, will use an exploratory sequential design, with each study informing the next. Studies within the present research will largely use a convergent parallel design, collecting data simultaneously, and triangulating the data before formulating conclusions. Adopting a convergent parallel design within studies will enable the collection of stronger data to allow for more accurate analyses to be performed and conclusions to be drawn. Quantitative and qualitative data in this thesis are analysed by assessing which statistical test or method of qualitative analysis is appropriate for answering the research questions.

Research in this thesis will be gathered in three different ways. First, a systematic review of existing research examining the impact of dogs supporting victims in the criminal justice system will be carried out. Secondly, a cross-sectional study will be used to investigate the perspectives of

professionals globally who have worked with facility dogs in the criminal justice system, specifically exploring the impact on victims and themselves, and any issues. Finally, a randomised controlled experiment will ascertain whether facility dogs can cause bias. Figure 1 provides a schema of studies in this thesis, and the next sub-section will detail these three studies.

Figure 1 A schema of studies for this thesis



4.3 Outline of Studies

As mentioned previously, the ultimate aim of this thesis is to investigate the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system, including their perceived impact on victims and professionals. Three studies will be carried out to investigate the use of facility dogs.

4.3.1 Study One – Understanding the Impact of Dogs Supporting Victims and Witnesses in the Criminal Justice System: A Mixed Methods Systematic Review

As explored previously, crime is costly for society and also for victims (e.g., Heeks et al., 2018; Handson et al., 2010). There is also little in the way of emotional support for victims (Pettitt et al., 2013) and victims risk experiencing retraumatisation in the criminal justice system due to effectively reliving their experiences through the interviews and testimonies they have to provide (Campbell, 2001). Although this thesis is interested in how facility dogs, specifically, can be used in the criminal justice system, the scope of this systematic review will include how therapy dogs have been used in the criminal justice system as well. Widening the scope may be necessary due to the relative lack of empirical research in this area as it is a relatively novel phenomenon. Carrying out a systematic review will increase understanding as to how research to date illustrates the use of dogs supporting victims in the criminal justice system, to ascertain whether they are a viable option for supporting victims, and, if they are found to be helpful, what their impact is.

4.3.2 Study Two – Exploring International Professionals' Perspectives of Working with Facility Dogs in the Criminal Justice System

A cross-sectional study will be carried out to investigate the opinions of legal professionals outside of the UK, regarding the impact of facility dogs, specifically, on both themselves and victims. Although there is a small amount of research in this area, research generally focuses just on the perceived impact on victims and not professionals, and certainly not outside of North America where facility dogs are most common (e.g., Spruin et al., 2020a). If facility dog

programmes are to be implemented in the UK, it would help to have perspectives of professionals from multiple countries to contribute to the creation of a solid evidence base.

There is a small amount of research examining the benefits of dogs in the workplace, including for hospital staff and office workers (Baurys, 2020; Holman et al., 2018). However, there is little research investigating the impact of dogs on professionals working in the criminal justice system. This is surprising given the high levels of stress and the low levels of job satisfaction that can be experienced in these jobs (Hagan & Kay, 2007; Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). Moreover, legal professionals may experience vicarious trauma and secondary trauma stress (Parkes et al., 2022). Given that research indicates dogs can act as a conduit to help people regulate their emotions (Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015), it would be beneficial to explore the impact of facility dogs on professionals.

This cross-sectional study aims to deepen the understanding of how professionals perceive the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system, including for victims, their support, and the professionals themselves. This will be achieved through an online questionnaire and interviews to understand this phenomenon in-depth.

4.3.3 Study Three – Exploring Jury Decision Making and Facility Dogs: A Hydra Suite Study

As touched on previously, it appears to be a concern that facility dogs could potentially bias a jury in favour of the witness. Although there is no substantial evidence supporting this, there have been cases in the US where verdicts have been overturned or sentences reduced due to arguments made by the defence that juries could have been biased by the presence of a facility dog (e.g., Ensminger et al., 2020). Such concerns have helped inform different approaches to the use of facility dogs in courtrooms. For example, some practices involve facility dogs hidden in witness boxes so they are only visible to the person testifying, and other practices require judges to provide

instructions to the jury that the facility dog is there in a supportive capacity and that jurors should not infer innocence or guilt from its presence (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024; Gerkey, 2015). These practices share the common goal of reducing the potential for a facility dog to bias a jury. However, there is minimal research examining the efficacy of these practices. For this reason, this study seeks to examine whether a facility dog could impact jury decision-making.

This study will employ a state-of-the-art simulation suite, known as the Hydra Suite, to investigate potential jury bias. Hydra Suite is used across the UK to facilitate decision making in various settings, including amongst police forces, paramedics and firefighters (Hydra Foundation, 2024). Hydra Suite enables the space for decisions to be made on complex cases that could theoretically be rare to come across but would need good judgement to be made if that situation or a similar situation happens.

Participants recruited for this study will be allocated to one of four conditions. Conditions will vary depending on whether participants can or cannot visibly see the facility dog when the complainant provides evidence, and whether the judge did or did not include in their direction to the jury context about the facility dog's role and that they should not make any inferences about the case based on the presence of the dog.

Participants will deliberate the court case amongst themselves before reaching a verdict and will complete pre- and post-deliberation questionnaires investigating their opinions of the fictional court case. Data will be analysed to ascertain whether, and/or the extent to, which the facility dog impacted jurors' opinions of the court case.

Section 5 – Chapter Summary

The current chapter has provided an overview of issues with the lack of emotional support given to victims in the UK criminal justice system, leading to retraumatisation and potentially causing increased attrition rates (Hohl & Stanko, 2015; Murphy et al., 2022). This chapter

demonstrated how these issues necessitate exploration of how victims can be emotionally supported, and the idea of dogs in the criminal justice system was introduced. Differences between therapy dogs and facility dogs were ascertained, and research in this area was discussed. Finally, gaps in the literature were identified, providing rationale for the research that will be carried out as part of this thesis.

This thesis is presented in five chapters. The first study, the mixed methods systematic review described above, will be detailed in Chapter Two. The second study, the cross-sectional study investigating professionals' opinions, will be covered in Chapter Three. The final study investigating whether facility dogs can cause jury bias will be detailed in Chapter Four. Each of these chapters will provide a more detailed overview of the literature contributing to each study and the rationale for these studies, before divulging the specifics of how each study was carried out. Data from each study will be analysed and discussions will be presented before each chapter is concluded. Chapter Five, the final chapter in this thesis, will provide a general discussion of findings, exploring implications for future research and practice as well.

Chapter Two: Understanding the Impact of Dogs Supporting Victims and Witnesses in the Criminal Justice System: A Mixed Methods Systematic Review

Section 1 – Introduction

The current chapter seeks to expand the understanding of the impact of dogs supporting victims and witnesses of crime by reviewing research that has been carried out in this field to date. Currently, this field is diluted with anecdotal evidence of the impact of dogs on victims and witnesses (e.g., Dellinger, 2009). To enhance clarity in this area, the current mixed methods systematic review aims to gather and evaluate what empirical evidence there is in this field assessing the use of dogs in the criminal justice system.

The previous chapter explored lack of resourcing in the police (Unison, 2018) which could impact the confidence of victims and witnesses who do and do not choose to report crime (McCarthy-Jones, 2018). Where police forces in the UK are already under a great deal of pressure (Baker & Kirk-Wade, 2024), they face additional challenges related to building trust in communities (Moroz, 2023). Indeed, although supporting victims is one of the top priorities as per the Policing Vision 2030 (NPCC, 2024), at present they are being let down by the police, with there being little recognition of the impact of vulnerabilities, such as mental health conditions and learning difficulties, on victims and witnesses (e.g., Hohl & Stanko, 2015). Even though crime can impact victims' and witnesses' quality of life, their mental wellbeing, and more (Hanson et al., 2010; Moroz, 2023), there is little in the way of emotional support to help victims and witnesses through the criminal justice system and reduce the revictimisation they can experience (Hunter et al., 2013).

Vulnerable victims and witnesses may not trust the police or the criminal justice system and could struggle emotionally to recount their experiences (Hohl & Stanko, 2015). Victims with mental health problems and/or learning difficulties are more likely to receive a police decision of

'no further action' (Hohl & Stanko, 2015). Police empathy has been found to be positively associated with sexual assault cases going to court (Maddox et al., 2011), which suggests that how police officers come across when a victim is making a disclosure is important, and perhaps more needs to be done to improve how police are perceived by victims. Monitoring police empathy is especially important given that some victims and witnesses of crime experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD (Hanson et al., 2010; Langton & Truman, 2014; McCart et al., 2010). Such symptoms have the potential to impact how believable victims and witnesses are perceived to be; for example, PTSD symptoms might include emotional numbness and dissociation, traits that are not associated with the stereotypical emotional victim, thus potentially rendering victims with these PTSD symptoms less believable (Maddox et al, 2011). Therefore, it is important that the needs of vulnerable victims and witnesses are understood, to minimise the impact on their vulnerability. The need to focus on victims' and witnesses' emotional wellbeing and how they can be supported while they are engaging with the criminal justice system is important as, if they could be supported with their emotional wellbeing, this could also potentially impact on their engagement and how they are perceived.

Chapter One explored how there is some support in place for vulnerable victims and witnesses; special measures are used to support victims and witnesses in their engagement with the criminal justice system. Attrition rates for people who provide evidence through a video-recorded interview, one form of special measures, are lower, except for when the victim has mental health problems (Hohl & Stanko, 2015). However, even with video-recorded interviews, it may be difficult for some people, especially children and those highly vulnerable, to engage with the interviewing process using this method (e.g., Victims' Commissioner, 2021b), and if they do, their testimony may be deemed inferior compared to if they gave evidence in-person at court (Fairclough, 2017) and could have a negative impact if the video-recorded interview is not of a high

quality (Aldrige & Luchjenbroers, 2008). This suggests a gap in existing support, and vulnerable victims and witnesses would benefit from additional measures, particularly to support them emotionally. The assurance that victims and witnesses will be emotionally supported is particularly important in the immediate period after contacting the police which is when many complainants withdraw their case (Barrow-Grint, 2016).

It is in this context that dogs could be helpful, to ensure victims and witnesses feel more supported when they are engaging with the criminal justice system, from the point of first contact with the police, through to prosecution. Where the previous chapter provided information about how dogs have been found to be useful in various settings, including educational settings and healthcare settings, the remainder of this chapter will explore how dogs can be used to support vulnerable victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system.

1.1 The Present Study

Dogs have been used to support victims and witnesses at least since 2003 (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2023). They have been conceptualised as a source of support in an environment that otherwise may seem cold and sterile (Glazer, 2018). Dogs appear to help across different dimensions, including helping people elaborate on more negative stressful events in their lives (Capparelli et al., 2020). This demonstrates how dogs could be beneficial for victims and witnesses when they are giving evidence, in addition to the emotional support they provide victims (Glazer, 2018). Despite the widespread support for the use of dogs as support for victims and witnesses (e.g., Roby, 2015; Kaiser, 2015), there is little empirical evidence exploring this specific area, and they are not currently used in the UK.

This area is multi-faceted in that victims and witnesses move through various parts of the criminal justice system, thus providing a strong reason for and adding complexity to this review. Additionally, the amount of time a person spends with a facility dog could differ; for example, some

victims and witnesses might only make contact with a dog in the criminal justice system once, whereas others may have a dog for the entire duration of their case. There are also different environments in which dogs can be used, including police interviews, inside courtrooms, inside courthouses but outside courtrooms, medical centres where they carry out physical examinations, and more. This could, therefore, be considered a complex phenomenon to investigate through a systematic review, particularly in the light of minimal research. Considering this, the present study is the first systematic review to attempt to gather all empirical evidence to date investigating the use of dogs supporting victims and witnesses at multiple points of their journey through the criminal justice system.

The present study seeks to review empirical research investigating the impact of dogs in victim and witness services to date, including within the criminal justice system (e.g., in police stations, courts, medical examinations) and outside of the criminal justice system (e.g., in healthcare settings where victims receive treatment). The aim of the current systematic review, therefore, is to provide clarification as to how dogs who are supporting victims and witnesses are used in the criminal justice system. The research question developed for this systematic review asks what impact, if any, dogs who are supporting victims and witnesses have, and whether they are an effective form of support.

Section 2 – Method

To meet the aims of the current research, a mixed methods systematic review was chosen as the most efficacious method. As knowledge in this area is limited and what research exists is diverse in aims, approaches, measurements and findings, no single method for conducting a review would have been appropriate or effective. The Joanna Briggs Institute Reviewers' Manual for mixed methods systematic reviews was used to inform the methods adopted in this review

(Lizarondo et al., 2020). This review is reported according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (see Figure 2).

2.1 Inclusion Criteria

2.1.1 Population

The types of participants included in this review was anyone impacted by dogs that are being used to support victims and witnesses. So, although victims and witnesses are the main focus, this review is also interested in the potential impact on the support networks of victims and witnesses, and the professionals working with them as well. Research concerning adults and children were included, as either can be victims and witnesses of crime.

2.1.2 Phenomena of Interest

Studies where the primary aim was to investigate how a dog could support a victim moving through the criminal justice system were included. Although the current thesis is largely interested in the use of facility dogs as opposed to any other type of dog illustrated in Chapter One, research looking into therapy dogs were included in the current study due to the relative novelty of facility dogs and the little research in this area presently. Not all studies included in this review specified the training and qualifications of the dogs used in their respective studies. For this reason, all data were analysed together, and no differentiations have been made in the results and discussions based on the type of dogs used for the studies included.

2.1.3 Context

Any setting in which a victim or witness could find themselves in during their time engaging with the criminal justice system was included in the review. Such settings include the use of dogs in police stations, courthouses, courtrooms, child advocacy centres (in the US), and in healthcare settings in the aftermath of the crime.

2.1.4 Types of Studies

Only primary data were included in the current review. Studies included were quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods, reflecting the mixed methods approach taken in this thesis. Only research published in English were included in this review, and any journal articles were from peer-reviewed journals. This is because peer-review is important due to the assessment of quality articles must go through by peers relevant to the field (Gaillet & Guglielmo, 2014). No research was excluded due to not being a published journal article as long as they were peer-reviewed, e.g., PhD theses would have been included in this review as they are peer-reviewed by examiners.

2.2 Exclusion Criteria

Studies that were excluded but still based in criminal justice settings include research that investigated the wellbeing of individuals who offended. The impact of dogs on people who offend is an important area for research and warrants an entire field of its own (e.g., Mercer et al., 2022), therefore such studies have not been included in this review, which is focused specifically on the impact of dogs supporting victims. Excluded studies also included animal-assisted interventions that did not use dogs, but another type of animal instead, such as horses or birds. Although other animals could also be beneficial for victims, this thesis is interested in the impact of dogs in the criminal justice system. Studies that explored how dogs could be beneficial for emotional wellbeing, recall or a related area but were conducted on a population who did not experience crime or support someone who experienced crime were excluded. One piece of research was excluded as it solely investigated judges' perceptions of facility dog programmes (Meyer et al., 2022). While undoubtedly an important perspective, judges generally have fleeting interactions with victims and witnesses and may not provide a holistic account of how dogs might impact victims and witnesses. Finally, another piece of research was excluded as dogs were not used throughout the duration of the intervention (Signal et al., 2017).

2.3 Search Method

The following databases were searched in March 2023 and again in March 2024 to include any recent studies: APA PsychINFO, Scopus, PubMed, Supplemental Index, Science Direct, Academic Search Complete, Directory of Open Access Journals, Criminal Justice Abstracts, and HeinOnline. Searches on these databases yielded 952 results, using the search terms "facility dog" OR "facility dogs" OR "courthouse dog" OR "courthouse dogs" OR "animal assisted" OR "canine assisted" OR "therapy dog" AND "court" "police" "victims" "witness" "forensic" "criminal justice" "legal". Research was sought from 11 years prior to the date the search was conducted. In addition to this, only peer-reviewed research published in English were eligible for consideration in the present review.

2.4 Screening

Studies identified by the search were imported into Zotero, a reference manager, and any duplicates were removed. The reviewers (the author of this thesis and a researcher who is also a PhD candidate) worked separately to screen titles and abstracts, to determine which articles should be excluded from this review. Studies included after the initial screening stage were downloaded and the full-text articles were then screened by both reviewers, as per current guidelines (Stoll et al., 2020). A dual review process can help to increase the number of relevant studies identified for analysis in a systematic review (Stoll et al., 2020). After screening, full-text articles that did not meet inclusion criteria were excluded; reasons for exclusion are available in Figure 2. No disagreements arose between the reviewers.

2.5 Quality Appraisal

Eligible studies were critically appraised by the researchers to establish the methodological quality of the selected studies. The systematic review was compiled in accordance with the JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis (Aromataris & Munn, 2020). Mixed methods systematic reviews are

relatively uncommon compared to their solely quantitative and qualitative counterparts, and so there is little guidance on how a mixed methods systematic review should be carried out. However, the JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis provided sufficient guidance and so was used for this systematic review.

Four critical appraisal checklists were used in assessing the quality of studies used in the mixed methods systematic review, to ensure studies were appropriately assessed as per the design chosen for the respective studies. These tools include the JBI critical appraisal checklist for randomised controlled trials (Tufanaru et al., 2020), the JBI critical appraisal checklist for quasi-experimental studies (Tufanaru et al., 2020), the Center for Evidence Based Management (CEBM, 2014) critical appraisal checklist for cross-sectional studies, and the JBI critical appraisal checklist for qualitative research (Lockwood et al., 2024). Where included studies used a mixed methods approach, the quantitative aspect and qualitative aspect were appraised separately. Any disagreements that arose between the reviewers were resolved through discussion.

2.5.1 The JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Randomised Controlled Trials

The first checklist used was the JBI critical appraisal checklist for randomised controlled trials (Tufanaru et al., 2020) where studies in this review used randomisation to allocate participants to different experimental groups. This checklist assesses studies based on thirteen distinct points.

2.5.1.1 True randomisation

The checklist assesses whether true randomisation was used for allocation, meaning that participants had to be assigned randomly otherwise allocation could potentially be influenced by the researchers' own biases (Tufanaru et al., 2020). To meet this criterion, participants must be assigned purely by chance and not without prior knowledge of participants' characteristics.

2.5.1.2 Concealment of allocation to groups

This dimension assesses whether researchers making allocations have been prevented from knowing prior to allocation which treatment or control is next in the allocation process, to prevent preferential allocation.

2.5.1.3 Treatment groups the same at baseline

As existing differences between participants in groups could impact a study looking into causal relationships, it is important to assess whether treatment groups are the same at baseline (Tufanaru et al., 2020). This could then impact how results are interpreted, i.e., the extent to which the intervention being examined could be deemed successful as a result of the intervention itself.

2.5.1.4 Participants blind to treatment assignment

This dimension involves participants not being aware whether they are allocated to the treatment group or control group, as this may impact their responses. Where possible, participants should be prevented from knowing which group they have been allocated to.

2.5.1.5 Those delivering treatment blind to treatment assignment

This dimension refers to whether those involved in the delivery of treatment are aware of participants' allocation, as this could impact how they interact with participants. By ensuring those delivering treatment are unaware of treatment assignment, the risk of distorting the results from the study can be minimised.

2.5.1.6 Outcome assessors being blind to treatment allocation

Those assessing the outcomes of the groups must be unaware of the treatment allocation where possible, so as not to influence the participants in any way. This will minimise the risk of outcome assessors potentially distorting the data collection.

2.5.1.7 Identical treatment of groups

Aside from the intervention of interest, groups should be treated equally so correct conclusions can be drawn regarding the efficacy of the intervention of interest. If groups are treated differently in other ways, aside from the prescribed intervention, it would be difficult to ascertain whether any differences between groups are as a result of the intervention.

2.5.1.8 Participant follow up

This refers to follow up from when participants were randomly allocated to when the experiment ended. This criterion requires follow up to be completed, and, where this was not possible, for differences between groups in terms of follow up to be adequately described and analysed.

2.5.1.9 Participants analysed in the groups to which they were randomised

This dimension refers to whether all participants were analysed in the groups they were randomly allocated to regardless of whether they completed the intervention. So, for example, whether participants who withdrew from the study were still included in the analysis.

2.5.1.10 Outcomes measured the same for groups

Outcomes have to be measured the same between groups to allow for comparisons. This is so the impact of the intervention can be fully assessed, and the correct conclusions can be drawn from the study. If outcomes are measured the same, this will reduce any confusion in what the effect of the intervention is.

2.5.1.11 Outcomes measured reliably

This dimension emphasises the need for outcomes to be measured reliably. Unreliable measurements can threaten the integrity of a study and confuse the findings and conclusions drawn from the study. Reliable measurements include checking the number of raters, training of

raters, intra-rater reliability, and the inter-rater reliability within the study. This dimension is not about the validity of measurements used in the study.

2.5.1.12 Appropriate statistical analysis

Inappropriate analysis can cause confusion around the existence of an effect suspected to be caused by treatment as well as the strength of the effect. This can include checking whether assumptions of statistical tests were reported, whether an appropriate power analysis was carried out, if effect sizes were used, and whether the statistical methods were appropriate given the number and types of variables, participant numbers, and the objectives of the statistical analysis.

2.5.1.13 Appropriateness of the trial for the design

This dimension assessed whether the trial design was appropriate as there are many types of RCTs, including crossover RCTs, cluster RCTs and stepped-wedge RCTs. Any deviations from the standard form of RCT should be accounted for in the way the study is conducted and analysed.

2.5.2 The JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Quasi-experimental Studies

The JBI critical appraisal checklist for quasi-experimental studies (Tufanaru et al., 2020) is for experimental studies that do not use random allocation. This checklist assesses research on nine dimensions.

2.5.2.1 Clarity around 'cause' and 'effect'

There should be clarity around what the independent variable is; that is, the variable that is manipulated and being investigated as a potential cause of the dependent variable, the effect. The relationship between the independent and dependent variable should be unambiguous.

2.5.2.2 Similarity in participants across groups

If there are differences in participants between groups, this could interfere with the validity of research exploring causal relationships. There may be a risk of selection bias when this

happens, and this can make it difficult to attribute cause and effect. This dimension does not apply to within subject designs where the same participant pool is used.

2.5.2.3 Participants receiving multiple interventions

Participants should not be exposed to any other interventions apart from the intervention of interest. If participants are included in multiple interventions, this may make it difficult to understand the findings as it might be unclear what caused any impact found. There should be no doubt around potential causes for effects found.

2.5.2.4 Existence of a control group

This dimension refers to whether a control group was used as a comparison for the intervention group. This is to measure whether the intervention was effective, and if so, by how much. This can help to make causal inferences to strengthen the findings from research.

2.5.2.5 Multiple measurements of the outcome

It is recommended that pre- and post-test assessments are taken to help measure the effectiveness of an intervention. If no assessment is taken prior to the intervention, it will be difficult to assess whether the intervention had any effect, and if it seemingly did in comparison to a control group, whether this finding was by chance. Multiple measurements aid thorough investigation into the phenomenon being assessed.

2.5.2.6 Follow-up

This dimension refers to whether the same number of participants were measured at pre-test compared to post-test. If there are any differences here, these should be described and explored with reference to how efficacious an intervention might be if there was inadequate follow-up.

2.5.2.7 Consistency in measurements at pre- and post-test

Measurements should be the same at pre- and post-test to ensure validity in any claims of a causal relationship. If there are different measurements used at pre- and post-test, there is no assurance around the efficacy of any interventions.

2.5.2.8 Reliability of measurements used for outcomes

Outcomes should be measured reliably, to ensure strength in the validity of inferences made about any causal relationships. This may include, for example, the number of raters, the level of training the raters have undergone, as well as intra- and inter-reliability within the study itself. This dimension does not refer to the validity of the measurements used in this study.

2.5.2.9 Appropriateness of statistical analyses used

If appropriate statistical analyses are not used, this can jeopardise the strength of the effect attributed to the intervention. Low statistical power and assumptions of statistical tests not being met may impact the validity of conclusions drawn about any causal relationships.

2.5.3 The CEBM Critical Appraisal Checklist for Cross-sectional Studies

This checklist is used to assess the quality of cross-sectional studies. This checklist was adapted from various sources, including Crombie's *The Pocket Guide to Critical Appraisal* used by the Oxford Centre for Evidence Medicine, checklists of the Dutch Cochrane Centre, the British Medical Journal's editor's checklists, and the checklists of the EPPI Centre (CEBM, 2014). There are 12 items on this checklist.

2.5.3.1 Addressing a clearly focused question / issue

This dimension emphasises the importance of the study addressing what it sets out to research. The research aims and questions should also be stated coherently and should not be vague.

2.5.3.2 Appropriateness of the study design for the research question

This area checks whether the research method employed for the study being appraised is appropriate for answering the research question. For example, a cross-sectional study that seeks to deepen the understanding of personal experiences of using a facility dog would be inappropriate as cross-sectional research makes observations of populations rather than understand the philosophy of experience.

2.5.3.3 Participant recruitment clearly described

It is important that the methods used for participant recruitment are made clear. This will help to make sense of some of the findings (e.g., a study that solely uses a student population may be different to a study that recruits the general population) and will help with replication of the study.

2.5.3.4 Risk of selection bias

Selection bias is an issue that needs to be addressed to ensure the sample of participants recruited for a piece of research is representative of the wider population of interest. For example, a study seeking to understand parents' experiences of their children using justice facility dogs, but only speaks to parents whose children won their court cases, could be seen as selection bias and this might result in only positive views of the use of facility dogs.

2.5.3.5 Subjects representativeness of the population being investigated

This dimension emphasises the importance of ensuring that the participants recruited for the study are representative of the population to which the findings will be referred, ensuring that conclusions drawn from research are accurate and generalisable to the population of interest. For example, research that aims to understand the use of justice facility dogs in Europe, but only focuses on one country, could be seen as not being representative of the population being investigated (i.e., Europeans).

2.5.3.6 Sample size based on pre-study considerations of statistical power

Statistical power is important as it affects the probability of drawing the correct conclusions if the alternative hypothesis is true. Making a pre-study calculation will help to determine how many cases are needed to detect meaningful differences.

2.5.3.7 Satisfactory response rate

A satisfactory response rate is important to ensure that inferences drawn from research are not simply by chance. Generally, in quantitative research, a minimum sample size of 30 can be used for statistical analysis.

2.5.3.8 Validity and reliability of measurements

With the use of questionnaires, it is important to ascertain the extent to which measurements are valid and reliable as this will impact the extent to which conclusions can be firmly drawn from research. This might involve testing whether, for example, the questionnaire used measures what it sets out to measure.

2.5.3.9 Assessment of statistical significance

Descriptive data can be useful in illustrating a certain phenomenon amongst populations. However, assessing for statistical significance can help strengthen the findings and minimise the risk that the findings were by chance.

2.5.3.10 Confidence intervals given for main results

Confidence intervals indicate the consistency or variability of the result. They help to estimate how far the sample mean may be from the actual population mean. If confidence intervals are provided, this can help provide assurance regarding how precise the data are.

2.5.3.11 Accounting for confounding factors

Where possible, extraneous variables should be accounted for to ensure conclusions drawn are accurate and not impacted by other factors. For example, a questionnaire seeking to

understand parents' experiences of their children using facility dogs could be skewed by the verdict of the court case if this is not accounted for. However, this should be applied within reason; controlling for each parent's favourite breed of dog, for example, might not be practical or appropriate.

2.5.3.12 Applicability of results to organisation

This dimension questions whether the results of the study being appraised are relevant to the person appraising the study. So, in this instance, whether the results of the study being appraised is appropriate for inclusion in the present systematic review.

2.5.4 The JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research

This checklist is used to assess the quality of qualitative research used in either single methods or mixed methods systematic reviews. This assessment tool was used to review qualitative studies and qualitative components of mixed methods research. This checklist has ten dimensions.

2.5.4.1 Concordance between the research methodology and philosophical perspective

Ideally, qualitative research should make clear the philosophical or theoretical foundation of the study. For example, interpretive research using survey methodology may be in juxtaposition as gathering knowledge on the meaning of a phenomena to people or to groups of people would be difficult to do using a survey presenting standard questions to a defined study population.

2.5.4.2 Concordance between research methodology and research questions or aims

The research methodology should be an appropriate way to address the research questions and aims raised for the study. For example, a piece of research wishing to establish cause and effect that then adopts an ethnographic approach would be in discordance as an ethnographic approach would not help to address this research question.

2.5.4.3 Concordance between research methodology and data collection

This dimension involves ensuring that the method of data collection is appropriate for the research methodology adopted for the study. As an example, a study adopting a phenomenological approach that then collects data through a questionnaire could be incongruous.

2.5.4.4 Concordance between research methodology and the representation and analysis of data

The method of data analysis should be appropriate for the research methodology chosen for the study. For example, a study adopting a phenomenological approach would be expected to investigate the meaning of a phenomenon in the participants, rather than only focusing on common themes and recurring messages, and not taking into consideration other meanings that may have been reported that were less common.

2.5.4.5 Concordance between research methodology and interpretation of results

Results from qualitative research should be interpreted in a way that is appropriate for the chosen research methodology. A piece of research may adopt a phenomenological approach only to use the findings to create checklists for practitioners and researchers. This would not be aligned with the phenomenological approach, which aims to understand how a phenomenon is experienced by people and not how this can then be generalised to other populations.

2.5.4.6 Researchers' own cultural and theoretical position

In qualitative studies, researchers play a very active role throughout, from developing the research aims to interpreting the findings. It is therefore important that researchers' own beliefs and values are explored to make candid the potential influence they could have had on the study.

2.5.4.7 Influence of the researcher on the research and vice-versa

The potentiality for the researcher to influence the research and vice-versa should be explored in qualitative research. This could involve exploring the relationship between the

researcher and participants, as well as the influence the researcher could have on the data collection process.

2.5.4.8 Fair representation of participants and their voices

Findings in qualitative research should be reflective of the participants in the study and the data collected from their participation. Any conclusions drawn should make it apparent how this links to the data collected to ensure adequate representation of participants' voices.

2.5.4.9 Ethical approval

It should be clear from research what ethical issues were considered and how ethical approval was gained for the study.

2.5.4.10 Relationship between interpretation of data and conclusions

The findings produced from a study should reflect how the data was interpreted by the researcher. Any conclusions drawn should come solely from the data itself, and clear links should be made in texts to establish this.

2.6 Data Extraction

Data gathered were extracted into standardised tables which covered whether the dog used in the study was a facility dog or therapy dog, information about participants, the study method design and data collection, phenomenon of interest, context for the study, outcomes, and themes and subthemes. Where relevant, statistical findings were extracted from quantitative papers to then be qualitised.

2.7 Analysis

A meta-analysis was not deemed appropriate for the present research due to the diversity of the studies in terms of the environment the experiments were carried out in, as well as the participants and the outcomes of the research. For this reason, meta-aggregation was used. Meta-aggregation allows for the synthesis of findings across different types of research (Lockwood et al.,

2015) without the need to reinterpret findings which could potentially obscure conclusions that could be drawn from primary studies. A convergent integrated approach was adopted for this analysis, meaning that quantitative and qualitative data were analysed together to address the research questions. The first stage of the analysis involved extracting all raw data from the research into tables, as illustrated in the previous sub-section. Quantitative components of research were qualited. This method was chosen as codifying statistical data may be less error-prone than assigning numerical values to qualitative data (Lizarondo et al., 2020). Statistical data were translated into 'textual description' to allow integration with the qualitative data analysed for the present research.

The second stage of the analysis involved pooling qualited data with the qualitative data extracted from mixed methods and qualitative studies into tables. The reviewers, both with backgrounds in Psychology, examined and re-examined the assembled data and met regularly during the analysis to discuss emerging categories, which were aggregated to produce overall findings and develop a cohesive, nuanced narrative that runs through the research and represented all findings from these studies.

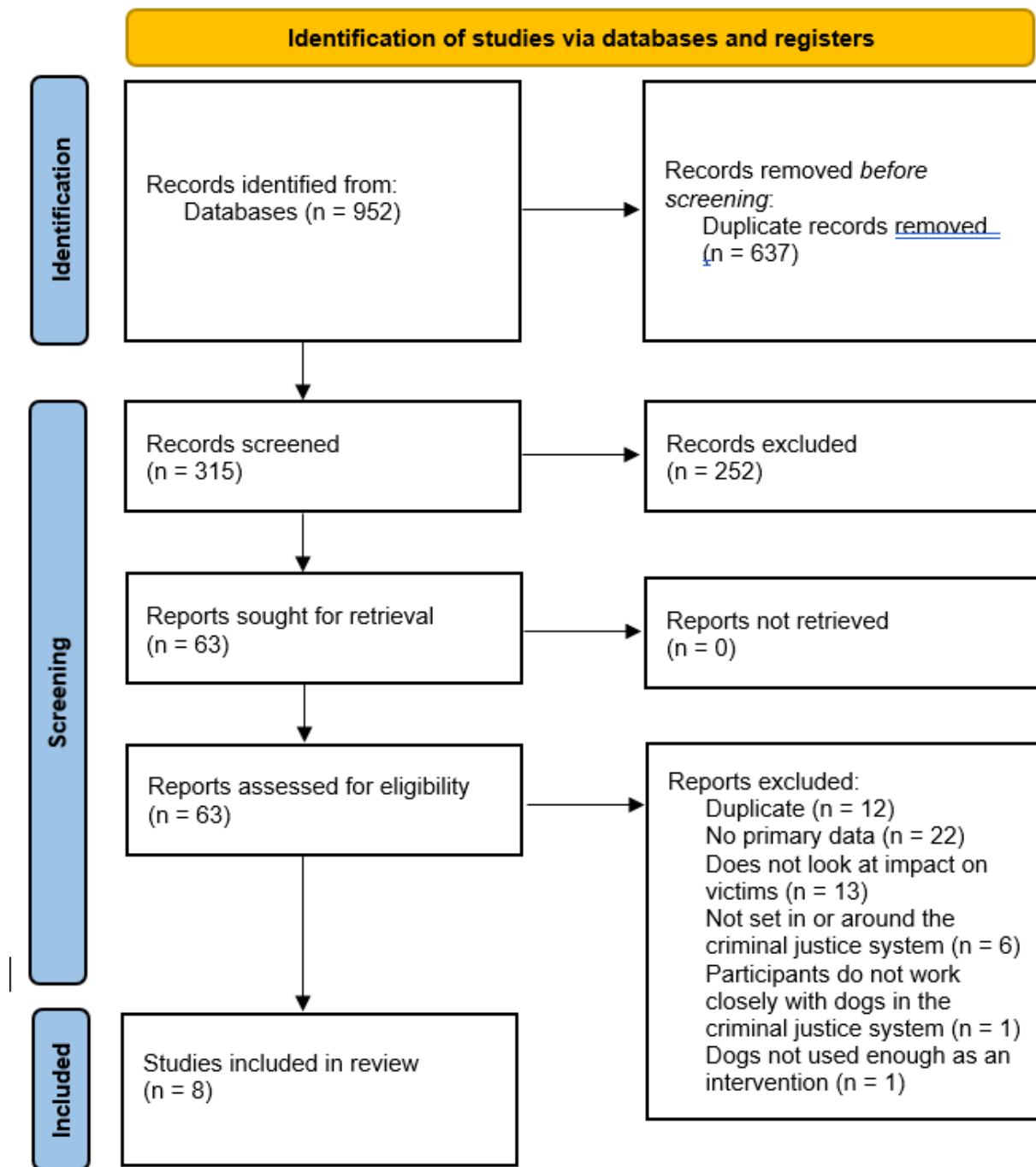
Section 3 – Results

3.1 Study Inclusion

Figure 2 provides a flowchart of identification of studies via databases and registers. Initially, searches returned 952 results. Of this, 637 records were removed prior to screening due to duplication. The second stage involved screening titles and abstracts to discard studies where it was immediately apparent that they did not meet the criteria; this included papers that focused on the benefits of dog programmes for people in prisons rather than for victims, which is not the focus of this thesis. Articles that were commentaries rather than empirical papers were also excluded. This brought the number of records down from 315 to 63. Following this, all 63 reports were sought

for retrieval and were successfully obtained. The full texts were then screened for eligibility and 55 studies were removed due to duplication, lack of primary data, studies not looking at dogs in roles supporting victims, studies not related to the criminal justice system, the participants of the study did not work closely with dogs in the criminal justice system, and dogs were not used enough as an intervention to assess their efficacy. This left eight studies for inclusion in this review.

Figure 2 PRISMA flowchart demonstrating identification of studies via databases and registers



As expected, studies were varied in their aims and the settings the research took place in.

Five studies used victims as participants (Dietz et al., 2012; Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015;

Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015; Krause-Parello et al., 2018b); two studies used professionals who

work with dogs (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020a); one study used data from victims, their support, and professionals (Spruin et al., 2020b), and one study used professionals and court users, which could be anyone, including a witness of either the defence or the prosecution, and their support (Spruin et al., 2019).

In terms of the location of the research, four studies were carried out in Child Advocacy Centres which are sometimes used for children to undergo forensic interviews (i.e., investigative interviews in British English terms) or partake in therapy after reports of abuse (Dietz et al., 2012; Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015; Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015; Krause-Parello et al., 2018b). One study took place in court (Spruin et al., 2019), one study in a police station (Spruin et al., 2020a), and a final study took place online with participants who carry out investigative interviews (Spruin et al., 2020b).

Table 1

Characteristics of studies included in mixed methods systematic review investigating the impact of dogs in victim-facing roles in the criminal justice system

Authors	Country	Aims	Design	Participants	Data Collection	Findings
Dietz et al. (2012)	US	To evaluate and compare the effectiveness of three therapy groups for child sexual abuse (CSA) survivors on trauma symptoms, including anxiety, depression, anger, PTSD, dissociation, and sexual concerns.	Quasi-experimental between-subjects designs	153 children with validated cases of child sexual abuse three conditions, group therapy with no dog, group therapy with dog, or group therapy with dog and ‘stories’	Quantitative data collected. Trauma symptoms assessed with self-report scale before first group therapy session and again at conclusion of group therapy session	Children assigned to the conditions with dogs experience better outcomes than children assigned to the control condition (no dog)
Howell et al. (2021)	US and Canada	Focus is on how dogs are used in legal contexts, their associated advantages and challenges, and	Interviews	11 professionals (nine women) working with facility dogs	Qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews conducted online with staff who work with	There were benefits and challenges to using facility dogs in the legal system, but benefits appear valuable (e.g.,

		animal welfare implications			facility dogs in legal contexts	calming and empowering survivors)
Krause-Parello & Friedmann (2015)	US	Examine the effects of AAI on stress indicators (salivary alpha-amylase [sAA], immunoglobulin A (IgA) and heart rate) in children undergoing investigative interviews for alleged sexual abuse	Randomised experimental design, repeated measures design	42 children assigned to either no dog present during investigative interview condition or dog present	Biomarkers taken before interview and before introduction to dog, and immediately after interview	Some biomarkers of stress were lower for the experimental condition than the control condition
Krause-Parello & Gulick (2015)	US	Examine the effects of AAI on changes in salivary cortisol, IgA, BP, and HR as a result of investigative interview in children	Randomised experimental design, repeated measures design	42 children being interviewed for child sexual abuse	Unstimulated saliva sample, blood pressure and heart rate measured before interview (before meeting the dog) and after interview	Dog acted as a buffer or safeguard for children who disclosed details of sexual abuse. Control condition had higher cortisol levels before and after interview

		interviewed for alleged CSA				
Krause-Parello et al. (2018b)	US	Examine how presence of facility dog affects stress levels in children undergoing investigative interviews for child sexual abuse allegations	Randomised experimental design, repeated measures	51 children undergoing investigative interviews for child sexual abuse allegations	Biomarkers taken before and after investigative interview (before meeting the dog)	AAI impacted stress for some children (e.g., certain types of abuse and acts) and under specific conditions (e.g., petting the dog)
Spruin et al. (2019)	UK	To investigate the impact of a therapy dog in a court waiting area	Semi-structured interviews with court users and court staff	117 court users (48 males and 69 females) and eight professionals (3 males and 5 females)	Court users were interviewed after they interacted with the dog in the waiting area, staff were interviewed at their own convenience	Therapy dog helped reduce stress and anxiety in court users, staff could see benefits for court users interacting with therapy dog
Spruin et al. (2020a)	US and Canada	Assess the effect of facility dogs on rapport building and witness credibility	Online questionnaire	70 legal professionals (9 males and 61 females)	Online mixed methods questionnaire measuring witness credibility and rapport building	Facility dog enhanced people's communication and confidence. Dogs enabled rapport building which enhanced witness credibility

Spruin et al. (2020b)	UK	To investigate the support that a facility dog can provide to survivors of sexual crimes when undergoing video-recorded interviews	Multiple case study design	13 survivors of sexual offences (11 female, 2 male)	Semi-structured interviews with parents and/or guardians of survivor, observations of survivors before and after, feedback requested from policing staff and intermediaries	Dog enhanced survivors' willingness to disclose and increased their coherency. Dog created a relaxed, less intimidating environment. Significant drop in anxiety in survivors before and after interview
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3.2 Characteristics of Included Studies

The characteristics of the eight selected studies are presented in Table 1. These studies were published between 2010 and 2021. Four studies were carried out with participants from the US (Dietz et al., 2012; Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015; Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015; Krause-Parello et al., 2018b), two studies were carried out with participants mostly from the US but some from Canada (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020a), and the remaining two studies were carried out in the UK (Spruin et al., 2019; Spruin et al., 2020b).

Four studies were carried out solely with victims and survivors as participants (Dietz et al., 2012; Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015; Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015; Krause-Parello et al., 2018b), two studies were carried out solely with professionals (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020a), and one study used data collected from victims and survivors, their support, and professionals (Spruin et al., 2020b). One study recruited court users (i.e., any person at the court, whether it is a witness for the defence or the prosecution, or their support) and court professionals (Spruin et al., 2019), and this data were analysed equivalent to data about victims and witnesses. This is for two reasons, firstly that most participants in this research were prosecution witnesses, a population that is the primary focus of this thesis. The second reason is that for the defence witnesses who partook in this research, they are still witnesses and could be vulnerable in themselves. As they could still be in need of emotional support themselves, the inclusion of the findings from this study will still be applicable in terms of demonstrating the impact dogs can have on people emotionally. Therefore, the findings from Spruin et al.'s (2019) study are still in the scope of this review. Although this could potentially impact the findings in terms of how this applies to the understanding of support for vulnerable victims, it could be argued that due to the majority of participants in this study being prosecution witnesses, any impact on findings would be minimal.

The combined number of participants in all the studies used for this systematic review was 517. Methods include randomised controlled experiments, surveys, interviews, and multiple case studies. Research took place in varied settings, including Child Advocacy Centres, courthouses, police stations and online.

3.3 Methodological Quality

The overall methodological quality of the studies chosen for this review is summarised in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5. Due to the mixed methods nature of this systematic review, four tools were used to appraise the quality of research.

Three studies met the criteria for randomised controlled experiments (Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015; Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015; Krause-Parello et al., 2018b). Due to the nature of the interventions used, it is not possible for allocation to treatment groups to be concealed (Q2), and participants cannot be blind to treatment assignment as they will see if there is a dog present (Q4). For the same reason, it is also not possible for those delivering the intervention or assessing the outcome to be blind to treatment assignment (Q5 and Q6 respectively). For one study, it was unclear whether treatment groups were the same at baseline either in participant characteristics, or through the measurements of the dependent variables before the intervention (Q3; Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015). For two studies, participants appeared to differ at baseline, whether by participants' personal characteristics (e.g., race; Krause-Parello et al., 2018b) or by measurements of the dependent variable before the intervention (e.g., heart rate or blood pressure; Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015; Krause-Parello et al., 2018b).

Two studies met the criteria for cross-sectional research (Spruin et al., 2020a; Spruin et al., 2020b). These studies did not consider a power analysis for their respective sample sizes (Q6), and they did not report confidence intervals (Q10). As these studies are mixed methods, they were also

assessed for their qualitative components. Researchers did not provide their philosophical perspective of their research (Q1) and did not provide their cultural or theoretical position (Q6).

For the quasi-experimental study, only one dimension was not met as participants across groups being compared were not similar (Q2; Dietz et al., 2012). This could be a difficult feat to achieve given the nature of the study, as it cannot be controlled when children who have been abused will come for therapy.

The two final studies were purely qualitative studies (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2019). Researchers did not explore the philosophical perspective of their research (Q1) and did not position themselves culturally or theoretically (Q6). Further to this, Spruin et al. (2019) did not explore the influence of the researcher on the research (Q7).

After removing the dimensions that researchers could not have accounted for, as stated above, percentages for methodological quality were calculated. These are presented in Table 6. Studies included in this systematic review were generally of high quality.

Table 2

Methodological quality for research used in mixed methods systematic review that adopts a randomised experimental design

Author	Q1	Q2 ^a	Q3	Q4 ^a	Q5 ^a	Q6 ^a	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
Krause-Parello & Friedmann (2015)	Y	N	U	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Krause-Parello & Gulick (2015)	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Krause-Parello et al. (2018b)	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Note. Y indicates the criterion was met, N indicates the criterion was not met, U indicates it is unknown whether the criterion was met.

^a Criterion could not be controlled for by the researchers as detailed previously.

Table 3

Methodological quality of studies used in mixed methods systematic review with a quasi-experimental design

Author	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Dietz et al. (2012)	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Note. Y indicates the criterion was met, N indicates the criterion was not met, U indicates it is unknown whether the criterion was met.

Table 4

Methodological quality of studies used in mixed methods systematic review with a cross-sectional study design

Author	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 ^a	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11 ^a	Q12
Spruin et al. (2020a)	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Spruin et al (2020b)	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	U	Y	N	N	Y

Note. Y indicates the criterion was met, N indicates the criterion was not met, U indicates it is unknown whether the criterion was met.

^a These dimensions should have a response of N to meet the criteria.

Table 5

Methodological quality of studies used in systematic review that have qualitative components

Author	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
Howell et al. (2021)	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Spruin et al. (2019)	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Spruin et al. (2020a)	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Spruin et al. (2020b)	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y

Note. Y indicates the criterion was met, N indicates the criterion was not met, U indicates it is unknown whether the criterion was met.

Table 6*Overall percentage quality of studies*

Authors	Study Design	Percentage Quality
Dietz et al. (2012)	Quasi-experimental design	88.89%
Howell et al. (2021)	Qualitative design	80%
Krause-Parello & Friedmann (2015)	Randomised experimental design	88.89% ^a
Krause-Parello & Gulick (2015)	Randomised experimental design	88.89% ^a
Krause-Parello et al. (2018b)	Randomised experimental design	88.89% ^a
Spruin et al. (2019)	Qualitative design	70%
Spruin et al. (2020a)	Mixed methods cross-sectional design with qualitative components	81.82%
Spruin et al. (2020b)	Mixed methods cross-sectional design with qualitative components	77.27%

Note. ^aThese percentages are calculated after removing dimensions that researchers could not have accounted for, as previously discussed.

3.4 Findings

This subsection explores three distinct but related themes that were found within the data gathered for this systematic review. The first theme explores the purpose of the dog, so what therapy dogs and facility dogs do for victims. The second theme explores what impact the purpose of the dog has on victims and witnesses, including the biological and psychological impact. The third and final theme then details the wider impact the dog has on the criminal justice system through their work with victims and witnesses.

3.4.1 The Purpose of the Dog

Therapy dogs and facility dogs appear to provide companionship to victims, survivors and court users (Spruin et al., 2019). Some survivors needed reassurance that the dog would not be taken away from them and may have felt as though the dog was only there to support them (Spruin et al., 2020b). It was observed that the dog would sense when participants were upset and would provide them with comfort (Spruin et al., 2020b).

Dogs were also reportedly a positive distraction for victims, survivors and court users, taking their mind off their fear and anxiety (Spruin et al., 2019; Spruin et al., 2020b). Court users welcomed the distraction in the waiting area; they reported that just seeing the dog helped them feel happier and distracted them, although touching the dog may help participants reap benefits as well (Spruin et al., 2019). Court staff agreed that dogs appear to give court users something else to concentrate on (Spruin et al., 2019), and through observations, it appeared that the dog helped survivors cope during interviews by changing their focus somewhat.

3.4.2 The Impact on Victims and Witnesses

It was suggested that dogs could have a biological effect on victims and survivors attending Child Advocacy Centres. Whether they were there to provide evidence through investigative interviews (or, as they are known in the US where these studies took place, forensic interviews), or

if they were there for animal-assisted therapy (AAT) in the aftermath of experiencing crime, it was found that dogs generally impacted children's biological state, from which it is inferred that dogs helped children feel calmer. This was measured by salivary alpha-amylase (sAA), a biomarker of stress, which was found to be significantly lower after an investigative interview when a dog was present compared to when a dog was not present (Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015). There were two nuances to this finding, whereby sAA was lowest in short interviews with the dog present, and the longer the interview, the less the presence of a dog influenced sAA.

Comparatively lower levels of sAA in children accompanied by dogs was not consistently found across studies. Krause-Parello et al., (2018b) did not find a statistically significant difference in levels of sAA between experimental conditions (with dog) than control conditions (without dog). This discrepancy could indicate that there were other factors involved that might not have been accounted for in this study. The authors suggest that the large size of the dog used in this particular study could have been intimidating for some children, although this is speculative as the authors did not control for children's opinions about the dog.

Another biological marker of stress used in research to measure the impact of dogs on victims includes levels of salivary immunoglobulin A (IgA), a protein that, when under stress, the body produces less of. It was found that levels of IgA were lower when there was a dog present during interviews after controlling for other variables, compared to no dog being present during interviews (Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015; Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015), although this finding is not consistent across all studies (Krause-Parello et al., 2018b). This could be because in one specific study, participants in the control condition (i.e., the condition without the dog) showed higher levels of IgA before the study took place, compared to the experimental condition (Krause-Parello et al., 2018b). Further to this, participants in the experimental condition had lower levels of IgA after undergoing interview compared to before, unlike the control condition where levels of IgA

were higher after the interview compared to before (Krause-Parello et al., 2018b). Therefore, although this one particular study did not find statistically significant differences in salivary IgA between groups, this trend still suggests the decrease in levels of IgA in children who use the dog is indicative of the benefits of the dog, particularly when considered alongside research where statistically significant differences in levels of IgA are found between groups (Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015; Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015).

Heart rate has also been investigated in children before and after investigative interviews. Children provided with a dog during interview showed significantly lower heart rate values after the interview than before (Krause-Parello et al., 2018b). When children did not have a dog present during interview, heart rate values were greater for younger children than older children (Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015). Moreover, for younger children, the longer the interview, the more the presence of the dog was associated with lower heart rate (Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015).

Another observed biological change that indicates reduction in stress includes a change in blood pressure. There were significant changes in blood pressure in children who had a dog present during interview, depending on when a disclosure was made during interview, and the frequency of the abuse that occurred (Krause-Parello et al., 2018b). Indeed, children who had a dog present during interview showed decreases in systolic blood pressure depending on whether they disclosed when compared to the control condition (Krause-Parello et al., 2018b). There was also a decrease in diastolic blood pressure in older children who had a dog present, which was solely explainable by age and the presence of the dog (Krause-Parello et al. 2018b). Changes in blood pressure have also been linked to petting the dog; children who petted the dog after making a disclosure showed significantly reduced systolic blood pressure compared to children in the experimental condition who did not pet the dog (Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015), providing further support that touching the dog can help participants reap benefits (Spruin et al., 2019).

A final biomarker of stress that was investigated noted that children who did not have a dog present with them during interview had higher cortisol levels after the interview compared to the children who did have a dog present (Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015). These studies provide compelling evidence that dogs help alter the biology of the victims and witnesses they comfort, which could then cause or be linked to other impacts dogs have on victims and witnesses. For example, physical changes in the demeanours of victims, witnesses and court users have been observed (Spruin et al., 2019; Spruin et al., 2020b). This includes people looking physically more relaxed, smiling where they were unable to smile before, and generally appearing brighter and less anxious.

Changes in victims' demeanour could be attributed to the aforementioned phenomenon of dogs acting as a positive distraction and providing companionship, which may in turn help people to feel calm and safe. Dogs have been suggested to have a calming influence over victims, witnesses, their support, and even staff (Howell et al., 2021; Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015; Spruin et al., 2020b), which may then enable victims and witnesses to feel less fearful and more confident, relaxed, and empowered to provide their accounts (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020a; Spruin et al., 2020b).

Some people report that the warmth and proximity of the dog is reassuring, and that dogs help turn interviews into a positive experience (Spruin et al., 2020b). It is thought that the presence of a dog during the interview process can act as a buffer or a safeguard (Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015). It could be assumed that this takes place because dogs may promote a sense of safety and help make the process less intimidating and more comfortable (Spruin et al., 2020a; Spruin et al., 2020b).

In addition to helping people feel calm and safe, self-report data and observational data suggest dogs help people's mental states (Dietz et al., 2012; Spruin et al., 2020a). Indeed, dogs

may have a significant impact on symptoms of anxiety, depression, PTSD, and dissociation in victims and survivors (Dietz et al., 2012; Spruin et al., 2020a). This is also found in group AAT where storytelling is incorporated into the therapy, suggesting that AAT in conjunction with other interventions may be even more beneficial (Dietz et al., 2012). The extent to which AAI during investigative interviews helps children's stress levels appears to vary depending on the type of abuse they experienced (e.g., indecency versus sexual contact and, and aggravated assault) and under certain conditions, such as petting the dog (Krause-Parello et al., 2018b).

Observational data suggests dogs can help decrease negative affect, including anxiety and fear, and help elicit positive emotions, including happiness and joy (Spruin et al., 2019; Spruin et al., 2020a). It is suggested that dogs can even help with coping strategies, such as helping victims and witnesses feel grounded (Spruin et al., 2019), particularly when they gain hold of the dog's lead while playing with the dog (Spruin et al., 2020b).

3.4.3 The Wider Impact on the Criminal Justice System

Thus far, the mechanism of what dogs do to provide support and how this impacts victims and witnesses has been explored. It is theorised that this may then have a wider impact on the criminal justice system. One way this takes form is how dogs can help to improve people's engagement with the criminal justice system. Engagement encouraged on a surface level, with dogs doing tricks to help survivors engage with them (Howell et al., 2021), to a deeper level, such as dogs helping build rapport between interviewers and interviewees, and enabling witnesses to see interviewers as friendly and likeable (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020a). It is suggested that dogs help victims, witnesses and court users engage with the criminal justice processes where they may otherwise be reluctant to (Spruin et al., 2019).

In addition to improving engagement with the criminal justice system, dogs can also help victims and witnesses communicate where they otherwise may not have been able to give

interview (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020a). The support victims and witnesses receive from dogs also helps them last longer during interviews, provide better quality evidence, and appear more coherent (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020b). This could be due to the reduced anxiety levels which, in turn, may lengthen attention spans, and the calm environment the dog fosters may help victims and witnesses with resilience during interviews (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020b).

The calmer state people appear to be in when providing evidence with dogs has been suggested to enhance credibility, which may improve the quality of evidence collected (Spruin et al., 2020a). Staff suggested dogs can and have reduced staff burnout (Howell et al., 2021), and while it could be speculated that this is due to the positive atmosphere dogs create even for staff (Spruin et al., 2020b), it is not clear exactly how this mechanism works. Nonetheless, this remains a benefit for the criminal justice system as it appears dogs help staff build better rapport with interviewees and help to collect higher quality evidence, which could, in turn, positively impact their performance at work and their attitudes towards their work.

There were a few suggestions around who might benefit the most from the use of dogs in the criminal justice system. While some believed everyone in any criminal justice setting would benefit, some court users speculated that young people, especially, may benefit (Spruin et al., 2019). Some, still, suggested only those who liked dogs would benefit from such a service, although in this research, even those who did not like dogs experienced benefits just looking at the dog (Spruin et al., 2019). Court staff speculated that the more scared, stressed and vulnerable a court user was, the more positive the effect of the dog was on the court user (Spruin et al., 2019). This idea is loosely supported by research that found children who petted the dog at least once during interview had higher heart rate values prior to the interview, suggesting that these children

experienced higher levels of stress before the interview and had greater want or need to pet the dog during the interview (Krause-Parello et al., 2018b).

Section 4 – Discussion

This mixed methods systematic review identified three synthesised findings from eight studies investigating how victims may benefit from the use of dogs in the criminal justice system. These findings include (1) the purpose of the dog, (2) the impact on victims and witnesses, and (3) the wider impact on the criminal justice system. The current review posits a framework to facilitate understanding around how this cascade of effects may come to be.

Dogs provide companionship and act as a positive distraction for people using them. They are described in literature as providing emotional support and acting as comforters, fostering a positive environment that may otherwise be uncomfortable for victims and survivors. Dogs may provide a change in something to focus on, giving people a way of coping during interviews.

Observations on the multiple impacts this can have on people then become apparent. There are observed biological changes in people using dogs, including changes in heart rate and blood pressure. People using dogs can be observed as being more relaxed and smiling, and participants report finding the dog calming and feel safe in the presence of the dog. Research even suggests that dogs can act as a buffer or safeguard for children disclosing details of sexual abuse. Dogs are thought to help people with their mental wellbeing; research found dogs can impact self-reported levels of anxiety, stress, depression, and more. People report feeling more empowered in the presence of the dog, finding comfort in small things like the dog's warmth and proximity.

In turn, the biological and psychological impact of the dog appears to affect victims' and witnesses' performance during interview. Indeed, staff working with facility dogs and victims report that evidence collected may be more credible due to the calmness with which a person is able to give interview in the presence of a dog. It is thought that people can last longer during interviews

and provide a more robust account of their experiences due to the presence of the dog. Some victims and witnesses, their support, and professionals working with them report that the dog helps them engage with the criminal justice system; they find themselves able to engage better with the process where they otherwise might not have been able to.

The studies used in this systematic review provide promising evidence that victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system benefit from the option of having dogs with them during investigative interviews and in courthouses. Dogs appear to have a calming influence that may help victims become more coherent when they are giving evidence. Although this is discussed in detail anecdotally (Dellinger, 2009), the studies in this systematic review provide convincing evidence supporting the benefits dogs can have for victims and witnesses, thus helping to remedy some of the issues in this area as a result of the dilution of anecdotal evidence.

The introduction section of the current chapter explored how attrition rates may be impacted by a perceived lack of empathy from the police (Maddox et al., 2011). Where police forces in the UK are under significant pressure and face challenges building trust in communities (Baker & Kirk-Wade, 2024; Moroz, 2023). The use of dogs in police interviews could be a way to help improve the image of the police and improve interviewers' ability to build rapport (Spruin et al., 2020a) which, in turn, could positively impact victims' experience of providing evidence.

Literature explored previously emphasised that victims find court processes traumatising (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2021), potentially for various reasons, including a perceived lack of empathy from judges and other court officials. Further to this, it is estimated that 71% of victims navigate the criminal justice system with little to no designated support (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2021), illustrating a lack of emotional support for victims. The present systematic review provides convincing evidence that dogs act as a buffer or a safeguard against trauma, helping people engage with the criminal justice system more easily and effectively. Dogs have been

found to provide emotional support to victims and witnesses; where evidence demonstrates a concerning lack of support experienced by victims, using dogs could be one fruitful way of extending support to victims and witnesses.

In terms of the quality of evidence collected by professionals, one observation that has been made is that vulnerable victims and witnesses might struggle to provide evidence. Even through video-recorded interviews, one form of special measures, it can be difficult to obtain good quality evidence (Victims' Commissioner, 2021b) which is key to progressing a case. However, as noted by the findings in this systematic review, dogs can help people feel calmer and engage better with the interviewing process (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020b). It could therefore be suggested that dogs could fill the gap in existing special measures to help vulnerable victims and witnesses provide the best quality evidence they are able to give.

Findings from this review make a compelling case for dogs to be treated as a special measure for vulnerable victims and witnesses providing evidence in the UK. Especially where existing special measures by themselves are not sufficient (e.g., Majeed-Ariss et al., 2021), using dogs to support victims and witnesses appears to be at least one way of improving engagement with criminal justice processes and potentially enhancing communication when a person is giving evidence.

4.1 Strengths and Limitations

Strengths of the current systematic review include that it is the first known systematic review of existing research investigating the impact of dogs supporting victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system. In pooling this knowledge together, it may be possible to make plausible suggestions for what future research could investigate, as well as providing support for the use of these dogs. This systematic review used the JBI manual for mixed methods systematic reviews

(Lizarondo et al., 2020) to maintain rigour and robustness, and used the PRISMA protocol (Page et al., 2021) for reporting the search method, ensuring transparency and replicability.

One limitation of this review is that there is very little empirical research investigating the impact of dogs on victims and witnesses, and therefore only eight studies were used in the present systematic review. Therefore, conclusions drawn from this research should be applied with caution. That said, there was high concordance between the studies used in this systematic review, therefore although there were few studies, they appear to be consistent in their reports, suggesting that the findings and recommendations from this review have strong support.

Although the quality of the studies used in the current review were relatively high, with the lowest quality percentage of 70% and the highest at 88.89%, the quality of research investigating the impact of dogs on victims and witnesses could be improved. Studies of poorer quality were qualitative studies, or mixed methods research with qualitative components, and criteria commonly not met include the researchers failing to position themselves theoretically or discuss the impact of the researcher on the research. Without this, it can become unclear the extent to which researchers' own biases influenced the findings. Nonetheless, again due to the concordance of findings amongst the studies used in the present review, it is likely that the impact on conclusions drawn in this review are minimal.

4.2 Implications for Practice and Research

The current meta-aggregation created new knowledge, providing an understanding around the mechanism of how dogs help victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system. Although research investigating the impact of dogs on victims and witnesses is minimal, there is consistency in suggestions that the dogs can help victims both emotionally and practically when giving evidence. This includes helping improve victims' communication and engagement with the criminal justice system, which could potentially help achieve justice by bridging the gap for people

who may otherwise struggle with communication or in their engagement with criminal justice processes. Findings from the present systematic review therefore advocate for vulnerable victims and witnesses giving evidence to have the option of receiving emotional support from a trained dog.

Many studies used in this systematic review describe themselves as ‘exploratory’, and certainly experimental research in this area uses small sample sizes which further research should seek to address. Some of the research used in this systematic review relies on self-report data, and perhaps more varied approaches to data collection may be beneficial. That said, it could be argued that it is the victim’s understanding of their experience that is important as their understanding of their experience may then dictate how they will engage with the criminal justice process, rather than, for example, the changes in their heart rate or blood pressure. Physiological changes may not necessarily reflect psychological experiences, but varied approaches may be helpful in providing a deeper understanding of the impact of dogs on victims, especially with a population who may not have the vocabulary to articulate their thoughts and feelings to a high standard (e.g., very small children).

A final implication for future research is that the current body of research largely takes place in North America, mostly in the US. It is important to understand the perspectives of people using dogs to support victims and witnesses in other countries as well, particularly in places where facility dog programmes are relatively new (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024). This could help to encourage and support the implementation of facility dog programmes in other countries, as well as understanding barriers that newer programmes in other countries might face and how these could be overcome.

Section 5 – Conclusion

Victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system may have strong emotions towards their experiences of crime and the criminal justice system, which could potentially impact their

ability to communicate and engage with the criminal justice process (e.g., Spruin et al., 2019; Spruin et al., 2020b). Although concerning, there appears to be an effective way for working around this, at least for some people, through the use of specially trained dogs. They seem to be useful in various settings including in police stations and courthouses (Spruin et al., 2019; Spruin et al., 2020b). Dogs appear to have a ripple effect in the criminal justice system: they provide companionship and a positive distraction for victims and witnesses, which helps to improve victims' and witnesses' wellbeing and willingness to engage with criminal justice processes. Dogs could, in turn, have numerous benefits for the criminal justice system. These benefits include better engagement from victims and witnesses which may make the work of criminal justice staff less difficult and intense due to, for example, the ease at which dogs enable rapport building during interviews. It could be argued that any resource with the potentiality to ease the toll of engaging with the criminal justice system on victims, witnesses, and even staff, should be used where there is sufficient evidence to support this, which there appears to be in this area. Where current research largely focuses on facility dog programmes in the US, future research should try and understand experiences of facility dog programmes internationally to address gaps in knowledge around the impact such programmes may have.

Chapter Three: Exploring International Professionals' Perspectives of Working with Facility Dogs in the Criminal Justice System

Section 1 – Introduction

This thesis has so far illustrated contemporary issues in the criminal justice system and the impact on victims, particularly those who are vulnerable. Although there are special measures in place to assist individuals in the criminal justice system, these special measures are arguably not enough and may be insufficient in supporting victims emotionally (e.g., Fairclough, 2017; Stern, 2010). Additionally, there is a strong body of evidence that suggests the criminal justice system may need a change in approach to accommodate vulnerable victims and witnesses and improve their experience of the criminal justice process (e.g., HMCPSI, 2021; Majeed-Ariss et al, 2021).

Interventions involving dogs were then explored as a way to mitigate some of the issues that victims and witnesses experience, with a particular focus on facility dog programmes. These programmes are used successfully to support victims, and Chapter Two found they benefit professionals as well. Based on these findings, the current chapter seeks to deepen the understanding of the impact facility dogs have on victims and the professionals using them, specifically by exploring professionals' perspectives. Furthermore, as participants in research in this area are largely from the US (e.g., Spruin et al., 2020a), it is important to capture perspectives of professionals in other countries, particularly now that facility dog programmes are being adopted in criminal justice systems in Australia, Belgium, Canada, and France (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024). This chapter will begin by providing an overview of the impact facility dogs have on victims and witnesses as explored in Chapter Two. Issues faced by professionals working in the criminal justice system will then be examined, before an exploration of research around dogs in workplaces outside of the criminal justice system is presented, demonstrating their potential

impact. Research investigating dogs and staff working in the criminal justice system will then be detailed, and the rationale, aims and hypotheses for the present study will be presented.

1.1 The Impact of Facility Dogs on Victims and Witnesses

As seen from the previous chapter, although sparse, research in this field advocates for the use of dogs as a means to support victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system. Indeed, research suggests that dogs have numerous benefits for victims, including alleviating physiological markers of stress (Krause-Parello & Friedmann, 2015; Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015), and improving how much more calm and coherent people can be when they are interviewed (Capparelli et al., 2020). Aside from physiological and cognitive effects, dogs used in animal-assisted group therapy with children who were treated after experiencing sexual abuse yielded statistically significant reductions in trauma symptoms, including with levels of anxiety, depression, anger, PTSD, dissociation, and sexual concerns compared to the control group who received treatment as usual (Dietz et al., 2012). This highlights the psychological benefits dogs can have for victims.

In addition to physiological, cognitive, and psychological benefits, dogs have also been suggested to improve victims' experience of the criminal justice system (Spruin et al., 2020b). This is particularly important as earlier in this thesis, the negative perceptions of the policing and judicial systems were explored (e.g. Garside & Grimshaw, 2002; HMICFRS, 2019). Spruin et al. (2020b) discovered through a multiple case study approach that facility dogs impacted how survivors engaged with the criminal justice process, feeling the environment was calmer due to the presence of the facility dog, demonstrating another benefit facility dogs can have for victims.

Only a small amount of research investigating this area accounts for the perspectives of professionals working with facility dogs. To create a more holistic picture of the impact of facility dogs on victims and witnesses, it is important to investigate professionals' perspectives further. The relationship between a facility dog and a victim is not always simple as there will often be

another individual involved, either the handler of the facility dog, an interviewer, an intermediary, or at least one other professional (e.g., Spruin et al., 2020b). It is therefore key to investigate how professionals working with facility dogs perceive any potential impact on the victims and witnesses they work with, as well as themselves and their work, which the present study seeks to do.

Furthermore, as the benefits dogs have for victims and witnesses are numerous, it would be logical to explore whether these same benefits can be reaped by the professionals using them. The next subsection will illustrate issues faced by staff working in the criminal justice system and why they could benefit from working with facility dogs.

1.2 Issues Faced by Staff in the Criminal Justice System

Before assessing whether facility dogs could be beneficial for staff, it is important to explore what issues currently impact people working in the UK criminal justice system.

Overwhelming research suggests individuals working in the criminal justice system experience high levels of stress (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019; Walsh et al., 2018) and low levels of job satisfaction (Hagan & Kay, 2007). This has been linked to numerous factors, including services being under-resourced (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019), experiences of secondary trauma stress (Levin et al., 2021; Tehrani, 2016), feeling undervalued by the government (Thomas, 2023), and more.

Research has investigated experiences of vicarious trauma in police forces in the UK. Traumatic stress in police officers has been linked to exposure to trauma (Parkes et al., 2022). This particularly appears to be the case when staff are working on cases around sexual assault (Parkes et al., 2022) and child abuse cases (Hurrell et al., 2018; Tehrani, 2016). Over half of detective officers investigating child protection cases reported symptoms of secondary traumatic stress (MacEachern et al., 2018), and Foley and Massey (2021) frame such experiences amongst police officers as a cost of caring. This illustrates current challenges faced by people working in the

criminal justice system, and that more needs to be done to minimise the impact of vicarious trauma on police officers.

Staff working in courts also report negative experiences. Thomas (2023) reported more judges considered leaving their roles than before, and two-thirds of judges expressed that working conditions have worsened, with morale amongst court staff being concerningly low. Only one-third of judges who participated in the research reported experiencing no symptoms of stress, and just a quarter of participants reported not experiencing anxiety (Thomas, 2023). This research did not look into experiences of trauma specifically which can be viewed as a methodological shortcoming; however, there is a general understanding that legal practice needs to become more trauma-informed to protect staff as well as clients (James, 2020). Once again, this demonstrates the impact stress and trauma can have on staff working in the criminal justice system, and how this warrants further investigation to establish ways of mitigating this impact.

Intermediaries, who act as a communication tool for vulnerable victims and witnesses who choose to use the service (Majeed-Ariss et al., 2021) also experience difficulties working in the criminal justice system. They are thought to be under-resourced, and experiences of vicarious trauma amongst intermediaries have been linked to high turnover (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). Even jurors have reported experiencing vicarious traumatisation (Robertson et al., 2008), which impresses the far-reaching impact traumatic court cases can have. Diesfeld et al. (2024) also illustrate the impact of trauma in the judicial system and argue for compassion in court to protect staff wellbeing. The benefits of such changes are numerous; aside from the obvious benefits for professionals' experience at work, negative working environments have further been linked with poor decisions being made in the judiciary (Casaleiro et al., 2021). This area is therefore important to investigate, to improve circumstances for legal professionals and potentially change decision making processes.

It is not just staff within policing and judicial systems who experience difficulties at work, but also people working in areas linked to the criminal justice system. Staff working in Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) where victims of sexual crimes, often after referral from the police (Mattison et al., 2023), undergo forensic examination also report high levels of stress and emotional difficulties (Horvath et al., 2020; Massey et al., 2019). Sometimes these symptoms manifested as emotional numbing, both in response to witnessing an overwhelming amount of trauma and as a way of preventing burnout and increasing longevity in their roles (Massey et al., 2019). These studies emphasise the stress and trauma professionals working in and around the criminal justice system experience, and that more needs to be done to improve staff wellbeing. As Chapter Two highlights the numerous benefits dogs have for victims who experience stress and trauma, it would be logical to explore if these same benefits could be reaped by staff working in the criminal justice system.

Further evidence that this avenue should be explored is provided by research that has found lawyers with high levels of emotional intelligence and emotional regulation experience lower levels of burnout and higher levels of job satisfaction (Platsidou & Salman, 2012). Given the overwhelming amount of research that suggests dogs can act as a conduit to help people regulate their emotions (e.g. Bao & Schreer, 2016; Chan & Wong, 2022; Hawkins et al., 2022; McLaughlin & Hamilton, 2019), it would be logical to investigate whether dogs can help professionals' emotional regulation, levels of burnout, and job satisfaction as well. With further investigation, it can be ascertained as to whether dogs can indeed have a dual benefit for both victims and the professionals working with them, and, to that end, whether facility dogs can and should be used in the UK.

1.3 The Impact of Dogs in Other Workplaces

There is an abundance of research that has investigated the impact dogs can have on professionals in workplaces outside of the criminal justice system. Just five minutes with a therapy dog was found to significantly decrease the amount of stress experienced by doctors and nurses working in an emergency department in the US (Kline et al., 2020), and therapy dog programmes were found to be beneficial for staff and patients alike at a burn centre in the US (Pruskowski et al., 2020). These studies suggest that staff working in healthcare settings, which can be incredibly pressured, may welcome therapy dogs as a form of destressing. It is not just in the US where therapy dog programmes have been beneficial for staff; first responders in Canada have responded positively to the use of therapy dogs at work as way of destressing (Curley et al., 2021), further highlighting how therapy dogs may be beneficial for professionals in the workplace. This research also interestingly discovered that more benefits were reaped by those who perceived dogs more favourably than people who perceived dogs still favourably, but less so. As will be explored later in this section, opinions about dogs and dog ownership vary worldwide (e.g., Megna & Tilford, 2023; Perrin, 2009), so it would be fruitful to understand more about the impact of dogs in countries globally, not just in North America.

One piece of research that did investigate dogs in the workplace in the UK was carried out by Hall and Mills (2019) who assessed the effects of people taking their own pet dogs into work. It transpired that participants who brought their dogs into work often reported higher than average work engagement, and they were more invigorated, dedicated and absorbed in their work than participants who did not bring their dogs into work. The intention to quit was also significantly lower and work-based friendship higher for participants who brought in their own dogs. These findings led Hall and Mills (2019) to conclude that dogs should be considered in the workplace as there is a need generally to improve employee wellbeing and job satisfaction. While these findings are

promising, it should be noted that research investigating the impact of dogs on professionals explored thus far has focused on pet dogs and therapy dogs, which are distinct from facility dogs, as detailed in Chapter One. The comparison between these dogs is important for many reasons, but especially as research has suggested facility dogs may be more effective in some respects than therapy dogs (Walsh et al., 2018).

In terms of the effect of facility dogs specifically, the minimal research that has investigated this area is promising. In the US, where facility dogs are more popular compared to other countries (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024), professionals working in paediatric healthcare settings described the positive impact resident facility dogs had on their stress, wellbeing, morale at work, and their relationships with other members of staff (Rodriguez et al., 2022). Jensen et al. (2021) also sought to investigate the impact of facility dogs on professionals working in a paediatric healthcare setting in the US. They found that work-related burnout was much improved, and participants' intention to quit also decreased. The facility dog did not impact levels of anxiety, a finding that contradicts other research (e.g. Walsh et al., 2018, and Spruin et al., 2018 with regards to therapy dogs), but facility dogs were associated with positive emotions, better perceived mental health, and lower levels of depression (Jensen et al., 2021). It should be noted that one reason why the facility dogs may not have helped with anxiety is because a measure of reporting clinical anxiety was used for this study, and none of the healthcare professionals in this study met the criteria for having clinical anxiety (Jensen et al., 2021). Nonetheless, findings demonstrate the benefits dogs can have on professionals working in stressful workplaces. Any intervention that could help to reduce burnout, improve perceived mental health, and reduce intentions to quit should arguably be investigated in greater detail to assess the efficacy and feasibility of such an intervention.

There are potentially some drawbacks to the use of facility dogs in the workplace. Rodriguez et al. (2022) found facility dogs being used in US healthcare settings could be

burdensome for their handlers due to the added responsibility of ensuring the dog is cared for, and while facility dogs improve working relationships, sometimes handlers find they are approached too much by colleagues wanting to pet the dog. These findings could suggest that more research needs to be conducted to understand professionals' perspectives of the use of facility dogs, to ascertain how, if at all, they could be used to benefit staff. Moreover, the research explored thus far has focused on the impact of dogs on staff in North America, and it is evident that research needs to be carried out in other countries to gain a holistic understanding of the potential impact of dogs on professionals.

Overall, this subsection has demonstrated how dogs can be beneficial in stressful work settings outside of the criminal justice system (Jensen et al., 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2022). Given the high levels of burnout and secondary stress trauma found in staff working in the UK criminal justice system (Foley & Massey, 2021; Kim et al., 2022), and how facility dogs have been found to improve the emotional wellbeing of victims and witnesses (e.g., Krause-Parello et al., 2018b; Spruin et al., 2020b) it is important to investigate whether staff working in the criminal justice system, too, could benefit from dog-assisted interventions.

1.4 Dogs and Professionals in the Criminal Justice System

This subsection will explore how dogs have been used to support legal professionals. As there is little research in this area, studies investigating the use of therapy dogs and facility dogs are both explored. Existing research examining professionals' perspectives of facility dog programmes and the impact this has on victims, witnesses and themselves will then be detailed, followed by a discussion of gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed to deepen understanding around the effects of facility dog programmes in the criminal justice system.

One study that investigated the impact of therapy dogs on the perceived stress of legal professionals was carried out by Binfet et al. (2020) in Canada, where professionals' stress levels

were measured pre- and post-intervention with a therapy dog, who was brought to a precinct every week for eight weeks. Results yielded that staff spent an average of 11 minutes with the therapy dog, and that stress would decrease from pre-to-post visit, leading to conclusions that dogs are an efficacious intervention for reducing stress in policing staff. While these findings demonstrate the benefits dogs can have for staff working in the criminal justice system, the current research is investigating the use of facility dogs. Nonetheless, these findings provide promising evidence supporting the use of dogs in alleviating stress in criminal justice staff.

Research that has investigated the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system provides support for their use, in general. In the US, Walsh et al. (2018) examined whether facility dogs, therapy dogs, or pet dogs had an impact on investigative interviewers' secondary traumatic stress, when compared to a control condition consisting of no dog. The researchers also asked participants about their job stress over the first five years of their current job. Staff who worked with facility dogs consistently reported low levels of job stress over the five-year period, and sometimes there was a statistically significant difference when compared to the no dog group and the therapy dog group, who only started reporting lower scores as the years went on. The researchers discovered that secondary traumatic stress in the facility dog group was actually higher than the no dog condition, although lower than the therapy dog group. These findings could be because participants in the facility dog group conducted almost twice as many interviews as participants in the other groups, and so were exposed to more trauma. However, as the research did not specifically investigate whether workload moderated the impact of dogs on secondary traumatic stress, no firm explanation for these findings can be given (Walsh et al., 2018), thus necessitating more research to establish what the impact of facility dogs is on criminal justice staff.

It should be noted that the measurement for job stress in this study was a five-point Likert scale filled out retrospectively for each year they worked for the service up to five years (Walsh et

al., 2018). Although it is promising that facility dogs appear to minimise participants' job stress from the outset, it could be argued that there is insufficient evidence to draw conclusions about the potential impact of facility dogs from these findings alone. Research needs to explore in greater detail the different facets of working in the criminal justice system that facility dogs could impact, which the present study seeks to do. Depending on the findings, suggestions could be made to help improve the working conditions of policing and judicial professionals that, at present, may contribute to a system that is not fully functional, harmful to staff (Paoline & Gau, 2020) and delivers poor decisions (Casaleiro et al., 2021). Although this is not to say that facility dogs can fix a broken criminal justice system, any method of improving the criminal justice system and the experience of people within it should be adequately explored and used following the building of a strong evidence base.

Another piece of research that investigated facility dogs and criminal justice professionals was carried out by Spruin et al. (2020a), who aimed to incorporate professionals' viewpoints about the impact a facility dog can have on their work with child witnesses. All participants were investigative interviewers who had experience of using and not having the use of a facility dog during investigative interviews throughout their careers, so were able to report holistically on the impact having a facility dog may have. The findings included that facility dogs helped interviewers build rapport with witnesses, and they reported that witnesses felt the facility dog was beneficial for them. As mentioned previously, professionals provide an important perspective as they work closely with facility dogs, and therefore are best placed to communicate any potential caveats to or even hidden benefits of using facility dogs.

It should be noted that this study largely focused on participants in the US and Canada. This is because the US has used facility dogs starting from around 2003 (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2023), and it is more commonplace there than other parts of the world, so naturally a

larger sample size would be attracted from the US. However, it is important to understand perceptions of facility dog programmes within a global population, not least due to the potential differences in attitudes towards dogs across the world. Indeed, the US may have a different approach to dog ownership compared to the rest of the world (e.g., Bergen and Bressler, 2015), and the rates of dog ownership are slightly higher in the US (44.5%; Megna & Tilford, 2023) when compared to Australia (38%; Animal Medicines Australia, n.d.), the UK (27%; The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals [PDSA], 2022) and Canada (around 33%; Perrin, 2009). Differing levels of dog ownership could potentially highlight differences in attitudes towards dogs. Furthermore, unlike the US where facility dogs are part of more established programmes used in the criminal justice system, some countries like Australia have reported structural challenges to using facility dogs whereby there is a lack of support from individuals in the community; opposition from colleagues and judges can make it difficult to use facility dogs (Howell et al., 2021) which could discourage the implementation of facility dog programmes. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate any cultural differences in the perceived impact of facility dogs on victims, witnesses and professionals, and amplify the voice of professionals across the world whose opinions are otherwise largely unheard.

There was one piece of research that investigated European professionals' opinions about facility dog programmes, which was published after the present study took place and has been included in this introduction retrospectively. O'Mahoney et al. (2023) sought to investigate the extent to which facility dogs could help mitigate secondary victimisation for victims within three areas: a police service in Belgium, a victim support service in France, and a domestic violence shelter in Italy. Victims and staff completed questionnaires, and it was found that almost all victim support professionals agreed that the facility dog helped the victim, lending support to the use of facility dogs. However, it should be noted that this study had a relatively small sample size of

professionals with just 26 participants, and so any conclusions drawn should be accepted with caution. Furthermore, although the questionnaires used are not detailed, only three items relating to professionals' perspectives are reported on; first, that professionals felt victim interviews went well and the victim was cooperative and effectively able to communicate; second, that they perceived victims to be relaxed and displaying positive emotions; and third, that they thought the dog helped victims open up about their experiences. Based on the reporting of these three items alone, it could be argued that this research provides a promising but limited view into professionals' perceptions of the impact facility dogs could have on victims, therefore it is important for research to extend on these findings by broadening topics explored with professionals. Furthermore, professionals' perspectives only constituted a very small proportion of the qualitative analysis in this study, arguably underrepresenting views from professionals, an oversight that the present research seeks to remedy. Finally, this study does not demonstrate how facility dogs could be beneficial for staff as well, which is an area of interest for the present study.

Research has suggested there is a link between employee wellbeing and job performance (Van de Voorde et al., 2011). As touched on earlier, negative working environments have been linked to poor judicial decisions (Casaleiro et al., 2021). It may therefore be illuminating to see if there is an association between any benefits facility dogs have for professionals, and a perceived impact on their work with victims. It is not expected that professionals' experiences with facility dogs will be without challenges; as noted earlier, additional responsibilities can accompany the use of facility dogs (Rodriguez et al., 2022). Furthermore, one barrier to using facility dogs that is often discussed in literature is challenges to their use due to potential jury bias, an argument that has been made by defence lawyers and accepted by judges (Ensminger et al., 2019). Based on these experiences and concerns, the present study will also explore challenges and barriers around the use of facility dogs, including, but not limited to, jury bias.

1.5 Rationale, Aims and Hypotheses

The literature review in this section explored the impact facility dogs may have on victims and witnesses and why this is needed given the stress and trauma victims face when engaging with the criminal justice system (Dietz et al., 2012; Krause-Parello et al., 2018b). Although the amount of research in this area is growing, there is currently very little representation of the perspectives from professionals working with facility dogs in the criminal justice system, either regarding the perceived impact on victims or the perceived impact on themselves. To rectify these gaps in the research, the overarching question for the present study asks how professionals in different countries perceive the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system. Through the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, a holistic picture can be gained examining the perspectives of professionals working with facility dogs.

Findings from Chapter Two explored the benefits facility dogs have for victims. It is important to see if these same benefits can be found in criminal justice professionals working with and around the facility dogs. Issues faced by professionals share commonalities with those faced by victims in that staff can also experience stress and vicarious trauma as a result of working on traumatic cases (Levin et al., 2021). Although the current research is not investigating the mental health of legal professionals as such, factors that may contribute to job satisfaction or job stress which could in turn impact professionals' wellbeing, will be examined. Therefore, an aim of the current study is to explore what impact, if any, facility dog programmes can have on legal professionals. The present research aims to understand factors that could impact professionals' perspectives of facility dog programmes, including what barriers they may face using facility dogs, since one issue that is often cited in literature is around potential jury bias (Bowers, 2013).

As research has suggested a tenuous link between the amount of time a person has spent working with a dog and their perceptions (Walsh et al., 2018), hypothesis (1) of the present study is

that there may be a difference in professionals' perceptions of facility dogs based on how long they have been used for by the participant. Previous research has made links between employee wellbeing and attitudes towards work (Van de Voorde et al., 2011) and suggested job satisfaction is linked to better outcomes in the judiciary (Casaleiro et al., 2021). Based on this, it could be thought that if professionals experience positive outcomes for themselves through working with a facility dog, this could be linked to their perceptions around victims' outcomes. Therefore, hypothesis (2) of the present study is that there will be an association between professionals' perceived impact of facility dogs on themselves, and on victims and witnesses.

Finally, investigations into professionals' perceptions of facility dog programmes either only provided a limited insight (O'Mahoney et al., 2023) or are conducted mostly with participants in the US, therefore missing the voices of professionals from other countries where facility dog programmes are becoming more popular (Spruin et al., 2020a). Thus, the present study seeks to broaden the understanding of facility dog programmes by incorporating perspectives from professionals in countries where facility dog programmes are currently used, including in Australia, Belgium, Canada, and France (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024). As there are cultural differences in attitudes towards dogs and dog ownership (Megna & Tilford, 2023; Perrin, 2009), hypothesis (3) is that there may be a difference between countries such as the US in which some areas have used facility dogs in the criminal justice system for around two decades, and other countries where facility dogs are relatively novel (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024).

Section 2 – Method

2.1 Design

A simultaneous mixed methods design was adopted for the present research, in line with the pragmatism paradigm adopted for current thesis. The use of quantitative data was deemed important to gain an overview of professionals' opinions from working with facility dogs in the

criminal justice system. The use of qualitative data was also adopted to explore these opinions in-depth to gain a holistic picture as to why some professionals may hold their opinions.

2.2 Participants and Recruitment

To meet the aims of the present research, participants were recruited using various channels. Convenience sampling was used as the study was advertised on the Justice Support Dogs International social media accounts, including Twitter/X, Facebook, and Instagram. Advertisements took the form of tweets and posts that contained a link directing participants to the online survey. There are many advantages to convenience sampling, including that it is efficient and easy to implement. However, there could be an impact on the generalisability of findings as convenience sampling is non-random and therefore susceptible to bias, as well as potentially not being representative of the wider demographic of criminal justice staff working with facility dogs (Jager et al., 2017). Snowball sampling was also used to recruit participants, whereby a couple of organisations (Courthouse Dogs Foundation in the US and Handi Chiens in France) were requested to disseminate the survey amongst their contacts. These participants then recruited acquaintances to complete the study. Snowball sampling is effective for the present study as a specific population of people are being sought for recruitment, i.e., criminal justice staff who have worked with facility dogs. However, there are disadvantages to snowball sampling, including that it is non-random and may not be representative of the wider population of people being investigated (Parker et al., 2019). Furthermore, there is a risk of selection bias as the initial sample is dependent on the researcher's pre-existing contacts and resources, and these participants are then likely to recruit participants similar to themselves (Parker et al., 2019); so, for the present study, other staff working in their particular field who may have the same opinions about facility dogs. These limitations are important to bear in mind when accepting conclusions drawn from the present research.

Inside the online questionnaire, there was an item asking respondents if they were interested in being interviewed about their views. Respondents who expressed an interest were emailed a link to a form where they could book their own slot to meet with the researcher online for a half-hour interview.

2.2.1 Demographic Information

One-hundred-and-eight participants responded to the survey. Thirty-five participants' data were deemed unusable due to missing data, leaving a sample of 73 participants (see Table 7 for a tabular breakdown of demographics). Of these 73 participants, 80.8% ($N = 59$) were female, 16.4% ($N = 12$) were male, and 2.7% ($N = 2$) identified as non-binary and 1.8% ($N = 1$) declined to answer. Most participants (94.5%, $N = 69$) identified as white, 1.4% ($N = 1$) identified as Asian, 1.4% ($N = 1$) identified as mixed race, and 2.7% participants ($N = 2$) preferred not to answer. Participants' age ranged from 25 to 72 ($M = 45.74$, $SD = 12$). Sixty percent ($N = 44$) of participants were from the United States, 21.9% ($N = 16$) from Canada, 8.2% ($N = 6$) from France, 4.1% ($N = 3$) from Belgium, 2.7% ($N = 2$) from Australia, and 2.7% ($N = 2$) from the UK.

Of the 37 participants who expressed an interest in being interviewed, 10 were interviewed. Eighty percent ($N = 8$) were female and 20% ($N = 2$) were male. Sixty percent ($N = 6$) worked in the United States, 20% ($N = 2$) worked in Canada, 10% ($N = 1$) worked in Australia, and 10% ($N = 1$) worked in the United Kingdom.

Table 7

Summary of survey participants' demographics, number of years spent with facility dogs, and number of times used weekly

<i>Country</i>	<i>Job area</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of years with facility dog</i>	<i>Number of times dog used weekly</i>
US	Policing system	Female = 4	$M = 40.5, SD = 5.5$	$M = 6.13, SD = 2.6$	$M = 3-5$ times per week
		Male = 4	$M = 40.75, SD = 5.9$	$M = 2.5, SD = 1.5$	$M =$ Once or twice per week
	Judicial system	Female = 8	$M = 49.25, SD = 7.8$	$M = 7.1, SD = 4.9$	$M =$ Daily
		Male = 2	$M = 53.5, SD = 0.5$	$M = 7.5, SD = 2.5$	$M =$ Once or twice per week
	External services (e.g. Victims services)	Female = 11	$M = 54.4, SD = 11.6$	$M = 8.6, SD = 7.5$	$M =$ Once or twice per week
		Male = 2	$M = 46.5, SD = 3.5$	$M = 3.5, SD = 0.5$	$M =$ Daily
	Social services	Female = 2	$M = 31.5, SD = 5.5$	$M = 1.2, SD = 0.85$	$M =$ Once or twice per week
	Facility dog organisation	Female = 4	$M = 54, SD = 12.2$	$M = 6.3, SD = 4.6$	$M = 3-5$ times per week
		Male = 1	$M = 47, SD = 0$	$M = 5, SD = 0$	$M =$ Daily
	Psychological services	Female = 2	$M = 55.5, SD = 4.5$	$M = 3.5, SD = 0$	$M = 3-5$ times per week
Penal system	Male = 1	$M = 36, SD = 0$	$M = 4, SD = 0$	$M =$ Once or twice per week	
Role not specified	Female = 2	$M = 46, SD = 8$	$M = 3.8, SD = 1.3$	$M =$ Daily	
	Non-binary = 1	$M = 60, SD = 0$	$M = 8.5, SD = 0$	$M = 3-5$ times per week	
Canada	Policing system	Female = 3	$M = 34.3, SD = 2.5$	$M = 1.8, SD = 0.2$	$M =$ Once or twice per week
		Male = 1	$M = 41, SD = 0$	$M = 5, SD = 0$	$M =$ Once or twice per week
	Judicial system	Female = 5	$M = 39.4, SD = 8.1$	$M = 3.7, SD = 1.4$	$M =$ Once or twice per week

	External services	Female = 4	$M = 39.8, SD = 10.3$	$M = 8.9, SD = 4.0$	$M = \text{Daily}$
		Nonbinary = 1	$M = 58, SD = 0$	$M = 5, SD = 0$	$M = \text{Daily}$
	Facility Dog Organisation	Male = 2	$M = 58, SD = 5$	$M = 4, SD = 0$	$M = \text{Once or twice per week}$
France	Judicial system	Female = 2	$M = 26.5, SD = 1.5$	$M = 0.5, SD = 0.5$	$M = \text{Once or twice per week}$
	Social services	Female = 2	$M = 29, SD = 0$	$M = 2, SD = 0$	$M = \text{3-5 times per week}$
	Psychological services	Female = 2	$M = 28.5, SD = 1.5$	$M = 1.2, SD = 0.8$	$M = \text{Once or twice per week}$
Belgium	Policing system	Female = 3	$M = 40.6, SD = 7.5$	$M = 1.7, SD = 0.2$	$M = \text{Daily}$
Australia	External services	Female = 2	$M = 62.5, SD = 1.5$	$M = 4, SD = 1$	$M = \text{Daily}$
UK	Policing system	Female = 1	$M = 50, SD = 0$	$M = 6, SD = 0$	$M = \text{Less often}$
		Male = 1	$M = 44, SD = 0$	$M = 6, SD = 0$	$M = \text{Less often}$

The roles that participants worked were varied; the survey received responses from lawyers, social workers, psychologists, police officers, investigative interviewers, detectives, and more. When coded, it transpired that 17 participants (23.3%) worked for the police (including investigative interviewers, lieutenants and chief inspectors), 17 participants worked in courts (including lawyers, judges, and their assistants), 20 participants (27.4%) worked for external organisations such as Victims' Services, and seven participants (9.6%) indicated they worked for a facility dog organisation. Four participants (5.5%) stated they worked for social services, four participants worked for psychological services, one person (1.4%) worked in the penal system as a probation officer, and three participants (4.1%) did not provide enough information for their job role to be coded.

Information was collected regarding how long the respondent spent working with facility dogs and how often they worked with facility dogs on a weekly basis (see Figures 3 and 4). In terms of the length of time spent with facility dogs in total, this varied from around four months to 23 years ($M = 5.3$ years, $SD = 4.7$). When asked how often they worked with facility dogs on a weekly basis, 6.8% ($N = 5$) participants indicated they work with facility dogs less than once a week, 30% ($N = 22$) worked with facility dogs once or twice a week, 19.2% ($N = 14$) worked with facility dogs three to five times per week, and 39.7% ($N = 29$) of participants worked with facility dogs on a daily basis. On average, participants worked with facility dogs three to five times per week.

Figure 3 Graph showing the number of years survey respondents spent working with facility dogs

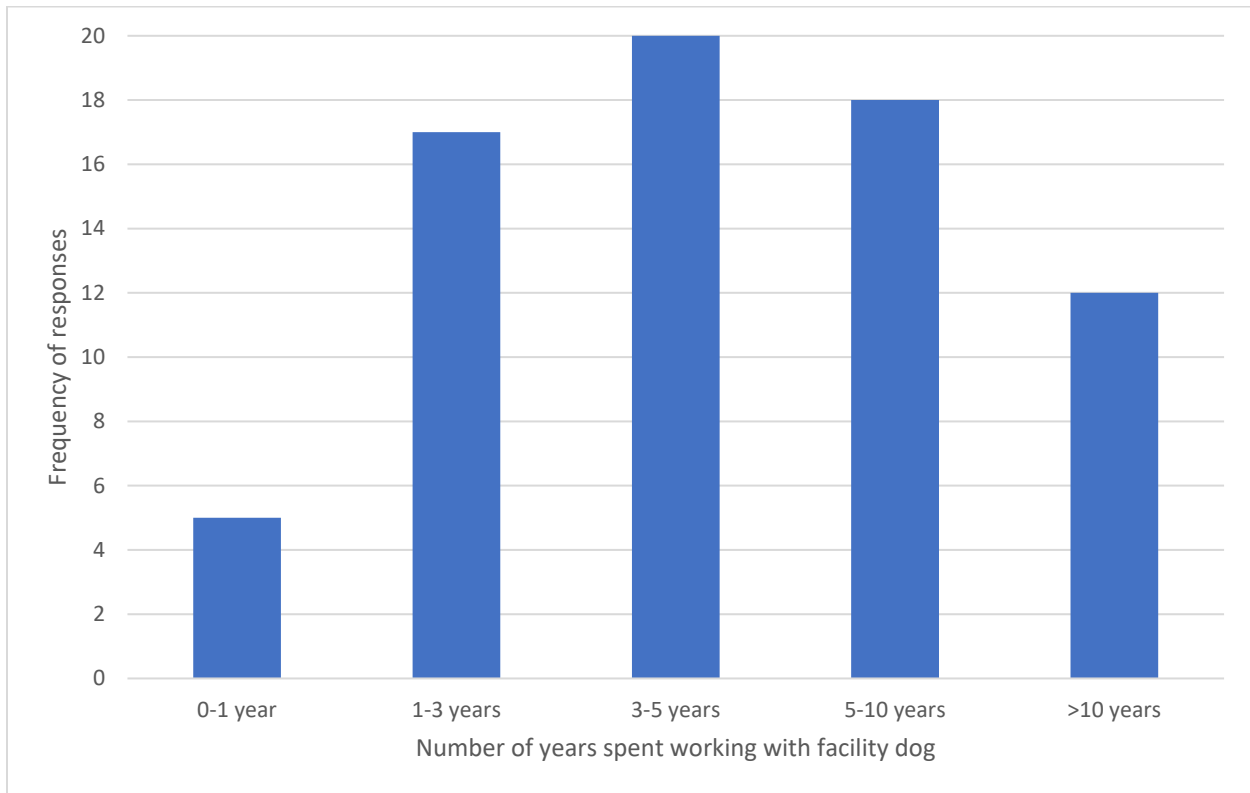
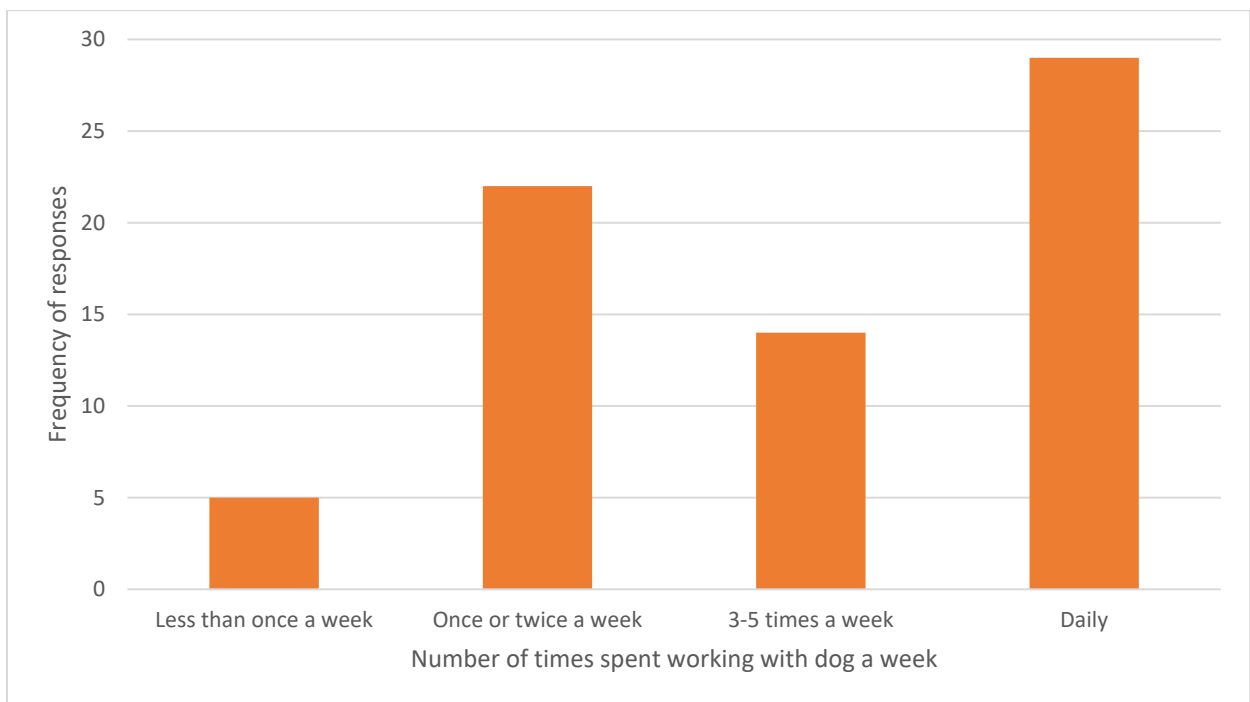


Figure 4 Graph showing how often participants worked with facility dogs per week



Participants listed 16 different settings where they used facility dogs, although there were some similarities between some of the settings listed. Table 8 displays the frequencies each setting was listed by a survey respondent.

Table 8

Frequencies of settings in which professionals working in the criminal justice system use facility dogs

Type of setting	Frequency
Court	58
Investigative interviews	42
Interviews with lawyers	14
Meetings (no type specified)	9
Interviews (no type specified)	8
Medical examinations	4
Immediate support during and after trauma	3
Community events	2
Meetings with judge	2
Victim-perpetrator meetings	2
Critical incident stress debrief	1
Lobby (location not specified)	1
Mental health services	1
Probation	2
Immediately after victim reports to police	1
Treatment court	1

2.3 Materials

The consent form included five questions to highlight participants' knowledge of their participation in the research and a tick box in lieu of a signature ([Appendix 3.3](#)). The consent form emphasised participants' rights, including their rights to withdraw from the study and that their data will be treated with confidentiality.

The first part of the questionnaire given to participants explored demographics and background information, including gender, age, ethnicity, job title, geographical location of work, amount of time worked with facility dogs in months or years, how often they used a justice facility dog each week, and what legal settings they would use a facility dog.

The remainder of the questionnaire ([Appendix 3.6](#)) was adapted from Spruin et al. (2020b), demonstrating that this questionnaire has established value. One section explored the perceived impact of facility dogs on victims and witnesses through a 12-item scale and one open-ended question allowing people to expand on their answers. The 12-item scale probed professionals' views on whether facility dogs enabled victims and witnesses to be 'more forthcoming with disclosures', 'communicate more effectively', 'open up about their experiences', 'feel more relaxed during an interview or when providing testimony', 'cooperate more during interview or when providing testimony', and 'stay committed to the goals of the interview'. The scale also investigated whether professionals thought victims provide 'a more consistent account' and 'a more complete account', as well as whether the facility dogs help to create 'a more comfortable atmosphere', helps them 'think more logically', and 'enhances their emotional wellbeing'. The Cronbach's Alpha for the scale measuring benefits for victims and witnesses was $\alpha = .921$, indicating high reliability.

The questionnaire then explored perceived impact for professionals in the criminal justice system, which consisted of eight items and another open-ended question offering participants the opportunity to expand on their answers. These items sought views on how facility dogs might help 'build a better rapport' and 'deal more effectively' with victims and witnesses, as well as how facility dogs 'allow me to positively influence people's lives', 'help me feel inspired through the work I do with them', 'help me deal with the emotional aspects of my work', 'help me cope with the strains of my job', 'help me feel less fatigued at work', and 'provide me with a greater sense of job

satisfaction'. The scale measuring impact on professionals also had a high Cronbach's Alpha score, $\alpha = .892$.

A further two items used a five-point Likert scale to ask the extent to which professionals agreed that facility dogs could impact witness credibility and jury bias, and another open-ended question allowed participants to provide their thoughts on the above questions. The final part of the questionnaire included four questions exploring other personal views participants might have about facility dogs. These questions included whether participants felt facility dogs would benefit some populations in particular, what they thought issues might be with using facility dogs in the criminal justice system, any concerns they had about the use of facility dogs, and if they had any other thoughts. The final question in the survey asked participants if they were willing to participate in a half-hour interview. After completing the questionnaire, participants were directed to the debrief sheet ([Appendix 3.4](#)) and an email address they could contact should they have any queries.

The consent form for the interview was similar to the consent form for the survey ([Appendix 3.3](#)) but instead took the form of a Microsoft Word document version for participants to sign and send prior to the interview taking place. The semi-structured interview schedule ([Appendix 3.7](#)) was produced essentially as an extension of the questionnaire participants had already completed. The aim of the interviews was to delve deeper and gain a more in-depth understanding around the intricacies of the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system. Finally, after the interview, participants were emailed a copy of the debrief sheet for their participation in the interview ([Appendix 3.5](#)). Participants were also verbally debriefed and given the opportunity to ask any questions.

2.4 Procedure

The survey was conducted using Gorilla, an online survey builder (Build 2022-20; Gorilla, 2024), and was distributed to participants through the aforementioned streams. Participants who completed the survey were given information about the questionnaire before being asked to provide consent. They were then asked about their experience with and opinions about the potential impact of facility dogs on victims and witnesses of crime and their families. The next part of the survey asked participants about their opinions of the impact on facility dogs on their work and job satisfaction. Finally, participants were presented with the option to voice any other opinions they may have around the subject of facility dogs in the criminal justice system, sign up for an interview, and were presented with the opportunity to stay informed about the research.

Interviewees were emailed an information sheet and consent form, the latter of which they had to sign before the interview could proceed. The interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams, a platform approved by Canterbury Christ Church University for its security. Interviews were semi-structured and consisted of five main questions, which participants were able to skip or return to later in the interview if they wanted to ([Appendix 3.7](#)). The interview broadly explored the impact facility dogs could have on victims, their support (e.g., family or caregivers), and the professionals who work with them. After the interview, participants were thanked for their time and were again reminded of their right to withdraw at any point of the research prior to publication.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Social Sciences Ethics Panel at Canterbury Christ Church University. As part of the ethical process, participants provided fully informed consent prior to the study, and information sheets, consent forms, and debrief forms reminded participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without providing a reason, before March 2023 when analysis of the results would take place. Participants

were presented with adequate time and opportunity to ask the researcher any questions before, during and after the studies. Participants were also provided with a signposting sheet of organisations they could contact if they experienced any distress from their participation in these studies. They were also provided with the contact details of the research supervisors if they had any concerns. Participants were informed and reminded about the university's confidentiality policy, and any identifiable information provided (for example, dogs' names given during interviews) would be redacted before analysis.

Section 3 – Results

3.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were drawn from the demographic questionnaires and from the questionnaires measuring opinions that professionals held regarding the impact of facility dogs on victims and themselves. This subsection will firstly present the descriptive statistics before moving to the inferential data analyses.

3.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

The scales completed by participants measured perceptions of the impact of facility dogs on victims. The statements themselves, alongside frequencies, means and standard deviations presented in Table 9 indicate that, on the whole, participants held positive perceptions of the impact of facility dog programmes on victims. Participants agreed strongly that facility dogs enable victims to be more forthcoming with disclosures, allow victims to communicate more effectively, and enables victims to open up about experiences. Participants also agreed strongly that facility dogs provide a more comfortable atmosphere for victims, enhance victims' emotional wellbeing, and enable victims to feel more relaxed during interviews. Most participants agreed that facility dogs allow for a more consistent account from victims, although nearly one-third of participants were neutral about this. Participants also agreed that facility dogs enable victims to provide a more

complete account, and they help victims cooperate more during interview. Most participants agreed that facility dogs help victims stay committed to interview goals and motivates victims during interview or providing testimony, although a lot of participants were also neutral on these points. It should be noted that the same two participants disagreed with all but one of the statements, including the statement that facility dogs enable victims to feel more relaxed during interview which, otherwise, all participant strongly agreed with. This may indicate anomalies. Figure 5 presents these responses as percentages in a stacked bar chart and Figure 6 presents box plots showing outliers.

Table 9

Frequencies, means, and standard deviation scores for professionals' perception of the impact of facility dogs on victims

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Enables victims to be more forthcoming with disclosures (<i>M</i> = 6.4, <i>SD</i> = 1.06)	0	2 (2.7%)	0	2 (2.7%)	6 (8.2%)	16 (21.9%)	47 (64.4%)
Enables victims to communicate more effectively (<i>M</i> = 6.53, <i>SD</i> = .96)	0	2 (2.7%)	0	0	4 (5.5%)	16 (21.9%)	51 (69.9%)
Allows for more consistent account from victims (<i>M</i> = 5.49, <i>SD</i> = 1.31)	0	0	2 (2.7%)	23 (31.5%)	9 (12.3%)	15 (20.5%)	24 (32.9%)
Enables victims to open up about experiences (<i>M</i> = 6.59, <i>SD</i> = 1.06)	0	2 (2.7%)	0	2 (2.7%)	5 (6.8%)	11 (15.1%)	53 (72.6%)
Provides more comfortable atmosphere for victims (<i>M</i> = 6.81, <i>SD</i> = .96)	2 (2.7%)	0	0	0	0	2 (2.7%)	69 (94.5%)
Helps victims think more logically (<i>M</i> = 5.56, <i>SD</i> = 1.21)	0	0	2 (2.7%)	15 (20.5%)	19 (26%)	14 (19.2%)	23 (31.5%)

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Enhances victim emotional wellbeing (<i>M</i> = 6.79, <i>SD</i> = 1.0)	2 (2.7%)	0	0	0	0	3 (4.1%)	68 (93.2%)
Victims provide more complete account (<i>M</i> = 6.01, <i>SD</i> = 1.18)	0	2 (2.7%)	2 (2.7%)	3 (4.1%)	9 (12.3%)	27 (37%)	30 (41.1%)
Enables victims to feel more relaxed during interview (<i>M</i> = 6.84, <i>SD</i> = .99)	2 (2.7%)	0	0	0	0	0	71 (97.3%)
Motivates victims during interview or providing testimony (<i>M</i> = 5.51, <i>SD</i> = 1.45)	2 (2.7%)	0	0	20 (27.4%)	13 (17.8%)	11 (15.1%)	27 (37%)
Helps victims cooperate more during interview (<i>M</i> = 5.97, <i>SD</i> = 1.32)	2 (2.7%)	0	0	9 (12.3%)	7 (9.6%)	22 (30.1%)	33 (45.2%)
Helps victims stay committed to interview goals (<i>M</i> = 5.74, <i>SD</i> = 1.09)	0	0	0	13 (17.8%)	16 (21.9%)	21 (28.8%)	23 (31.5%)

Figure 5 A stacked bar chart representing perceptions of the impact of facility dogs on victims

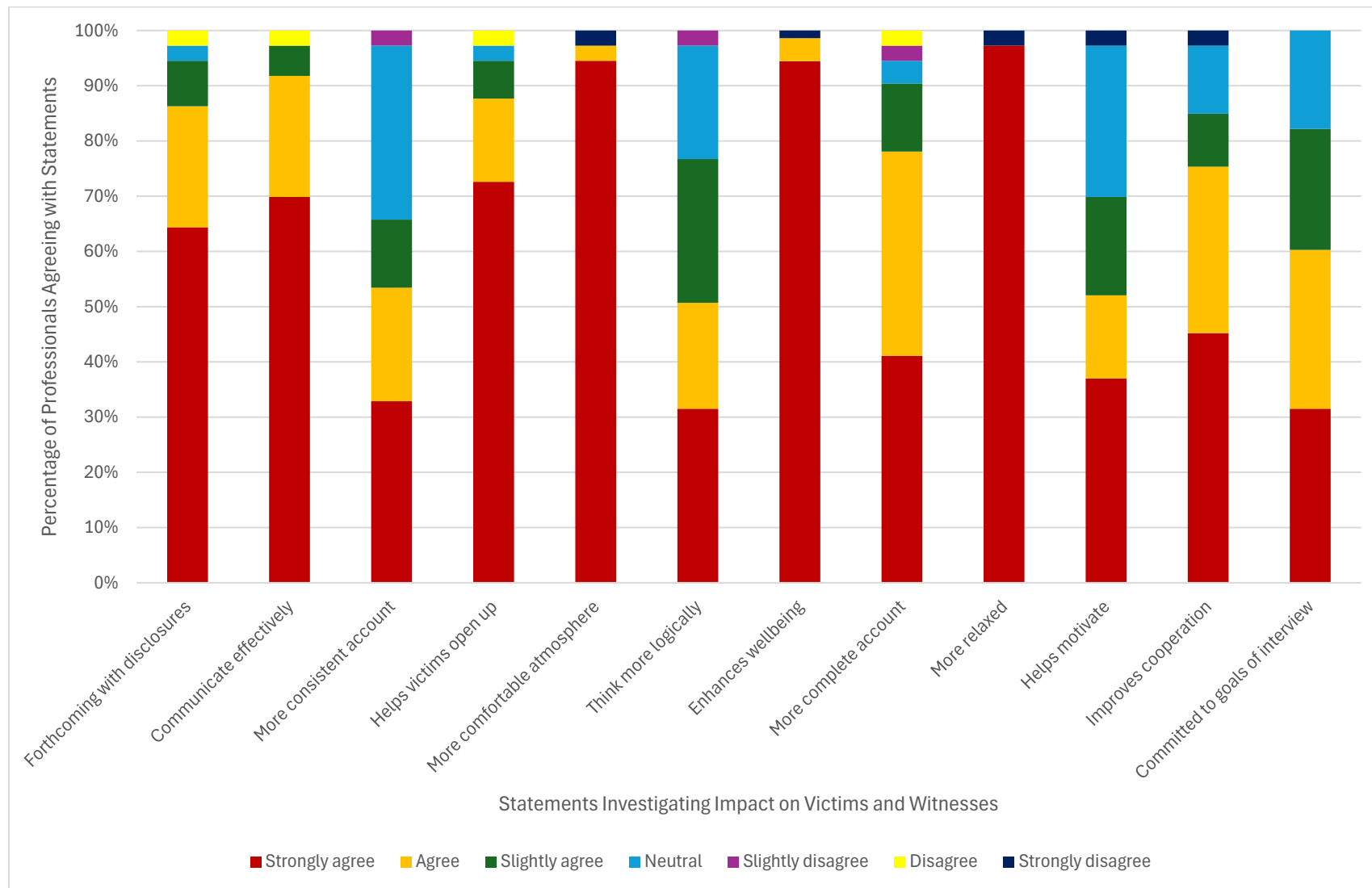
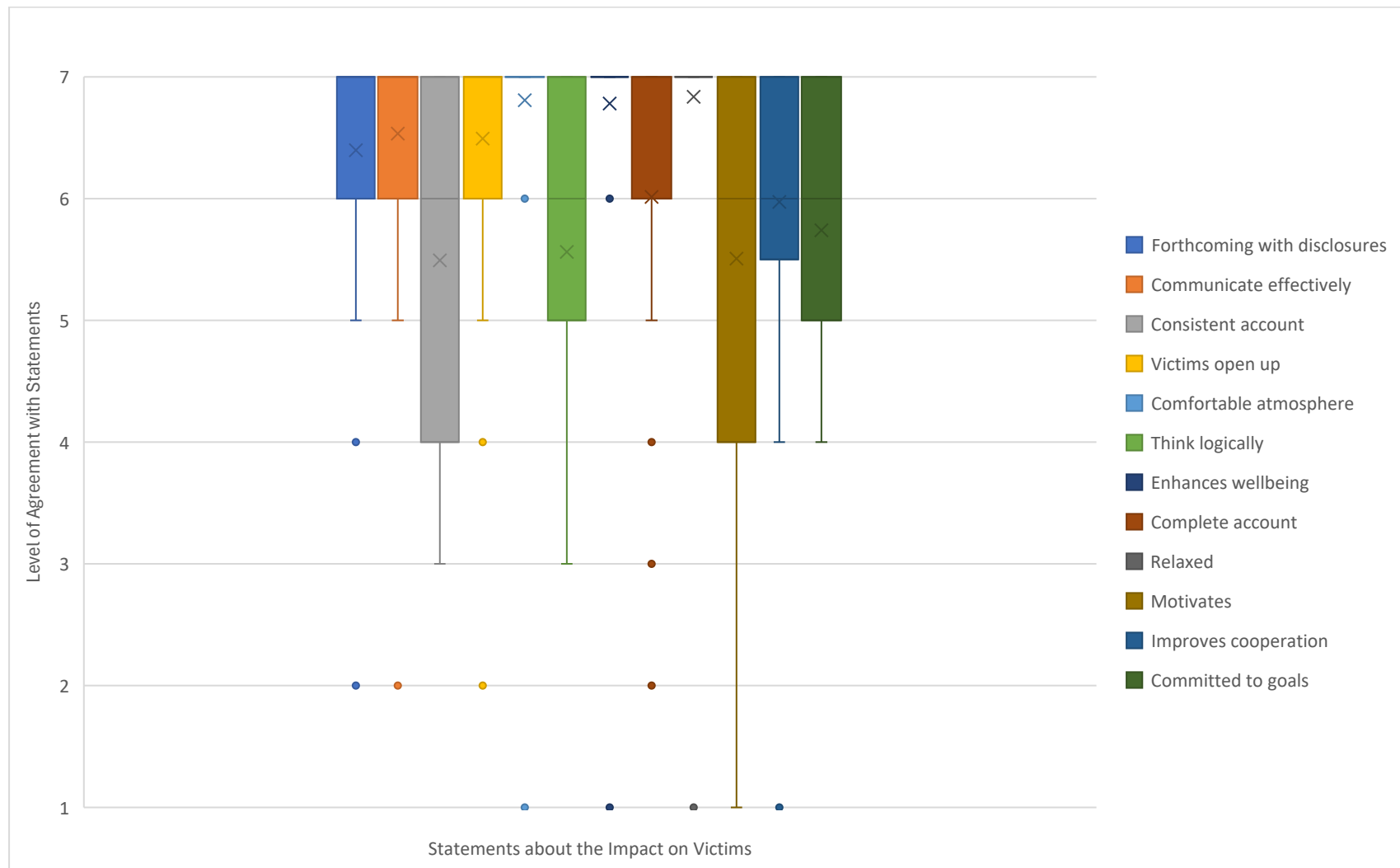


Figure 6 Box plots showing responses to statements about perceptions of the impact facility dogs have on victims



Note: '7' indicates 'strongly agree', '4' is 'neutral', and '1' indicates strongly disagree

For the scale measuring perceptions of the impact facility dogs have on professionals working with them, frequencies, means and standard deviations presented in Table 10 indicate that, on the whole, participants agreed with each of the statements. Responses to these statements appear more varied than for statements about the impact of dogs on victims, but there appear to be fewer anomalies. Participants generally agreed that facility dogs allow interviews to build better rapport, help them deal more effectively with victims, and help them feel inspired through the work they do with facility dogs. Participants mostly agreed that facility dogs help them to cope with strains of their job and help them feel less fatigued at work, while also providing them with a greater sense of job satisfaction. Most participants also strongly or moderately agreed that facility dogs help them to deal with emotional aspects of work, although this was the most disagreed statement, with 10 participants disagreeing. It should be noted that the same two participants thought to be anomalies mostly disagreed with all these statements as well. Figure 7 presents responses as percentages in a stacked bar chart and Figure 8 presents box plots showing outliers.

Table 10

Frequencies, means, and standard deviation scores for professionals' perception of the impact of facility dogs on professionals

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Allows the interviewer to build better rapport (<i>M</i> = 6.42, <i>SD</i> = 1.14)	0	2 (2.7%)	0	4 (5.5%)	6 (8.2%)	8 (11%)	53 (72.6%)
Enables me to deal more effectively with victims (<i>M</i> = 6.23, <i>SD</i> = 1.02)	0	0	0	9 (12.3%)	4 (5.5%)	21 (28.8%)	39 (53.4%)
Helps me feel inspired through the work I do with them (<i>M</i> = 6.68, <i>SD</i> = .72)	0	0	0	2 (2.7%)	5 (6.8%)	7 (9.6%)	59 (80.8%)
Helps me deal with emotional aspects of work (<i>M</i> = 6.48, <i>SD</i> = 1.02)	0	2 (2.7%)	8 (11%)	0	0	12 (16.4%)	51 (69.9%)
Helps me cope with strains of the job (<i>M</i> = 6.21, <i>SD</i> = 1.33)	2 (2.7%)	0	1 (1.4%)	5 (6.8%)	7 (9.6%)	13 (17.8%)	45 (61.6%)
Helps me feel less fatigued at work (<i>M</i> = 5.82, <i>SD</i> = 1.22)	0	1 (1.4%)	1 (1.4%)	11 (15.1%)	12 (16.4%)	20 (27.4%)	28 (38.4%)

Provides me with a greater sense of job satisfaction
 (M = 6.59, SD = .91)

0	0	0	6 (8.2%)	3 (4.1%)	6 (8.2%)	58 (79.5%)
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Figure 7 A stacked bar chart representing perceptions of the impact of facility dogs on professionals working with them

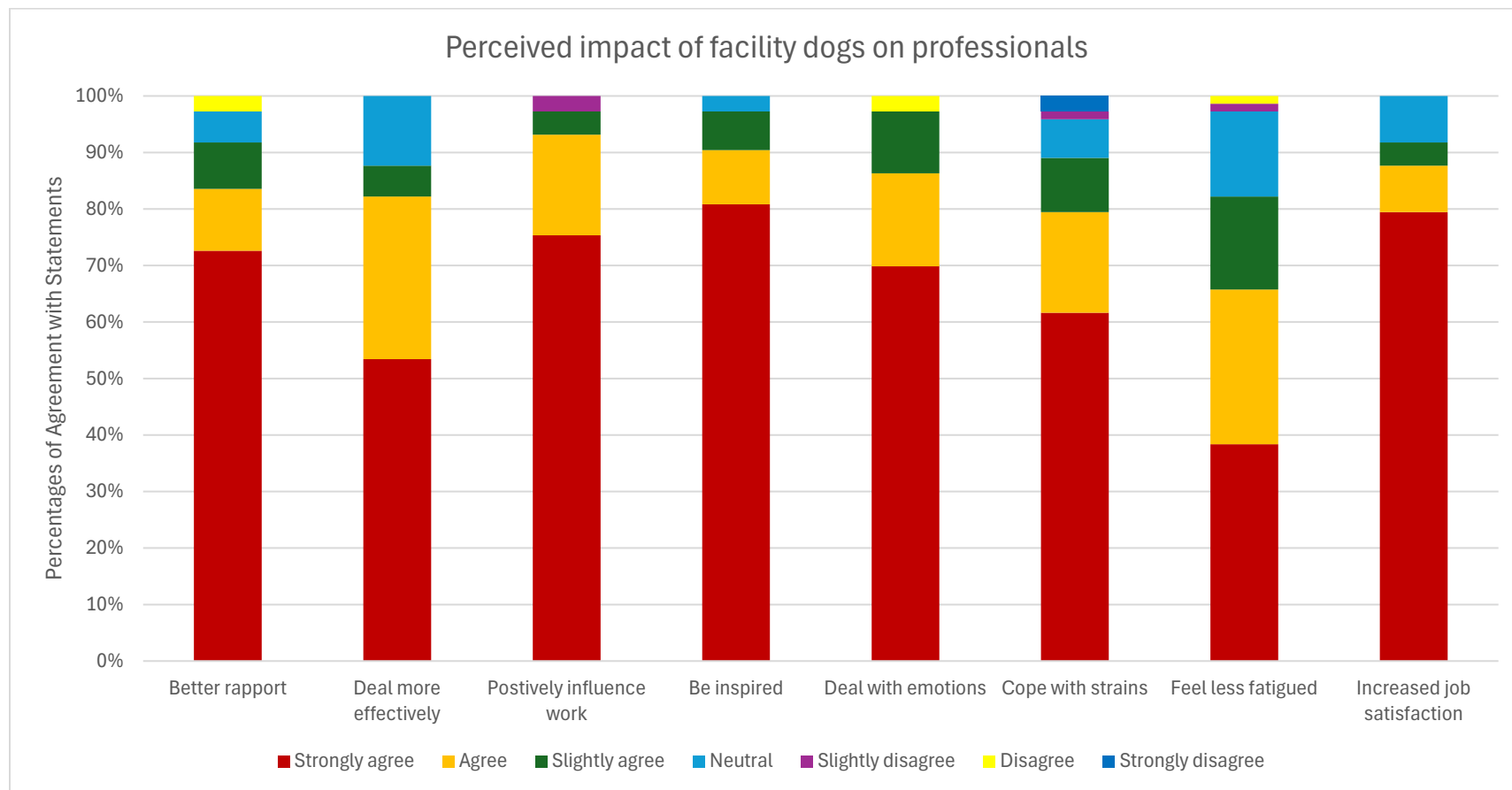
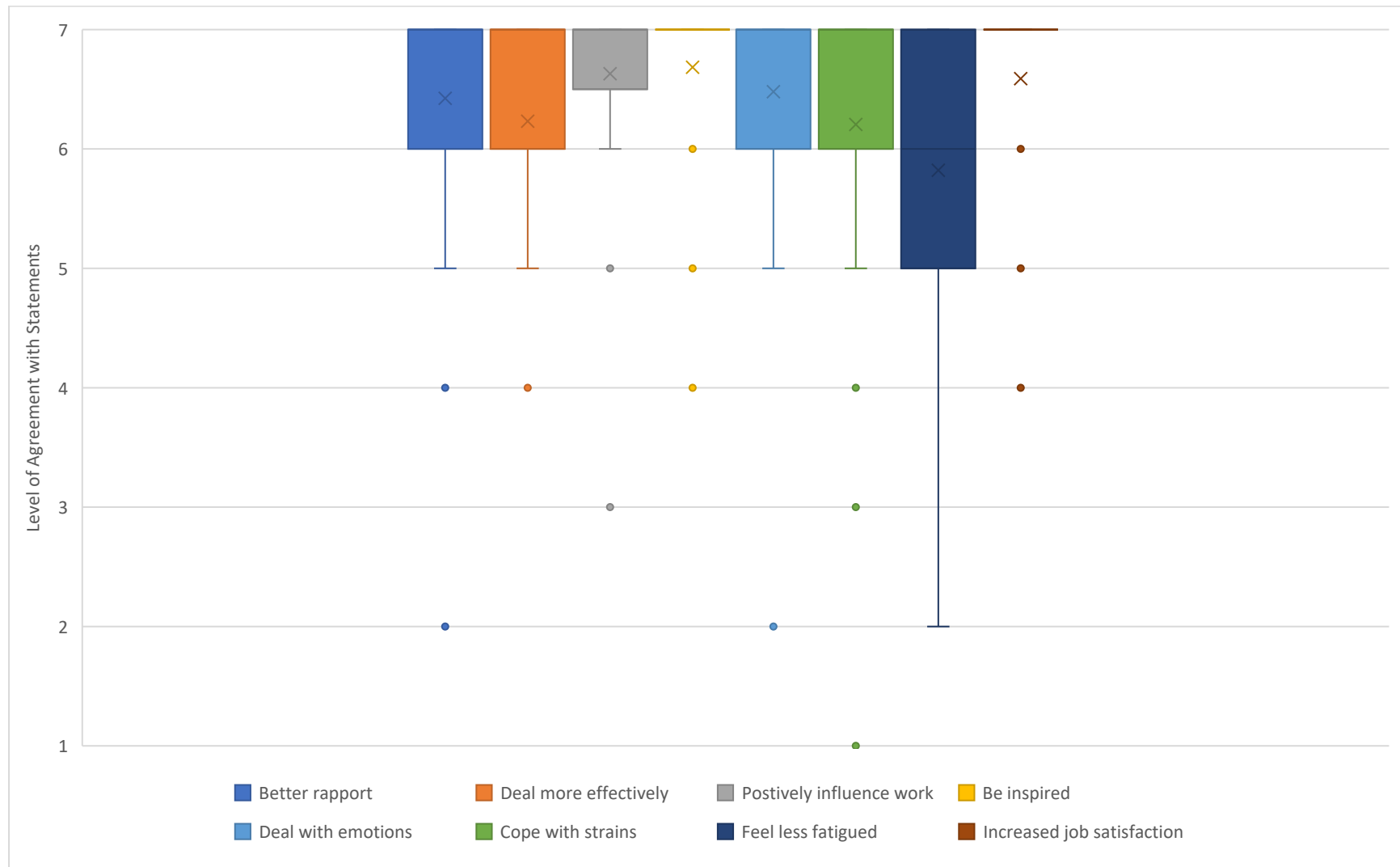


Figure 8 Box plots showing responses to statements about perceptions of the impact facility dogs have on professionals



Note: '7' indicates 'strongly agree', '4' is 'neutral', and '1' indicates strongly disagree

Participants reported mixed opinions as to whether facility dogs could cause bias, although the majority appeared to disagree, and one-fifth of participants were neutral. Participants also reported mixed opinions as to whether facility dogs cause victims to be viewed more credibly. The majority of participants disagreed, and over one-quarter of participants remained neutral. Frequencies, means, and standard deviations are reported in Table 11.

Table 11

Means, standard deviations and frequencies for professionals’ opinions on bias and victim credibility

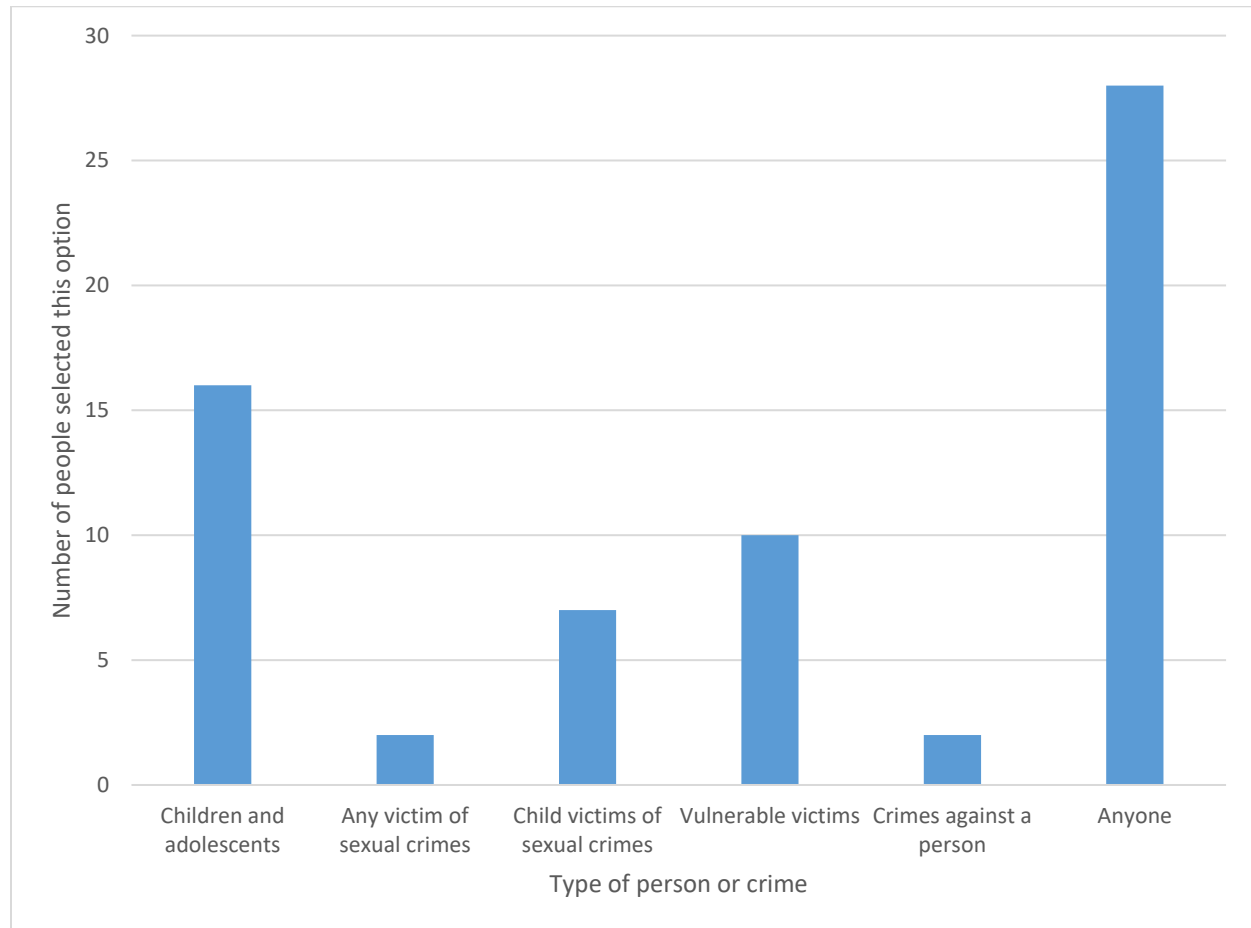
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
May cause bias in favour of victims (<i>M</i> = 2.81, <i>SD</i> = 2.04)	32 (43.8%)	10 (13.7%)	2 (2.7%)	14 (19.2%)	4 (5.5%)	6 (8.2%)	5 (6.8%)
May cause the victims to be viewed as more credible (<i>M</i> = 3.19, <i>SD</i> = 2.09)	26 (35.6%)	8 (11%)	2 (2.7%)	20 (27.4%)	5 (6.8%)	4 (5.5%)	8 (11%)

Participants were also asked about what populations they thought would benefit from the use of facility dogs; this data is presented in Table 12 and a visual representation is available in Figure 9. Fifty-four participants responded to this question, however the number of responses total 65 as participants could give as many responses as they wished. Many participants expressed how beneficial they thought facility dogs could be for children, although a few respondents also detailed how facility dogs might not be appropriate for children under the age of six due to potentially getting distracted by the dog. Some participants expressed how facility dogs would be beneficial for vulnerable victims, and it should be noted that, by definition, the title ‘vulnerable victims’ includes children and victims of sexual crimes, so there are some commonalities amongst suggestions.

Table 12*Categories most selected when suggesting who facility dogs may particularly benefit*

Type of person or crime	Number of responses
Children and adolescents	16
Any victim of sexual crimes	2
Child victims of sexual crimes	7
Vulnerable victims	10
Crimes against a person	2
Anyone	28

Figure 9 Graph showing the number of survey respondents who thought facility dogs would benefit a certain type of crime victim



3.1.2 Inferential Data Analyses

Statistical analyses were completed using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29.0 (IBM Corp). Two statistical tests were chosen for the present research; a Spearman’s rank-order correlation test and a Mann-Whitney U test. These tests were chosen as the data were not normally distributed, therefore nonparametric tests were needed to ascertain whether there were any correlations in the data (using Spearman’s rank-order correlation) or if there were any differences in the data (using Mann-Whitney U test). Additionally, as mentioned previously, there appeared to be a few outliers in the data. Not every item had outliers and where there were outliers, there were no more than three per item. The outliers were not removed, as the

nonparametric tests used to analyse the data are more robust and able to analyse with datasets that have outliers.

Assumptions were tested prior to analyses. The data met the assumptions for Spearman's rank-order correlation, namely that the two variables were measured at an ordinal level, the second that the variables measured in these hypotheses represent paired observations, and the third that there were monotonic relationships between variables, tested by creating scatterplots in SPSS. The data also met the assumptions for the Mann-Whitney U test. These assumptions included that there was one variable measured at an ordinal level, the independent variable consisted of two categorical, independent groups, and that there was an independence of observations, so participants belonged to one group or the other but not both.

Due to multiple testing, a type 1 error had to be controlled for to decrease the chances of accepting a false positive finding. To control for a type 1 error, the Benjamini-Hochberg procedure was chosen, as it is considered a powerful adjustment method compared to other correction methods, such as the Bonferroni correction (Jafari & Ansari-Pour, 2019). The Benjamini-Hochberg procedure involves placing raw p -values in ascending order and assigning ranks, before using the ranking and the false discovery rate to calculate critical values (Jafari & Ansari-Pour, 2019). As this is an exploratory study, the false discovery rate was set to 0.1 which is the lowest value recommended (McDonald, 2024). Original p -values are then compared to the critical Benjamini-Hochberg value to ascertain findings that are significant (Jafari & Ansari-Pour, 2019). Adjusted p -values are presented in the text below, and Table 13 presents raw p -values and adjusted p -values.

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was conducted to ascertain whether there was a correlation between the number of years a professional had spent working with a facility dog and their opinions on the impact of facility dogs on victims and professionals. The test did not yield

significant results for the opinions of victims ($r_s(73) = -0.99, p = .509$) or for professionals ($r_s(73) = -.120, p = .615$). As a result, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

To test the second hypothesis, that there would be a correlation between perceived benefits for victims and perceived benefits for professionals, a Spearman's rank-order correlation was carried out. The test yielded statistically significant results ($r_s(73) = .43, p = 0.005$). As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

To test the third and final hypothesis, that there would be a difference between perceptions of legal professionals working in the US compared to the rest of the world (including Australia, Canada, Belgium, France, and the UK), a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The test yielded a statistically significant difference, with the false discovery rate set to 0.1, when comparing the opinions regarding the perceived impact on victims ($U = 455.5, p = .065$) and professionals ($U = 405.5, p = .015$). Respondents from the US viewed facility dogs more positively for victims and professionals than respondents from the rest of the world. As both results were statistically significant, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 13*Raw and adjusted p-values in the quantitative analysis of survey responses*

Hypothesis	Raw p-value	Rank (i)	Critical value ((i/5)Q)	Adjusted p-value ($p^*(5/i)$)
H ₂ – correlation between perceived benefits for victims and professionals	.001	1	0.02	.005*
H ₃ – benefits perceived differently across countries (US versus rest of the world) for professionals	.006	2	0.04	.015*
H ₃ – benefits perceived differently across countries (US versus rest of the world) for victims	.039	3	0.06	.065*
H ₁ – benefits perceived differently across time for victims	.407	4	0.08	.509
H ₁ – benefits perceived differently across time for professionals	.615	5	0.1	.615

* Statistically significant when false discovery rate (Q) is set to 0.1

3.2 Qualitative Data

The qualitative data collected from participants were analysed using thematic analysis, chosen due to its applicability to a range of epistemologies (e.g., Nowell et al., 2017) which aligns with the pragmatism paradigm adopted for the current research. The thematic analysis model used in for the present study was developed initially in 2006 and updated in 2023, and aimed to make steps taken during data analysis more apparent to enable evaluation of research and to allow for comparison with other studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2023). Braun and Clarke (2023) outline a six-step process for conducting a thematic analysis. These steps involve the researcher familiarising themselves with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes,

reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally producing a report. These guidelines were revisited during the analytic process to ensure they were being adhered to and to ensure the quality of the analysis.

Thematic analysis is favoured due to its flexibility in data analysis, making it ideal to use across qualitative data sets and across research approaches. The aims of thematic analysis include to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes, found in a data set. While thematic analysis enables the identification of themes, it is important to acknowledge the active role the researcher takes in scrutinising data sets and drawing themes to then report to readers (Braun & Clarke, 2023). A few key considerations prior to data collection and analysis include what may constitute as a 'theme' during analysis, whether a rich understanding is developed across the data set or detail and nuance is ascertained for one particular theme or set of themes in the data. Whether an inductive or deductive approach should be taken during the analysis should be decided; this analysis used an inductive approach, meaning that the themes that were generated were grounded in the data set without using any knowledge derived from literature surrounding this topic. This was chosen due to the little research that currently exists in this area and the subsequent need to gather new insights to enhance understanding rather than deepen understanding of existing knowledge per se. The analysis of themes at semantic or latent levels is also important to consider; in the present study, the data were analysed at a semantic level, where words are taken by their explicit meaning rather than trying to identify any underlying ideas that are not explicitly communicated. Analysis at a semantic level was chosen to ensure themes derive from participants' own words rather than the researcher's interpretation of them.

Other forms of analyses were considered, but ultimately not selected for the data analysis of interviews and responses to open-ended survey questions employed in the present study.

Analyses that were considered include IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis; Smith et al.,

1999) and grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The former was not chosen due to its roots in phenomenological epistemology which does not align with the research approach and paradigm of this thesis, and, although understanding the intricacies of how people experience facility dogs would be beneficial, such analysis would not help meet the aims for the current research. The latter form of analysis was not chosen as the current study does not seek to produce any new theories, but instead seeks to identify common themes that occur in different people's experiences of working with facility dogs.

For the survey ([Appendix 3.6](#)), six follow-up questions were asked ('Please expand on your responses to the section 'Perceived impact on victims/witnesses'', 'Please expand on your responses to the section 'Perceived impact on professionals'', 'Do you feel facility dogs would particularly benefit some populations of victims/witnesses over others? (e.g. age group, gender, type of crime etc.)', 'In your opinion, what, if any, issues present themselves with the use of facility dogs in any part of the criminal justice system', 'Do you have any concerns about the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system that you would like to share?' and 'Please use this space to indicate any other thoughts on this subject matter.'). The responses to five of these questions were analysed together with the interview data using thematic analysis, and the question asking about a target population for facility dogs was coded quantitatively, for which the data are presented above. The interviews conducted were broadly split into three parts, one part exploring the impact of facility dogs on victims, witnesses and their support networks, one part exploring facility dogs as an alternative or complementary resource to existing special measures, and another part examining the impact of facility dogs on professionals. The interview schedule can be found in [Appendix 3.7](#).

Qualitative responses from the survey and the interview data were pooled together and analysed simultaneously to draw overarching themes to help answer the research questions. The

data were initially split into three categories that are of interest to the researcher based on existing gaps of knowledge as illustrated earlier in this chapter. These categories explore the impact of facility dogs on victims and their support, on professionals, and also any issues with the use of facility dogs.

Figure 10 shows categories, themes and sub-themes that arose from the qualitative survey and interview data. For the first category, exploring the impact of facility dogs on victims, witnesses, and their support networks, there were three main themes: benefits for the criminal justice system, dogs' ability to provide emotional support, and their help in building connections. For the second category, exploring the impact facility dogs may have on the professionals using and working around them, two main themes were identified: dogs as emotional support, and dogs helping to build connections. For third and final category, examining issues with the use of facility dogs, four main themes were identified: issues using dogs in court, logistical issues with the use of facility dogs, issues around the dogs themselves, and no issues.

Figure 10 Themes drawn from qualitative analysis of responses from professionals working with facility dogs



The remainder of this section will examine the themes that arose from the qualitative analysis as per Figure 10. In the quotes below, any names and identifiable information, including that of facility dogs', have been changed or redacted to maintain anonymity.

3.2.1 Impact on Victims and Their Support

The current section explores themes developed from the qualitative survey and interview data based on the impact facility dogs can have on victims and their support. The responses from the survey and interviews suggest that facility dogs may have benefits for the criminal justice system overall by improving victims' engagement with the criminal justice system, providing emotional support for victims, and helping to build connections.

3.2.1.1 Benefits for the criminal justice system

Facility dogs are perceived to have an overall positive impact on criminal justice processes. Participants discussed how facility dogs can help to improve engagement with the criminal justice system and promote fuller disclosures, without motivating victims as such. Some participants felt facility dogs may be beneficial for victims of certain types of crimes.

3.2.1.1.1 Improved engagement and fuller disclosures

Generally, participants agreed that facility dogs enable victims to give fuller disclosures and their engagement with the criminal justice process overall improves. Participants detail how the facility dog's presence allows victims to be more 'effective' during their interviews. Part of the reason could be because rapport is built quicker with interviewers as a result of the facility dog's presence and the interactions with the facility dog.

Our facility dog has enabled victims/witnesses to feel more comfortable and calm during the aftermath of a crime. They are then able to give a more detailed account of what happened. When our facility dog is present, the victim/witness feels supported during this process. (Survey respondent 42)

I have seen victims disclose more about their victimisation during a defence interview that changed the whole dynamic of the prosecution as the victim disclosed another offender.

While working on a victim impact statement (read just prior to sentencing) with the victim and the courthouse facility dog supporting her she disclosed more of what had happened to her. Things she had not told anyone even after telling her story many, many, many time throughout the criminal justice process, including testifying against her offender. (Survey respondent 5)

Facility dogs appear to not only help some victims in their communications, but also their general engagement with the criminal justice system. Whether this is with victims who may otherwise not have testified without the facility dog's presence, or generally improving people's attitudes towards participating in interviews or providing testimony, it is apparent that facility dogs help victims to engage better with the process and may improve their experience of the criminal justice system. Facility dogs appear to help victims feel differently about testifying in court, and there are some reports of victims feeling more 'excited' to come to court. Improved engagement from victims is important for the criminal justice system as many interviewees report scepticism as to whether interviews or testimonies could take place without the facility dog.

We had three children who had been [crime redacted for anonymity] and the detective that was interviewing them said this child just couldn't speak. He basically shut down. So she came out to me and said is [the facility dog] finished with the other children? I said yes, yes she is. So we gave the lead to the little boy and he walked into the room and she said within 30 seconds he disclosed what had happened. She said she's never seen anything like it.

(Joline, interviewee, Australia)

We had a child who was literally balled up on the floor, they had their hoodie pulled up over their head, they had the strings tied tight. They were asking the child very simple questions, how are you doing? What's going on in school? The child would barely even shake their

head yes or no. And I thought, oh, this child isn't going to be able to testify, [they] can't even talk about neutral topics. I thought, let me try to introduce [the facility dog] and we'll just see how this goes, because part of introducing [the facility dog] is just seeing if they have any type of bond, will they interact with the dog to assess? Can they testify with [the facility dog]? And watching this child completely transform – the sweatshirt came off. They were rolling on the floor with [the facility dog]. It was a completely different child. The child couldn't stop talking once [the facility dog] came in. (Sally, interviewee, US)

We have had multiple cases where the victim would not speak to the forensic interviewer, but rather disclosed directly to the facility dog. (Survey respondent 14)

3.2.1.1.2 Facility dogs do not motivate victims and witnesses necessarily

There are nuances in the relationship between victims' motivation and ability to partake in interviews and testimonies. Although victims may give fuller disclosures with the support of the facility dog, the limits of the facility dog are in the calmness of the environment they provide and the rest appears to be a result of the victim's own abilities. Facility dogs can create an environment where victims may feel more encouraged to speak but may not motivate victims themselves.

It is difficult to attribute victim [or] witness motivation to the dog. I think the dog's presence helps to calm the victims, lower cortisol, and allow the brain to act in a less black and white way and that calmer state may make things easier for the victim. They are less likely to "fight, flight, freeze" and the proper functioning of their brain could be mistaken for motivation and cooperation, but I feel what you are seeing is just a human reacting as they "normally" would because they are not in a perceived "threat" environment. (Survey respondent 7)

I do not believe the facility dog can impact a victim's ability to cooperate or be more committed. The facility dog is a comfort which can calm nerves, but victims will only provide information they want to provide. (Survey respondent 28)

3.2.1.1.3 Dogs for certain populations and crime types

This area was explored in the survey and during interviews. The survey data is available in Table 12 and a visual form is available in Figure 9. Some interviewees discussed what populations and crime types they felt would benefit most from using facility dogs. Many participants specifically divulged the types of crimes their victims experienced and how helpful the facility dog appeared to be, others placed greater emphasis on facility dogs being helpful for every kind of person who may want the facility dog, and any kind of crime. Participants emphasised that although they may use facility dogs largely with a population of children who have experienced trauma, they would also be suitable for adults who have experienced trauma or even stressful situations, such as divorce. One participant discussed how helpful facility dogs could be with surviving family members after they arrive at a police station following an incident. They also described how dogs can be helpful in any situation where a person's stress may be heightened and there is a need to remain calm.

Generally, participants agreed that vulnerable victims would greatly benefit from using facility dogs. There is some concordance here with current guidance in the UK which aims to provide special measures to vulnerable victims, including children and people who have experienced a traumatic crime. One participant added that facility dogs do not discriminate and could be used with defendants as well as victims.

Hundred percent facility dogs should be used in crimes against vulnerable victims [...] people with disabilities relating to their mental health. Anytime we're dealing with those victims I think would be useful. I am starting to find that when it's safe to do so, even acute mental health crises, [the facility dog] can be extremely valuable. (Mark, interviewee, US)

We specialise in sexual abuse, physical abuse, torture, human trafficking, online exploitation. So anyone under 18 and I find [the facility dog has] made such a difference in this population. But I have used him as well with developmentally delayed adults and vulnerable adults who may have experienced some complex trauma in their life and need that extra support. (Cynthia, interviewee, Canada)

If you have suffered some kind of trauma and you're expected to tell the police that, anything that makes that experience easier and less traumatic has got to be a winner. So, if you're talking either child sexual abuse, domestic abuse or some kind of trauma in a road traffic accident or anything where the victims have been really impacted by the experience, having that dog there for lots of people not exclusively is a good thing. And I don't think it's just for children. I'm an adult and [the facility dog] gave me reassurance. It would be fantastic if it could be available for everybody. (Rose, interviewee, UK)

I think [facility dogs would help] anyone with trauma. I would love for an offender to request [the facility dog] because she would sit up there with them and she wouldn't know what they were accused of. And she would sit with them and comfort them and probably help them with their testimony as well. (Sally, interviewee, US)

3.2.1.2 Building connections

This theme explores three similar but separate concepts around how facility dogs help to build connections. Facility dogs are explored as a form of icebreaker, and a way to break professional barriers. Perhaps most importantly, facility dogs enable the victim to build a connection with the dogs themselves which is key to reaping benefits from the facility dog.

3.2.1.2.1 Icebreaker

Facility dogs were described by some as providing a good way to become acquainted with victims and witnesses. They are described as affectionate and good for rapport building with victims. The effect they had in this regard was described as a 'huge difference'.

[The facility dog] just loves people. She really is a lapdog. If you leave the room, [she] will follow you. She just loves interacting with people. I always tell the kids and parents when I meet them, if you sit on the floor and kick your legs out, [she] will come curl up in a ball and sit with you. She just loves attention and being with people and loves being pet. And that's a really good icebreaker with kids and a really good way for rapport building with some kids.
(Sally, US)

The advocates meet the family when they first come in the door. So we explain what's going to happen. We would introduce them to the dog and then introduce them to the police. So we get them into the door and do it in a really soft and warm way and if I see that there is a youth or a child having a difficult time, I might say, 'Do you like dogs? We have a dog here' and then going to get our facility dog who's used mostly with the criminal justice process.
(Cynthia, Canada)

When victims, both minors and adults, present themselves for an examination at the premises [redacted for anonymity], the presence of the service dog provides a much warmer welcome. It helps to relax the often heavy and stressful atmosphere. It also allows you to talk about other things (in this case about the dog) before the exam, which helps to reduce stress. (Survey respondent 50)

3.2.1.2.2 Breaking barriers

Participants detailed how dogs can break professional barriers that, for example, police officers and court clerks might not be able to break. Facility dogs can bridge the gap to help build connections between staff and service-users.

I've seen it with victims, looking back at the videos and seeing how he just bridges the gap between your investigator and your survivor. He is just the conduit for that. (Rose, interviewee, UK)

I've also used [the facility dog] on families with child deaths. It is another thing where again, I think a lot of officers, with every fibre of their being wants to be human and connect with that family in an empathetic way. But there's those professional lines and [the facility dog] can just crush right through those and be an ambassador for the Police Department as to what we want to express empathetically, but professionally we can't so. (Mark, interviewee, US)

3.2.1.2.3 Connection

There appears to be great importance with connection, both with victims and the professionals they are working with, but also connection between the victim and the facility dog. Feeling connected can have a grounding effect for people who are providing interviews or testifying.

I had a youth testifying at my office about two weeks ago and usually we have our facility dog sitting on a mat on the ground and so I'll tell children they can take off their shoes and they can pet the dog with their feet if it helps them feel connected. And with this youth, she really needed like be touching the dog the entire time. So we had her testifying on a couch with the dog sitting on the couch with her. So she had his head in her lap the whole time she testified. And it really just calmed her down and regulated her and really just made it so

much easier for her to talk about things that were really hard. (Cynthia, interviewee, Canada)

One of the things we do notice is people will often take their shoes off so they can physically connect with the dog, a lot of our witnesses will give evidence through a remote video room so they're on camera, not actually in the courtroom, and most often, the people will take their shoes off so they can feel the dog at their feet. So, the dog's not doing anything, but that grounding, that feeling something normal... (Joline, interviewee, Australia)

3.2.1.3 Dogs as emotional support

Facility dogs were often discussed as being a form of emotional support, for victims and their support networks. Dogs were described as a relaxation tool, a shield for trauma, and had a wide-reaching impact, not just for the victim who they were supporting but for others too.

3.2.1.3.1 Dogs as sentient beings

Dogs are conceptualised as being different from other forms of special measures as they are sentient beings with whom victims can communicate without fearing judgement. Whether dogs were described as 'tools' or 'resources', it was agreed that dogs are an effective form of enabling victims to communicate.

[The facility dog] sits in the witness box with them. They're a living, breathing creature. The kids have a special, smaller leash that they get to hold when [the facility dog is] in the witness box with them. An advocate and an interpreter are not in the in the box with you. And yes, your comfort animal or your fidget toy are nice, but they're not a living, breathing creature. They can't put their head in your lap in the witness box. (Sally, interviewee, US)

I hate to say, use the dog as a tool or resource because obviously it's a living, breathing, sentient being which is much more important than a squeeze, a sensory toy. But it is a resource. And I believe they can be proactively used. (Joline, interviewee, Australia)

The way [the girls] interacted with [the facility dog], it made you realise the empathy [the facility dog] is giving back to them is maybe some of the first experience they've ever had with feeling love back from something, and while an inanimate object can help calm us, it's that ability to feel that living empathy coming back at you that I think trumps the inanimate object. [...] When [the facility dog] puts her head up against yours and bows her forehead into you, almost as if saying "I feel you, I get you, I understand you". Having seen that type of stuff happen, I think it is far more powerful than other objects could ever be. (Mark, interviewee, US)

3.2.1.3.2 Relaxation tool

Dogs were often described as having the ability to relax the people they were working with. Whether a 'tool' or a 'resource', it was generally agreed that dogs were able to relax victims to the point where they would be able to provide a better testimony or interview due to feeling calmed down. Facility dogs can do this through several means, such as their weight, warmth, their own calm demeanour, and even their breathing.

The presence of his physical weight is actually really reassuring, and I know there's lots of research at the moment about calming blankets and the weight on you, I'm sure that's clearly an element of what [the facility dog] does. (Rose, interviewee, UK)

The greatest noticeable benefit to the victim is the impact on comfort, relaxation, and general wellbeing. The victim is typically more relaxed in the presence of a facility dog, and rapport is built faster with interviewers. The impact of a calmer, happier witness is that they

are more cooperative and able to provide more comprehensive accounts in interviews and court. (Survey respondent 51)

[The facility dog] is a trained dog. She's able to sense people's emotions. She can go sit down next to someone and just put her head in their lap and that grounds someone [...] they're able to talk about things, the worst thing that's ever happened to them, that they wouldn't be able to do if a dog wasn't there. And that's what we want [...] to be able to get justice for these victims and do things that we might not be able to if it wasn't for these dogs. [...] I think she has a calming presence. I wouldn't say that somebody testifies better because of [the facility dog]. I don't think she's a magic wand that all of a sudden makes people recall more details. I just think she helps people, I think she regulates people's emotions and if that makes them testify better... I think she's a resource to help people. She's not a prop. (Sally, interviewee, US)

3.2.1.3.3 Trauma shield

Some participants described dogs as being a shield for the traumatic experiences people have had by the time they are being interviewed. Participants theorised that facility dogs could be a comfort to those who have experienced trauma and could even help to mitigate further retraumatisation by enabling a victim to provide the best possible evidence so their case might not need to go to trial.

It's life-changing and I know that sounds very cliché, but I didn't realise the impact of seeing people with dogs, especially in the trauma field, until I really saw it. (Rose, interviewee, UK)

She was meant to be a facility dog. She picks up on emotion. She can sense when somebody is upset. This is what she was bred and trained to do it. It's to comfort people who have trauma. I really believe that. (Sally, interviewee, US)

The effect that mitigating trauma someone's incurring in that moment hopefully makes the trauma easier to deal with and helps curb some of the development of post traumatic injury. [...] I think by proxy you're going to end up with a better interview that may not even go to trial because you've closed so many doors with that good interview. [...] I think the American Academy of Paediatrics consider courtroom testimony in and of itself an Adverse Childhood Experience. And so, if we can avoid that through a better interview [...] then we're preventing that damage down the road. One event can have decades of effects on a person, and any tool that we can bring to bear to help mitigate that, we should be. (Mark, US)

The criminal justice system is stressful and can be retraumatizing to victims/witnesses. They did not choose to have the crime happen to them, so I do not see why a support dog cannot be used as long as it knows how to do its job and does not disrupt the process.

(Survey respondent 55)

3.2.1.3.4 Wide-reaching impact

Facility dogs appeared to not only help the victims they were working with, but also others in the vicinity, such as the people supporting the victim. The impact of facility dogs also appeared to be long-lasting; some participants detailed how they saw victims a couple of years after the victims last met the facility dog and they still felt impacted by the contact.

A lot of times the parents can't be in the courtroom when the kid is testifying because they're witnesses themselves. I'm not going to say it relaxes them, but it makes me feel a little bit better about the process. (Kristin, interviewee, US)

Not everyone's going to disclose, but it creates a pathway for that disclosure and the instant calming, the instant reassurance, the instant patting. He then offers support to the parents.

(Rose, interviewee, US)

I truly believe had [the facility dog] not been there, the prosecution wouldn't have been able to move forward. And it just really shows the calming presence that dogs have that just the stress levels went down, you could see the parents calm down, the prosecutor took a breath and then we were able to move forward. And just seeing that, like the lightness come into the room and everybody go OK, like we can do this. (Sally, interviewee, US)

We have stuffed animals [of the facility dog] [...] it's really nice that we can give those to families to take home too, so they can take home their own little [facility dog] that they can cuddle. And I've had kids who come back a year or two later and still have that with them, that they'll bring with them as like a comfort object. (Cynthia, interviewee, Canada)

3.2.1.3.5 Stand-in for support

Facility dogs were described as acting as a stand-in for support when, for example, victims cannot have family in the courtroom with them as their family members may later be testifying. Facility dogs were described as a more informal 'team member' who the victim could relate to and feel safe in the hands of.

I think it makes all the difference in the world. It's changed how I do my job and knowing I have that as a tool to use. Kids can't really always have their main support person in court and but this allows them to have something. And I think that just makes a huge difference. (Kristin, interviewee, US)

We have interpreters. Fidget toys are really big here. And yes, we have a lot of advocates that will come to court to support kids. [The facility dog] is different because when the kid walks in, it's like that's my team member. You're the four-legged team member who wags their tail when I walk into the room. You don't have a badge. You don't have a gun. You're not the lawyer in the suit. [The facility dog] has her own business card. She has stickers. She

has a book all about her. And I feel like the child and the family really feel like, “You're here for me. I'm the only one on your caseload. You're not running out of here because you have another appointment”. (Sally, interviewee, US)

3.2.2 Impact on Professionals

As well as exploring the impact on victims and witnesses, interviews also investigated the impact that facility dogs may have on professionals in the criminal justice system. Effects could be found on both professionals who work directly with facility dogs and those who encounter them during their work. Two main sub-themes were identified here: emotional support and building connections.

3.2.2.1 Emotional support

Facility dogs provide emotional support to the professionals they encounter by providing a positive distraction, as well as being able to reduce stress in staff and convey a sense of empathy. It may be easier for staff to communicate with a facility dog over a human when they are experiencing stress at work.

3.2.2.1.1 Positive distraction

Facility dogs were perceived as a positive distraction in a line of work that can take an emotional toll on some people due to the workload and the intensity of cases.

Wherever we took [the facility dog], I used to see everyone. [...] You would get people stopping into the classroom and coming in, and then we take him into operational police stations, which obviously is very different and people would just come out of their office and just come and sit and then they would say to us, why can't you just come and work in the office all day long? So I just saw him having a massive positive impact on so many

people. I don't think I met one person in all those times who said I just don't get it, or it's not for me. (Rose, interviewee, UK)

We all do it for the victims, but we can't ignore the impact that it has on the other players. Whenever we're in court and we're there early, normally I'll always have not just the prosecution come across, we'll also have defence. They'll ask, is it all right? Is defence allowed to pat the dog? And I say of course they can pat the dog because I really believe that if everybody can benefit from some nice sort of interaction, absolutely do it. I'll often have afterwards the judge's associate come up and say can we pat the dog? (Joline, interviewee, Australia)

I can't tell you how many times I'm just walking the hallways with [the facility dog] and someone stops us. [...] And then they'll get down on their hands and knees, have a little face rub time with her or whatever. Stand up, take a deep breath and say I needed that. [...] In that 15 second, if that, interaction, there is probably something happening in that person to kind of reset them emotionally. (Mark, interviewee, US)

3.2.2.1.2 Mental health, empathy, and stress reduction

Many participants detailed how facility dogs were beneficial for professionals' own mental health. Indeed, the impact of facility dogs specifically on secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, and chronic stress was explored, and then described as allowing professionals to be more effective in their roles.

The facility dog not only assists the victim/witnesses she serves, but also assists the professionals on the team to cope with and process the secondary trauma of working with child victims. (Survey respondent 14)

These dogs have a tremendous impact on the professionals working around them. The dog picks up on the stress level of staff, knowing who needs the attention from the dog. Staff actively seek out the dog when they are feeling stressed or having a bad day. (Survey respondent 39)

[The facility dog] reduces everyone's stress. The work that we do is hard. So I know in Child Protective Services, the rate in which people leave the profession here is 18 months. That's a short amount of time to do this work. [...] I have people that will come to my office and ask to sit with [the facility dog]. She will go to the person that she senses is the most stressed. We have what we call a multidisciplinary team and that's everyone who works on the case, law enforcement, medical prosecution, etcetera. And [the facility dog] is part of that team. So I think she just helps everyone, whether it's sitting with them, them petting her. I think she reduces everyone's trauma, even if it is just for 5 minutes sitting with them. (Sally, interviewee, US)

It doesn't matter whether you're a prosecutor, but [facility dog] included, if we can mitigate some of that front-end stress response then not only are we helping that employee long-term, but we're probably helping them be more effective in their job. (Mark, interviewee, US)

Very sadly, the suicide rates of our magistrates and judges are fairly high. So, I think anything that we can do to help mental health in the judiciary is really important. (Joline, interviewee, Australia)

3.2.2.2 Building connections

The different ways dogs help to build connections were explored, including connections between victims and facility dogs, victims and professionals, and amongst professionals as well. The notion of working collaboratively arose, in the sense of the need to use facility dogs in

conjunction with other special measures, such as with advocates. This may require training all professionals involved in working with facility dogs to ensure maximum efficacy in their use.

3.2.2.2.1 Breaking barriers

Facility dogs are conceptualised as being able to break barriers that professionals may otherwise struggle breaking through due to the need to remain professional. They are also able to build a long-lasting relationship with victims and their families, which may especially be important for victims who could have incurred attachment trauma through the crime they have experienced.

Advocates are incredible. We have advocates involved in most of our serious cases, but [...] there's still that odd professional barrier. It might be a little softer than it is for a police officer. (Mark, interviewee, US)

[The facility dog] 100% [helps with] building rapport and we all know that rapport is the most important key to get that disclosure. I've trained officers for years, and that is my one point that I will always stress. You can't go into an interview with a child without building that rapport. And if that rapport takes you 10 minutes, 2 hours, 3 days it doesn't matter, but if you've got [the facility dog] who can maybe make that process better, the quality of the rapport better, that may lead to a disclosure and better evidence. (Rose, interviewee, UK)

3.2.2.2.2 Relationships and community

Some respondents illustrated in their responses how facility dogs help to foster positive, productive relationships between professionals, and also between professionals and the wider community. Strong links with the community is especially important given the current image of, for example, police officers as detailed earlier in this thesis.

The facility dog also helps promote positive relationships with the community (especially from a child welfare perspective). (Survey respondent 27)

Having [the facility dog] with me has greatly changed how people interact with me, parents who are reluctant to bring their children are more relaxed and engaged. I have greater visibility in the community, he has become a bit of a celebrity. Having him in the office and courthouse has created more conversation, smiles and engagement. (Survey respondent 53)

3.2.2.2.3 Collaborative working

Using facility dogs proactively with other professionals working with victims, such as advocates, intermediaries, and social workers, can help improve collaborative working. Working proactively can look like training or advising professionals on how to make the best use of facility dogs, such as by using them as role models.

We really want to encourage people to use the dog as a support mechanism and some intermediaries are really, really good at this. They will, in conversations with the witness, be really proactive and say, "can you see [the facility dog], look at her, she's breathing really deeply, look at her chest, go up and down as she's breathing" and a way of role modelling like, "hey, let's slow our breathing down" or "look, how calm, [the facility dog is] so relaxed today, this is a really safe place in here". By including the dog and the conversation, she can really help role model. This is a safe place where we're all looking after you. We're all on your team. So that's how I really think the dog should be used, really used as a proactive tool. (Joline, interviewee, Australia)

The most powerful way would be an advocate paired with a facility dog because then you're bringing all that exceptional training and experience and everything of the advocate along with something that is alive, has a heartbeat, interacts and can bridge those personal space barriers that professionals can't. (Mark, interviewee, US)

3.2.3 Issues

There were some issues discussed by professionals with regards to the implementation of facility dog programmes. There were some discussions around issues with the use of the dogs themselves, logistical issues with dogs, concerns around using the dogs in court, and, as discussed by many participants, no issues at all.

3.2.3.1 Issues surrounding dogs

Some participants described issues with using dogs, including the necessity to factor the needs of the dogs, and dogs potentially causing a distraction or triggering phobias and allergies. Although there may be ways of working around these issues, it is important that these issues are discussed and explored.

3.2.3.1.1 The needs of dogs

Respondents relayed how the needs of dogs are important, and it is imperative that the way facility dogs work is understood in order for them to work efficaciously. Participants discussed how dogs have their own needs which must be taken into consideration when creating their schedules, and how best to use facility dogs.

[There are] no real issues, but the needs of the dogs must be considered, which adds a level of complexity to the situation. (Survey respondent 1)

In premises where there are a lot of people, noise, passage, it is sometimes difficult for the dog to concentrate and pay attention to the commands offered, it is important that a link with the accompanied person be established beforehand. (Survey respondent 47)

One problem conveyed by a respondent specifically related to court is that there can be a delay before the trial begins, which raises difficulties for the facility dog who will be working the entire time.

Timing can be difficult. There are often significant wait times before a trial begins. This time is still counted toward working hours for [the facility dog] (he is wearing his vest) and can make it difficult for [the facility dog] to stay focused all day. (Survey respondent 53)

3.2.3.1.2 Dogs as a distraction

Sometimes, facility dogs in themselves may be a distraction. As they are living creatures, they may snore or sneeze and this can be viewed as a distraction. Respondents explored how one way of working around this could be to make the jury known that there is a facility dog present; this way they are not caught off-guard when they suddenly hear a dog sneeze.

The main issues surround (1) if the dog is visible or may be heard (shifting, sighing, sneezing) and (2) if the presence of the dog, once perceived, would engender additional undue sympathy. These concerns are largely unfounded and if they are raised to the jury during jury selection would be entirely a non-issue. (Survey respondent 10)

Where children are very small and may get distracted by the dog, one way of working around this is simply to not use the facility dog during testimony, but perhaps before and after testimony instead.

Sometimes the dogs can serve as more of a distraction for the individual than a source of grounding - both with children and adults. In those cases, the dog may need to be removed or placed in a space further away from the client so that they can focus. (Survey respondent 51)

I think that generally a facility dog helps victims/witnesses to stay committed to the goals of the interview, but the dog can be a challenging distraction when used incorrectly. Just to be clear, we assess for suitability before the dog goes into the interview room and if the dog is too much of a distraction then we won't use the dog in the interview or courtroom. This is

not often the case but has been known to occur with extremely young children. (Survey respondent 46)

3.2.3.1.3 Phobias and allergies

Some issues that may arise could be around those who have cynophobia or are allergic to dogs. If someone is cynophobic, they may be incredibly fearful of dogs to the point of not being able to tolerate being in the same room as a dog. Those with allergies may vary in the severity of their allergies. Ultimately, respondents clarified that these issues could be dealt with as and when they happened.

Naturally allergies, fear of dogs and the dog "acting out" would create barriers, but I believe this could be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. (Survey respondent 52)

The problems that can be encountered are more of the order of fear, some people who come to the service where the dog is present when they have a canine phobia. (Survey respondent 50)

3.2.3.2 *Logistics of facility dog programmes*

There are four sub-themes around the logistical issues and considerations of implementing facility dog programmes. This includes difficulties faced by handlers, confusion around qualifications of dogs, the need to increase staff training, and the need for more support behind facility dog programmes.

3.2.3.2.1 Difficulties faced by handlers

An important aspect to acknowledge is the difficulties faced by handlers of facility dogs. Handling a facility dog may come with its own pressures which should be understood and managed appropriately.

As the primary handler, I put a great deal of pressure on myself to ensure that I am maintaining her training and caring for her properly. My facility dog is very smart and pushes limits and also makes me feel like I am not a great handler which creates stress for me.

(Survey respondent 28)

There may also be pressure on the facility dog and the handler due to the demand, or potentially covering a large area as a result of there being fewer trained facility dogs a specific region.

[Our facility dog] is not available for every interview/court appearance. He is the only dog serving a large area and so availability can be inconsistent. (Survey respondent 53)

[One issue is] my limited schedule - we could be 3 places at any one time (Survey respondent 32)

3.2.3.2.2 Increase training for staff

Some participants identified the need to increase training for staff who may be working around facility dogs. As facility dogs' training is very particular, colleagues may accidentally jeopardise the work facility dogs carry out by, for example, responding inappropriately to the facility dog while they are working.

Handlers need to be strong in their boundary-setting with the dog. Other individuals that are not the victim/witness that the dog is supporting often try to take over the dog's attention and distract from its job. (Survey respondent 51)

I have seen some frustration from forensic interviewers if [the facility dog] is not cooperating during an interview (falling asleep, snoring, or leaving the couch and not

engaging with the child). This stems from a lack of training in [the facility dog's] commands and the interviewer not knowing how to redirect [the facility dog]. (Survey respondent 53)

Others being unprofessional around the dogs or the idea around the dogs is what causes issues when working with the dog and client/victim. If we treat them as normal as we do a blanket or a fidget toy, we wouldn't worry about it. (Survey respondent 4)

3.2.3.2.3 Confusion around qualifications

An important distinction to make is that between facility dogs and other types of dogs, such as therapy dogs. As noted in Chapter One, facility dogs are bred and trained to be in service; they may be taught certain commands and are trained to be predictable. Participants detailed how other types of dogs, such as pet dogs and therapy dogs, do not have the same level of training. Facility dogs must also be from a reputable organisation; there are other organisations who will certify pet dogs; however, this is not the same as facility dogs from accredited organisations.

A big concern is in the rise of other 'support dogs' that have not been provided by accredited schools. Our fear is that one of this inappropriately trained dogs will do something which will reflect badly on the whole program. (Survey respondent 45)

The facility dogs need to come from a reputable training organisation because if the dog is not properly trained for this then they will be more disruptive to the criminal justice system than they are beneficial. (Survey respondent 55)

Another issue that was raised was surrounding lawyers and other professionals not understanding the credentials of facility dogs, despite having had training. A lack of understanding can lead to confusion around why the dog is there and what permits them to be there in this instance.

Attorneys not understanding the credentials (despite trainings) that allow the dogs to sit in the witness box. (Survey respondent 27)

3.2.3.2.4 The need for more support

There was a general consensus that more support needs to be behind facility dog programmes to improve their reach and effectiveness. It appears that the better such initiatives are supported by legislation, the easier it is for professionals working with facility dogs.

When [special measures] were written in 1999, facility dogs hadn't reached the UK, so I think it is time that that piece of legislation needs updating and being brought into this time, you look at where dogs are used and it should extend into the criminal justice system. (Rose, interviewee, UK)

I think when it comes to getting these public access rights for our dogs, a lot of the schools are now saying, well, because the dog's not supporting one person who has a disability, we can't do a public access test because you're not disabled. But our dogs still need that public access because they're going into court buildings and they may be going into police stations. (Joline, interviewee, Australia)

The only real issue we've had to deal with was convincing some attorneys and judges that the dog could behave appropriately in the courtroom for extended periods, would not be startled by the use of a gavel and would not prejudice a jury in favor of the witness/victim to the detriment of the defendant. We thwarted much of these issues by having our judges and local attorneys trained by the Courthouse Dogs Foundation people about the use of facility dogs in the legal setting prior to our obtaining the dog. (Survey respondent 14)

3.2.3.3 Issues using dogs in court

Some issues were raised with using dogs in court specifically. This includes the need to change court processes to accommodate facility dogs, and the awareness of potential jury bias.

3.2.3.3.1 Need to change court processes

There are issues around court processes and how each individual court session decides to operate with regards to the use of facility dogs; whether the presence of the dog is declared to the jury or not is a decision that resides with the judge. However, professionals using facility dogs generally recommend that the dog's presence should be made known to the jury even if they never see the dog.

When the dog is being used to support a victim in the courtroom, we believe that the judge should be up front with the jury to disclose that the dog is on the stand with that victim. Our (Californian) penal code allows for the dog to be present, but the judge decides on each case whether or not this information will be disclosed to the jury. (Survey respondent 8)

I know there are times when defense counsel is not interested in a facility dog present during court proceedings, as they do not want to make a victim appear more vulnerable or believable to a jury. However, there are ways to work around these biases, such as having the facility dog hidden from a jury. (Survey respondent 42)

Contrastingly, another respondent reported that the dog should not be hidden from the jury, as, from their own experience, people do not react to a dog in the courtroom.

I don't think we should attempt to hide the dog from the jury. My experience with juries is that they do not think twice about the dog in the courtroom. Courtrooms aren't set up for dogs to be comfortable which means they will sometimes be in view of the jury. (Survey respondent 2)

Another respondent detailed how, although the court they attend approved the use of facility dogs, legislation would help to give people to have the right to use a facility dog in court.

We go through an approval process with the court prior to deploying the dog. It would be wonderful if we could see legislative change allowing people the right to have a court facility dog. (Survey respondent 45)

We haven't had [facility dogs] in court yet and I know that's going to be the next step. I know that there is resistance from the judiciary about that. But again, I think it's just got to move with the times. Why can't you have a justice facility dog in a court? You can have a guide dog in a court. There should be no reason why you can't have a facility dog in any courtroom. I think that's built on a little bit of British judiciary, and so I think we need to move on. (Rose, interviewee, UK)

3.2.3.3.2 Jury bias

Many participants vehemently denied any possibility that facility dogs can bias a jury. Due to their specialist training, facility dogs provide support to victims and witnesses generally in a very discreet manner. A few participants noted that the possibility of jury bias may depend on how the facility dog is presented in court.

Having a specifically trained facility dog should have no bearing on the view of the victim/witness in regards to their credibility. Facility dogs are there to provide emotional support, strength and comfort to the victims/witness as they go through the justice process. (Survey respondent 35)

I don't think there's any bias. I know that. So the way that we do it is [the facility dog] will walk in and she'll sit in the witness box and then the jury comes in. So no one sees her. Will she shake or get more comfortable? Yes. I mean the jury is instructed that there is a dog

there. She's a dog. She's a living, breathing creature. But they don't see her, and even if they did, is that gonna make the witnesses testimony more credible because they see a dog? In my opinion, no. I know a lot of other people, defense attorneys, may argue that it does.

(Sally, interviewee, US)

A small number of defense attorneys have expressed concerns that the use of the dog in the trial would bias the jury against their clients. The opposite has actually occurred. In the times [the facility dog] has been used in a trial, the jury has actually returned 'not guilty' verdicts. Several jurors commented that the presence of the dog did not influence them, but that they made their decision based on the evidence. (Survey respondent 33)

3.2.3.3.3 No Issues

Finally, many respondents report encountering no issues when they were using facility dogs. Interesting to note, most of the respondents who reported experiencing no issues were from the US, bar one from Canada and one from Belgium. This could indicate there are some differences across countries with the experience of working with facility dogs.

We have not encountered any issues using a facility dog during forensic interviews in our criminal justice system. There have been no challenges to this practice by any of our community partners, defense attorneys, or judges. (Survey respondent 38)

I have handled my facility dog for more than 5 years. He has supported child victims of abuse in more than 550 forensic interviews, therapy sessions, and/or court proceedings during this time. He has been 100% reliable with no issue of any kind in regards to distractibility, consistency, and reliability. (Survey respondent 18)

Other respondents reportedly use ‘creativity’ to overcome any potential issues. This includes methods for not allowing the facility dog to be seen by the jury or anyone else apart from the witness and the handler.

I believe most, if not all, issues can be overcome with creativity and flexibility. The layout of the courtroom and witness box can be relevant because it can impact whether the dog is seen by the jury or not. In some circumstances the court and parties would prefer the dog not be seen by the jury. (Survey respondent 25)

There really should not be any issues. I feel blessed to have a courthouse that is quite open to our dogs. However, it has taken many years and education to get them on board. We still face the obstacle of a jury trial. When we support a victim in a criminal trial the dog is hidden from the jury. The judge excuses the jury, we come in and then the jury returns. (Survey respondent 31)

Section 4 – Discussion

The current study sought to capture and investigate the opinions of international professionals working with facility dogs in the criminal justice system, and the effects this may have for victims and themselves. All participants had some experience of working with facility dogs in the criminal justice system, and participants’ locations varied from the US, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, and the UK. The overarching question for this research asked how professionals, globally, perceive the impact of facility dogs and this section will provide an overview of findings from this study in relation to this question. Links with current research will also be made where appropriate. Strengths and limitations of this study will then be examined, before detailing implications from the present research.

4.1 Overview and Discussion of Descriptive Statistics Obtained from Questionnaire

All in all, the questionnaire data highlighted how facility dogs are viewed positively by professionals working with them in the criminal justice system. Participants largely agreed that facility dogs had benefits for the victims using them, but also for themselves. This subsection will discuss perceptions of the impact of facility dogs on victims before examining perceptions of the impact on professionals.

In terms of opinions regarding the perceived impact on victims, most respondents, on average, agreed with statements, demonstrating the positive impact facility dogs could have. The statements that were most agreed with include that facility dogs helped to create a relaxed atmosphere for victims, help victims with their emotions, and they enable victims to communicate effectively. These findings are consistent with the literature explored earlier that demonstrated how facility dogs can help interviewers build rapport with victims and witnesses, and that facility dogs can make victims feel more comfortable and improve their emotional wellbeing (Dellinger, 2009; Meyer et al., 2022; Spruin et al., 2020a).

Statements about victims that were least agreed with, but still agreed with on average, include that facility dogs help engender a more consistent account from victims, they help victims think more logically, and they motivate victims during interview or testimony. The former two opinions could be explained by a snippet of the qualitative data where it was described that although the impact of the facility dog can be perceived as ‘magical’, the dogs themselves were not ‘magic’. Participants also detailed how, in a way that is supported by scientific research they have read about, facility dogs used their ability to help others emotionally regulate to then help victims be more coherent and think logically. Furthermore, lower levels of agreement to these statements could be explained by some of the qualitative data that details how ‘motivating’ victims during

interview or testimony could be interpreted as potentially coaching victims or witnesses; future research could use clearer phrasing to make the statement easier to interpret and understand.

In terms of professionals' opinions regarding the facility dog's impact on themselves and their work, all statements were agreed with on average. In terms of the highest scoring items, professionals felt the facility dogs helped them feel inspired through the work done with the facility dogs. Professionals also felt facility dogs helped them in their encounters with victims. These findings are supported by the qualitative data which suggests that facility dogs help to build connections between professionals and victims. There is also concordance with previous research that has suggested facility dogs can be used to help build rapport with victims and help victims view interviews positively (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020a).

The lowest scoring opinion which all professionals, on average, agreed with but less so than other statements was that facility dogs helped professionals feel less fatigued. It is unclear from the data why this might be. This could, again, be explained by the fact that the impact facility dogs have is 'magical', but they are not necessarily 'magic' per se, and that they may have their own limits, therefore perhaps the impact of facility dogs can only help professionals so much. In addition to this, previous research also suggested that people working with facility dogs could potentially have increased workload due to the demand of facility dogs (Walsh et al., 2018), however as this research did not account for perceived workload, no firm conclusions can be drawn. Future research should account for participants' workload to build upon the findings in this study.

The present study also investigated professionals' opinions on whether facility dogs could bias a jury or cause a victim to be viewed as more credible. Results showed that the majority of respondents disagreed with these statements; this slightly contrasts previous research which suggested professionals perceived at least some degree of bias against defendants when victims

made use of facility dogs (Glazer, 2018). It should be noted that there were some discrepancies with regards to victims being viewed as more credible. This could be due to the phrasing of the statement. Some participants expressed that a dog could not motivate a witness, while others elaborated that a dog could help a witness be viewed more credibly by providing a safe environment for them where they could provide a fuller account. Future research could explore this area further by providing clearer statements when measuring whether facility dogs could cause a victim to be viewed as more credible.

All of the findings discussed thus far illustrate the perceived benefits facility dogs have on victims and the professionals working with them. This partially helps to answer the research question asking how professionals perceive facility dog programmes. Already, findings help to amplify the voice of individuals who have worked with facility dogs, which has previously not been focused on in the literature to an in-depth extent (e.g., O'Mahoney et al., 2023). Together with discussions of the inferential data analyses and the qualitative analysis, a clearer picture can be obtained about professionals' perceptions of facility dog programmes.

4.2 Overview and Discussion of Inferential Data Analyses

Questionnaire data were analysed to test the hypotheses of the current research. There was no correlation between how many years a professional had worked with a facility dog, and the perceived impact of facility dogs on victims and professionals. Based on this, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The lack of correlation here could demonstrate how the impact of facility dogs on victims and professionals is resilient against time and that facility dogs are consistently perceived positively by the people using them, whether they only recently started using facility dogs, or if they have been using them for a few years. This is somewhat in line with research in this area that found investigative interviewers who used facility dogs consistently reported low levels of job stress over a five-year period (Walsh et al., 2018).

Consistent with the second hypothesis for this research, there was a correlation between perceived benefits for victims and perceived benefits for professionals. This finding is loosely explained by previous research that has suggested improved employee wellbeing is linked with positive outcomes in the judiciary (Casaleiro et al., 2021), whereby in the present study, participants who experienced benefits for themselves also reported positive outcomes for the victims they work with. The current study did not seek to establish whether one variable predicted the other (i.e., whether professionals' wellbeing predicted improved outcome for victims), which future research could seek to ascertain. Nonetheless, this is a promising finding that highlights a link between improved outcomes for victims and improved outcomes for professionals as well.

The third and final hypothesis for the current research was supported by the results. A difference was found between perceptions of criminal justice professionals working in the US compared to the rest of the world, where American respondents viewed facility dogs more positively for both victims and professionals. This could be explained by the qualitative data from other countries around the world which expressed difficulties with the acceptance of facility dogs in the criminal justice system. Contrastingly, American interviewees did not indicate struggle against courts or within the policing systems, although there are obstacles raised by defence lawyers regarding the potential for facility dogs to influence a jury (Bowers, 2013). That is not to say that these issues do not exist at all in the US, but this was not raised by interviewees in the present study. Discussions around the qualitative data may help to provide further insights to explain some of these findings.

4.3 Overview and Discussion of Qualitative Data

The qualitative findings largely support the quantitative data and provide further information as to why individuals agreed or disagreed with statements as they did. While the quantitative data reported that facility dogs create a relaxed atmosphere for victims, help victims

with their emotions, and enable victims to communicate effectively, qualitative data from the survey and interviews explained how facility dogs were able to achieve this; by providing a calm, empathetic environment where victims felt safe, not judged, and able to build a relationship with their interviewer or able to testify in court.

Facility dogs were described as being welcoming to victims and helping change the image of the police, a finding that is important to bear in mind given the challenges police forces in the UK face in building trust and confidence in communities (McCarthy-Jones, 2018; Moroz, 2023). Some participants detailed how victims felt excited to provide evidence, which is in stark contrast to the negative emotions victims are prone to experiencing when they engage with the criminal justice system (e.g., Hunter et al., 2013; Ritchie & Long, 2021). Many participants described facility dogs as being able to mitigate trauma, a benefit that is particularly desirable given the retraumatisation victims can experience as they move through criminal justice processes (Hunter et al., 2013). Dogs were conceptualised as being able to convey empathy and help victims feel less alone, which some participants speculated, as detailed in Chapter Two, could help victims feel calmer, enable them to recall information clearer and help them feel able to convey this information to the facility dog or in the facility dog's presence, where they might otherwise have kept it to themselves.

The qualitative data helped understand how facility dogs compare to existing special measures and identified a gap in existing methods of support offered to vulnerable victims and witnesses. Indeed, as sentient beings who provide a sense of empathy and help professionals break barriers, facility dogs provide a service that existing special measures cannot. Participants described how dogs can be held by victims, unlike with intermediaries or advocates, and how inanimate objects cannot convey a sense of empathy like how facility dogs can, thus providing convincing evidence that facility dog programmes could fill a gap in existing special measures as outlined in Chapter One.

The qualitative data also enhanced understanding around how facility dogs were beneficial for professionals working with and around them, namely by providing a positive distraction during the working day and aiding their stress reduction. It appears that in using facility dogs to improve the emotional wellbeing of victims and witnesses, in some way this has a dual benefit for professionals, and thus the narrative widens to include staff wellbeing. Participants described how facility dogs they work with will actively seek to comfort stressed staff, and likewise when staff are stressed, they will often seek out the facility dog to provide them with comfort. Facility dogs were described as helping professionals emotionally reset and enhancing the meaning of people's work.

Facility dogs are not without issues, however. The qualitative data highlighted that more facility dogs are needed, as well as more organisations that can accredit these dogs to increase their reach throughout criminal justice systems across countries. Other problems that were explored included reformation in the criminal justice system to accept such dogs and minimise the negative experience of court users in particular, and the need to train professionals to make them aware of how to behave around facility dogs who are working, and to ensure everyone is aware of the facility dog's credentials and what makes them able to carry out the work they do.

Concerns around whether facility dogs could cause bias or motivate witnesses were explored. The qualitative data helped to clarify that participants do not see dogs as being able to motivate victims, per se, but rather encourage victims to engage by creating a calm environment where victims feel able to do participate. Regarding jury bias, although this is an issue often brought up in the literature (e.g., Grimm, 2013; Ensminger et al., 2020), participants in this study did not feel jury bias was a possibility, although they offered suggestions for eliminating any potentiality, such as hiding the facility dog from view and informing the jury that there is a facility dog in the court room. Given that the issue of jury bias is often argued by defence teams and potentially jeopardises court cases where facility dogs are used, as described by participants in the

present study and in the literature (e.g., Bowers, 2013; Ensminger et al., 2020), it may be beneficial to ascertain whether dogs can cause jury bias, to help clarify what appears to be a polarising notion.

4.4 Overall Discussion of Findings

The present study has brought novel findings to the field. These findings have emphasised the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system on both victims and the professionals using and working around them, lending support to the implementation of facility dog programmes. Where previous research used data from victims' biological changes (Krause-Parello et al., 2018b) or self-report data from court users (Spruin et al., 2019), the present research provides a holistic and in-depth understanding of the impact of facility dogs on victims by incorporating professionals' perspectives. Findings from this study support previous research, highlighting how facility dogs make victims feel more comfortable and how they act as a positive distraction (Spruin et al., 2019; Spruin et al., 2020b), and also how they improve victims' engagement and communication (Howell et al., 2021). This helps strengthen conclusions drawn from this research, that facility dogs can have a positive impact on victims and that, by extension, they should be considered seriously as a way of supporting victims.

Findings from the present study also highlight the benefit facility dogs have for professionals as well as victims, and an association between the two. Although it is not clear whether one variable predicts the other, this correlation insinuates the importance of improved working environments for employees to potentially enhance benefits for victims. Particularly in a landscape where staff working in the UK criminal justice system report high levels of job stress (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019; Walsh et al., 2018), secondary traumatic stress (MacEachern et al., 2018; Parkes et al., 2022), and low levels of job satisfaction (Hagan & Kay, 2007), it could be argued that any intervention that can alleviate effects from negative work-related experiences in staff

should be investigated. Participants in the present study reported increased job satisfaction from working with facility dogs, and they conceptualised facility dogs as a ‘trauma shield’, in line with previous research that conceptualised dogs as a buffer or a safeguard (Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015). Given this perceived impact, it is likely that facility dogs could minimise the effects of trauma for professionals as well.

In addition to helping professionals emotionally, the current study demonstrates how facility dogs help professionals practically as well. Research previously highlighted how facility dogs help professionals build rapport with victims and help victims see interviewers positively (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020a). This is also found with the present study, where nearly all participants agreed that facility dogs help them to build better rapport.

The present study also found differences between the US and the rest of the world in terms of opinions on the use of facility dogs. It is not entirely apparent from the data why there are differences, but it could be that professionals’ perspectives are impacted by the stability, or lack thereof, of facility dog programmes, where issues with facility dog programmes were expressed more by participants outside of the US. These findings could suggest that resistance to the use of facility dogs might negatively impact perceived benefits, which in turn could impact the efficacy of facility dog programmes in the criminal justice system. Future research should aim to understand reasons behind differences in opinions across countries to ensure facility dog programmes are appropriately implemented and supported.

4.5 Methodological Limitations

The current research was not without limitations. As previously explored, the phrasing for some items in the questionnaire could be improved, particularly with regards to jury bias and witness credibility. To investigate these phenomena, multiple items could be used to explore different facets of victim credibility, e.g., ‘Facility dogs could cause victims to be viewed credibly by

juries' and 'Facility dogs could help victims become more credible by helping them regulate their emotions'. Changing wording could help to gain more answers that either 'agree' or 'disagree' rather than remain neutral as they help clarify what the question is asking.

Previous research has tentatively suggested job stress could be a factor that impacts the perceived efficacy of facility dog programmes (Walsh et al., 2018). The current study did not investigate professionals' perceptions while controlling for job stress, which future research could seek to do. The current research also did not use a control population to examine the current findings against; for example, professionals who do not use facility dogs in their work, or perceptions of people who work with victims but do not use a facility dog. However, the present study did not aim to compare facility dogs against no intervention as such, but instead to explore differences in countries across the world and examine what current opinions of the use of facility dogs are.

A final limitation of the present study is that the sample populations for countries that were not the US were somewhat small, making it impossible to compare individual countries. This may be reflective of the lack of facility dog programmes and supportive, easy-to-reach communities in these countries which can be rectified by further research into and implementation of facility dog programmes.

4.6 Implications

The current study has helped amplify the voices of international professionals who use facility dogs in the criminal justice system, helping to portray a holistic picture of how facility dogs can be used in the criminal justice system. Where previous research has only superficially explored professionals' perspectives of facility dog programmes (O'Mahoney et al., 2023), or mostly focused on the perspectives of professionals in the US (Spruin et al., 2020a), the current study fills this gap in the literature by using a mixed methods approach to provide an overview of and more in-depth

information about how facility dog programmes are perceived by professionals in countries outside of the US.

Findings from this study propose a convincing argument for the use of facility dogs in the UK criminal justice system. There appears to be an overwhelmingly positive impact facility dogs have for victims, both on an emotional level and in terms of improving their engagement with the criminal justice system. Facility dogs can also positively impact staff using them, highlighting a dual benefit of facility dog programmes. Based on these findings, there should be serious consideration for the use of facility dog programmes as a way of providing emotional and practical support to victims, witnesses, and professionals in the UK.

The present research was broad in its scope and presented numerous findings, and in doing so has identified further gaps in knowledge that future research should seek to fill. Facility dog programmes appear efficacious in reducing self-reported stress in professionals, and future research could extend on this by, for example, comparing facility dogs as an intervention against no intervention while accounting for perceived job stress and workload, which the present study and other research (e.g., Walsh et al., 2018) did not address. This will help to determine how effective facility dogs are for professionals.

This study could be extended on by understanding how perceptions of the impact of facility dogs on victims compare to perceptions of the use of special measures. Facility dog programmes are not intended to replace special measures, but rather complement them, and, to that end, it may be a point of interest for future research to ascertain how facility dog programmes could fit within existing UK criminal justice processes. Furthermore, future research could investigate in-depth differences between the US and the rest of the world to provide deeper understanding as to why there may be differences, and perhaps to ascertain how facility dog programmes can best be implemented in other countries.

There were some issues with using facility dogs that were brought up by participants, including needing to have stronger boundaries with colleagues and the pressures of being a facility dog handler. These issues may require further investigation to deepen understanding and, in doing so, improve professionals' experience and delivery of facility dog programmes. Such research can also help the potential implementation of facility dog programmes in the UK, by understanding issues and seeking resolutions. Participants in the present research indicated that there needed to be more training around how facility dogs are used and their qualifications. One participant detailed how judges and lawyers in their area were trained by the Courthouse Dogs Foundation which helped to clarify many issues. Therefore, it is apparent that this training already exists, but it could be that this and similar resources need greater signposting to, or that evaluation into the comprehensiveness in existing resources is necessary. If facility dog programmes are to be adopted in the UK, findings from this study emphasise the importance of ensuring staff working around facility dogs are adequately trained.

A final issue that has been explored in the present research includes that of jury bias. Participants in the present study generally disagreed that dogs could bias juries, however, before supporting the implementation of facility dog programmes in the UK, further research needs to be conducted to investigate the potentiality for dogs to cause bias.

Section 5 – Conclusion

The present study found, overall, professionals working in the criminal justice system view the use of facility dogs positively for both victims and themselves. There is no difference in perceptions based on the amount of time a person has worked with a facility dog, which may mean facility dogs are a promising intervention that can be used in the criminal justice system with effects visible early after implementation and long-lasting. American respondents view facility dogs more positively than respondents in Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, and the UK, which may be

due to the comparative stability of facility dog programmes in the US. There are issues with facility dog programmes that require further investigation. One of these issues include concerns around jury bias. Professionals in the present research do not, on average, believe facility dogs can bias a jury, however further research is needed to fully investigate jury bias in the criminal justice system to ascertain whether facility dogs are a viable, nonbiased source of support for victims wishing to use them.

Chapter Four: Exploring Jury Decision Making and Facility Dogs: A Hydra Suite Study

Section 1 – Introduction

This thesis has so far showcased the positive impact facility and other specialist dogs have in the criminal justice system in their capacity to provide emotional support to victims and witnesses (Dietz et al., 2012; Krause-Parello, 2018b). The previous chapter explored the opinions of professionals working with facility dogs, specifically, in the criminal justice system. Overall, facility dog programmes were viewed favourably, but there were some concerns around the difficulty getting facility dogs in courts, in part due to unfounded claims that dogs could cause bias in juries. Concerns around jury bias appear to be a recurring theme; they are echoed in literature (Bowers, 2013; Ensminger et al., 2020), and, although participants in the previous chapter did not believe dogs could be prejudicial, potential bias was still a source of trepidation.

The current chapter details the final study in this thesis. The present study explores how jurors make decisions about cases where a facility dog is present, while manipulating whether the visibility of a dog, or lack thereof, combined with specific instructions from the judge about the dog, or lack thereof, can impact jury decision making. The current study aims to deepen the understanding around the complexity of juror decision making by exploring factors that could impact how decisions are made. Existing literature discussing the potentiality for dogs to be prejudicial in courts will then be explored. Finally, this chapter will provide detail about the randomised controlled experiment that was carried out to investigate facility dogs and jury bias, before providing an analysis of the results and discussing the findings and their relevancy both practically and in research.

1.1 Composition of Juries

Before exploring jury decision making, it is important to understand how juries are composed as this could impact how verdicts are reached. Juries vary across the world in terms of

selection and composition. In the UK, there is a right to a jury trial in criminal cases (Juries Act 1974, UK). Jury service is mandatory in the UK with a few exceptions, including when a person is mentally incapacitated or if they have a serious conviction (Citizens Advice, 2024). Typically, 12 people will be selected at random to partake in a jury for a Crown Court case (Marder, 2015). In other countries, such as Australia, prospective jurors walk in front of the defendant, and the defendant has the right to propose a challenge against jurors (Marder, 2015). In Canada, judges might ask prospective jurors if there is anything that could impact their participation, such as health problems, hardships, or relationships with any parties relevant in the court case (Marder, 2015). The US is perhaps one of the only countries, or at least one of very few, in which the jury selection process begins with *voir dire*, where a prospective juror is assessed for their impartiality (Marder, 2015; McGee et al., 2023). *Voir dire* has been criticised as a breach of privacy as some questions asked can be viewed as demeaning and discriminatory (McGee et al., 2023).

Upon selection and after a case is heard, juries are expected to deliberate together to reach a verdict as to whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty, weighing up all the evidence that was presented to them. The following sections will draw from existing literature to investigate how jury decision making takes place with respect to serious crimes and what factors are suggested to influence jury decision making. As research investigating jury decision making is somewhat limited in the UK, research from other countries has been pulled together to provide an overview of jury decision making.

1.2 Factors Affecting Jury Decision Making

Juries are often made up of laypeople who may lack specialist knowledge on the specificities of the law and crime (Callander, 2016; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010). Difficulties can arise with some crime types where there are commonly held misconceptions. Research has suggested there are many factors that could affect jury decision making. For example, Blackwell

and Seymour (2014) found, in a study where mock jurors reviewed a case of child sexual abuse (CSA), there were three variables that were strongly associated with conviction, including similar factual evidence, evidence provided by a witness of the offence, and support in the form of medical or DNA evidence. There are numerous other factors suggested to influence jury decision making that might not necessarily pertain to facts of court cases themselves. These social psychological processes that impact jury decision making could be mitigated by jury directions, which will be explored in due course. The factors that will be examined in this section appear frequently in research, including the role of gender, race, age, victim-defendant relationship, victims' behaviour at the time of the crime, jurors' own knowledge and understanding, and victims' appearance and engagement.

1.2.1 Gender

There is an abundance of research investigating the impact of gender on jury decision-making. Research investigates the impact of the genders of the juror and the defendant, as well as the gender composition of the jury.

The gender of the juror appears to almost consistently impact juror perceptions and decision making. Men and women mock jurors are reported to perceive the boundary between ordinary behaviour and stalking behaviour differently (Gavin & Scott, 2016), and women appear more opposed to adult/child sex than men (Bottoms et al., 2014); these are attitudes that could impact opinions regarding court cases and verdicts. Women mock jurors express more empathy and are more likely to support women and believe children when compared to male mock jurors (Bottoms et al., 2014; Klettke et al., 2018) and have been found to express pro-prosecution and pro-defence statements in equal measure (Golding et al., 2007). Male mock jurors are suggested to express more sentiments in favour of the defendant when the defendant is also male (Golding et al., 2007), and they may be more likely to blame female victims in fictitious rape cases than female

participants (Grubb & Harrower, 2009). Research has suggested male mock jurors are likely to render fewer guilty verdicts than female mock jurors, particularly in prototypical cases consisting of female victims and male defendants (Dunlap et al., 2011). Verdicts have been found to differ based on other factors, such as how much fear the victim elicited as conveyed by their own words (e.g., 'worrisome' and 'annoying' versus 'terrifying' and 'horrifying'), such that male mock jurors gave fewer guilty verdicts where the victim elicited lower levels of fear compared to the higher victim fear condition (Dunlap et al., 2011). These studies highlight how the gender of the juror can impact decision making and perceptions of victims and defendants.

Some of these differences in opinions could be explained by Jones et al. (2021) who found that, when reviewing a fictitious case of CSA, male participants expressed higher levels of fear of false accusations than women, which analyses suggested explains why male participants would believe child abuse allegations less than female participants. In providing insight as to why gender differences might exist, this introduces what could potentially be done to address this, in this case acknowledging the possibility of jurors' own fears of false accusations.

Studies have also investigated the potential impact of the gender composition of juries. Women-majority juries have been suggested to convict the most often (Golding et al., 2007) and have been found to change from not guilty to guilty more often than nonwoman-majority juries (Bottoms et al., 2014). These findings are somewhat supported by Fischer (1997) who found that adding more female mock jurors to the deliberation of a rape trial did not make it more likely that a guilty verdict would be returned until there was a female majority of ten in the mock jury. These studies emphasise the importance of the gender composition of juries.

The gender of the defendant has also been identified as an important factor in jury decision making. Amongst mock jurors, male defendants are sometimes blamed more than female defendants and are more likely to be given guilty verdicts or longer sentences (Ruva et al., 2023;

Sommer et al., 2016; Stevens et al., 2022). Male and female defendants may also be viewed differently. Karlsson et al. (2021) found that, although male and female defendants of homicide were deemed equally guilty, female defendants were regarded as mentally ill, and male defendants were likely to be seen as unemployed and have aggressive attitudes. These studies demonstrate how the gender of the defendant can impact jury decision making and that this should perhaps be mitigated by addressing preconceived ideas juries may have about defendants based on defendants' gender.

1.2.2 Race

Anecdotally, it is thought that race may have an impact on victims' and defendants' outcomes in the criminal justice system. What empirical research exists in this area seemingly agrees with this, although there are nuances. While racial bias is present across research, certain moderators have been suggested to make this effect more pronounced (Mitchell et al., 2005).

In an analysis of death penalty cases in the US, Williams et al. (2007) found that a combination of race and gender could be a predictor of death sentence outcomes. People who murdered females were likelier to receive a death sentence than people who murdered males, and people who murdered black males were treated with more lenience than people who murdered white females. This demonstrates the complexity of the intersectionality between gender and race, and the subsequent impact on jury decision making. There may be a need to address issues around race and gender through judicial instructions to create awareness around any potential biases and minimise the impact of these biases on jurors' perceptions and verdicts.

Somewhat contrastingly, Wuensch et al. (2002) suggested that, amongst mock jurors who were either black or white, when scrutinising a fictitious case of sexual harassment, people favoured litigants of their own race and gender. Racial bias was still found to be highest among white male jurors and lowest among white female jurors. This sits somewhat in juxtaposition with

findings from Minero and Espinoza's (2014) study which found European American mock jurors would give guilty verdicts significantly more often to undocumented immigrants from Mexico than Latino mock jurors, who did not demonstrate ingroup favouritism or outgroup bias. These studies show there is some complexity of the impact of race on jury decision making, and while it may not be possible to account for all factors all the time, it would be beneficial to be aware of the potential impact.

In the UK, one study analysed data retrospectively to investigate rates of conviction between white people and people from ethnic minority groups (Thomas, 2017). The data yielded that people from ethnic minority groups were not disproportionately convicted, leading to the conclusion that juries are fair. It should be noted that, unlike the studies previously explored in the current literature review where mock jurors were used, it was not possible to account for other factors such as the race of the victim and the socioeconomic background of the defendant, both of which have been suggested to be linked with race and conviction rates (Da Silva & Oliveira, 2016; Williams et al., 2007). Therefore, the conclusion that juries in the UK are fair should be accepted with caution.

1.2.3 Age

Age is another factor that has been suggested to impact jury decision making and jurors' perceptions. For example, research has investigated how the age of the juror (Klettke et al., 2016) and the age of the victim (Sheahan et al., 2017) can impact juror decision making.

With regards to the age of the victim, mock jurors have been found to blame 14-year-old victims of CSA more than five-year-old victims (Bottoms et al., 2014). These findings, together with Thomas's (2020) findings that a third of real jurors in the UK are unsure as to whether children often fabricate stories about being sexually abused, demonstrate how child victims may be perceived unfairly by jurors. To counter the impact of jurors' misconceptions, it could be argued that more is

needed by way of intervention. Such interventions could take the form of judicial instructions to address any preconceived ideas jurors may have about child victims, or support for child victims when they are providing evidence to ensure they are providing the best evidence possible in the face of potential juror misconceptions. Klettke et al. (2018) also found that participants blamed older victims of sexual abuse when the victim was 15 or 20 compared to when they were 10 years old. The findings from these studies are both supported and contradicted by Sheahan et al. (2017), who found that when the victim was 12, they were viewed more credibly than when the victim was 16, but less credible compared to when the victim was 25 years old. While the research in this area does not appear conclusive in its suggestions as to how the age of the victim impacts jury decision making, there is still the suggestion that bias is present because of the victim's age.

Klettke et al. (2016) also examined the impact of age on jury decision making, specifically by examining the age of the juror. Mock jurors were assigned to groups depending on their generation (e.g., baby boomers, generation X) and completed questionnaires probing for opinions on the credibility of female sexual abuse victims. It was found that older generation groups, specifically baby boomers and generation X, viewed victims less credibly than younger generation groups, specifically generation Y and generation X. These findings suggest that jurors' age could influence their perceptions of victims, adding another layer of complexity to the current understanding of how age could impact jurors' opinions.

1.2.4 Victim-defendant Relationship

The relationship between the victim and the defendant is also thought to influence jury decision making. Mock jurors have been found to attribute least blame to victims who did not know their rapist compared to those who did (Grubb & Harrower, 2009). Mock jurors have also been found to view defendants more positively when they are an acquaintance to the victim compared to when they are a stranger (McKimmie et al., 2014). These findings are not uncommon; mock jurors

have rendered longer sentences to perpetrators of acquaintance rapes rather than marital rapes (Osborn et al., 2018), and intimate partner rape (IPR) has been viewed by mock jurors as a lesser sexual crime, different to felony rape (Lynch et al., 2018). These studies, overall, demonstrate how if there is a pre-existing relationship between the victim and the defendant, jurors could be biased and hold different perceptions than if the victim and the defendant were strangers.

Findings from these studies are somewhat challenged by Thomas (2020) who found that nearly two-thirds of real jurors who participated in a questionnaire disagreed that people are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know. While this may appear promising at first, it should be noted that just over a third of participants agreed or were unsure, which still indicates a gap in jurors' knowledge. Furthermore, unlike previous studies explored thus far, only a single-item question on a three-point scale was used to assess this opinion and a mock case study was not provided to assess whether views translated into a verdict or opinions of defendants' guilt and victims' credibility. This study therefore does not necessarily refute claims that the victim-defendant relationship can impact on jury decision making, a factor that may warrant being addressed with jurors to minimise the potential impact on verdicts.

1.2.5 Victims' Behaviour at the Time of the Crime

Jury decision making is thought to be influenced by victims' behaviour at the time a crime took place. Research has suggested that, in a fictional rape case, mock jurors render fewer guilty verdicts and view the victim less credibly when the victim was intoxicated (Lynch et al., 2013). When the perpetrator purchased drinks, mock jurors were likelier to deliver guilty verdicts and view the defendant more negatively compared to when the victim bought drinks (Lynch et al., 2013).

Somewhat supporting these findings, Thomas (2020) carried out a questionnaire with jurors who just finished jury service, of which details of the cases they initially worked on are unknown. It was found that 61% of participants were unsure of or agreed that when the victim and the

defendant are drunk, it is difficult to ascertain whether it was rape. This could indicate that the intoxication of the victim and/or defendant can impact jurors' opinions, suggesting that it may be beneficial to address preconceived ideas people may hold before they can deliberate as juries.

Kern et al. (2007) also found that mock jurors' perceptions were impacted by the behaviour of the victim at the time of the crime. Mock jurors were found to deliver shorter sentences when the victim (the wife) provoked the defendant in a case of domestic violence compared to when she did not provoke the defendant. Findings from this research highlight how victims' behaviour when the crime took place could influence jury decision making, and perhaps this should be considered when juries are provided with instructions about such cases.

1.2.6 Jurors' Characteristics

Jurors' own characteristics have been suggested to influence perceptions and verdicts. For example, Clark et al. (2007) conducted a study where jurors who underwent the selection process completed the Big Five Inventory assessing personality traits. They found that high levels of extraversion amongst jurors were associated with not guilty verdicts. This study highlights how jurors' own personality traits could potentially impact verdicts.

Culhane et al. (2004) also provided evidence suggesting that jurors' own traits could influence their decision making. They found that mock jurors who identified themselves as victims of the same crime of the trial they were reviewing would convict more frequently than other participants who were not victims of those crimes. Victims of violent crimes, even if it was a different crime to that which they were reviewing, were also more likely to convict than people who were not victims of crime. Although jurors' identification with victims is not something that can be accounted for by countries other than the US where *voir dire* is used, these findings still demonstrate the complexity of how different factors can impact jury decision making.

1.2.7 Defendants' Characteristics

There are some characteristics specific to defendants that could impact outcomes. For example, Patry et al. (2008) found that, without deliberation, mock jurors would find the plain-looking defendant guilty, whereas jurors who did deliberate were likelier to find the attractive defendant guilty. In a similar vein, Pica et al. (2020) found that although the social status of a defendant did not impact verdict, it did influence guilt ratings. So, when a defendant was deemed of a lower status, they were rated as more guilty. Contrastingly, when the defendant had higher social status (e.g., was a star quarterback), the victim was perceived as having more control. Pica et al. (2020) further found that intoxicated defendants elicited higher guilt ratings compared to sober defendants, although this did not appear to influence verdicts. This suggests that the characteristics of the defendant, either by their physical appearance, social status, or whether they were intoxicated or sober, could potentially impact jurors' perceptions of them. Again, this serves to highlight how jury decision making is complex and can be impacted by many different factors.

1.2.8 Victims' Appearance and Engagement with Criminal Justice Processes

Certain details in a court case itself have been suggested to influence jurors' decision making. The amount of time it takes for a complainant to come forward about a crime can impact jury decision making, with mock jurors rendering fewer guilty verdicts when there was a 25-year delay in reporting sexual offences compared with a 15-year delay (Fraser et al., 2022). However, if a complainant was a repeat victim, particularly if they were a victim of rape, they would be blamed more for the crime (Sommer et al., 2016). Somewhat contrastingly, Thomas (2020) found that 80% of jurors believed there were good reasons why a victim of rape would be reluctant to report this to the police. However, it should be noted that participants in this study were not presented with a fictitious scenario to further interrogate their opinions, unlike research methodology typically used in this area, so the extent to which the findings of this study are relevant is limited. It could still be

argued, therefore, that any delay in reporting a crime could still impact juror perceptions, and it would be beneficial to address this with juries deliberating on cases where such a delay is reported.

Victims' physical appearance has been suggested to impact jury decision making. Osborn et al. (2018) found that when victims were wearing smart attire in court rather than casual attire, more guilty verdicts and longer sentences were given by mock jurors to perpetrators of marriage rape. It is concerning that victims' appearance might influence jurors' opinions in this way, and it may be beneficial to investigate how other facets of victims' appearance could impact jury decision making.

Other research has investigated victims' demeanour during trial and how this could influence jury decision making. In a fictional court case detailing rape where the victim was either male or female, and either cried while giving testimony or did not cry, victims were perceived more credibly when they cried, regardless of the gender of the victim (Pals et al., 2023). Increased credibility was linked to increased likelihood of a guilty verdict. Similarly, Jenkins et al. (2023) found elevated perceptions of victim credibility when the victim in a fictional court case cried compared to when she did not. Credibility mediated the relationship between victim demeanour and trial outcomes, and victim demeanour was found to be important in participants' decision making. Nitschke et al.'s (2019) systematic review investigating the emotional victim effect on victim credibility supported the findings from Pals et al.'s (2023) and Jenkins et al.'s (2023) studies. Thomas (2020) also found that only 22% of participants did not expect a rape victim to look emotional when providing evidence, once again highlighting how victims' demeanour during trial could influence jury decision making. This suggests effective methods of reducing jurors' reliance on victims' demeanours as a means of assessing credibility and reaching verdicts are needed.

This subsection has clearly highlighted the importance of victims' appearance and engagement, whether through their attire, demeanour, or how they present themselves in court. Based on this, it would be sensible to consider whether the appearance of a dog by the victim's side could also impact how they are perceived by jurors and thus the extent to which such programmes can be implemented in court.

1.3 Views on Dogs in Courts

Reviews focusing on the use of dogs in courts are largely in favour of facility dog programmes. Jones and Miller (2021) weigh up both the pros and cons of courthouse facility dogs. They acknowledge that facility dogs encourage witnesses to testify as they can elicit positive emotions, reduce retraumatisation in witnesses, and help witnesses provide more coherent testimonies, consistent with findings in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis.

Jones and Miller (2021) further acknowledge that facility dogs can allow witnesses to testify in-person with the defendant, therefore arguing that facility dogs do not impede defendants' right in the US to see the complainant. This is supported by Kaiser (2015), Grimm (2013), and Dellinger (2009) who also argue that, particularly with children, if a witness is feeling overwhelmed and fearful of the criminal justice system, a facility dog may be beneficial to help them overcome their fear, once again upholding the defendant's right to a fair trial as they can come face-to-face with the complainant. This would not be possible if the complainant felt too overwhelmed to come to court and instead provided evidence through a video-recorded interview. These papers express how facility dog programmes can be beneficial when used in courts, and these benefits could be experienced both by victims who must testify, and by defendants when victims are empowered to deliver evidence in-person.

Despite the positive aspects of facility dogs in court, there are also some concerns. Jones and Miller (2021) express concerns that dogs could be distracting and might bias juries, thus

jeopardising a defendant's right to a fair trial. These sentiments are echoed in a few other papers, including Dellinger (2009) and Grimm (2013), the latter arguing that a jury could assume the witness is so traumatised and vulnerable that they require a dog to testify. Wood et al. (2018) refute the notion that dogs are prejudicial in courts on the basis that there is no evidence to support this and that the benefits of dogs in courts are numerous for the witnesses using them. The authors argue that the negative and traumatising impact of cross-examination should be taken into account when assessing the appropriateness of a facility dog supporting witnesses, and that the benefits witnesses receive from dogs could outweigh any speculative jury bias (Wood et al., 2018).

Bowers (2013) also posits that therapy dogs unfairly prejudice criminal defendants, causing juries to sympathise more with witnesses. This notion, Bowers states, is supported by defence lawyers who propose that complainants using therapy dogs are infringing on their client's right to a fair trial. Some dispute the use of the word 'therapy dog', instead preferring the more neutral term 'courthouse dog' (Bowers, 2013). It is also argued that dogs might cause the testimony of the complainant accompanied by the dog to stand out due to the novelty of dogs in courtrooms, distracting juries from focusing on the evidence itself and the credibility and truthfulness of the complainant's testimony (Bowers, 2013). Grimm (2013) further speculates that judges' instructions to juries may not be enough to counterbalance potential jury bias caused by a dog, especially where a juror may have an affinity for dogs.

Ensminger et al. (2020) acknowledge the positive impact facility dogs can have but also contest the use of facility dogs in courtrooms. They argue that testifying is not traumatic for all victims and witnesses, and that, in some cases, the threshold for having a facility dog in court can be too low. The authors also notice that there is currently a shortage of research investigating biases in juries where facility dogs support complainants. Finally, the authors conceptualise the oxytocin loop from the presence of a dog, whereby the oxytocin that is released when in the

presence of a dog could then stimulate more of its own release (Ensminger et al., 2020). If facility dogs are used, the authors recommend that maximum precautions should be taken to ensure juries are not affected by this oxytocin loop which the authors suggest may cause bias.

Grimm (2013) also wrote an article examining why dogs should not be used in courtrooms. The author's reasons included that there are other tools at the disposal of children who have to testify, including video-recorded interviews and comfort toys. It should be noted that, as discussed earlier, video-recorded interviews could be seen as impeding on a defendant's right to a fair trial (Kaiser, 2015), and the participants in Chapter Three detailed how comfort toys are very different to facility dogs as they are unable to convey empathy or a sense of companionship. Another reason Grimm (2013) contests the use of dogs in courts is because of the argument that dogs could cause prejudice against the defendant. There has been no evidence suggesting dogs can cause bias and some evidence contradicting this argument (Burd & McQuiston, 2019; McDermott, 2022) which will be detailed in the next section. While the papers explored thus far are all speculative with occasional reference to previous court cases, they represent the broad spectrum of views that are held regarding facility dog programmes in the criminal justice system, illustrating why research into the potentiality for dogs to cause bias needs investigating.

To better understand opinions on facility dogs, there has been a small amount of empirical research conducted in this area. Donaldson (2017) interviewed lawyers in the US and found they displayed a high level of acceptance of the use of facility dogs in courtrooms and were keen to learn more about these dogs. Further research carried out by Bradley (2014) found that judges had good understanding around the physical and psychological benefits of dogs and were keen to ensure child witnesses were as comfortable as possible, particularly as these judges expressed seeing an increasing number of child abuse cases. Meyer et al. (2022) also found that judges were overwhelmingly supportive of facility dog programmes. Judges felt witnesses would benefit from

the emotional support of a facility dog, and they would provide calmer testimonies that may be more accurate, truthful, and coherent. Judges also shared concerns that dogs could potentially be disruptive and cause bias in juries.

Although there is no empirical evidence supporting the argument that dogs can bias juries, not all professionals are convinced. One piece of research investigated opinions of court professionals on facility dog programmes. Through interviews, Glazer (2018) identified concerns amongst professionals that dogs in courts could potentially bias juries, although these concerns did not outweigh benefits discussed by professionals, including that dogs could assist with emotional challenges and difficulties that accompany the court experience.

It should be noted that court professionals' concerns that dogs could bias a jury is in stark contrast to findings from Chapter Three in this thesis, where survey respondents, on average, disagreed that dogs could cause bias. The qualitative data from professionals in Chapter Three detailed how they vehemently disagreed that dogs could cause bias, although they knew of instances where defence lawyers made this argument and had verdicts overturned. It is interesting that participants opposed concerns of jury bias despite the heavy speculation about this in the literature (e.g., Bowers, 2013; Grimm, 2013). The potentiality for dogs to bias juries appears to be a contentious notion, and as described by participants in Chapter Three, it has affected court cases despite there being no empirical evidence supporting this notion. Therefore, there appears to be a strong need to investigate possible jury bias, to provide an evidence-based response to the argument that dogs could cause jury bias hence the necessity for the current study.

1.4 Research Investigating Dogs and Jury Decision Making

There is very little empirical research investigating the possible influence of dogs on jury decision making. There are, however, some case studies that suggest dogs do not sway juries. For example, Roby (2015) details in Colorado where, in the initial trial, the complainant was unable to

complete their testimony. At the retrial, the complainant was accompanied by a dog who the jury did not see, although they were instructed about the dog by the judge. The complainant was more able to testify in court, however the jury still acquitted the defendant. The author argues that this case provides evidence that juries are not biased by dogs in courts, proposing that if the juries were biased, the defendant may have been found guilty. It is important to note that there are numerous factors impacting jury decision making as detailed earlier in this chapter, therefore the jury acquitted the defendant may not necessarily be indicative that the dog did not bias the jury, but could have just not biased the jury enough to find the defendant guilty. Either way, it could still be concluded that the presence of the dog did not impact the jury's verdict in this instance.

There are only two known studies that investigated whether facility dogs could cause prejudice. Both recruited mock jurors online to review a fictional criminal trial involving a defendant and a child witness (Burd & McQuiston, 2019; McDermott, 2022). Mock jurors reported multiple perceptions they had surrounding the court case, including the credibility of the child witness, the strength of the case against the defendant, and whether they would convict the defendant. Neither study found that facility dogs could bias a jury in favour of the complainant or against the defendant, leading to the conclusion that facility dogs could provide comfort and support to witnesses without being prejudicial. These findings provide promising evidence that refutes claims of facility dogs causing bias, however it should be noted that there are some drawbacks which the current study seeks to address.

One such drawback is that these studies were conducted online through questionnaires. Large sample sizes were recruited which is a strength of these studies; however, juries are normally conducted in-person and typically require a great deal of discussion before jurors reach a verdict (CPS, 2024). Therefore, it could be argued that findings from these studies study may not accurately reflect jury decision making. Although independent jurors' opinions are important,

arguably what is more important is how personal opinions interact with views expressed by other jurors, as this is what would happen in a real jury. Research has suggested that jurors' individual opinions can be impacted by deliberation with other jurors; for example, Curley et al. (2022) discuss how bias in jurors can be mitigated through deliberation. Despite such evidence, there is no known research to date that has investigated facility dogs and decision-making processes when participants come together to make a jury. Therefore, the current study aims to investigate whether facility dogs impact decision making processes of juries as a whole, adopting as ecologically valid a method as possible to address current gaps in research that are dominated by studies adopting online questionnaire designs that may not be reflective of real jury decision making processes.

1.5 The Role of Judicial Instructions

To counter any possible misconceptions jurors could have, it has been suggested that judicial directions should be used (Call & Wingrove, 2022; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010). Judicial directions can take the form of a judge providing information to juries to counter commonly held misconceptions, such as how rape victims who do not physically resist might not be 'real' victims (Ellison & Munro, 2009) or how responses to sexual abuse can be varied (Cossins et al., 2009).

An example of this is how, in Scotland, legislations have been implemented to support the use of judicial instructions in cases where there could be misconceptions amongst jurors, such as where sexual crimes are concerned (Callander, 2016). In England and Wales, judicial instructions to disregard myths and stereotypes about sexual offence complainants are common, but usually given at the end of a trial rather than at the beginning, the latter of which may be more effective (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). It should be noted that evidence for the support of judicial instructions is still being built, to investigate what judicial instructions are helpful and appropriate, and what could do more harm than good (Callander, 2016). For example, where a complainant has

delayed reporting their experiences to the police, juries might benefit from being instructed not to make inferences based on the delayed reporting.

Some research has emphasised the importance of judicial directions in helping correct misconceptions amongst jurors. Call and Wingrove (2022) and Goodman-Delahunty et al. (2010) found that when mock jurors were provided with judicial instructions relating to a case of CSA, misconceptions reduced. Judicial instructions did not directly impact verdicts, but rather provided juries with information reducing mock juror misconceptions about children's reliability as witnesses and responses to CSA, causing the complainant to be viewed more credibly, particularly for jurors who expressed higher numbers of misconceptions. These findings emphasise the importance of judicial instructions in countering misconceptions amongst jurors.

More specific to the present study, Bollingmo et al. (2009) investigated the impact of victims' expression of emotion on jurors' perceptions and whether judicial instructions had could affect jurors' perceptions. They found that when the victim appeared more emotional, jurors were more biased in favour of the victim where they would view her as being more credible. However, judicial instructions had an impact on credibility ratings whereby when jurors were presented with nonbiased judicial instructions (being warned against using emotional expression to ascertain victim credibility) compared with biased judicial instructions (pointing to the victim's expression as a sign of credibility), the former reduced bias in jurors. These findings demonstrate how jurors are impacted by victims' appearance, how such bias can be modified by judicial instructions, and the type of judicial instruction that would be beneficial (nonbiased versus biased).

The form that judicial instructions take could impact their efficacy; research suggests written directions improve juror recall and comprehension (Leverick, 2014; as cited in Callander, 2016; Madison et al., 2023). Carefully constructed directions can be made available for judges, but judges still have discretion as to how instructions can be made relevant for specific court cases

(e.g., Callander, 2016; Madison et al., 2023). Although judicial instructions are a fairly novel form of addressing jurors' misconceptions, it appears to be effective for some crimes where myths amongst jurors may be more prevalent (e.g., Call & Wingrove, 2022; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010). This is important to note as the use of judicial instructions will be manipulated in the present study to assess what impact, if any, they could have on jury decision making. Based on this research and Bollingmo et al. (2009), the present study aims to investigate whether nonbiased judicial instructions can impact jurors' credibility ratings, verdicts, and their deliberations for a fictional court case where the complainant uses a facility dog.

1.6 Rationale, Aims and Hypotheses

The literature review in this section detailed factors that could influence jury decision making, including race, gender, age, and the victim-defendant relationship (e.g., Bottoms et al., 2014; Grubb & Harrower, 2009; Mitchell et al., 2006; Thomas, 2020), among many other factors. This illustrates the complexity of jury decision making processes and the many issues within this process that have the potential to cause bias. Of particular interest is how the appearance of the victim could impact jury decision making (e.g., Pals et al., 2023), leading to questioning as to whether the appearance of a victim, when accompanied by a dog, could also influence jurors' opinions.

Literature around the potential impact of dogs and jury decision making was then explored. This included opinion pieces opposing the use of dogs in court due to the possibility that they could cause bias against defendants (e.g., Bowers, 2013; Grimm, 2013), and articles and empirical research reflecting professionals' favourable opinions towards the use of dogs in court, primarily because the benefits outweigh the risks (e.g., Glazer, 2018; Wood et al., 2018). A recurring concern across most, if not all, literature that was explored is around facility dogs potentially biasing juries in favour of witnesses and against defendants (e.g., Grimm, 2013). This is perhaps surprising as

there is no empirical evidence suggesting dogs can bias juries. Nonetheless, due to this potentiality, the use of dogs in courts have been framed as impeding on a defendant's right to a fair trial (Bowers, 2013), with participants in Chapter Three of this thesis even detailing how verdicts have been overturned in part due to witnesses' use of facility dogs and arguments put forward by the defence that dogs could be prejudicial. As there is no empirical evidence supporting or refuting the notion that dogs can cause bias, this area needs investigation so as to provide an evidence-based response to such doubts. If research around this area grows, thorough advice based on empirical evidence can be given to judges and court professionals around the use of dogs in courtrooms. Furthermore, depending on findings, research investigating dogs and jury bias could enable facility dog programmes to be adopted with less opposition. As noted by judges, facility dogs are helpful for victims by supporting them emotionally and enabling them to provide calmer, more coherent testimonies (Bradley, 2014; Meyer et al., 2022), and it is important that they can be used without potentially causing bias in favour of the victim or against the defendant.

There have been two studies looking into jury decision making and facility dogs, specifically, through online questionnaires that probed mock jurors' opinions; neither study found that dogs could bias jurors (Burd & McQuiston, 2019; McDermott, 2022). However, it can be argued that the extent to which conclusions from these studies can be applied to real-life juries is limited, and there is a need for ecologically valid research that captures and analyses discussions juries have in a highly realistic, immersive simulation. Furthermore, while the literature supports the use of judicial instructions as a way to mitigate juror misconceptions (e.g., Bollingmo et al., 2009; Call & Wingrove, 2022), there is no empirical research investigating the possible impact of judicial instructions of jury decision making where victims are accompanied by a facility dog.

The aim of the current study, therefore, is to explore decision making processes around a fictional court case where a facility dog is supporting the complainant. The current research will

analyse differences across conditions that will vary depending on the visibility of the facility dog (visible versus not in sight) and the judge's instructions about the facility dog (provided versus not mentioned) to ascertain whether dogs can be prejudicial and to what extent visibility and instructions from the judge can impact potential bias. Differences that will be analysed include within verdicts returned by different groups, as well as opinions on the credibility of the complainant and the believability of the defendant, and the extent to which juries as a whole were pro- and anti- complainant and defendant in their discussions. Furthermore, discussions amongst jurors will be analysed to provide a deeper understanding of their decision-making processes and to detect whether the facility dog factored into decision making. The questions this research seeks to answer include what influence, if any, do facility dogs have on juries; and how, if at all, do judicial instructions and visibility of the facility dog impact on jury decision making.

Based on these questions, together with existing empirical and anecdotal evidence in this area, three hypotheses were formulated. Hypothesis (1) expects that there will be no different in opinions across groups surrounding the court case and hypothesis (2) predicts that there will be no difference in verdicts across groups, consistent with previous literature in this area (Burd & McQuiston, 2019; McDermott, 2022). Hypothesis (3) also expects that there will be no difference in self-reported bias across groups.

Section 2 – Method

2.1 Design

A mixed methods approach was adopted for this study whereby quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously. The quantitative data were collected in the form of pre- and post-deliberation questionnaires ([Appendices 4.8](#), [4.9](#) and [4.10](#)) about the court case presented to participants. Information on demographics, personality traits and political opinions was also collected ([Appendices 4.7](#) and [4.11](#)). Qualitative data were collected during the group discussions

that took place in a simulation suite, known as the Hydra Suite, after the completion of the pre-deliberation questionnaire.

2.1.1 About the Hydra Suite

The Hydra Foundation was initially created by Professor Jonathan Crego who was recruited by the Metropolitan Police in London to create a method to train staff to manage public order events in the safety of a simulation suite before they had to face such an event for the first time (Hydra Foundation, 2024). The Hydra Suite has developed since, and now deals with a vast range of other critical incidents, largely for the purpose of training emergency services. Now adopted globally, the Hydra Foundation, whose principle is that ‘10 minutes before the dance is not the time to learn to dance’, work with police forces, fire and rescue services, Home Office, higher education institutions, and more (Hydra Foundation, 2024).

Essentially, Hydra enables the creation of immersive simulations where participants can test their skills, approaches and decision making prior to finding themselves in such a critical situation in real life. Simulations are tailored to the specific needs of the organisation using Hydra, which for the present study involved creating a simulation of a fictional court case which participants could discuss with each other in real time.

The Hydra Suite used in the present study was located at Canterbury Christ Church University, in Kent, UK, and consisted of a control room where the researcher had access to audio and visuals for each the syndicate rooms where participants engaged with the simulation (Hydra Foundation, 2024). A plenary room in the Hydra Suite was also used for briefing and debriefing. More specifically for the present study, Ten Thousand Volts (stylised as 10kv), a method for running debriefings, was used. In the syndicate rooms, participants had access to a collaborative log to record their joint decision-making processes. As of 2022, after incredible global demand, over 400 of these events have been carried out across the world (Crego, 2022).

The online version, known as 10kv.Cloud, was considered. This would have consisted of participants being assigned to virtual syndicate rooms where they would confer amongst themselves to reach a verdict, still in real-time, akin to if the study had been conducted in-person (Crego, 2022). This software was created in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and of the 18 events carried out during the pandemic, each lasted around an hour and generated an average of 60,000 words. Through the adoption of phenomenological research methodologies, reports and recommendations were generated. This indicates how powerful and necessary these debriefing sessions were during the pandemic.

It was decided that, for the present study to have maximum ecological validity, in-person research would be preferable. The literature explored earlier details how studies looking into jury decision making often take place online through questionnaires (e.g., Burd & McQuiston, 2019; Dunlap et al., 2011; Golding et al., 2007). The present study seeks to bring innovation to the field of jury decision making research, therefore using the Hydra Suite in-person was the most suitable decision.

2.2 Participants and Recruitment

Participants were recruited through various means, including through paid social media advertisements on Facebook and Instagram, which were displayed for around 3-4 weeks prior to the study taking place, specifically targeting people in east Kent as the study took place at Canterbury Christ Church University. Social media posts were also made on the Justice Support Dogs International Facebook, Twitter/X and Instagram pages, as well as in community Facebook groups (e.g., Canterbury residents' group, Herne Bay residents' group, Canterbury Christ Church students' Facebook group, and more). Additionally, posters were placed in key areas (e.g., local supermarkets in Canterbury and district, Folkestone and Hythe district, Thanet district, and Faversham and Swalecliffe district, Canterbury Christ Church Students' Union, University of Kent

Gulbenkian Café, Canterbury job centre, and local volunteering hubs such as Canterbury Samaritans). The study was also advertised on Canterbury Christ Church University's Research Participation Scheme (RPS) webpage which is available to staff and students at the university. Moreover, the researcher advertised the study to shoppers in busy city and town centres in east Kent, including Canterbury, Folkestone, Margate, and Whitstable. Finally, the study was advertised on Canterbury Christ Church University's Virtual Learning Environment, and there was a last-minute recruitment drive at the end of a psychology lecture that took place on the day the study ran. A prize draw to win an Amazon voucher was used as an incentive for participation.

Recruitment aimed at gathering 52 participants so four juries of 12 could be made and there would be four extra participants in case of any unexpected absences. By the end of the recruitment drive (excluding last-minute recruitment), 55 participants were recruited. On the day, 32 participants partook in the study, including participants who signed up last-minute after being given information about the study at the end of their psychology class.

In terms of participant demographics, 21.9% of participants were aged 18-24 ($N = 7$), 18.7% of participants were aged 25-34 ($N = 6$), 9.4% of participants were aged 35-44 ($N = 3$), 15.6% of participants were aged 45-54 ($N = 5$), 15.6% of participants were aged between 55-64 ($N = 5$), and 15.6% were aged between 65-74 ($N = 5$). One participant (3.1%) declined to give their age.

Most participants were women (75%, $N = 24$), 15.6% were men ($N = 5$), including one transman, 3.1% identified as non-binary ($N = 1$), and 3.1% identified as 'other' ($N = 1$). One participant (3.1%) declined to give information about their gender.

Nine percent of participants identified as Asian or Asian British ($N = 3$), 3.1% identified as mixed race or multiple ethnic groups ($N=1$), and the remaining 84.4% of participants identified as white ($N = 27$).

2.3 Procedure

Prior to sign-up, participants were provided with an information sheet ([Appendix 4.3](#)) detailing broadly what participation in the study involved, and reminding them of their rights, including their right to withdraw from the study at any point, and their right to confidentiality. Participants were emailed a week prior to the study taking place, with instructions on how to get to Canterbury Christ Church University.

On the day of the study, student helpers guided members of the public to the briefing room where participants were reminded of what the study entailed and were reminded of their rights. During this time, participants were registered, allocated to one of four conditions, and logged onto the university Wi-Fi to complete questionnaires on their demographics, personality traits, and political leaning. Once participants were briefed, which consisted of being reminded what the study entails and their rights as participants, they were divided into their respective groups and were led to the syndicate rooms in the Hydra Suite.

In the syndicate rooms, participants were played a clip of a fictional court case on a large screen. The court case was the same across each of the four conditions, detailing a suspected case of sexual contact with a child, the child being the complainant. They were referred to as a complainant to minimise any potential bias that the label 'victim' could be associated with. Details around the presence of a facility dog changed for each condition. In group one, the control condition, there was no dog in sight when the victim was providing evidence via video-recorded interview, and the judge did not reference a dog when he addressed the jury (for ease, this will be abbreviated to NDNI for no dog, no instruction). In group two, there was no dog in sight when the victim was providing evidence, but the judge referenced the facility dog when addressing the jury (this will be abbreviated to NDWI for no dog, with instruction). In group three, the facility dog was visible when the victim was providing evidence, but the judge did not reference the dog when

addressing the jury (WDNI for with dog, no instruction). Finally, in group four, the facility dog was visible when the victim was providing evidence and the judge references this when addressing the jury (WDWI for with dog, with instruction). After the complainant provided evidence, participants then watched the witness and the defendant provide evidence before the judge made his concluding remarks.

After watching clips of the court case, participants were asked to fill in the pre-deliberation questionnaire ([Appendix 4.8](#)). The questionnaire explored their initial opinions on the court case, including whether they believed the complainant, Samantha, was abused; whether Max, the witness, was credible; and whether Dean, the defendant, was believable. They were also asked for their personal verdict. Participants were then asked to confer amongst themselves as a jury would, to eventually reach a verdict as a group where possible. While they were having discussions, one participant was nominated to fill out the decision log on the Hydra Suite software, detailing what conversations were had and how the group reached their verdict. This was done on the same screen participants watched the court case, so all participants had sight of the decision log. Participants were allocated 25 minutes for the group exercise. Two groups ran at once in two separate syndicate rooms, instead of all four groups running at once, to ensure the researcher could be available should any issues arise. The researcher was able to listen to group discussions from the control room to ensure any potential issues could be resolved swiftly.

After 25 minutes of group deliberation, participants were prompted to reach a verdict and fill out the post-deliberation questionnaire ([Appendices 4.9](#) and [4.10](#)). Upon completion, another prompt appeared on the screen for those in the experimental conditions, asking about their thoughts on the facility dog. Participants were allocated five minutes for this part of the discussion. Participants were then led to the debriefing room where they were given full information about the aims of the research, were presented with the opportunity to ask any questions, and were provided

a debrief sheet with researcher contact details and information about relevant support lines if they were affected by their participation in the study.

2.4 Materials

The online questionnaires consisted of four demographic questions asking about age group, gender, ethnicity, and highest level of education completed to date. There was also a question asking about political views (where participants could select 'liberal', 'somewhat more liberal than conservative', 'somewhat more conservative than liberal', and 'conservative'), so this could be controlled for in case there was an impact; this is in line with previous research (Burd & McQuiston, 2019). The questionnaire also included the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI-10, Gosling et al., 2003), a tool used to assess personality traits. The reason for inclusion was to control for any impact jurors' own personality traits could have, a factor that was linked to juror decision making by one study explored in the literature review (Clark et al., 2007).

Participants were then presented with a clip of a fictional court case, altered from previous research (Burd & McQuiston, 2019). The court case was altered to increase relevancy to the UK in terms of British laws, and also to include judges' instructions which are of interest in the present study. The nature of the court case, sexual contact with a child, was chosen as all victims of sexual crimes are considered vulnerable victims (Ministry of Justice, 2020), and facility dogs can be used for victims of any type of crimes, but they are commonly used with victims of serious crimes, including sexual violence. Using a court scenario appropriate to one of the target populations for facility dog programmes increases the relevancy of the findings to real life situations where facility dogs are used.

The clip began with the judge opening the court case, briefly describing how the teenage niece (the complainant) wished to attend a party that the uncle (the defendant) did not permit her to attend while she was in his care. The complainant allegedly stormed off to her room, and when

the defendant went to her room, he allegedly helped her clean herself after she spilled juice on herself, which was when the witness (the complainant's sibling) walked past her bedroom. The complainant and the witness allege that the touching was inappropriate. After the judge's opening, a clip of the complainant being interviewed was then shown, followed by an interview with the witness. The defendant then provided evidence, and the clip ended with the judge reminding the jury of their obligations. Clips of the court case varied depending on whether participants were assigned to a group that had visibility of the dog, and whether the judge provided instructions to the jury not to make any inferences based on the dog's presence. The transcript of the court case where judicial instructions were not given about the facility dog is presented in [Appendix 4.5](#), and the transcript of the court case where judicial instructions were given about the facility dog is presented in [Appendix 4.6](#).

After watching the fictional court case, participants were asked to complete the pre-deliberation opinions questionnaire ([Appendix 4.8](#)), which included questions around whether they believed the complainant, Samantha, was abused, whether they thought Max, the witness was convincing, and whether they believed the defendant, Dean, was believable. These questions could be answered on a 10-point Likert scale (with '1' being 'strongly disagree' and '10' being 'strongly agree'). The questionnaire also asked about their conviction in their judgement, and asked whether they would return a verdict of guilty or not guilty. These measurements were used in a previous study exploring the use of facility dogs and potential jury bias, thus demonstrating they have precedence (Burd & McQuiston, 2019).

At the end of the study, participants were asked to complete the post-deliberation opinions questionnaire (Appendices [4.9](#) and [4.10](#)), which included all the previous questions, and, for the experimental conditions, an additional question about whether they felt the facility dog biased them, either in favour of the defendant or in favour of the victim. This question was answered on a

scale, where participants could answer from '0' (indicating there was self-reported bias in favour of the defendant) to '5' (completely neutral) to '10' (indicating there was self-reported bias in favour of the complainant).

This study used Hydra Suite software in the syndicate rooms to record decisions. This took the form of a digital notepad, called a decision log, on a large screen that all participants could see. One participant was selected by each group to type down thoughts that the group agreed underpinned their discussions. This decision log then helped how they reached their verdict.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Social Sciences Ethics Panel at Canterbury Christ Church University. To adhere to ethics, participants provided fully informed consent prior to the study, and information sheets, consent forms, and debrief forms reminded participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without providing a reason. The information sheet also contained brief details of the court case that would be discussed (i.e., sexual contact with a child) so participants could choose if they felt able to deliberate such a case.

Participants were presented with adequate time and opportunity to ask the researcher any questions before and after the study, and they were also made aware they could request assistance while they were in the syndicate rooms. After the study, participants were provided with a signposting sheet of organisations they could contact if they experienced any distress from their participation in these studies. They were also provided with the contact details of the research supervisors if they had any concerns.

Participants were informed and reminded about the university's confidentiality policy and the researcher's legal obligations. They were made aware that any identifiable information

provided (for example, if their occupations were discussed during deliberations) would be redacted before analysis.

Ethical considerations were made around the nature of the study. Bringing together people in-person to discuss a case of sexual contact with a child, albeit a fictional case, could be charged with emotion, and compromises anonymity. For this reason, participants were reminded prior to the study that the court case was fictional, and the researcher was in the control room of the Hydra Suite, listening in to the discussions in case any issues arose, which there were none.

Section 3 – Results

This section is divided into two broad areas. The first subsection presents analysis of the questionnaire data, which tests the hypotheses provided earlier in this chapter. The second subsection provides a rationale for the use of content analysis, before presenting data and analysis of participants' discussions, helping to provide a response to the research question detailed earlier in this chapter.

3.1 Questionnaire Analysis

Before running the analysis, the questions in the pre- and post-deliberation questionnaires asking participants whether the defendant, Dean, was believable was recoded. An average was taken from this value and the values measuring victim believability and witness credibility. These averages were then compared across four conditions. By way of reminder, the four conditions consist of group one, the control condition, where there was no dog visible and no instructions from the judge about the dog (NDNI, $N = 10$); group two, where there was no dog visible but there were instructions from the judge about the dog (NDWI, $N = 9$); group three, where the dog was visible but there were no instructions (WDNI, $N = 6$); and group four, where the dog was visible and there were instructions (WDWI, $N = 7$).

On average, participants across the four conditions appeared only slightly convinced that the complainant was abused ($M = 5.875$, $SD = 1.676$), where the scale ranged from one ('definitely not abused') to 10 ('definitely abused'). A Kruskal-Wallis H test was chosen to test the following hypothesis due to the relatively small sample size of the current study and the data failing to meet assumptions for a one-way ANOVA. The test was conducted to identify differences in attitudes towards the case the complainant presented across the different conditions, at pre- and post-deliberation levels. There appeared to be no statistically significant difference when comparing perceptions of the court case across the four conditions prior to discussion taking place amongst jurors, $\chi^2(3) = 1.411$, $p = 0.703$. Mean rank scores, which are used in a Kruskal-Wallis H test rather than actual means, are presented in Table 14. Higher scores indicate positive views regarding the believability of the complainant and credibility of the witness. Higher scores are also indicative of jurors believing there was a strong case against the defendant.

After deliberation, participants, on average, still appeared only slightly convinced that the complainant had been abused ($M = 5.688$, $SD = 1.802$). A Kruskal-Wallis H test did not reveal a statistically significant difference when comparing perceptions of the court case across the four conditions after discussion took place amongst jurors, $\chi^2(3) = 2.027$, $p = 0.567$. Mean rank scores are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Mean rank scores for opinions about the court case at pre- and post-deliberation

	<i>N</i>	Mean rank at pre-test	Mean rank at post-test
Group one (NDNI)	10	19.3	19.15
Group two (NDWI)	9	15.5	14.5
Group three (WDNI)	6	14.17	13.42
Group four (WDWI)	7	15.79	17.93

In the three experimental conditions, participants were asked in the post-deliberation questionnaire whether they felt the facility dog biased their judgement, on a scale of zero to 10 where zero represented being fully biased towards the complainant, five was completely neutral and not biased towards either the complainant or defendant, and 10 represented being biased towards the defendant. On average, participants reported that the facility dog did not bias their judgement in either direction ($M = 5$, $SD = 0.166$). A Kruskal-Wallis H test yielded no statistically significant difference between the three experimental conditions, $\chi^2(2) = 0.385$, $p = 0.825$.

In the pre- and post-deliberation assessments, participants were asked to provide their personal verdict on the case. Table 15 shows percentages and frequencies of verdicts across groups and Figure 11 provides a visual representation. In group one, the control condition (NDNI), 50% of participants found the defendant not guilty ($N = 5$); 44.4% of group two (NDWI) found the defendant not guilty ($N = 4$) and 55.6% found the defendant guilty ($N = 5$); 83.3% of group three (WDNI) found the defendant not guilty ($N = 5$) and 16.7% found the defendant guilty ($N = 1$); and in group four (WDWI), 57.1% found the defendant not guilty ($N = 4$) and 42.9% found the defendant guilty ($N = 3$). A Chi-squared test could not be used due to the small sample size. Therefore, a Fisher's Exact test with Bonferroni correction was used, and yielded no significant difference between groups at pre-deliberation ($p = 0.543$).

After jury deliberation, participants were asked the same question again. Frequencies and percentages are provided in Table 15 and a visual representation is available in Figure 11. Group one responses remained the same, but in group two, 88.9% of participants found the defendant not guilty ($N = 8$) and 11.1% found the defendant guilty ($N = 1$); in group three, 100% of participants found the defendant not guilty ($N = 6$); and in group four, 42.9% found the defendant not guilty ($N = 3$) and 57.1% found the defendant guilty ($N = 4$). A Fisher's Exact test with Bonferroni correction ($p = 0.041$) initially yielded statistically significant differences between groups, however post-hoc

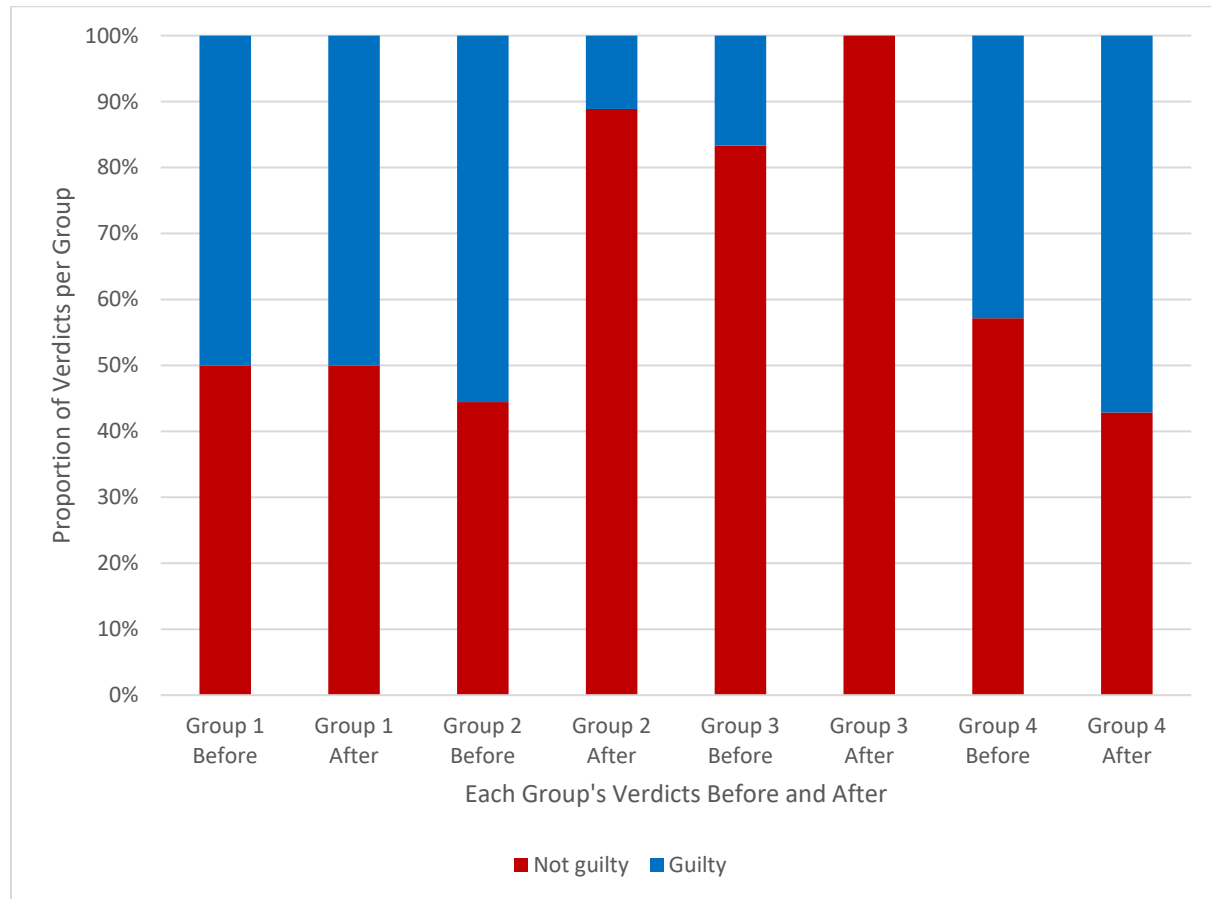
analyses did not yield statistically significant differences between groups, therefore suggesting the results are inconclusive. This could be because 75% of cell counts have values equalling five or fewer, which could impact the Fisher's Exact test's ability to find statistically significant differences.

Table 15

Frequencies and percentages of verdicts before and after jury deliberation

	Before		After	
	Not guilty	Guilty	Not guilty	Guilty
Group 1 (NDNI)	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	5 (50%)
Group 2 (NDWI)	4 (44.4%)	5 (55.6%)	8 (88.9%)	1 (11.1%)
Group 3 (WDNI)	5 (83.3%)	1 (16.7%)	6 (100%)	0 (0%)
Group 4 (WDWI)	4 (57.1%)	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)

Figure 9 Stacked bar chart showing the percentage of guilty and not guilty verdicts by group before and after jury deliberation



When asked about demographic information, participants provided information about their political leaning ('conservative', 'more conservative than liberal', 'more liberal than conservative' 'liberal'), in line with previous research (Burd & McQuiston, 2019). Participants were categorised as either liberal or conservative, and frequencies are supplied in Table 16. Because of the small sample sizes, it was not possible to compare whether there was a difference in groups' opinions about the court case while considering political leaning. However, there did appear to be differences in individual participants' opinions depending on their political leaning. To test the impact of political leaning on opinions prior to deliberation, a one-way ANOVA was carried out as the data met all the assumptions for an ANOVA, including tests of normality and homogeneity of variance. Results yielded that there was a statistically significant difference in opinions about the

court case prior to deliberation depending on participants’ political leaning ($F(1,29) = 27.915, p < .001$) with a large effect size ($\eta^2 = .490$) indicating a strong relationship between the two variables.

Table 16

Frequencies and percentages of liberal and conservative participants in each group

	Group 1 (NDNI) ^a	Group 2 (NDWI)	Group 3 (WDNI)	Group 4 (WDWI)
Liberal	7 (77.8%)	6 (66.7%)	5 (83.8%)	4 (57.2%)
Conservative	2 (22.2%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (16.7%)	3 (42.8%)

Note. ^a One participant did not supply information about political leaning, therefore group one totals do not add up to 10.

To test whether there was a difference in opinions post-deliberation depending on participants’ political leaning, a Mann-Whitney U test was carried out as the data did not meet assumptions for a one-way ANOVA, specifically failing the test for homogeneity of variances. The Mann-Whitney U test yielded that there was a difference in post-deliberation opinions based on participants’ political leaning ($U = 5.5, p < .001$) with a strong effect size ($\eta^2 = .534$), indicating a strong relationship between the variables.

Participants also completed the Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI-10; Gosling et al., 2003). However, due to the small sample size and incomplete data where not all participants answered all questions, it was not possible to compare whether there was a difference in groups’ opinions based on personality traits, as results from any analysis could not be trusted due to too many missing data points. Nonetheless, group averages for personality traits are available in Table 17. Items in the TIPI-10 are measured on a scale of one to 10, and items were recoded as appropriate before averages were obtained. Scores for different traits generally appear similar across groups.

Table 17*Average scores from the TIPI-10 across groups*

	Group one (NDNI)	Group two (NDWI)	Group 3 (WDNI)	Group 4 (WDWI)
Extraversion	4.34	4.38	3.89	4.71
Agreeableness	3.95	4.67	4.35	4.64
Conscientiousness	5.23	4.92	5.39	5.76
Emotional stability	3.45	4.38	3.86	4.35
Openness to experience	5.28	5.38	4.73	5.36

Extraversion scores were slightly lower in group three and slightly higher in group four, which is interesting to note as higher levels of extraversion have been linked to not guilty verdicts (Clark et al., 2007), but 42.9% of group four returned a verdict of not guilty, the lowest of all four groups, and 100% of group three returned a not guilty verdict, the highest of all four groups. Although no statistical analysis could be carried out to investigate this further, it is still interesting to note.

Agreeableness scores were lowest in group one and highest in group two, although scores were generally lower across all groups. Group four appeared the most conscientious and group two the least, and across groups, scores were generally in the middle of the scale, indicating moderate levels of conscientiousness. Group one scored lowest on emotional stability and group two scored highest, although all groups scored relatively low in this area. Scores for openness to experience were highest in group two and lowest in group three, indicating moderate levels of openness to experience.

3.2 Content Analysis

Content analysis was chosen to analyse the qualitative data due to its applicability to various forms of data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), in this instance used for group discussions in this study. As it can be used quantitatively and qualitatively, this also aligns with the mixed methods approach of this research, and the pragmatism paradigm which the current thesis is aligned to.

Content analysis is considered a flexible method of analysing textual data with a varied history (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Originally developed as an analytic technique, content analysis is also incorporated as a quantitative research method through the coding of clearly defined categories that can then be described through statistics (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It can therefore be considered as a quantitative analysis of qualitative data, and thus it is partially in this capacity that content analysis is employed for the present study.

The summative content analysis was employed to firstly gauge how often defined categories were discussed (e.g., the defendant's guilt versus the defendant's innocence), and secondly to understand how participants had conversations about these categories. The aim was to identify any differences across groups that could indicate unconscious bias because of the facility dog's presence by sight or by reference during the judge's instructions. Unlike the previous use of thematic analysis which assessed the data semantically, the qualitative data for this study were analysed latently, which is to say that the meaning behind participants' words were scrutinised rather than the specific words themselves (e.g., if a participant member of the jury were to say 'I would never have done what the defendant did', this was coded as a sentiment against the defendant rather than in favour of the defendant). Summative content analysis allows for the statistical interpretation of qualitative data while still permitting focus on the underlying meaning of contents (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

NVivo 12 was used to carry out the content analysis. Transcriptions of the group conversations were made, and coding was carried out manually, which is to say that the researcher familiarised themselves with the transcriptions before creating categories and coding the transcriptions. Consistent with studies carried out in Chapters Two and Three, inductive analysis was used, meaning categories derived from the data itself rather than the researcher's prior knowledge of the field. Statistical data was input into IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29.0 (IBM Corp) for analysis and categories for further qualitative analysis were analysed in NVivo to identify patterns in the data and derive meaning around how participants engaged with the material in this study.

A drawback of content analysis is the subjectivity which it relies on (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Although subjectivity is not necessarily a criticism of qualitative or mixed methods research which may not seek to be objective by their very nature, the researcher sought to minimise potential bias by presenting the coded data to a secondary researcher who was previously unfamiliar with the study. Thus, the data analysis begun by the primary researcher reading all group transcripts to familiarise themselves with the data, and then rereading the data to identify initial codes by value on a line-by-line basis. For example, if a participant said, 'The defendant was really stupid, and the complainant didn't help herself either', the first portion of this line would be coded as being anti-defendant, and the second portion as being anti-complainant. Data were then revisited a third time in their respective categories to ensure they were coded accurately and to see if any changes needed to be made. The secondary researcher then reviewed the data, and any disagreements were resolved through discussion.

3.2.1 Quantitative Content Analysis

Jury deliberations were analysed using content analysis. Data were coded by sentences and categorised according to the following: whether they were pro-complainant (e.g., 'She was

only doing what a teenager would do'), anti-complainant (e.g., 'She should have stopped him'), pro-defendant (e.g., 'He was just taking care of the children), anti-defendant (e.g., 'He should've known better'), pro-witness (e.g., 'It was good of them to speak up'), anti-witness (e.g., 'Why didn't they say anything sooner?') and neutral statements that did not indicate support either way (e.g., 'This is all very sad'). Neutral statements were not analysed due to the inability to draw inferences from them. It should be noted that during the initial deliberation period, no participants explicitly referenced the facility dog, therefore there is no code in this portion of the analysis relating to the facility dog. Data were coded by two independent researchers and any disagreements that arose were referred to a third researcher and resolved through a discussion.

Frequencies, as well as percentages of statements in proportion to the groups themselves, are displayed in Table 18. Percentages of statements per group are also presented in Figure 12. Analyses that will be conducted will help to draw firmer conclusions, but the frequencies indicate that group one (NDNI) express the most number of pro-complainant sentiment of all the groups, and it is also noteworthy that they express an equal number of pro- and anti-defendant statements which could hint that while they are more pro-complainant, viewpoints regarding the defendant could be more balanced. Group one also expressed more neutral statements than any other group, and within the group itself, there were as many neutral statements as pro- and anti-defendant statements. All of this could suggest group one, as a whole, were somewhat more pro-complainant, but were also quite neutral about the defendant.

Group two (NDWI) expressed almost an equal number of pro-complainant and pro-defendant statements, which could indicate they are balanced in terms of who they express sympathy towards and that judicial instructions about the dog may not have caused bias. They appear slightly more anti-complainant and anti-defendant, but the analyses will yield if the

discrepancy between the number of anti-complainant and -defendant statements is statistically significant.

The greatest number of pro-defendant statements across all the groups was made by group three (WDNI). This group had more conversations about the defendant rather than the complainant. Based on frequencies alone, it is unclear why this might be, but it is interesting to note. As group three had sight of the dog and made the greatest number of pro-defendant statements, it could be argued that sight of the dog did not cause bias against the defendant, although further analyses will help to draw stronger conclusions.

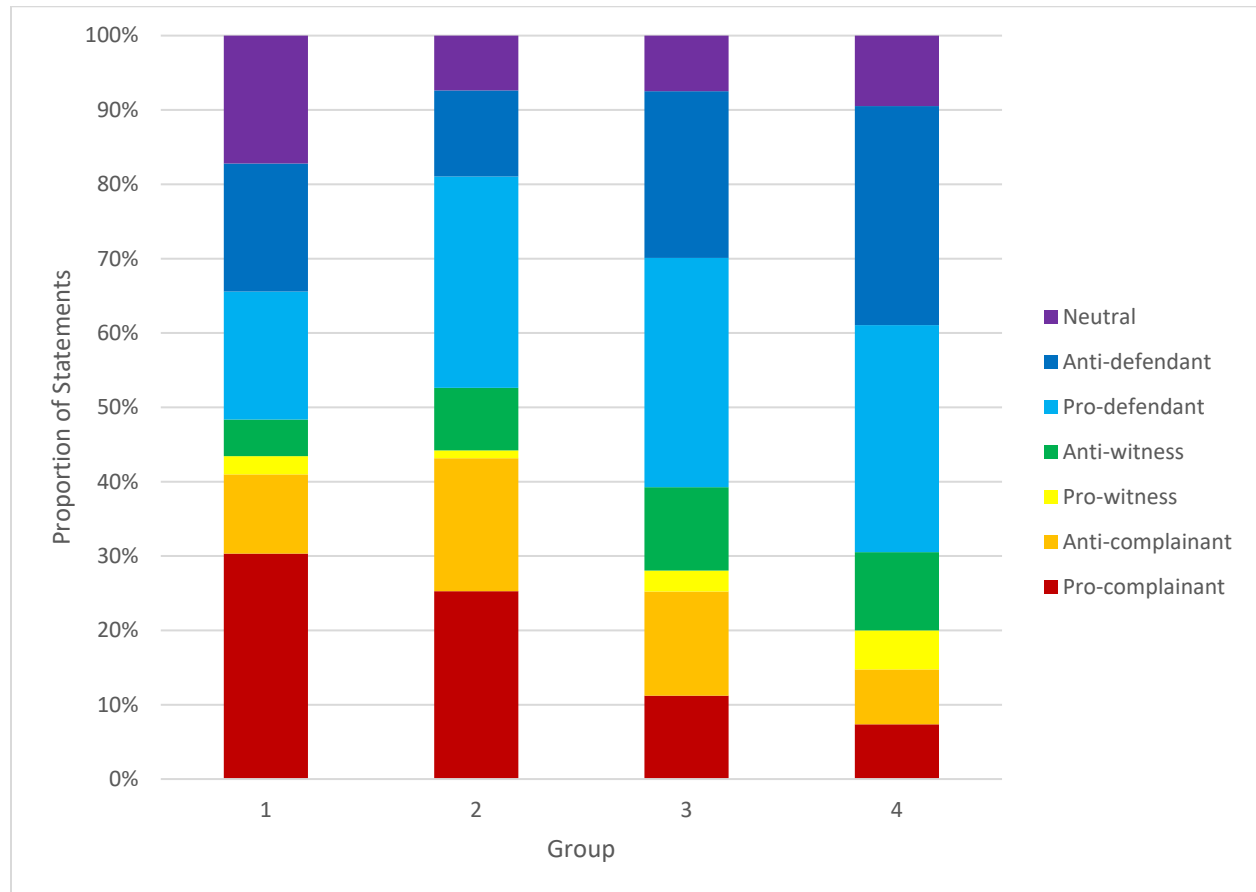
Group four (WDWI) expressed the greatest number of anti-defendant statements when compared to other groups, but they expressed a similar number of pro- and anti-defendant statements within their own group. Group four also express an equal number of pro- and anti-complainant statements of which the frequencies appear smaller than pro- and anti-defendant statements. This could indicate balance within the group, as, based on frequencies alone, group four express sentiments for and against complainants and defendants in equal measure. Similar to group three, they appear to discuss the defendant more than the complainant. From this alone, it cannot necessarily be concluded that having sight of the facility dog biased juries to the extent that there were comparatively fewer conversations about the complainant, but the analyses in the next section can help provide deeper understanding around this.

Conversations about the witness appear minimal, although all groups express greater anti-witness sentiment than pro-witness sentiment. Group two expressed almost a similar number of anti-defendant and -witness statements, and group three expressed the same number of pro-complainant and anti-witness statements. Group four actually expressed more anti-witness sentiment than pro- or anti-complainant. Although no firm conclusions can be drawn just from these frequencies, they help to illustrate the types of discussions that were had.

Table 18*Frequencies and percentages of statements made by different groups*

Statement type	Group 1 (NDNI)	Group 2 (NDWI)	Group 3 (WDNI)	Group 4 (WDWI)
Pro-complainant	37 (30.3%)	24 (25.3%)	12 (11.2%)	7 (7.4%)
Anti-complainant	13 (10.7%)	17 (17.9%)	15 (14.0%)	7 (7.4%)
Pro-defendant	21 (17.2%)	27 (28.4%)	33 (30.8%)	29 (30.5%)
Anti-defendant	21 (17.2%)	11 (11.6%)	24 (22.4%)	28 (29.5%)
Pro-witness	3 (2.5%)	1 (1.1%)	3 (2.8%)	5 (5.3%)
Anti-witness	6 (4.9%)	8 (8.4%)	12 (11.2%)	10 (10.5%)
Neutral	21 (17.2%)	7 (7.4%)	8 (7.5%)	9 (9.5%)

Figure 10 Stacked bar chart showing the proportion of statements assigned to different categories by group



Statistical analyses were then completed to understand whether differences between groups were significant. Due to the comparatively smaller numbers of pro- and anti-witness statements, a Chi-squared test of independence was carried out to ascertain differences between groups just based on pro- and anti-complainant and defendant statements. This analysis was carried out with Bonferroni correction to minimise the chance of a type 1 error due to multiple comparisons, and Cramer’s V was used to measure effect size, chosen due to its applicability to contingency tables larger than 2 x 2, unlike with Phi’s Coefficient (Kim, 2017). The Chi-squared test yielded a statistically significant difference between groups ($\chi^2 (9) = 38.81, p < .001$) with a moderate effect size ($V = 0.20$), indicating that there is a strong relationship between variables and that there is practical significance in this finding.

Post-hoc tests and adjusted residuals were then used to help account for variation as a result of the different sample sizes in each group and to ascertain where the statistically significant findings were, meaning which groups had greater differences. Together, adjusted residuals and post-hoc tests yielded statistically significant differences in pro-complainant statements. Counts, percentages (recalculated after removing pro- and anti-witness statements and neutral statements), and adjusted residuals are presented in Table 19. Group one (NDNI) expressed more pro-complainant statements than groups three (WDNI) and four (WDWI) which were of statistical significance, and group two (NDWI) expressed more pro-complainant statements than group four, which was of statistical significance.

There were no statistically significant differences in anti-complainant or pro-defendant statements between the groups. In terms of anti-defendant statements, group two expressed fewer anti-defendant sentiments compared to group four, which was of statistical significance.

Table 19

Frequencies, percentages and adjusted residuals for categories of statements made by group

Statement type	Group 1 (NDNI)			Group 2 (NDWI)			Group 3 (WDNI)			Group 4 (WDWI)		
	#	%	Adj. Res.	#	%	Adj. Res.	#	%	Adj. Res.	#	%	Adj. Res.
Pro-complainant	37 ^a	40.2	4.1*	24 ^{ab}	30.4	1.4	12 ^{bc}	14.3	-2.5*	7 ^c	9.9	-3.3*
Anti-complainant	13 ^a	14.1	-0.6	17 ^a	21.5	1.6	15 ^a	17.9	0.6	7 ^a	9.9	-1.6
Pro-defendant	21 ^a	22.8	-2.6*	27 ^a	34.2	0.1	33 ^a	39.3	1.2	29 ^a	40.8	1.4
Anti-defendant	21 ^{ab}	22.8	-0.8	11 ^b	13.9	-2.8	24 ^{ab}	28.6	0.7	28 ^a	39.4	3.0*

Note. Each subscript letter denotes a subset of group categories whose column proportions do not significantly differ from each other at $p < 0.5$, e.g., cells marked ^a are not significantly different to other cells in the same row marked ^a.

* Adjusted residual values greater than -1.96 or +1.96 represent statistical significance, $p < .05$

After jury deliberation and completing the post-deliberation opinions questionnaire, participants in the experimental conditions were prompted to discuss the facility dog, which was either referenced to them through the judge’s instructions, or was visible to them during the complainant’s interview, or both. Participants were allowed five minutes for this aspect of the discussion. Generally, participants either discussed the logistical benefits or issues with having a dog, or they discussed bias in relation to the dog. Frequencies are presented in Table 20.

Table 20

Frequencies of statements discussing logistics of facility dog and potential bias about the dog, by group

	Dog logistics			Dog bias	
	Neutral	Pro-dog	Anti-dog	Self-suspected	No dog bias
Group 2 (NDWI)	3	1	0	1	0
Group 3 (WDNI)	7	2	4	2	0
Group 4 (WDWI)	4	7	0	1	7

Note. Group 1 is the control condition and therefore had neither sight of nor were instructed about the facility dog. Consequently, they did not have any discussions about the dog.

A Chi-squared analysis could not be carried out due to the majority of cells with a frequency fewer than five. It appears that, upon prompting, the dog was discussed more by group four who expressed a greater number of pro-dog sentiments from a logistical perspective (e.g., ‘[the dog] didn’t even bark’), and also more neutral statements. Group four also expressed a greater number of statements about not being biased because of the dog. Group three expressed more neutral statements about the logistics of the facility dog being there and reported more self-suspected

bias compared to other groups; there were two statements indicating that they could imagine a dog would cause them to be biased. Isolated, this figure may not be indicative of any kind of bias and this figure is not substantially larger than the number of self-suspected bias statements reported for groups two and four. Finally, group two reported fewer statements in general, and these statements were mostly neutral from a logistical perspective and there was one statement expressing self-suspected bias.

3.2.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

Data were analysed and broadly assigned to six categories: statements against the defendant, against the complainant, against the witness, in favour of the defendant, in favour of the complainant, and in favour of the witness. Where the previous section analysed differences in frequencies of statements that occurred across groups, this section explores how participants perceived and engaged with the contents of the fictional court case. This section will analyse the content of the discussions and draw comparisons between themes touched on by each group. The categories and themes are presented in Table 21.

Table 21

Themes from discussions about the fictional court case

Category	Theme	General observations
Against the defendant	Inconsistent account compared to the prosecution	All groups reflected on how the defendant’s seemingly inconsistent account reflected poorly.
	Picking holes in the defendant’s testimony	Groups two (NDWI) and four (WDWI) discussed the defendant contradicting himself, and pausing during testimony. Group three (WDNI) was suspicious of the defendant ‘playing the victim’.
	Why would he touch her in the first place?	All groups questioned why the defendant would have any reason to touch the complainant.
In favour of the defendant	Belief in the defendant	Participants across all groups expressed believing the defendant based on his physical presentation. Groups two and three believed the defendant based on the incongruence between his role as an uncle and the allegations.
	Lack of evidence	All groups equally discussed a lack of evidence against the defendant that felt antithetical to delivering a guilty verdict.

Uncle not needing consent Groups one (NDNI) and two made a small number of comments about how the uncle did not need consent to touch his niece.

Sympathising with the defendant Groups two, three, and four expressed sympathy towards the defendant for being on trial. Group one did not make such comments.

Against the complainant	Conflicts in claims	All groups noted conflicts in claims made by the defense and the prosecution, attributing this as a weakness of the prosecution’s case.
	Not believing the complainant’s presentation	All groups expressed not believing the complainant due to her presentation.
	Blaming and villainising the complainant	Group one expressed fewer comments blaming and villainising the complainant, but these discussions were still prevalent across all groups.

In favour of the complainant	Believing the complainant	All groups expressed believing the complainant. Group one only expressed believing the complainant due to their physical appearance. Groups one and two did not believe the complainant had cause to lie.
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	Support from the witness and family	Groups one, two, and three explored how the complainant being supported by the witness and their father strengthened the prosecution’s case.
	Sympathising with the complainant	All groups sympathised with the complainant, discussing how they could be traumatised and how difficult it must be to come forward.
Against the witness	Not believing the witness	Participants across groups expressed not believing the witness.
	Blaming the witness	All groups blamed the witness to an extent.
In favour of the witness	Believing the witness	Discussions were had across groups about how believable the witness was.
	Sympathising with the witness	Groups one and two had slightly more discussions expressing sympathy for the witness compared to groups three and four.
Discussions	Dog logistics	Groups two, three, and four discussed understanding how dogs could be used by people giving evidence.
	Dogs and bias	Only group two discussed the potentiality for dogs to cause bias, whereas groups three and four, and some participants from group two, did not feel biased because of the dog and did not think the dog could cause bias.

By way of reminder, the evidence provided by the defendant, complainant and witness vary, but in essence, the teenage niece (the complainant) wished to attend a party that the uncle (the defendant) did not permit her to attend while she was in his care. The complainant allegedly stormed off to her room, and when the defendant went to her room, he allegedly helped her clean herself after she spilled juice on herself, which was when the witness (the complainant's sibling) walked past her bedroom. The complainant and the witness allege that the touching was inappropriate. The transcript of the court case where judicial instructions were not given is presented in [Appendix 4.5](#), and the transcript of the court case where judicial instructions were given is presented in [Appendix 4.6](#).

3.2.2.1 Against the defendant

When exploring sentiments against the defendant, there were four themes that arose. These included inconsistencies between the evidence provided by the defendant and complainant that was deemed to reflect negatively on the defendant; generally picking apart the defendant's testimony; the defendant was deemed as playing the victim sometimes; and the final theme explored confusion around why the defendant would touch the complainant in the first place.

3.2.2.1.1 Inconsistent account compared to the prosecution

Participants argued that any discrepancies between evidence given by the defendant and the complainant and witness demonstrated flaws in the defendant's testimony. Participants presented arguments that, if the defendant's testimony was accurate, they would not clash with what the complainant and witness were saying. Discrepancies included that the defendant was the only person who referenced the complainant wearing a party dress; the complainant and the witness did not reference the party dress at all. The complainant and witness also did not reference any juice being spilt.

[The defendant] says that [the complainant] was angry that she couldn't go to party, but he claims that he intervened because she was wearing a party dress so that's an inconsistency on his side. (Participant in Group 2)

You're also taking his word for the party dress, he's the only one that mentioned the party dress. (Participant in Group 3)

This theme arose in discussions across all four groups, and the same points were raised in each group. In isolation, this may not be indicative that the facility dog caused bias, as, if this were the case, it would be expected that these discussions would arise disproportionately in one or some groups more than the control condition, which was not the case here.

3.2.2.1.2 Picking holes in the defendant's testimony

Participants doubted other aspects of the defendant's testimony without noticeable discrepancies with what the complainant and witness posited. Points that were raised included areas where the defendant may have contradicted himself (e.g., saying that she stormed off with her dinner but also said he had not finished cooking), and that the defendant paused at one point during his testimony which led to the participant doubting them. Interestingly, these points were only made by participants in groups two (NDWI) and four (WDWI).

What teenager goes to the kitchen, grabs her dinner and angrily storms to her room? I don't know, that felt kind of weird for me, the detail that he provided that she specifically went to the kitchen and got the food and stormed off. (Participant in Group 4)

You said about the thing that he had more explanation of what's gone on, I'd say that can also show guilty because they're trying to overcompensate and explain themselves, defend, explain, justify and defend. (Participant in Group 4)

I think the situation was strange in the fact that he stopped what he was doing when [the witness] looked at him. I think if you were doing something innocent why would you stop what you were doing? (Participant in Group 4)

Participants in group three (WDNI) felt it was suspicious how the defendant was seemingly playing the victim. Participants felt some of the language used by the defendant was beyond defensive and bordered offensive.

He's playing the victim, isn't he? The defendant claims the children were targeting him because he did not let them attend a party that evening. (Participant in Group 3)

In this portion of the analysis, participants in the experimental conditions appear to make inferences from about what the defendant was saying and how he was saying it. Isolated, these conversations could perhaps indicate some level of unconscious bias against the defendant, although other categories and themes will need to be analysed to gain a clearer picture.

3.2.2.1.3 Why would he touch her in the first place?

Many participants commented that even if the complainant spilled juice on herself in her bedroom, there was no just cause for the defendant to touch the complainant. Some participants expressed that they could not imagine why the defendant, a grown man and an uncle to the complainant, would touch a teenage girl regardless of her having spilled juice.

Does she need someone else to wipe her up? Why couldn't he just give her his handkerchief? I wouldn't approach a 14-year-old boy and clean his groin with a handkerchief. (Participant in Group 1)

For me personally, at that age I would expect to be given a handkerchief to wipe myself.
(Participant in Group 2)

Him getting a handkerchief out to help her clean her dress, it's like I expected to read that she was seven, not that she was 14, because then I was like, okay, well, she's 14, would you actually offer that help to a 14-year-old? I don't think so. (Participant in Group 3)

There was a great deal of discussion about this across all the groups. By frequency, group two (NDWI) expressed fewer of these particular statements which is reflected in the quantitative content analysis where this group expressed fewer anti-defendant statements overall.

Nonetheless, as all groups had these discussions in detail, it can be concluded that it is unlikely, based on this theme alone, that the participants in all groups were biased against defendant.

When grouped with the other themes in the anti-defendant category, including identifying how the defendant's testimony clashes with the testimonies provided by the prosecution, unpacking the defendant's testimony, and questioning the defendant's actions, there does not appear to be bias against the defendant. Although some inferences were made by the experimental groups when unpacking the defendant's testimony, potential anti-defendant bias does not appear consistent across all these themes. It can therefore be concluded that it is unlikely the facility dog caused unconscious bias against the defendant.

3.2.2.2 In favour of the defendant

Participants across all groups expressed statements in favour of the defendant. Themes ranged from participants just believing the defendant, feeling there was a lack of evidence against the defendant, arguing that the defendant did not need consent to touch his niece, and finally expressing sympathy towards the defendant. Although not statistically significant, group one (NDNI) expressed fewer pro-defendant statements, and this is sometimes reflected in the themes below where they generally have less to say about these themes.

3.2.2.2.1 Belief in the defendant

Participants presented an abundance of reasons why they believed the defendant. Some of these reasons were rooted in the evidence presented in the fictional court case, but other reasons stemmed from pure belief and sometimes participants' own experiences. Some believed the defendant due to his presentation while he was providing testimony.

He maintained composure and was able to stay calm throughout all of it, giving more detail, which seemed more believable to me. (Participant in Group 1)

To be fair, the man had a suit on; a man wearing a suit might well have a hanky. (Participant in Group 2)

Participants across all groups echoed believing the defendant because of his physical presentation, suggesting that the presence of the dog, by sight or by instructions, did not bias groups to view the defendant differently to each other. If there was bias as a result of the facility dog, differences might be expected across groups, however, all groups consistently expressed bias in favour of the defendant due to his appearance.

Other participants believed the defendant as they felt the allegations against him were incongruent with his role as their uncle and guardian in the occasional absences of their father. Participants argued that if he had any bad intention, he would have approached the situation differently, and that this was not the first time he was taking care of them so if he was a guilty man, the behaviour would have started from the first time he took care of the children when their father was away.

It does say also that he's done this before, the looking after, on the rare occasions his brother's had to go away, and nothing had ever happened before. (Participant in Group 2)

He'd come in and possibly left [the door] open and you can ask why, if he was going to do something, would he close the door behind so someone else could see? (Participant in Group 3)

These arguments were only raised by participants in group two (NDWI) and group three (WDNI). Together with comments about believing the defendant due to his physical presentation, it could be concluded that the dog did not bias juries either in favour of the defendant, as, if there was bias present, larger discrepancies between how different groups engaged with this theme would be present. However, to draw firmer conclusions, other themes in this category will need to be analysed.

3.2.2.2.2 Lack of evidence

Participants discussed in-depth feeling the evidence against the defendant was not strong enough for conviction. It may have been difficult to prove intent, which is necessary when finding a person guilty, as instructed by the judge across all conditions.

It says that if he intentionally touches another person, the touching is sexual, and the person is under the age of 16. So, I don't know if that means all conditions have to be met. So, it's a bit hard to prove intention. (Participant in Group 1)

I would hate to say someone was guilty based on something so vague, that's what's stopping me. (Participant in Group 2)

Maybe he's a bit stupid, and we may assume that he did the wrong thing, but he didn't mean to touch her sexually. (Participant in Group 3)

Despite earlier themes in this category where participants expressed believing the defendant just because of his presentation, participants were also able to weigh up the evidence and use this to guide their verdict. This was common across all groups in equal measure,

suggesting that the facility dog did not bias participants to the extent that they were unable to use the evidence they were provided with to reach a verdict.

3.2.2.2.3 Uncle not needing consent

The evidence presented by the defendant and complainant conflicted in terms of the nature of the touching. The defendant posited that the touching was not inappropriate and that he was only helping her after she spilled juice on her dress. The complainant alleged that the touching was inappropriate, with the defendant touching her in intimate areas. Some participants argued that the uncle did not need consent from his niece if he was touching her to help her after she spilled juice on her dress.

If it's like someone you know well, I mean would you ask consent? Say it was your son/daughter, wouldn't you just go like *that*, would you just go and do it? (Participant in Group 1)

It could well have been she made a mess, she might've gone 'eh', and he might've gone 'oop, hang on'. (Participant in Group 2)

These discussions only took place in groups one (NDNI) and two (NDWI). It was not a very prevalent theme, meaning even within these groups this theme was not discussed at length. Therefore, although this pro-defendant sentiment was only echoed by the groups that did not have sight of the facility dog, these discussions may not necessarily indicate that the facility dog caused bias in the groups that did not discuss this theme.

3.2.2.2.4 Sympathising with the defendant

There were numerous reasons participants expressed sympathy towards the defendant. Participants detailed their own experiences as parents and grandparents of teenagers, people who

could see themselves being careless with boundaries, and generally not wanting to give the defendant a 'label' without indisputable evidence.

He's worried, he doesn't want to be in prison just for – maybe he's too naïve and stupid, he's nervous about that. (Participant in Group 3)

How scared would you be if you were being accused of sexual assault on your nieces? You wouldn't be particularly happy about it. (Participant in Group 4)

These discussions were only prevalent in the experimental conditions, particularly in groups three (WDNI) and four (WDWI) compared to group two (NDWI). It is unclear why these discussions occurred, however, differences between groups three and four, and group two could reflect the lower frequency of pro-defendant statements expressed by group two.

When considered alongside other pro-defendant themes, including arguments that there was insufficient evidence against the defendant to convict, arguments that the defendant did not need consent to touch his niece, and participants believing the defendant just from his presentation, there does not appear to be noticeable differences between groups that would indicate the dog caused bias. Further analyses can help to provide clarification.

3.2.2.3 Against the complainant

There were four main themes that encapsulated anti-complainant sentiment. Participants expressed confusion around the claims made by both the defence and the prosecution, as well as not believing the complainant's presentation while she was giving evidence. Participants sometimes filled gaps in the evidence with their own experiences or beliefs, and some participants expressed sentiments that blamed or villainised the complainant.

3.2.2.3.1 Conflicts in claims

Participants referenced a few different aspects of evidence submitted that they found conflicting. They interpreted these discrepancies as a fault on the complainant's part.

She said she was touched four times, yet [the witness] said he only saw it once. (Participant in Group 1)

I also find it's a little strange that [the complainant] wasn't really sure how many times something had happened. (Participant in Group 2)

I think the corroboration between [the complainant and the witness] isn't strong enough [...] that's almost like the strongest part of the case, if two people are saying the same thing.' (Participant in Group 3)

Contrastingly, others thought there was too much corroboration between the complainant and the witness's interviews, and it was therefore concluded that their stories were rehearsed.

Another thing that I noticed is the two stories almost seemed rehearsed, it was very pre-practised. (Participant in Group 2)

Participants noted that the complainant could not accurately recall how many times she had been touched by her uncle, and that she has only come forward about it because her sibling reported it. Therefore, it was speculated that the allegation may not be authentic.

She didn't even come out and accuse him this time, the one time that [the witness] saw the assault is the one assault that he's passed on to the father and then she's saying it's more. (Participant in Group 1)

These discussions were largely had by groups one (NDNI), two (NDWI) and three (WDNI). This could reflect the low frequency of anti-complainant sentiments made by group four (WDWI)

which was equal to the number of pro-complainant sentiments they made. In this context, perhaps the lack of discussion around the conflicts raised by the complainant's testimony is not indicative that group four were unconsciously biased towards the complainant. However, from this theme alone, conclusions cannot be drawn firmly.

3.2.2.3.2 Not believing the complainant's presentation

Participants frequently expressed that the complainant's presentation was not convincing. They gave many reasons for why they did not believe the complainant's presentation, including that the complainant was perceived to be smirking and avoiding eye contact, and that she did not seem convincing when she was speaking to the interviewer.

To me, she doesn't look overly distressed, I think [the witness] was more... (Participant in Group 2)

You would think you'd have thought about it beforehand, she would've had her story ready, you would've thought. (Participant in Group 2)

These discussions were prevalent across all groups, suggesting that sight of or knowledge about the facility dog did not bias participants to view the complainant differently. It should be noted that the complainant's smirk, was only discussed in group one (NDNI). Upon reviewing footage of the court case, there appeared to be minor differences in the actor's presentation when comparing the clips shown to groups one and two (where the dog was not present) and the clips shown to groups three and four (where the dog was present). Some differences would have been inevitable as the clips are not carbon copies. Therefore, that group one specifically discussed the complainant's perceived smirk, but the other groups did not, may not indicate that the facility dog caused the experimental conditions to be biased towards the complainant. This is particularly supported by how discussions about the complainant's presentation were had across all groups,

suggesting that the dog did not cause enough bias, if any at all, such that the complainant's physical presentation would go unscrutinised. Analysing the remaining themes could help illuminate whether the visibility of the dog impacted how the complainant was received.

3.2.2.3.3 Blaming and villainising the complainant

Another common theme that arose was the blaming or villainising of the complainant. Some participants felt that the complainant could have done more to protect herself from any potential unwanted physical contact.

You think she wouldn't have even allowed him into her room or would've caused some sort of barrier or said something. (Participant in Group 2)

In the absence of stronger evidence, sometimes participants made assumptions about the complainant's character or whether she had any ulterior motives behind the allegations. Participants sometimes talked about how the complainant orchestrated everything, spilling juice deliberately down herself so the defendant would touch her, and at a time when, according to participants, the complainant must have known the witness would be leaving the bathroom and walking past her open bedroom door.

We don't know that she wasn't acting out when she dropped the stuff down her dress and was making a big show of it. (Participant in Group 3)

She weren't allowed to go to the party so then they've made [the defendant] look really bad by spinning up a story that now they've got to keep going through court, there's always that side of things. (Participant in Group 4)

Some participants used their own experience of children or grandchildren to make sense of the court case. Using their own experience seemed to help them decide the extent to which the complainant should be believed.

And grandkids especially at that age, they do get a strop on if you say no, they'll go and get changed and climb out the ruddy window, you have to drag them from the house that they've gone to when you say they can't go so yeah, they will get a strop on because they want to do something. (Participant in Group 2)

I know how manipulative – [children] can turn us against each other just like that, dad said this or mum said this, or do you know I've put one of them in a corner then said I've actually hit them but I haven't, how things get twisted so badly. (Participant in Group 4)

This theme was found across all four groups, although it was explored in less detail by participants in group one (NDNI) and in more detail by participants in group three (WDNI). In isolation, this does not appear indicative of unconscious bias because if sight of the dog could bias participants in favour of or against the complainant, similarities would be expected between group three and group four (WDWI) as well. Likewise, if receiving no instruction about the dog could bias participants in favour of or against the complainant, similarities would be observed between groups one and three. As this is not the case, it could be suggested that the facility dog did not cause unconscious bias.

When this finding is grouped with the conclusions drawn from the other anti-complainant themes, so not believing the complainant's presentation and highlighting conflict in claims, it cannot be concluded that the facility dog caused bias. However, analysing further categories may be beneficial in helping draw firmer conclusions.

3.2.2.4 In favour of the complainant

There were three broad themes under which participants expressed favourable sentiments towards the complainant. One of these included that some participants just believed the complainant, whether it was due to the way she presented, the believability of her evidence over the defendant's evidence, or that she apparently had no reason to lie. Participants also felt that the

complainant's corroboration with the witness provided support for her case, and other participants expressed sympathy towards the complainant.

3.2.2.4.1 Believing the complainant

There were different reasons why participants believed the complainant. Some participants simply stated that they would 'rather believe the victim'. Others felt the way she presented when giving evidence made her more convincing.

I also noticed her body language and the fact that she smiled and turned her head, I read that as her discomfort and not wanting to engage rather than not telling the truth.

(Participant in Group 1)

This contrasts the previous analysis where some participants in group one (NDNI) did not believe the complainant as she was perceived to be smirking. Once again, group one was the only group to comment on the complainant's physical appearance. This could be reflective of the subtle differences in clips, rather than being indicative that the facility dog, by sight or by being mentioned, caused bias in juries.

Other participants felt that the evidence the complainant provided did not align with the defendant's testimony. Based on this, participants felt the complainant should be believed.

She hasn't mentioned any of the spaghetti Bolognese or orange juice or any of that.

(Participant in Group 1)

Once again, this sentiment was only expressed in group one. While it could be argued that the facility dog biased juries against the complainant based on the experimental groups' lack of discussion around this theme, these discussions in group one could just reflect the higher frequency of pro-complainant statements expressed by this group, as explored in the quantitative content analysis.

Other participants felt the complainant must be telling the truth as she would have no just cause to lie about the defendant, her family member, touching her inappropriately.

I can't find an intention of the child's to lie about the uncle, and the whole "oh he didn't let me go to the party" would be a weak reason. (Participant in Group 1)

I would be curious if we have any evidence why she would be driven to such extremes as taking it to the criminal justice system. (Participant in Group 2)

It cannot be concluded from these discussions that sight of the facility dog caused bias in favour of the complainant. It could be argued that the judge's instructions might have biased group two in favour of the complainant as they expressed believing the complainant just because the complainant would, according to them, have no reason to lie. However, if this was the case, similar sentiments would likely have been expressed by group four, who also received instructions from the judge.

3.2.2.4.2 Support from the witness and family

Many participants felt that the corroboration between the complainant and witness's statements lent support to the complainant's case.

I still feel like with the witness statement and the way that the witness and the child's statements align against the [defendant's], that's two against one so it's more likely to be true. (Participant in Group 1)

Others felt that the complainant's father's involvement should be taken into consideration. It was generally agreed that the father would not have taken the case to the police if he did not believe his children's allegations.

It was the father who went to the police [...] that's the uncle's brother, isn't it? So that's quite significant. (Participant in Group 1)

She didn't tell anyone, either. [The witness] told the dad and the dad told the police, [the complainant] didn't actually say anything. (Participant in Group 2)

If the dad knew [the complainant] wanted to go to a party and he was saying no, would the dad not know she might be upset by that and then would take that into consideration when listening to what her story was? (Participant in Group 3)

These discussions were had across all groups except group four (WDWI), potentially reflecting on the limited discussion group four had about the complainant rather than suggesting any kind of bias was present. Based on these discussions alone, it is not possible to arrive at a conclusion yet, but further analyses may provide further insight.

3.2.2.4.3 Sympathising with the complainant

Some participants expressed sympathy towards the complainant. This took several forms, including acknowledging that providing evidence may have been difficult for her as she 'could have been embarrassed' and may have 'not wanted to relive that situation'.

If it has happened over a period of time, more than once, the victim may be in a very difficult situation in terms of saying what had happened, so she may not want to engage with it because it only came out when [the witness] ... [the complainant] may not be a very willing witness. (Participant in Group 1)

This idea was discussed in the same amount of depth across all groups. Potentially, such similarities suggest that the facility dog did not cause participants to view the complainant sympathetically.

Some participants provided reasons for any gaps in the complainant's evidence, such as that she could have been experiencing a 'trauma response' that prevented her from providing fuller evidence, or that, due to her age, she may not have thought to note her experiences.

To be fair, at 14, if you're asked has something happened four times, you're not going to be like, actually, for the record, it happened on these dates. (Participant in Group 2)

[To another participant] you're assuming that people know how to contain evidence, a lot of people don't. Quite often when people, for example, are assaulted, they have a shower afterwards and then the evidence washes away. (Participant in Group 4)

Sometimes we lack the details, or we don't really add things in-depth when we're young. (Participant in Group 4)

Once again, this idea was discussed in equal depth across all the groups. Participants across all groups expressed similar levels of sympathy for the complainant, regardless of whether they had sight of or were instructed about the facility dog.

Some discussions included sharing experiences hearing about similar cases and discussed how they might have responded similarly to the complainant. These sentiments, echoed across all four groups, included that 'some people don't come out about it for years and years, decades even', and so it was not implausible that the complainant would have not reported inappropriate contact immediately.

I know that from experience of friends and them speaking to therapists and police that sometimes trauma actually means you don't remember. (Participant in Group 2)

In the absence of concrete evidence of the complainant's character, some speculated what she might be like as a person, or what her emotional responses may have been at the time.

We don't know the girl's personality; she could be a lovely kid who'd never lie in her life.

(Participant in Group 2)

Maybe she was in distress when the uncle is touching you and she couldn't scream or say something to him. (Participant in Group 3)

Although discussion around this particular point was minimal compared to other points raised in favour of the complainant, these discussions were still consistent across all four groups. Together with the conclusions drawn from other pro-complainant themes, it cannot be concluded that the facility dog caused bias in favour of the complainant. If the facility dog did cause bias in favour of the complainant, differences between groups would be expected. However, there do not appear to be significant differences between how groups expressed pro-complainant sentiment, leading to the conclusion that it is unlikely the facility dog caused bias in favour of the complainant.

3.2.2.5 Against the witness

Conversation about the witness was minimal due to the limited involvement of the witness. When people did view the witness unfavourably, it was either because they simply did not believe the witness, or because they laid some of the blame on the witness.

3.2.2.5.1 Not believing the witness

Some participants did not believe the witness as they felt the witness may have made an innocent mistake. Others felt the witness could have misconstrued the touching they saw.

[The witness] may not even be lying because if he did walk past, he might've seen the rubbing of the stomach, he could misconstrue it. (Participant in Group 2)

Other participants simply did not believe the evidence the witness provided. This could be due to the perceived lack of eye contact the witness held while providing evidence, or because they felt the witness's evidence did not make sense.

[The witness] had seen this from the corridor as well, which is slightly peculiar. (Participant in Group 1)

These points were raised by participants across the four groups, suggesting that the dog did not cause bias based on this theme alone.

3.2.2.5.2 Blaming the witness

Sometimes blame was attributed to the witness as much as the complainant. Participants speculated whether the complainant and the witness both were 'putting it on', or 'spinning up a story'.

Well, we have no idea how [the complainant and the witness] really feel about [the defendant] being there, they may have just seen this as a great opportunity to get our own back on him and stop him looking after us again sort of thing. (Participant in Group 2)

Others actively questioned why the witness did not do more to stop the perceived inappropriate contact happening if that is what they saw. Some found the witness's lack of immediate inaction 'strange'.

You'd think [the witness] would be quite angry about it so he'd be more full on, saying no I walked past and [the defendant] was doing that and he shouldn't have been doing it [...] I'd expect that. (Participant in Group 2)

[The witness] walking past, like, you walk past to go to the bathroom are you really looking in? Would you not say something then like 'what you doing? (Participant in Group 3)

These discussions were similar across all four groups. If the dog did cause bias, differences would be expected in terms of how participants in each group engaged with these discussions. As

this was not the case, it is unlikely that the complainant having a facility dog impacted jurors' perceptions of the witness.

3.2.2.6 *In favour of the witness*

There were a few sentiments expressed by participants that conveyed support for the witness. Participants sometimes expressed believing the witness, either by their evidence or by their presentation, and also sympathised with the witness.

3.2.2.6.1 Believing the witness

Some participants commented on how the witness was 'quite believable' and perhaps more so than the complainant. Some participants felt what the witness was saying was plausible.

I didn't think, 'Oh they've cooked up some stories together', because neither of them are exaggerated, [the witness] only said 'I only saw it once' where you might think he could've been vaguer about that but he was very clear that he was only saying what he saw.

(Participant in Group 1)

Where had [the witness] gotten this idea from to tell their dad, 'Your brother did this to my sister'? (Participant in Group 3)

Others believed the witness by the way they presented. Some felt the witness 'looked quite upset' and that 'not making eye contact is the right thing to do [when giving evidence]'.

You shut down or go numb or whatever, [the witness] was wringing the hands and kind of looking, yeah. (Participant in Group 2)

Discussion around this topic was comparatively minimal as participants mostly discussed the defendant and the complainant. However, the conversations that were had around believing the witness were consistent across all groups. If the facility dog caused any bias, there would likely be differences across group discussions, but this was not the case.

3.2.2.6.2 Sympathising with the witness

A handful of participants extended their sympathy to the witness, acknowledging the difficult situation they were in providing evidence of an alleged incident they saw between two family members.

[The witness] might have been embarrassed about it, you know being questioned about it at that age and sort of, he saw it once and thought that would be the end of the questioning.

(Participant in Group 1)

It could just be [the complainant] shut down, trying to block it out, and [the witness] is saying, 'Oh god, this happened to my sister, and I couldn't stop it', but we don't know.

(Participant in Group 2)

Once again, there was little discussion had about the witness but what discussion there was took place in all groups, so all groups expressed sympathy towards the witness. It could be argued that groups one (NDNI) and two (NDWI) had slightly more in-depth conversations expressing sympathy towards the witness, but, together with the conclusions from the previous theme, it is unlikely that the facility dog used by the complainant caused participants to be biased in favour of the witness.

3.2.2.7 Discussions About the Dog

After the main discussion was completed and participants finished the post-opinions questionnaire, those in the experimental conditions were prompted to discuss the facility dog. Participants in the experimental conditions either had sight of the dog and were instructed by the judge not to make any inferences about the court case based on the dog's presence, or they may have had just the former or the latter in the clips of the court case they watched. Despite prompting, participants had minimal discussions about the facility dog. Conversations were

categorised into whether they spoke about dogs from a logistical perspective or about any potential biases towards dogs.

3.2.2.7.1 Dog logistics

Some people discussed facility dogs from a logistical viewpoint, such as how they could be used instead by complainants providing evidence instead of using a teddy bear and a blanket. There were some conversations around how the complainant may have had the facility dog with her for emotional support. Participants also discussed how the dog is trained to not draw attention to themselves while making themselves available for the complainant to touch. Other logistics relating to the dog were discussed, including how facility dogs could be used in courts and the welfare of the dog.

I presume that the way courts are that you're sitting down in a quite high sided level booth and people can see the dog may vary depending on the room. (Participant in Group 3)

They might want to take even more breaks the dog, the ethics of working dogs needs to be taken into account. (Participant in Group 3)

The amount of cases that actually make prosecution and conviction for assault is very low anyway. I think if anything, convictions and prosecutions need to increase rather than basing it off any biases on a dog being there. I think it's less than 10%. (Participant in Group 4)

Some participants discussed the logistics of people having access to a facility dog in a positive way. Participants could see how a facility dog could provide comfort, praising the facility dog in the clip for his stillness during the interview. Participants also divulged their personal experiences of receiving comfort from animals. One participant said even they felt comforted seeing the facility dog in the clip.

[The witness] looked quite uncomfortable, he might have benefitted from having the dog.

The way that the dog laid over [the complainant], it was like, some people that get sensory problems, get overstimulated, having weighted blankets is quite calming, and I think with the dog it stimulates the diaphragm and pressure and it helps to calm you. I have ADHD so I like having a weighted blanket, and I've got two little dogs and when they lay on me, it feels quite nice. (Participant in Group 4)

Participants across the experimental groups understood and discussed why the facility dog was there, without drawing any inferences that explicitly show bias (e.g., 'She must have had the dog because she was traumatised from what her uncle did'). Even group three, who were not provided instructions by the judge, understood the facility dog was present to provide a 'calming effect' for the complainant, suggesting that even without direction, people might understand why a dog would accompany someone providing evidence.

One participant across all experimental conditions discussed the logistics of having a facility dog in a negative light. They did not understand the need for a facility dog and had concerns that the dog might react negatively or cause a distraction.

Why would you need a dog instead of a soft toy? Surely anything could be a calming effect?

(Participant in Group 3)

It should be noted that this participant was from group three, and they did not receive instructions from the judge. The participant appears aware that the facility dog was there to have 'a calming effect', but did not understand the need for it. Although, by itself, this sentiment does not indicate bias, instructions from the judge may be beneficial so everyone is aware of the purpose of the dog.

3.2.2.7.2 Dogs and bias

A small number of participants described how they could see a facility dog potentially causing bias in their judgement.

I did think in my head that it would subconsciously make me think she's a child, she needs comfort. (Participant in Group 2)

This in itself might not highlight bias, as the complainant was actually a child and actually did need comfort, as many people presenting evidence might, therefore this quote is not inaccurate. Furthermore, participants in group two did not have sight of the dog, they were only instructed about the dog by the judge. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that sight of the facility dog would have made this particular participant 'subconsciously' biased. However, there is still perhaps an inference of sympathy for the complainant and it is unclear as to whether this particular participant would have still felt sympathy for the victim if they were in the control condition. Although no comment can be made specifically about this participant, generally the analyses yielded that it is unlikely the facility dog caused bias. So, although some participants thought that they might be biased, this was not identified through the analyses.

Many more participants discussed how they did not feel biased because of the facility dog and could not see how this could happen. Participants to whom the facility dog was visible in the clips of the court case discussed not really noticing the dog.

I wasn't even looking at the dog, I was looking at [the complainant]. (Participant in Group 4)

This also serves to suggest that the facility dog did not cause bias, at least for some participants. A facility dog is trained to not draw attention to themselves (Spruin & Mozova, 2018), therefore if the participants did not really notice the facility dog, this can be viewed positively as the

dog is doing their job. Comments about not noticing the dog also contradict the previous participant's comment that the dog could be a distraction.

Section 4 – Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine jury decision making for cases where facility dogs are involved, and to ascertain whether sight of a facility dog or receiving instructions from a judge about a facility dog providing support for the complainant could impact jury decision making. Participants were allocated to conditions that varied on dog visibility (seen versus unseen) and judge's instructions warning not to make inferences about the defendant's guilt based on the presence of the facility dog in the complainant's pre-recorded interview (received versus withheld). This section will initially provide an overview of findings, drawing associations with relevant research where possible. Methodological strengths and limitations of this study will then be explored, before detailing implications from the present research.

4.1 Summary of Findings from Questionnaire Outcomes

The pre- and post-deliberation questionnaires indicated no significant differences across the four conditions in the extent to which participants believed the complainant, viewed the witness as credible, and thought there was a strong case against the defendant. Therefore, hypothesis one of this study was confirmed. There were no significant differences between personal verdicts reported at either pre- or post-deliberation depending on what group a participant was allocated to, so hypothesis two was also confirmed. These findings are in concordance with previous research that indicated the presence of a facility dog did not cause prejudice amongst mock jurors (Burd & McQuiston, 2019; McDermott, 2022).

There was also little to no self-reported bias in favour of the victim or the defendant due to the facility dog, therefore hypothesis three of this study was confirmed. No known research has investigated the impact of facility dogs on participants' own self-reported bias before, therefore the

present study adds a new dimension to research in this area. Nonetheless, this finding was still expected based on previous research that indicated facility dogs are not perceived to be prejudicial amongst mock jurors (Burd & McQuiston, 2019; McDermott, 2022). The findings from the quantitative data suggest that facility dogs are unlikely to cause bias in juries, either from the sight of them or being instructed about them by a judge.

The present study attempted to control for other factors that could impact jury decision making, including political leaning and personality type (e.g., Clark et al., 2007). Due to the small sample size, it was not possible to conduct this analysis. Interestingly, however, there did appear to be a difference in opinions about the court case depending on participants' political leaning, whereby conservative participants, on average, viewed the complainant as less believable, the witness as less credible, and the defendant as more believable. It was not possible to draw conclusions as to whether this could impact facility dogs being prejudicial, however, future research may be interested in controlling for political leaning when investigating this area.

4.2 Summary of Findings from Quantitative Analysis of Group Discussions

Jury deliberations were analysed to examine whether there were any differences in how groups discussed the fictional court case. The quantitative content analysis in this section helps to address the research question that asks how, if at all, do judicial instructions and visibility of the facility dog impact on jury decision making. The results from this section initially propose that the facility dog causes bias against the complainant and the defendant; however, when contextualising these findings, it becomes apparent that this is unlikely to be the case.

The control condition (NDNI) expressed the highest number of pro-complainant statements, particularly in comparison to group four (WDWI) who expressed the least number of pro-complainant statements despite having both sight of and being instructed by the judge about the facility dog. While, in the first instance, it could be assumed that the facility dog biased the

participants of group four against the complainant, there is no evidence in the qualitative content analysis, which will shortly be discussed, or in the questionnaire data that supports bias against the complainant in group four. As there were no differences across groups in frequencies of anti-complainant sentiments, this does not support any conclusions that sight of and instructions about the facility dog could bias juries against the complainant. Furthermore, when inspecting the frequencies, group four expressed an equal number of pro-complainant and anti-complainant statements, which could indicate that they held balanced views about the complainant. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that group four were biased against the complainant.

Group four (WDWI) also expressed significantly more anti-defendant statements than the group with the fewest anti-defendant statements which was group two (NDWI). This finding alone could suggest that the facility dog caused bias against the defendant. Both groups two and four received instructions about the facility dog, but only group four had sight of the dog. It could therefore be argued that sight of the dog could have biased juries against the defendant. However, if sight of the facility dog caused bias, differences between groups two and three (WDNI) would also be expected, particularly as the latter did not receive instructions about the facility dog; this was not the case. Furthermore, although group four made the greatest number of anti-defendant statements, they also made an almost equal number of pro-defendant statements, by just one. Thus, group four may actually have been balanced when discussing the defendant. When looking at pro-defendant statements, there are no statistically significant differences across groups, and if group four were biased, it might be expected that they would make comparatively fewer pro-defendant statements, but this was not the case. All of this, together with the questionnaire data, makes it unlikely that group four were biased against the defendant because of the facility dog.

No group referenced the facility dog during the initial deliberation period. When juries were prompted to discuss the facility dog, there were few statements made about the facility dog during

the five-minute period allocated for this part of the discussion. No group used the whole five minutes assigned to discuss the facility dog, which could be indicative of the lack of attention given to the facility dog. Discussion was either around the logistics of using a facility dog, or the potential for facility dogs to cause bias. Participants mostly discussed the former, reflecting on how they could see facility dogs would be helpful for people giving interviews and providing testimony. Some conversations around bias found participants disagreeing that a dog could cause bias. Four statements from the same participant expressed self-suspected bias, however, this is not corroborated by the self-report data nor the content analysis. Therefore, although they speculated a dog could bias them, this suggestion may be unfounded.

4.3 Summary of Findings from the Qualitative Content Analysis

The qualitative data were analysed to understand how juries make decisions for cases where facility dogs are involved. As mentioned previously, the facility dog was not discussed without prompting, which in itself provides support for the use of facility dogs in courts as the facility dog did not explicitly factor into any decision-making processes. Facility dogs are trained not to draw attention to themselves (Spruin & Mozova, 2018), therefore that no participant discussed the facility dog without being prompted highlights how the dog was able to successfully carry out his role and had no discernible impact on jury decision making processes.

When analysing and comparing themes across groups from the discussions, there appeared to be a lack of bias present either in favour of or against the complainant or the defendant. Groups almost equally raised the same remarks against the defendant, and in the same level of depth, criticising inconsistencies with the defendant's testimony and questioning why he would touch his niece. In terms of pro-defendant sentiment, it appeared at first that sight of the facility dog (i.e., group three [WDNI] and group four [WDWI]) could influence juries to express more sympathy towards the defendant. However, it is unlikely that the facility dog could cause bias in

favour of the defendant as further inspection highlights how group four made the greatest number of anti-defendant statements, and that groups three and four did not express a disproportionate amount of pro-defendant sentiment in other ways, such as simply believing the defendant because of his presentation, or believing that the uncle did not need consent to touch his niece.

When investigating bias towards the complainant, generally there were similarities across groups in how they expressed anti-complainant sentiment. All groups expressed elements of blaming the complainant, and not believing the complainant because of a perceived conflict in claims or because of the complainant's presentation. In terms of pro-complainant statements, themes were similar across all groups, and generally were discussed to the same extent. No group mentioned just believing the complainant because of her presentation, as was the case with pro-defendant sentiments. If the facility dog did influence jurors, it might be expected that participants in groups three and four would express believing the complainant based on her appearance. The absence of any reference to the complainant's appearance further provides support that it is unlikely the facility dog caused bias in favour of the complainant.

Similarities were observed across group discussions around the witness. When discussing reasons why people did not believe the witness, participants generally raised the same themes and discussed this in equal measures. Groups did not discuss believing the witness in very much detail, however from these analyses, it cannot be concluded that the complainant's use of the facility dog cause any bias in favour of or against the witness, either by sight or by instructions from the judge.

This is the first known study to analyse discussions in mock juries where the court case involves the complainant using a facility dog. For this reason, there is no direct comparison in the literature. However, the qualitative analysis could not lead to conclusions that the facility dog

biased a jury either in favour of or against the complainant or defendant, and this finding is in line with previous research (Burd & McQuiston, 2019; McDermott, 2022).

4.4 Overall Discussion of Findings

The analysis helps to understand how juries may come to decisions about a court case. Many aspects of the court case were discussed, but of most interest to the present study, it appears that the facility dog either by sight or by the judge's direction did not influence how juries came to their decisions, lending support for the use of facility dogs in courts. As no differences between groups were found that suggest facility dogs could bias juries, with or without instructions from the judge, the present study suggests visibility of the facility dog might not be detrimental to the defendant's case, as is often argued (Bowers, 2021; Grimm, 2013; Ensminger et al., 2020). This is somewhat in contrast to current advice (e.g., Jones & Miller, 2021) that it may be wise for facility dogs to be out of sight from the jury where possible, where the present study suggests there may be no adverse impact whether the facility dog is in or out of sight.

Regardless of no significant differences being found between groups, instructions from the judge might still be beneficial. This is especially given that dogs, however well trained they are, could potentially snore in the witness box and this would have to be explained, as detailed by a participant in Chapter Three of this thesis. Participants in the present study were provided with transcripts, including judicial instructions informing them they must reach a verdict based on the evidence in front of them, and, in two of the conditions, to not make any inferences about the complainant having a facility dog. Providing transcripts and instructions has been suggested to be helpful as it can improve recall amongst jurors (Leverick, 2014; as cited in Callander, 2016). Indeed, where directions are clear and unambiguous, they can be beneficial and effective (Callander, 2016). It is suggested that such instructions are reviewed by experts to ensure they are accessible and comprehensible (Callander, 2016).

The literature review earlier in this chapter explored factors that could affect jury decision making. One study detailed how, with mock juries who reviewed a case of child sexual abuse, three variables strongly associated with conviction were similar fact evidence, evidence from a person who witnessed the offending, and positive medical evidence or DNA (Blackwell & Seymour, 2014). Participants in the present study were arguably given the former two by way of the complainant and the witness's testimony corroborating (as noted by some participants themselves), yet no jury decided to convict, and few participants personally returned a guilty verdict post-deliberation. This cannot necessarily be linked to the use of the facility dog, or lack thereof, but may indicate there are other factors that influence jury decision making.

Victim demeanour has also been found to influence jury decision making. Although it is not entirely clear cut, literature explored earlier in this chapter found that when victims cry or appear emotional while giving testimony, they are viewed more credibly (Jenkins et al., 2023; Pals et al., 2023). This is important to note because this highlights the need for an intervention to minimise jurors' reliance on victims' demeanour as a means for assessing credibility. One such way of doing this is through judicial instructions; as explored previously, they can be effective in enhancing jurors' knowledge and understanding (Call & Wingrove, 2022; Callander, 2016) and have been suggested to reduce biased opinions of victim credibility based on victims' demeanour (Bollingmo et al. 2009). Additionally, facility dogs can also help in this aspect. In Chapters Two and Three of this thesis, dogs have been conceptualised as having a calming effect and helping victims to provide more coherent testimonies. If vulnerable victims and witnesses are allowed to use facility dogs in court, this could actually minimise jury bias by enabling them to provide evidence in a calm way that will not influence the jury to view the victim as more credible because of their demeanour. Together with the findings from this study that facility dogs do not bias juries, there is strong evidence that their use should be permitted in courts.

Other factors suggested by research that could have influenced jury decision making include the age of the complainant. Research has suggested adolescent victims are blamed more for sexual abuse, and perceived as more culpable and less credible (Bottoms et al., 2014; Klettke et al., 2018; Sheahan et al., 2017). Increased perceptions of victim credibility are linked to increased likelihood of a guilty verdict (Pals et al., 2023). The complainant in the present study was an adolescent under the age of 16, and therefore she could have been impacted by such perceptions; this could particularly be evidenced by no juries returning a guilty verdict, and very few participants personally believing the defendant was guilty. This is not likely something that can be remedied using a facility dog, however this could potentially explain some of the anti-complainant sentiments that were expressed by participants, particularly those in group four.

The victim-defendant relationship was also suggested by research to have an impact on juries (e.g., Osborn et al., 2018). However, there is no known research investigating whether the relationship between an uncle and his niece could impact jury decision making. This did appear to factor into the present study as some jurors stated the uncle (the defendant) does not need consent to touch his niece (the complainant). Although this discussion did arise, it is unclear how much it could have impacted jury decision making.

Juror characteristics have also been found to influence jury decision making, particularly extraversion in jurors (Clark et al., 2007) and identification with the victim (Culhane et al., 2004). From the data collected, this study was not able to make associations between personality types and verdicts or opinions about the court case. Averages for extraversion across groups were generally similar, which could reflect the type of person who would voluntarily sign up for a study that would involve deliberation with others. As personality types across participants were generally similar (as per the TIPI-10; Gosling et al., 2003) it is unlikely that extraversion would have impacted jury decision making for the present study. In terms of identification with the victim, only a few

participants brought in first- or second-hand experiences when discussing the court case. From this, it is not entirely clear if they were aligning themselves with the victim per se, so it is unlikely that findings in this study were significantly impacted by this factor, which research suggests increases the likelihood of guilty verdicts (Culhane et al., 2004).

4.5 Methodological Strengths

Previous research has suggested jury deliberation can mitigate personal opinions and prejudices jurors may hold (Curley et al., 2022), demonstrating a drawback to conventional research methods in this area that rely on questionnaire data (e.g., Thomas, 2020). The present study is the first known piece of research to investigate the impact of a facility dog on jury decision making where participants convene as juries to discuss the fictional court case. This study is also one of few pieces of research that uses the Hydra Suite, a state-of-the-art simulation suite that is widely used across the UK to facilitate decision making over potentially difficult cases in the safety of a simulation suite. In this study, the Hydra Suite enabled participants to come together and discuss the court case enabling natural interactions in ‘the most realistic immersion possible’ (Hydra Foundation, 2024). This has increased the ecological validity of these findings, thus contributing to current insights as to what impact a facility dog could have on jury decision making.

During the fictional court case that was presented to participants, the complainant and witness do not undergo cross-examination. Instead, the complainant and witness provide evidence in a pre-recorded interview, and the defendant provides evidence in court. This was chosen as vulnerable victims and witnesses can use special measures in conjunction with other accommodations (Ensminger et al., 2020; Roby, 2013). Many vulnerable victims and witnesses provide evidence through pre-recorded interviews as, after providing evidence this way, it enables them to begin to move on with their lives and aside from waiting for a verdict, and they do not have to anticipate providing evidence on a specific date in court that could end up being postponed

(Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2021). Therefore, this study provides support for the use of facility dogs when evidence is given by complainants and witnesses in this particular way. Future research could investigate how facility dogs are discussed by juries when, for example, the complainant provides evidence in court.

4.6 Methodological Limitations

Like all research, this study is not without limitations. One limitation is that, due to an unexpected number of participants dropping out on the day of the study, the aim of recruiting 12 participants per 'jury' was not met. Participant numbers fluctuated between groups, and groups that did not have sight of the facility dog had more participants than groups that did have sight of the facility dog. Although this did not appear to outwardly jeopardise discussions, as each group actively deliberated for the same amount of time, the lack of numbers may not entirely reflect a real jury process. The study still ran with reduced numbers as the recommended number of people to effectively run a Hydra scenario is six, and all groups had six or more participants. Additionally, previous studies exploring jury decision making have used juries consisting of six participants, and some might argue this is more beneficial as it ensures all participants' voices are heard (Gavin & Scott, 2016; Golding et al., 2017). Nonetheless, future studies investigating this area could aim to recruit more participants to perhaps better reflect how discussions might be with bigger juries.

The literature explored earlier on in this chapter detailed differences in decision making across genders, particularly in cases where crimes of a sexual nature are concerned (e.g., Dunlap et al., 2011; Golding et al., 2007). There might also be differences in verdicts based on whether the defendant is male or female (e.g., Stevens et al., 2021). Based on this, another drawback of the current study is that it was not possible to evenly balance genders in juries due to the relative lack of male participants. This could reflect real-life juries where people are chosen at random (Citizens Advice, 2024), therefore the randomised element of group allocation is quite realistic and free from

any potential researcher bias. Regardless, this may be a consideration for future research wishing to explore this area through the creation of mock juries.

A final limitation is perhaps the depth of the case. The present study was not designed to be time-consuming for participants, and for this reason, the Hydra scenarios were relatively brief. The clips of the court cases presented were around ten minutes long depending on which condition participants were assigned to. The fictional court case was adapted from previous research and therefore has precedence and established value (Burd & McQuiston, 2019). There was also merit in the court case lacking great detail as too much information could restrict discussion as it may become too easy to conclude whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty. The limited evidence provided caused frustration with some participants who would have preferred more detail with which they could deliberate the case. However, further detail would have increased the jury deliberation time, which could also have impacted participant recruitment as people may be less likely to sign up for a more time-consuming piece of research. Moreover, it can be argued that the little detail given in this experiment is reflective of real scenarios; Call and Wingrove (2022) discuss how some child-related crimes such as child sexual abuse have little evidence involved. Nonetheless, future studies wishing to examine jury bias in controlled conditions should bear this in mind when designing such research.

4.7 Implications

The findings from this study provide strong support for arguments that facility dogs do not bias juries either in favour of the witness or against the defendant. Appeals from defence teams citing that facility dogs can cause bias have successfully been accepted (Ensminger et al., 2020; Jones & Miller, 2021; Kaiser, 2015), however these claims, while powerful and impactful, are largely unfounded. This research argues that facility dogs do not cause bias in juries, and that they can therefore be used safely in courts around the world to support vulnerable people, who might

otherwise face extreme challenges when they provide evidence. Particularly in a landscape where victims in the UK feel reluctant to report crime (Commissioner for Victims of Crime, 2024) and find engaging with the criminal justice system retraumatising (McLeod et al., 2010; Pettitt et al., 2013), it is important that victims have at their disposal resources that can encourage them to engage with the criminal justice system, and help them provide more coherent, stronger evidence, which facility dogs can help with (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020b). With the findings from this research, opposition to facility dog programmes due to their potentiality to cause bias can be refuted, to provide victims with the support they might need in court.

The use of judicial instructions is also supported by the present research. It is important when developing judicial instructions that they are as clear and nonbiased as possible, to ensure they do not cause more harm than good (Bollingmo et al., 2009; Callander, 2016). The judge in the present study gave specific instructions about the facility dog before the proceedings commenced, and a transcript was also available for participants to peruse. These choices were in line with research that suggests written directions improve juror recall and comprehension (Madison et al., 2023), and that directions should be given at the start of the trial rather than the beginning (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). In following these guidelines, the present study did not find any adverse impact of judicial instructions on jury decision making, suggesting that judicial instructions can and should be employed where possible.

The present study is the first known study where participants come together to deliberate in a near realistic setting around a fictional court case where a facility dog is used by the complainant. With the employment of a state-of-the-art simulation suite helping to recreate how jury deliberations happen, the present study uses a new and innovative way to investigate jury decision making. A large amount of research conducted previously has successfully used surveys to understand jurors' decision-making processes (e.g. Grubb & Harrower, 2009; Klettke et al., 2018),

including with the use of facility dog programmes (Burd & McQuiston, 2019; McDermott, 2022). While this is effective, it only provides a snapshot of a person's opinion at one point in time, and such research designs cannot capture processes as to how juries make decisions. By using the Hydra Suite, this study was able to achieve a near realistic recreation of the experience of deliberating in a jury. Although the Hydra Suite is available in many parts of the world now, this study is the first of its kind to use the Hydra Suite to improve the depth of understanding around jury decision making processes, laying the groundwork for future research in this area seeking to employ innovative methods.

Section 5 – Conclusion

The current chapter explored the final study of this thesis, investigating potential jury bias in a fictional court case where a facility dog accompanies the complainant while they are providing evidence. Existing research in jury decision making was explored, including potential factors impacting jury decision making, and the small amount of research that has already investigated the area of facility dogs and jury bias. Information was given about the final experiment in this thesis, detailing how a mixed methods design, in line with the research approach adopted for this thesis, was adopted to examine potential jury bias with the use of facility dogs in a fictional court case detailing sexual contact with a child. Using a state-of-the-art simulation suite, known as the Hydra Suite, participants completed questionnaires and engaged in discussions around the fictional court case, with conditions varying depending on whether participants had visibility of the facility dog and whether they were given judicial instructions about the facility dog. Analysis of the questionnaire data did not find that participants who had sight of or were directed about the facility dog were likelier to provide a guilty verdict, or show bias in favour of or against the complainant, defendant, or witness. Quantitative analysis of the discussions did, however, find differences although the interpretation of these differences was not straightforward. Indeed, although there

were differences between the four conditions whereby group four, that had sight of and instructions about the dog, expressed a greater number of anti-complainant and -defendant sentiments, they also expressed the same number of pro-complainant and -defendant statements that the group made, therefore within the context of the group, it could be said that there was no bias against either the complainant or the defendant. Further analysis of discussions helped to understand how juries reached their decisions, and the facility dog did not arise in any discussions, suggesting that the facility dog did not factor into any participant's conscious decision making. When prompted to discuss the facility dog, most participants discussed the logistics of facility dog programmes, including how they could potentially be helpful. Overall, findings do not indicate that the facility dog caused any bias in jury decision making. This study, therefore, lends support to the use of facility dogs in courts in the UK. Further research could be beneficial in providing additional support to the use of facility dogs, particularly with some variables changed, such as a different type of court case.

Chapter Five: General Discussion and Recommendations

Section 1 – Overview

The introductory chapter of this thesis explored an abundance of research, both in the UK and outside of the UK, investigating the impact of crime, including the socio-emotional impact (Langton & Truman, 2014) and the socio-economic impact of crime (Heeks et al., 2018). Despite the disproportionate impact of crime on the most vulnerable (e.g. Majeed-Ariss et al., 2021), there is very little in the way of emotional support for victims and witnesses to improve their engagement with and experience of the criminal justice system after a crime is reported.

Emotional support is particularly important where vulnerable victims and witnesses are concerned. It is thought that around 38% to 56% who report crimes are vulnerable (Aihio et al., 2017; Burton et al., 2006). This figure can vary by crime, so, for example, with homicide, 61% of victims are identified as vulnerable (Home Office, 2020). Despite the high numbers of vulnerable victims and witnesses, there is very little emotional support for them in the criminal justice system. Special measures are available to support vulnerable victims and witnesses, however they are generally practically supportive rather than emotionally; for example, live links help victims practically to provide evidence, and intermediaries are used to help communication, not for emotional support (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). Reporting a crime can be incredibly stressful, with people feeling intimidated and anxious and feeling a lack of support just at the initial stage of the criminal justice process (McLeod et al., 2010). If enough evidence is collected, this then progresses to court, and many court users experience stress, anxiety, and/or retraumatisation to such an extent that they discontinue proceedings altogether (McLeod et al., 2010). Attrition rates are a serious issue in the UK (Bunting, 2008; Hohl & Stanko, 2015; Murphy et al., 2022) and they are especially common across serious crimes (Barrow-Grint, 2016; Smith & Skinner, 2012).

In a criminal justice system where victims and witnesses often do not feel empathy and support from staff they encounter and processes they must undergo (Maddox et al., 2011; McLeod et al., 2010), there is a necessity to direct attention to how emotional support can be provided, which would allow full and effective participation by victims and potentially minimise retraumatisation. One way of improving the emotional support victims and witnesses receive, and their relationship with criminal justice staff which is a key factor in attrition for some crimes (Maddox et al., 2011), is through the use of facility dogs.

Facility dog programmes are conceptualised as revolutionary in the support they provide to victims and witnesses, particularly children (Dellinger, 2009; Roby, 2015), with victims and survivors detailing how positive an impact facility dogs have had on their experiences in the criminal justice system (Spruin et al., 2020a). Despite the widespread use of justice facility dog programmes in North America and elsewhere (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024), this programme is not available in the UK and there is minimal research across the world investigating this area. The overall aim of this thesis, therefore, was to provide a strong and significant contribution to the small evidence base investigating the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system by analysing existing data and collecting new data to fill gaps in knowledge and inform practice and research around their use. To achieve this aim, the current research sought answers to questions around what the potential impact of dogs supporting victims in the criminal justice system is; what are current perceptions of facility dog programmes by professionals working with them; and, finally, what potential influence can facility dogs have on jury decision making. Together, findings help to shed light on whether facility dog programmes are feasible and should be considered by the UK criminal justice system.

To orient this thesis and inform subsequent studies in this thesis, a systematic review was carried out; the first known systematic review in this area. The aim was to collate what empirical

research there is on the impact that therapy and facility dogs supporting victims and witnesses have in the criminal justice system. An unexpected finding of this systematic review, amongst many others that will be explored later in this chapter, included that policing and court staff working with and around dogs also reaped benefits. These findings informed the next study carried out in this thesis.

The second study sought to understand better how professionals from Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, the US, and the UK who work with facility dogs perceived their impact on victims, the people supporting victims, and also themselves. This was a key piece of research to carry out as previous research largely investigated views and opinions of professionals in the US (e.g., Spruin et al., 2020b). Additionally, at the time data were collected, there was no research intentionally investigating the impact dogs in the criminal justice system had on staff. Amongst many findings derived from this study, which will be explored later in this chapter, participants expressed concerns around arguments made predominantly by defence teams that facility dogs could potentially be prejudicial.

Based on these concerns, the final study in this thesis used the Hydra Suite, a simulation suite described as ‘the gold standard’ (Hydra Foundation, 2024), to create a realistic scenario where participants congregated as juries to discuss a fictional court case, where a facility dog was used by the complainant. The aim of this research was to examine jury decision making for cases where facility dogs were being used by victims, and to ascertain whether and, indeed, to what extent a facility dog could bias. Findings from this study could help to inform practice and future research in this area.

The present chapter will explore the significant contribution this thesis has made to the small body of research that has investigated the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system. Findings from the studies in this thesis are synthesised and situated within existing

knowledge, grounding these findings in existing knowledge. Methodological and interpretative limitations of this research will be explored. Finally, the current chapter will present implications of the findings of this research and provide guidance for both practice and future research.

Section 2 – Summary of Research Findings

The first study in this thesis was a systematic review, carried out to collate empirical research around the impact dogs supporting victims and witnesses have in the criminal justice system. Due to the scarcity of previous research, the scope of the review was broadened from the impact of facility dogs only, to the impact of therapy dogs as well. The scope of the review also included victims and witnesses in any criminal justice setting, including in police stations or courts. Some studies used in this review were carried out in child advocacy centres, which are used in North America to support child-victims of crime in many facets, including during interviews and support after an investigation has closed. Findings from this systematic review detailed how dogs provide support, such as giving companionship to victims during an otherwise solitary experience. Dogs appear to impact victims on several levels: biologically, dogs were often found to help lower physiological markers of stress, including blood pressure, heart rate, and salivary cortisol levels; psychologically, victims reported experiencing more positive emotions, and observations revealed a change in demeanour in participants, including visibly smiling and no longer shaking or crying. This, in turn, appeared to impact engagement with the criminal justice system. Indeed, policing and court staff remarked how dogs helped victims and witnesses provide fuller testimonies and interviews, and helped them engage better with the criminal justice system in general. Some staff also commented on the stress that they experience themselves in their work, and how they found dogs beneficial for their own wellbeing.

Although there is some research investigating benefits of dogs in the workplace (Kline et al., 2020; Pruskowski et al., 2020), there is little to no research investigating how facility dogs can have

an impact on professionals in the criminal justice system specifically. Additionally, most of the research investigating the impact of facility dogs was conducted in North America, particularly in the US (e.g., Spruin et al., 2020a). This meant that the opinions of international professionals working with facility dogs were not yet captured in research, despite facility dog programmes becoming more widespread (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024). Moreover, the systematic review in this thesis highlighted how the impact dogs on policing and court staff, who often experience high levels of burnout and job turnover (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019; Walsh et al., 2018), is underexplored. Therefore, the next study sought to capture the opinions of professionals across the world who worked with facility dogs, specifically regarding the perceived impact facility dogs can have on victims and themselves, and any issues they experience with the use of facility dogs.

The second study adopted a survey and interview research design to engage participants globally, to explore their opinions on facility dog programmes. The survey consisted of statements relating to the impact facility dogs could have on victims and professionals. Participants indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with these statements. Some participants were interviewed as well, and findings revealed the overwhelmingly positive opinions participants had regarding the impact facility dogs had on victims. Participants expressed largely positive opinions facility dogs had on themselves as well, and an association was made between the perceived benefits for victims and perceived benefits for professionals. Differences in opinions were found across countries, where the US expressed more positive opinions than other countries combined (namely, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, and the UK). The survey and interviews also aimed to explore issues with facility dog programmes, and therefore included a question as to whether participants thought facility dogs could cause jury bias, as this is a contentious argument often cited in the literature (Bowers, 2013; Grimm, 2013). Survey responses, on average, disagreed that dogs could bias juries. Interview responses vehemently rejected the argument that dogs could bias

a jury, although participants were keen for research to be conducted in this area for of the elimination of doubt.

Based on this, a randomised controlled experiment was designed to assess whether, and indeed the extent to which, a facility dog could bias juries in favour of the complainant or against the defendant. Through a combination of pre- and post-questionnaires and a qualitative analysis of jury discussions, findings suggest that either sight of or judicial instructions about a facility dog do not cause bias amongst juries. When the participants in the experimental conditions were prompted to discuss the facility dog, discussions were sparse, and many points made were about how participants could see facility dogs being beneficial for people giving evidence. Most participants elaborated that the dog would cause no bias for them. One participant posited that they could see themselves being biased because of the facility dog, but this is not supported by pre- and post-deliberation questionnaires or the discussions they had with other jurors.

The findings from this thesis have made a significant contribution to and extended on the small amount of research that has already been conducted in this field. The following section of this chapter will situate these findings within existing literature before discussing implications of this research.

Section 3 – Overall Discussion of Findings

As discussed above and in previous chapters of this thesis, findings from the studies conducted for this research correspond with and extend on current research. The specific findings for these studies can be found in the respective chapters (Chapters 2-4), and this section will only discuss how the overall findings from these studies, together, are situated in relation to other research investigating the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system. This structure is sectioned around three core themes within this thesis: the impact on victims and witnesses, the

impact on professionals, and the applicability of facility dog programmes in the criminal justice system.

3.1 Impact on Victims, Witnesses and Their Support

This thesis provides overwhelming support for the benefits facility dogs have for victims and witnesses of crime. The systematic review in Chapter Two and the interviews and surveys with legal professionals in Chapter Three highlight the significant benefits facility dog programmes have for victims, witnesses, and their support, including with court users' emotional wellbeing as well as their engagement with the criminal justice system. The finding that facility dogs are beneficial for emotional wellbeing corresponds with both research around facility dogs in other settings, including healthcare settings (Holman et al., 2018), anecdotal evidence about justice facility dogs specifically (Roby, 2015), empirical research investigating dogs' influence on biomarkers of stress (Krause-Parello et al., 2018b), and empirical research using self-report data and observations to assess the impact of dogs on victims' wellbeing (Spruin et al., 2020b).

As well as highlighting the benefits facility dogs have, it is important to explore some arguments against them. Some authors who oppose the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system accept that facility dogs are more beneficial than dolls as sources of comfort when people are providing evidence (Ensminger et al., 2020). It is generally acknowledged that dogs are sentient beings and therefore this is more beneficial than dolls, which are inanimate objects, incapable of reacting to human emotions (Grimm, 2013). Still, advocates or a support person are viewed as a better alternative, although this can vary depending on where the support person is situated in the court in relation to the victim, due to the potentiality of the support person causing the victim to be viewed as less credible by a jury, which will be explored later on in this discussion (Grimm, 2013; McAuliff et al., 2015). It could be argued that situating a support person away from the witness

does not take into account how important proximity to the source of support could be for a witness.

Findings from the systematic review conducted in Chapter Two provide a framework for understanding how dogs benefit witnesses, whereby proximity to the dog is important when a victim becomes distressed (Spruin et al., 2019; Spruin et al., 2020b). This is partly thought to be due to the proximity that can be maintained between a dog and the person providing evidence; a sense of companionship and support is fostered (Spruin et al., 2019; Spruin et al., 2020b) which a support person would not be able to do wherever they were seated in court. Participants in Chapter Three also detail how important the weight of the dog is in comforting victims, and how breathing with the dog can be beneficial in calming victims.

Findings from Chapters Two and Three detail how just holding onto the dog's lead is beneficial for people as a grounding technique (Spruin et al., 2019; Spruin et al., 2020b), and how petting the dog was linked to decreased systolic blood pressure which is an indicator of the reduced stress levels victims could experience when the dog is in close proximity (Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015). These findings are further supported by results from Chapter Three where the thematic analysis of survey responses and interviews found that, however distressed a person was, when the dog was brought in and they could pet them, they would appear visibly calmer. One participant even detailed how a witness was in such a state that they could not answer simple questions about how their day was, until the facility dog was brought in, and the witness became calmer and more articulate. These effects are also supported by observations from Spruin et al.'s (2020b) study where survivors were visibly calmer and their self-report anxiety scores were significantly lower when interacting with the facility dog. Findings from Chapter Three saw facility dogs being described as a 'positive distraction' when participants would pet the dog as a moment's break during interviews, which again is supported by evidence in the criminal justice system

(Spruin et al., 2020b) and in wider settings as well (Curley et al., 2021). This provides further insight into how a dog could be beneficial for witnesses in a way that a comfort item or a support person cannot be, and the importance of proximity and tactile interaction when a person is providing evidence. Where existing special measures are designed to aim communication rather than comfort (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019), dogs appear to be an efficacious form of emotional support, filling a gap in existing special measures.

In addition to the comfort facility dogs provide, anecdotal evidence suggests they can also provide continuity of support (*State v Dye*; as cited in Ensminger et al., 2020). This reinforces findings from the systematic review in Chapter Two where a sense of companionship, as though the dog is only there to support them, is one of the many ways that makes dogs an impactful source of support for victims (Spruin et al., 2020b). Similar findings were identified in Chapter Three where participants detail how important it is that victims have that consistency in support through interviews and testimonies, for the entire journey of their case. The thematic analysis in Chapter Three also found professionals in the criminal justice system detailing the trust victims have towards the dog, where they may have experienced a violation of trust after experiencing the crime they have reported (Dinisman & Moroz, 2023). This trust could potentially be difficult to foster with an advocate or a support person whereas results from both the quantitative and qualitative analysis in Chapter Three revealed that facility dogs can act as a bridge between a victim and the professionals they are working with. Indeed, in Chapter Three, almost all participants agreed that facility dogs help them to build rapport and deal more effectively with victims, a benefit that is particularly important given the need for criminal justice staff to build good rapport with witnesses (Ministry of Justice, 2022). The qualitative analysis suggests rapport becomes easier to build because the victim quickly builds trust with the facility dog, and when the facility dog is seen to be trusting of the professional, the victim is then also able to trust the professional. The idea that

facility dogs act as a bridge between victims and professionals is supported by research (Spruin et al., 2020b). Findings from Chapters Two and Three extend on existing literature by describing how this mechanism takes place and the far-reaching impact facility dogs have when used in the criminal justice system. These findings further demonstrate how facility dogs provide support for victims in a way that an advocate or a support person might not be able to, and certainly not a comfort item.

Findings from this thesis illustrate how dogs can be beneficial over comfort items. As mentioned previously, dogs are sentient beings and can provide companionship to victims, a fact that is even acknowledged by those who oppose the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system (Grimm, 2013; Ensminger et al., 2020). Findings from Chapter Two detail how, as sentient beings, facility dogs can help people relax, and even act as a 'trauma shield'. Chapter Three shared similar findings, where survey respondents and interviewees alike described facility dogs as a 'trauma shield', an important finding given the retraumatisation people experience going through the criminal justice system (Ritchie & Long, 2021). Krause-Parello and Gulick (2015) shared similar findings, concluding from their research investigating biomarkers of stress, that dogs act as a 'buffer' or 'safeguard' for children disclosing details of sexual abuse. Findings from Chapter Three provide support for and extend on this study by detailing the effects of how dogs act as a 'buffer'.

Chapter Two provides undeniable evidence of the benefits dogs have for victims. Thought to be a result of dogs creating a calming environment and acting as a 'trauma shield' for victims providing evidence, victims and survivors appear to become confident, relaxed, and more empowered to share their experiences, which, again, is supported by research (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020a; Spruin et al., 2020b). Moreover, evidence from professionals detailed in Chapter Three shows that almost all participants agreed how, with the help of facility dogs and the calming environment they create, victims begin communicating more effectively, opening up about

their experiences, and displaying improved emotional wellbeing. This results in the improved engagement and fuller disclosures reported in Chapters Two and Three, and the implications of their improved engagement are discussed in the next section. In Chapter Four, when prompted to discuss the facility dog, even participants with no known prior experience of facility dog programmes understood how they could be beneficial for victims, demonstrating further support for the use of facility dog programmes.

Finally, it is important to note the impact facility dogs have on the people supporting victims. Participants in Chapter Three detailed how parents felt calmer in the presence of the facility dog, a finding that is supported by previous research. Indeed Spruin et al. (2020b) detail how people supporting victims felt reassured knowing, as they were unable to go into interview themselves, the facility dog would be there for the victims, and how even just the presence of the facility dog helped the people supporting victims feel calmer in themselves. Findings in this thesis support previous research, illustrating the far-reaching impact facility dogs have, and provide a convincing argument for the use of facility dogs in the UK criminal justice system.

3.2 Impact on Professionals

Findings from this thesis did not only yield that facility dogs benefit victims and their support, but they also appear to benefit the professionals working with them as well, in multiple ways. From the perspective of improved ways of working, the systematic review in Chapter Two highlights how dogs can improve engagement with the criminal justice system. Dogs can impact on victims' engagement by helping interviewers be perceived as friendly and likeable, which, in turn, helps to build rapport between interviewer and interviewee (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020a). As detailed previously, facility dogs can help victims and survivors communicate more coherently and last longer during interviews (Howell et al., 2021), which could help legal professionals in their roles. This was raised in the survey and interview responses in Chapter Three,

where participants detailed how rapport building is key, and the amount of time it takes does not necessarily matter as, without good rapport building, the quality of evidence or the time taken to collect this evidence could be impacted. However, participants elaborated that if there is a way of speeding up the process of rapport building, this would be beneficial, particularly in terms of the high workload professionals in the criminal justice system often have (e.g., Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2021; Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019). This is supported by research that details how facility dogs can act as a bridge between victims and professionals (Spruin et al., 2020a), which could potentially positively impact staff workload if they are able to achieve something that could take days in a much shorter amount of time, further demonstrating the positive impact facility dogs can have in the criminal justice system.

Facility dogs were suggested to support professionals in other areas of their work. Chapter Three shows that almost all survey respondents felt facility dogs inspire them in the work they do, and many agreed that facility dogs provide them with greater job satisfaction. This finding is supported by Halls and Mills (2019) who discovered that professionals outside of the criminal justice system who often brought pet dogs into the workplace reported improved wellbeing and job satisfaction. It is important to focus on occupational wellbeing due to the low levels of job satisfaction that have been found amongst staff working in the UK criminal justice system (Hagan & Kay, 2007), and the increasing number of judicial staff intending to leave their roles (Thomas, 2023). This thesis has created new knowledge in terms of understanding how facility dogs impact the occupational wellbeing of people working in the criminal justice system.

Findings from this thesis also lend support to the use of facility dogs in improving the mental health of professionals working in the criminal justice system. Indeed, Chapter Three details how the majority of survey respondents agreed that facility dogs help them cope with strains of the job and deal with emotional aspects of work. Survey respondents also reported that

facility dogs help them feel less fatigued. These findings are supported by research by Binfet et al. (2020) who found that therapy dogs helped legal professionals with their mental health and stress reduction, and Walsh et al. (2018) who reported that investigative interviewers in the US who worked with facility dogs reported less stress compared to investigative interviewers who used therapy dogs. This thesis reinforces these findings and makes a significant contribution to this small body of research by detailing how facility dogs, specifically, could help with the mental health of professionals working in multiple parts of the UK criminal justice system, including staff in courts, medical examinations and more, and not just with investigative interviewers.

Chapter Three also contributes to the body of research investigating the relationship between dogs and professionals' wellbeing and job satisfaction by finding that there is a correlation between perceived benefits for victims and professionals. Although further research may be needed to understand this correlation better, it could be speculated that perceptions of facility dogs improving outcomes for victims could improve outcomes for professionals or vice versa. Although facility dogs appear, on the whole, to benefit professionals, there were issues around how applicable such programmes are to the criminal justice system which were a concern to professionals in Chapter Three, and therefore warranted further investigation.

3.3 Feasibility of Facility Dog Programmes

Chapter Three highlights some issues survey respondents and interviewees raised with facility dog programmes. Some issues include a confusion around qualifications of dogs due to participants' perceived increase in untrained dogs being used in the criminal justice system, and facility dogs being somewhat burdensome due to the intensity of training that must be maintained to ensure their continued use in the criminal justice system. Another issue discussed by participants includes that facility dogs could potentially be a distraction in the court room, a concern is often echoed in the literature (e.g., Holder, 2012; Wood et al., 2018). Research suggests

that this might not be an issue; for example, interviews with Texan judges found that, as they believed facility dogs to be well trained well-trained, they were not concerned facility dogs would cause a distraction (Bradley, 2014). Additionally, arrangements can take place to ensure dogs do not serve as a distraction. Such arrangements can include judges providing instructions to the jury about the purpose of the facility dog (Kelly, 2022) or keeping the facility dog out of the jury's sight (Dellinger, 2009). Facility dogs causing a distraction was a concern raised by a few participants in Chapter Three; although they never experienced facility dogs causing a distraction, they were worried others might perceive them to be distracting. Other participants in Chapter Three detailed how, in their experience, facility dogs did not cause a distraction as people eventually became used to the facility dog, and these dogs are trained not to attract attention to themselves. Furthermore, as will be described in more detail later, findings from Chapter Four demonstrate how participants were not distracted by the facility dog when deliberating as juries; some participants, after being prompted, commented that they did not even notice the dog. Therefore, although this is a concern that was raised by some participants in Chapter Three and echoed in the literature, other papers in this area and other findings in this thesis refute that dogs can cause a distraction and suggest ways to mitigate the possibility of this argument being made, as discussed previously (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024; Dellinger, 2009).

Although adopted in several countries around the world (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024), there is still some opposition to facility dog programmes which can make it difficult to implement these programmes. Indeed, despite the general consensus that facility dogs are beneficial over comfort items due to dogs being sentient and capable of reacting to human emotions, some people make the argument that other comfort items are preferable over facility dogs (Ensminger et al., 2020; Grimm, 2013). However, one piece of research that was conducted in this area actually suggests the opposite. A randomised controlled experiment carried out by Burd

and McQuiston (2019) suggests that comfort items could be more prejudicial than facility dogs. Therefore, it could be questioned as to whether comfort items really are a better alternative compared to facility dogs. Nonetheless, arguments are still made against facility dog programmes, and these programmes have not been implemented in the UK.

Grimm (2013) suggests advocates or a support person are a better alternative as they can be cross-examined by the defendant, thus upholding defendants' rights (more specifically in the US where a defendant has the right to confront the complainant). However, anecdotal evidence (e.g., *Weems*; as cited in Nascondiglio, 2016) suggests a support person could be prejudicial. One study supports this, adding that the presence of a support person in child-victim cases could affect perceptions of the child-victim's credibility and cause jurors to view the defendant as less guilty (McAuliff et al., 2015). This is because the mock jurors in this study speculated that the support person could coach the child-victim. Contrastingly, one could make the argument that facility dogs are a more neutral source of support than an advocate or a support person as they cannot be legally biased in themselves, unlike an advocate or a support person (Hodge, 2022), and they cannot offer a potential distraction of nonverbal cues like a support person could (McDermott, 2022). Nonetheless, as echoed by participants in Chapter Three of this thesis and numerous papers in this field (e.g., Bowers, 2013; Donaldson, 2017; Grimm, 2013; Hodge, 2022), there are concerns that dogs could cause bias amongst juries.

The randomised controlled experiment carried out in Chapter Four attempted to address these concerns, and findings suggest that facility dogs do not cause bias. Neither the questionnaire data nor analysis of the discussions yielded conscious or unconscious bias in favour of the complainant or against the defendant. There were no differences in verdicts across the different conditions, and there were no noticeable differences in opinions about the court case. No participant discussed the facility dog without prompted, and even after being prompted,

discussion was minimal and largely focused on how participants could see the facility dog being beneficial for the complainant. Analysis of the qualitative discussions did not find tangible signs of unconscious bias, as participants across conditions appeared to have similar discussions about the court case. The finding that facility dogs do not appear to cause bias is supported by previous research that also did not find facility dogs to be prejudicial amongst mock jurors (Burd & McQuiston, 2019; McDermott, 2022). Where previous research has relied on questionnaire data to investigate the potential for dogs to bias juries, the pioneering study detailed in Chapter Four demonstrates how neither jurors' own perceptions nor group discussions or verdicts indicate bias. Moreover, the study detailed in Chapter Four creates new knowledge by examining whether sight of or judicial instructions about the facility dog could impact jury bias; the results did not find any impact of judicial instructions on jurors' perceptions.

Concerns raised by participants in Chapter Three suggest that court processes need to adapt to accommodate facility dogs. Accommodations can include measures to prevent any possible jury bias, such as making sure the jury do not have sight of the facility dog, or the judge providing instructions to the jury about the facility dog (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024). In response to these concerns, Chapter Four highlighted how neither sight of nor instructions about the facility dog impacted juries, however, they could still be considered. Although it is not possible to draw firm conclusions, Chapter Three also found that professionals in the US viewed facility dog programmes more positively than professionals outside of the US (namely, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, and the UK), and it could be thought that perhaps the support of facility dog programmes improves professionals' perceptions of them. Despite some resistance, facility dog programmes are most established in the US, compared to other parts of the world (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024), and so perhaps if criminal justice systems elsewhere were accommodating of facility dog programmes, this might lead to improved perceptions of these

programmes by professionals in the criminal justice system. The argument made from findings in this thesis are strong and convincing, however further research in this area could help draw firmer conclusions and support the implementation of facility dog programmes in the UK.

Other concerns participants in Chapter Three shared were around the requirements of the facility dog had to be taken into account. Participants in a study conducted by Howell et al. (2021) also raised these concerns. It was also found, however, that facility dogs rarely needed removing from a situation because they became too stressed, and handlers were trained to look out for signs of stress so were capable of taking care of the facility dog from this perspective. Howell et al. (2021) also detailed how facility dogs would need breaks which would help them recuperate, and it could be considered that these breaks would be needed by professionals, regardless, due to the intensity of the work they engage with.

Although there were other concerns raised by a small number of participants (e.g., a need to train staff working around the facility dog and people conflating therapy dogs with facility dogs), it is important to note that most participants in Chapter Three reported experiencing no issues with the use of facility dogs. There is very little research investigating issues with facility dogs in the criminal justice system, and therefore none to necessarily support or contradict this finding. However, it is tentatively suggested that the finding that there are generally no issues with the use of facility dogs is a promising finding, lending support to their use in the UK criminal justice system.

Section 4 – Methodological and Interpretative Limitations

This thesis has made a significant contribution to the small body of research investigating the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system. Overall, findings support the use of facility dogs and highlight benefits such programmes have for victims, witnesses, their support, and professionals who work with and around facility dogs, as well as the wider criminal justice system. There are some limitations regarding what conclusions can be drawn from this thesis. Limitations

specific to the studies in this thesis have been discussed in Chapters 2-4. This section will detail general limitations in relation to the methodology adopted for this thesis, as well as interpretative limitations.

4.1 Methodological Limitations

This sub-section will explore limitations relevant to the philosophical stance adopted for this thesis, on which the methods used in these studies were drawn from. As stated in Chapter One, the pragmatism paradigm was chosen to explore this area, and, from this, a mixed methods approach was taken. Pragmatism does not seek to purport one truth alone; therefore, the current research was not designed to be generalisable to all populations (Rorty, 1982). This could be seen as a limitation of this thesis, meaning that conclusions drawn from this thesis are not absolute. It is possible that different conclusions could have been drawn from larger scale studies under a different paradigm.

A mixed methods approach was chosen for this thesis. This is in line with the pragmatism paradigm, which purports that as a single method is not sufficient for understanding reality (Maxcy, 2003). However, it should be acknowledged, again, that if a different paradigm were chosen and a single method approach adopted, different conclusions could have been drawn. For example, a purely quantitative study could have collected more statistical data that might then have helped discover findings that this research did not (e.g., whether other factors such as workload impacted legal professionals' perspectives of facility dogs). A purely qualitative study could have provided further insight into the phenomenological experiences people have when they witness positive changes in the victims they work with and how this then feeds into the work they do. Nonetheless, as explored in Chapter One, this thesis aimed to collect a holistic view of facility dog programmes from multiple perspectives and with varying depth.

By the very nature of this topic, human participants were needed: in the systematic review, in the cross-sectional study seeking the opinions of professionals, and in the Hydra Suite study, understanding jury decision making better. Due to the reliance on human participants, there are likely to be unknown differences in participants used for this study not known to the researcher, which the researcher might not have been able to control for even with prior knowledge. Such differences could include past experiences with dogs or other experiences with the criminal justice system that could influence findings of this study. For example, the Hydra Suite study in Chapter Four could have attracted people with a specific interest in judicial systems, which may not be representative of the general population. A further example is that participants in Chapters Two and Three could have an affinity for dogs, otherwise they would not choose to work with facility dog programmes. Therefore, there is the potential for bias based on the pool of participants. Although this may seem logical as people using facility dogs both as victims and as professionals would, of course, use them because they see the benefits, it can be difficult to evaluate facility dog programmes if participants are biased. Thus, although this thesis attempted to gain a holistic understanding of the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system, there could be other perspectives that need to be included to thoroughly assess the impact of facility dog programmes. It should be noted that this might not have been a realistic and achievable aim for this thesis, but this point should be brought to awareness when drawing conclusions about facility dog programmes based on findings from this thesis.

As with most, if not all, research, the researcher has chosen this topic due to interest, and therefore has the capacity to cause bias as well, albeit unknowingly. As a result of this, conclusions drawn in this research might if another person were conducting this research. The potential for such issues has been tackled in places. In the systematic review detailed in Chapter Two, a second reviewer was used to assess the quality of included studies using pre-existing, reliable assessment

tools to ensure findings were impacted by as little bias as possible. Self-report scales used in Chapters Three and Four were mostly pre-existing scales that were found to be reliable. The scale measuring the impact of facility dogs on professionals in Chapter Three was the only exception, as there has been little to no previous research in this area, but the scale that was used was produced based on indicators from previous research and was also found to be reliable. One issue with self-report scales is they might be prone to reflecting social desirability bias which can be found in self-report data (e.g., Caputo, 2017). Chapter Four anticipates this by using a triangulation of data whereby quantitative self-report data were analysed with qualitative discussions to determine the existence of any conscious and unconscious bias, therefore the likelihood of social desirability bias in Chapter Four may be reduced. A final issue with self-report scales could include that, it is possible that participants do not read all the questions when filling out surveys. This is potentially the case with some of the data collected in this thesis where, in both Chapters Three and Four, three participants across the studies selected the same answer for all items on a scale. However, there is no simple method for assessing whether these responses were intentional, and so it must be assumed that they were genuine responses.

Similar to quantitative analysis, there are considerations that have to be made when conducting a qualitative analysis. It is important for the researcher to be aware of their own biases at the start of and during the analysis, and when coming to conclusions. This is common practice for qualitative analyses (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2023), and the researcher has been mindful of this where possible, ensuring leading questions were not asked to participants, engaging in reflective practices and using a second reviewer to create thematic codes and categories with. As mentioned previously, the researcher has chosen this topic due to interest, and this could therefore potentially impact how qualitative findings are interpreted. To combat this, the researcher endeavoured to analyse qualitative data semantically, by allowing participants' choice of lexicon

inform themes that were drawn. In doing so, the researcher aimed to increase trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is an important pillar in qualitative research to ensure credibility and reliability of findings and to minimise any potential negative impact of subjectivity (Ahmed et al., 2024).

The researcher also followed guidelines for qualitative analysis to ensure data were analysed in ways that are established by previous research (Cena et al., 2024; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2023). These methods of data analysis require reflexivity to ensure as much as possible that the researcher's own bias does not impact data analysis (Cena et al., 2024). The researcher does not have extensive experience working with facility dogs in the criminal justice system, unlike the participants in the study detailed in Chapter Three. The lack of experience could have been helpful in ensuring no assumptions were made about participants' potential experiences as there was little prior knowledge to draw assumptions from, and research in this area is minimal, hence the need to carry out the studies in this thesis. Participants in Chapter Three who were interviewed were allocated adequate time to help build rapport with the researcher, and to help understand their perspectives as thoroughly as possible, a feature that is important to ensure credibility (Ahmed, 2024). Regarding the analysis in Chapter Four, triangulation of data was used to corroborate findings and ensure conclusions drawn came from the data itself, thus minimising potential bias on part of the researcher.

In general, the researcher has demonstrated dependability by clearly documenting methodology and strategies used to analyse qualitative data, which is an important step for ensuring trustworthiness (Ahmed, 2024). Themes that were drawn from data were also reviewed by other researchers, and, following discussion, themes were amended as necessary, thus ensuring confirmability, another feature that is important for ensuring trustworthiness and high-quality qualitative research (Cena et al., 2024; Stahl & King, 2020).

4.2 Interpretative Limitations

This thesis has posited numerous interpretations of the data collected from the studies in Chapters Two, Three and Four. There are some limitations that should be considered regarding the interpretations that have been made in this thesis. The purpose of this this was to investigate the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system for victims and professionals. For ethical and practical reasons, it would have been difficult to access a pool of participants who were victims of crime and used a facility dog during the criminal justice process. The impact of facility dogs on victims was instead explored through a systematic review (Chapter Two), through the lens of professionals who have worked with facility dogs (Chapter Three). This could mean the evidence collected in this thesis reviewing the impact of facility dogs on victims is somewhat weak, compared to if data were firsthand from victims. However, it could be argued that there is sufficient evidence already highlighting the benefits facility dogs have for humans (e.g., Bradley & Maldonado, 2013; Race, 2022), particularly those experiencing symptoms of stress and PTSD (e.g., Dvoskina & Cole, Krause-Parello et al., 2018a). What is outstanding is, perhaps, understanding how the observed impact facility dogs have on victims then has an effect on the wider criminal justice system, and understanding the far-reaching impact facility dogs have, for victims' support networks, professionals working around them, and criminal justice processes, as well as the potential for dogs to bias juries. Findings from this thesis have therefore created new knowledge about the impact of facility dogs in the criminal justice system.

Another interpretative limitation is that, although a framework to facilitate understanding was outlined in Chapter Two for the mechanism behind which dogs impact victims and the subsequent effects on the wider criminal justice system, this framework was developed from just eight studies. This was despite broadening the criteria to include therapy dogs and mixed methods studies. The small number of studies this framework was based on could potentially limit the

extent to which interpretations from this systematic review are applied and could extend to the rest of this thesis in that there is little evidence to support much of the arguments being disputed in this thesis (e.g., that facility dogs are prejudicial). However, what research was analysed in Chapter Two is convincing and of high quality, as demonstrating the assessment of quality. Moreover, that this research area is niche potentially highlights how this thesis is necessary.

Due to the mixed methods approach of this thesis, some of the statistical data, while illustrative, can be seen as somewhat lacking. Larger sample sizes would have allowed for stronger analyses, firmer conclusions, and potentially more generalisability, although, as mentioned earlier, this is not necessarily an aim of the pragmatism paradigm. It would have been interesting to ascertain other differences between attitudes towards facility dog programmes across the world, nonetheless. Moreover, a participant pool with greater diversity would have been interesting. As an example, in the jury decision making study in Chapter Four, a large proportion of participants were female and white. Research suggests that jury decision making can be affected by race (Minero & Espinoza, 2014; Wuensch et al., 2002) and gender (e.g. Gavin & Scott, 2016; Dunlap et al., 2011). Although this could not be helped due to how participants were sampled, it would have been interesting if there was more diversity in these studies.

This section explored some of the limitations for the studies conducted as part of this thesis, including some of the inferences that can be made from these studies and how it relates to the existing body of research. Nonetheless, the approach adopted for this thesis was considered and reasoned to be the best approach for answering the research questions and meeting the research aims as detailed in Chapter One. Despite the limitations, studies in this thesis still have numerous implications.

Section 5 – Implications for Practice and Research

Implications specific to the studies conducted in this thesis are available in their respective chapters. The current section will discuss the wider implications this thesis has, with regards to the practical use of and research around facility dog programmes in the criminal justice system.

5.1 Implications for Practice

This thesis has provided overwhelming support for the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system. In collating evidence of the benefits on victims in the criminal justice system so far, there is no question around whether facility dogs are beneficial. There is evidence from multiple perspectives that dogs act as a ‘trauma shield’ (Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015; see also Chapter Three), an important finding given the retraumatisation people experience in the UK criminal justice system which can have positive outcomes for the victim’s emotional wellbeing (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2021). There appears to be minimal emotional support currently available to victims in the UK criminal justice system, which can improve their ability to provide evidence to a high standard, which is key for conviction and, potentially, closure (Bowden et al., 2014; Maddox et al., 2011). People supporting victims might also benefit from facility dog programmes, which could have positive effects on the victim and the quality of care they receive from the person or people supporting them; however, more research would be needed in this area to draw such conclusions. Nonetheless, facility dogs have been conceptualised as ‘life-changing’ for victims by participants in Chapter Three, and it could be argued that any way of minimising the negative impact of crime and criminal justice processes should be used, especially when, for some, they even leave after providing evidence just talking about the facility dog rather than the experience of providing evidence (Spruin et al., 2020a). Based on the overwhelming evidence supporting the use of facility dogs as a way of supporting vulnerable victims and witnesses, their use in the UK criminal justice system should be adopted to ensure victims receive the emotional support they need.

In addition to the emotional support dogs provide, they can also provide practical support. As discussed previously, facility dogs are helpful in encouraging victims to engage with the criminal justice system, allowing victims to become coherent (e.g., Spruin et al., 2020a). Moreover, they can be an effective resource for professionals working with victims, as they can encourage rapport building and change the way interviewers are perceived, as detailed in Chapters Two and Three. This is particularly important to bear in mind as in the UK, there are thought to be issues around guidance for, and execution of, investigative interviews (Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 2019), which could impact how effective interviewers are in their roles, as well as the quality of evidence given by victims. As the present research suggests facility dogs can have a positive effect on the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, it would be logical to consider the implementation of facility dog programmes in the UK to ensure improved collection of evidence.

The current thesis highlights the positive impact facility dogs can have on the professionals working with them. Working in the criminal justice system can be incredibly burdensome in numerous ways, including the vicarious traumatisation people experience (Parkes et al., 2022). Previous research has suggested dogs act as a defence against trauma (Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015), and, again, it could be argued that any way of minimising the negative impact of vicarious traumatisation should be used. Findings in this thesis provides convincing evidence that professionals' wellbeing is positively impacted by working with facility dogs. This is not only true for handlers, but also people working around the facility dog and their handler (see Chapter Three). It could be argued that, if facility dogs benefit professionals' wellbeing and attitudes towards the work they do, this could also impact how effective they are in their roles (Casaleiro et al., 2021). Thus, the impact of facility dog programmes for professionals extends to the wider criminal justice system as well. Findings in this thesis provide a compelling argument for facility dog programmes to be available in police stations and courthouses in the UK, to ensure that professionals working in

what has been framed as a highly traumatic setting (e.g., Parkes et al., 2022) are also supported emotionally, which could also potentially improve how effective they might be in their roles.

A final implication of this research on practice includes that this thesis suggests how facility dog programmes could be implemented. Guidance currently varies, with some suggesting that it is better for the facility dog to be out of sight (e.g., Dellinger, 2009), and some suggesting judicial instructions are important (Courthouse Dogs Foundation. 2024). The present thesis suggests both sight of and judicial instructions about the facility dog do not cause bias amongst juries, and, therefore, these precautions may not be necessary. Findings from the current research emphasise that facility dog programmes can and should be used in courts to support vulnerable victims and witnesses who wish to use them, enabling them to provide better quality evidence while minimising the trauma that people oftentimes experience when participating in the criminal justice system (Ritchie & Long, 2021).

That facility dogs may not cause bias by sight or by judicial instructions does not necessarily mean these measures should be discarded. Current research highlights the impact of judicial instructions for other biases, including biases around the victim's demeanour (Pals et al., 2023). Although working dogs are becoming more commonplace, and some now do not even notice their presence (as detailed by participants in Chapters Three and Four), judicial instructions could still be beneficial. The Senior Presiding Judge should make a ruling about the use of facility dogs based on the findings and recommendations from the present research. When a facility dog programme is established in the UK, their use should appear in toolkits explaining the possibilities for facility dogs to fill a gap within existing special measures.

5.2 Summary of Implications for Future Research

Findings in this thesis have a great number of implications for future research. The framework outlined in Chapter Two illustrates what it is exactly that dogs supporting victims do

(e.g., provide companionship, help engage victims by responding to ‘tricks’; Howell et al., 2021) that then improves the wellbeing of victims (e.g., Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015; Spruin et al., 2020a). The framework then helps to facilitate understanding around the wider impact of the dog on the criminal justice system; so, for example, how the dog helps improve engagement with the criminal justice system and helps victims provide better quality evidence (Howell et al., 2021; Spruin et al., 2020b). The framework developed in Chapter Two builds on previous research that has explored ‘if’ dogs are beneficial by providing ‘how’ dogs in the criminal justice system make an impact. Future research can use this framework to help deepen the understanding of facility dog programmes. Additional evidence could be beneficial for assessing the appropriateness of facility dog programmes. Further evidence could also help add nuance to the framework developed, so, for example, whether it is applicable to people who have experienced different types of crimes and whether there are any cross-cultural differences. Moreover, as this framework was developed based on evidence from the use of both therapy dogs and facility dogs, it would be interesting to see if and, indeed, to what extent findings differ based purely on the use of facility dogs, the preferred type of dog to be used in the criminal justice system (Spruin & Mozova, 2018).

Although this thesis incorporates the perspective of professionals in other countries, the overall aim is to introduce facility dog programmes to the UK criminal justice systems where it currently does not exist. Future research could aim to build the evidence base in the UK to provide support for the use of facility dog programmes in the UK criminal justice systems specifically. The incorporation of international professionals’ perspectives is a strength of the present research where studies have typically been carried out in North America (e.g., Spruin et al., 2020a). This is the first known piece of research to examine perspectives of professionals internationally and provides a deeper understanding of benefits and caveats from people in a range of different roles. This is also the first known piece of research intentionally investigating how facility dog

programmes impact criminal justice professionals' wellbeing, extending on previous research that has only investigated professionals' opinions of the impact of facility dog programmes on victims (Spruin et al., 2020a). The findings from the present study were significant (e.g., that professionals in the US viewed facility dog programmes more positively than people outside of the US), and there is speculation as to why this could be, such as whether the acceptance of facility dog programmes engenders more positive opinions about them. However, from the data collected, it would not be possible to make definite conclusions. Future research account for different factors that might impact opinions of facility dog programmes (e.g., how accepted people feel such programmes are in their area, their perceptions of other people's perceptions of facility dog programmes) to better understand any discrepancies. Such research could, in turn, illuminate how changes can be elicited in facility dog programmes outside of the US.

Facility dog programmes are growing in other parts of the world, but they are still comparatively more common in the US and Canada (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2024). Although this thesis aimed to incorporate numerous perspectives globally, future research can improve by increasing sample sizes in other countries so that firmer conclusions can be drawn about facility dog programmes outside of North America. Using a control condition could also be beneficial for understanding, so, for example, understanding the wellbeing of professionals who do not use facility dogs. A control condition would help to contextualise the quantitative and qualitative data collected to understand better the extent to which facility dog programmes influence professionals' wellbeing.

The current research aimed to address whether facility dogs could be prejudicial, as this is a frequent argument made against their use, particularly in courts (Grimm, 2013). Findings suggests that facility dogs do not cause bias, but more research is needed to provide support for

these findings, as it is important to ensure juries are not prejudiced in favour or against complainants and defendants.

In a field where most, if not all, existing research into jury decision making uses questionnaire designs (e.g., Thomas, 2020), the current research introduces a new way of investigating jury decision making. Indeed, through innovative technology, the study detailed in Chapter Four has high ecological validity, and therefore may strongly reflect how an actual jury discussion of such a case could take place. Future research could adopt a similar research design when examining jury decision making in the future. Future research can also build on this study by adapting manipulations (e.g., using different crime types, or having the facility dog in court rather than in a video-recorded interview), providing multiple perspectives as to whether and, perhaps, to what extent facility dogs are prejudicial. Any research investigating dogs and jury bias in the future could adopt a research design akin to the one used in Chapter Four, with follow-up interviews to gain further insight into decision making processes. Such insight could provide a deeper understanding of decision-making processes. Although there is quantitative data indicating no bias and the larger discussions indicated no bias, qualitative data of personal accounts could help to gain a deeper understanding.

This thesis provides support for the impact facility dogs have on the wellbeing of victims and professionals; however, it is not known how long this impact lasts. Dogs have been described as a 'trauma shield', which potentially provides a promising barrier to the retraumatisation that can be experienced in the criminal justice system (Campbell, 2001). It could be argued that perhaps this is a less important area for research because, as long as facility dogs help people through the criminal justice system, they are carrying out the work intended for them. However, it would be both interesting and beneficial if longer-term effects were assessed for victims and professionals,

to ascertain the full extent to which facility dogs act as a buffer for stress and trauma, as they are described (e.g., Krause-Parello & Gulick, 2015).

Another avenue for future research could assess how facility dogs as an intervention compare to other measures that could be adopted to support victims and professionals with emotional wellbeing. Dietz et al. (2012) illustrate how, in child therapy groups, existing interventions with dogs (e.g., animal-assisted therapy) are more effective than existing interventions without dogs (e.g., standard therapy). It would be interesting, if other interventions for emotional support are brought into the criminal justice system, to understand how facility dog programmes compare. It might also be interesting to understand how facility dogs compare with other special measures, such as intermediaries, in their capacity to enable fuller, more coherent disclosures.

Finally, future research could assess the logistics of facility dog programmes in the UK, which this thesis did not cover, nor aim to. As mentioned previously, any intervention that could help both victims and professionals should be considered. However, in a system where there are already issues with funding (Dodd, 2024), it would be realistic to understand the cost of such programmes so this can be taken into consideration.

Section 6 – Conclusion

To summarise, this thesis creates new knowledge and provides support for the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system. The present research emphasises the positive impact of facility dogs have on victims' wellbeing, their ability to give evidence, and professionals' occupational and emotional wellbeing as well. This research further provides evidence that facility dogs are not likely to be prejudicial. Previous research has highlighted the benefits of facility dogs for victims, and the systematic review in Chapter Two brought bring existing research together to understand the far-reaching impact of facility dog programmes. As touched on in the systematic

review, professionals also indicated they experienced benefits, and so a cross-sectional study was carried out to examine the potential impact of facility dogs on professionals as well as victims. As concerns around jury bias were raised by professionals, the final study sought to examine whether dogs could bias juries.

The findings in this thesis provide answers to the research aims and questions outlined in Chapter One. More specifically, dogs were found to have a remarkable impact on victims, whereby the emotional wellbeing of people using them was enhanced. This impact was demonstrated on multiple levels, from physiological markers of stress lowering with the presence of and/or physical contact with the facility dog (Krause-Parello et al., 2018b), to observations of victims, including a change in demeanour (Spruin et al., 2019). Another impact on victims was found, namely that disclosures became fuller and more coherent (Spruin et al., 2020b).

The present research also examined legal professionals' perceptions of facility dog programmes and any discrepancies between opinions across countries, finding that perceptions of facility dog programmes were mostly positive in terms of benefits for victims and for professionals. Discrepancies were identified in that professionals in the US opined facility dog programmes more positively than professionals outside the US, which may warrant further investigation. Participants also reported some issues, including the need to train staff working around the facility dog to ensure appropriate behaviour, and concerns around potential jury bias.

Based on these concerns, the final aim of the present research was to investigate the influence facility dogs could have on jury decision making. The research concluded there was little to no jury bias towards or against complainants or defendants, and this finding did not appear to vary based on whether judicial instructions were delivered or whether the facility dog was visible to jurors.

Studies in this thesis also come with limitations and recommendations for future research which are important to be aware of, but the implications from the research in this area are numerous and promising. The findings from the present research lead to the conclusion that facility dog programmes are an effective way of providing emotional support to victims, where criminal justice systems, particularly in the UK, are currently lacking this. Facility dog programmes have been found to improve victims' coherence and engagement, and positively impact professionals' wellbeing and attitudes towards their work. The current research did not find evidence that facility dogs are prejudicial, which could help to overcome barriers that existing facility dog programmes face. This finding, in conjunction with other findings in this thesis, make a convincing argument that facility dog programmes can and should be developed across the UK, and that further research can be conducted investigating the impact of facility dogs to build a stronger evidence base.

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Appendices

Chapter Three Appendices

3.1 - Invitation to Participate in Research

Hello,

You are being invited to participate in a study conducted by Sanjidah Islam, PhD student at Canterbury Christ Church University in the UK, and supervisor Dr Elizabeth Spruin. The purpose of this study is to assess the perceptions of facility dogs in the criminal justice system to help ascertain the feasibility of facility dogs in the UK criminal justice system and, by extension, in other parts of the world. If you would like to participate in this study, please follow the below link which will take you to a survey hosted on Gorilla. The survey will be available until 1 March 2023, when the data will be analysed.

The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes, and if you would like to participate in a short half-hour interview, please ensure you leave your contact details so an appropriate date and time for the interview can be scheduled. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and confidential, and you can withdraw at any time, including after you have submitted the survey.

If you would like further information about this study, please contact the researcher by email si75@canterbury.ac.uk.

Thank you,

Sanjidah Islam

Psychology PhD student at Canterbury Christ Church University

3.2 – Information Sheet

Introduction

My name is Sanjidah Islam and I am a Psychology PhD student at Canterbury Christ Church University in the UK. The purpose of the present study is to assess perceptions of facility dogs in the criminal justice system. I will be providing information about the study and I invite you to partake in this research.

Purpose of the research

At present, there is limited empirical evidence supporting the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system, and facility dogs are not widely used in the UK criminal justice system as well as in many other countries across the world, in spite of the support presented by existing case studies which are predominantly based in North America. Police interviews and court processes have been identified as potentially retraumatising victims and witnesses, and facility dogs have been introduced in some countries to help victims and witnesses provide the best possible evidence. The purpose of the present research is to understand the perspectives of professionals who work with facility dogs in legal settings.

Type of research

Research for this particular study consists of a survey with both open and closed questions to gain a holistic understanding of how professionals view facility dogs in legal settings. If you would like to, you can also sign up to an optional half-hour interview to expand on your views. Interviews will be recorded to allow data to be reviewed and analysed in-depth. If you consent to an interview, you are also consenting to being audio recorded. Data from the interview will be anonymised and not linked back to you.

Participation selection

I am inviting any and all legal professionals to participate in this research, including interviewers, lawyers, judges and more.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you choose not to participate in this research or withdraw your responses, you will still be offered the findings following completion of the study. You may stop participating at any point during the survey or interview and you will receive written confirmation when your data has been deleted.

Description of the procedure

The survey will commence when you click the 'next' button below. You will be taken to a consent form which you will be asked to sign. Following this, you will be taken to the survey. The survey is split into four sections: demographic information, understanding the perceived impact on victims/witnesses, understanding the perceived impact on professionals, and any other personal views you may have on the subject matter. You will also be given the space to include your contact details if you would like to participate in an interview. If you choose to do this, you will be contacted as soon as possible to arrange a suitable date and time for the interview which can take place via Microsoft Teams, or via phone if this is more suitable. You will be asked to sign another consent form online. The interview will be semi-structured, and will not take any longer than half an hour. Data from the interview, when analysed, will not be linked back to you, so identifiable details such as where you work and what your specific role is will not appear in the data analysis.

Risks

There are no risks involved in this research. All you will need is a stable internet connection to complete the survey, and the interview if you choose to do this.

Benefits

Participation in this study will assist the understanding of professionals' views on the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system. If you would like to, you can sign up to receive the results of this research at the end of the project (approximately September 2024).

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The information collected from this study will be maintained with confidentiality. The data collected from the survey and audio recordings from the interviews will be stored on a secure, password-protected cloud used by Canterbury Christ Church University, and only the researcher will have access to this folder. Your data will be assigned a unique study ID which will allow you to

withdraw your responses at any time; this information will also be stored securely in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). We encourage participants of this research not to discuss the specific details of any particular victim/witness that could lead to identifying the victim/witness involved.

For participants who express an interest in being interviewed by submitting their name and email address at the end of the survey, this data will also be held securely until such time the interview has been carried out, after which the data will be assigned a unique study ID which will allow you to withdraw your responses at any time up before 1 March 2023. The lawful basis for processing this data is that it is in public interest as the research is being carried out by Canterbury Christ Church University; if you are interested in reading the university's Data Protection Policy, please see this link: <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/services/governance-and-legal-services/data-protection>. By providing this personal data, you are agreeing to having your data stored securely until the project end date (approximately September 2024).

Sharing of the results

A summary of the findings of this study can be made available to those wishing to see it upon the project completion (approximately September 2024). Research findings may be shared more broadly at conferences and within potential publications. No identifying information of the participants will be included in any of the dissemination protocols of the study

Your right to withdraw

It is essential you are aware of the voluntary nature of your participation in this study. You may withdraw your participation at any time before 1 March 2023 as this is when the data analysis will commence. If you decide to withdraw from the study, you have the right to request to withdraw any data collected to that point. You do not waive any legal right by consenting to this study.

3.3 – Consent Form

Please read the below carefully and select as appropriate.

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| Have you read and understood the participant information sheet? | YES / NO |
| If you have any questions, have you asked the researcher? | YES / NO / N/A |
| Have all the questions been answered satisfactorily? | YES / NO / N/A |
| Have you received enough information about the study? | YES / NO |
| Do you understand you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason? | YES / NO |
| Do you agree to take part in the study? | YES / NO |

Participant signature: _____

Date: _____

Participant name: _____

3.4 – Debrief Sheet for Survey

Thank you for participating in the survey. This data has been collected to understand the perspectives of professionals who work with facility dogs in the criminal justice system, with the view of ascertaining the feasibility of facility dogs in the UK criminal justice system and that of other countries around the world.

This survey asked for your views on the perceived impact on victims/witnesses to help understand how, if at all, facility dogs may benefit the wellbeing, credibility and effectiveness of victims and witnesses providing testimony and giving interviews. This survey also asked for your views on the perceived impact of professionals to understand other effects facility dogs may have, if at all, including the wellbeing of professionals using facility dogs as well as any potential biases or caveats to using facility dogs. The data from this survey will therefore help to create a holistic picture of how, if at all, facility dogs may be helpful in the criminal justice system.

If you would like to be kept informed on the outcome of this research, please leave your email address in the text box below and a copy of your contact details will be securely stored until you either withdraw your details or until the outcome of the research has been communicated.

As a reminder, you have the right to withdraw from this study at any point before 1 March 2023. Your data will remain confidential and will be held securely, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

If you have requested to partake in an interview, you will be contacted shortly to agree a date and time when this can be scheduled.

Thank you again for participating in this research.

3.5 – Debrief Sheet for Interview

Thank you for participating in the interview. This data has been collected to understand the perspectives of professionals who work with facility dogs in the criminal justice system, with the view of ascertaining the feasibility of facility dogs in the UK criminal justice system and that of other countries around the world.

The interview was to help understand your role in working with facility dogs in the criminal justice system, as well as how, if at all, you feel facility dogs may impact victims/witnesses, and the professionals who work with them. The interview was recorded and a copy of this recording will be held securely, and will be deleted on completion of the project (approximately September 2024). When the data is analysed, no identifiable information will be included (e.g. your job title, where you work etc.).

If you would like to be kept informed on the outcome of this research, please leave your email address in the text box below and a copy of your contact details will be securely stored until you either withdraw your details or until the outcome of the research has been communicated.

As a reminder, you have the right to withdraw from this study at any point, including during the research and after your participation is complete. Your data will remain confidential and will be held securely, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Thank you again for participating in this research.

3.6 – Survey in English

Exploring the impact of facility dogs

The use of facility dogs in the UK criminal justice system has yet to be established. This research is trying to build the evidence required to enable our criminal justice system and others around the world to adopt these practices. We would be very grateful if you could spend 10-15 minutes to answer questions about your experience using a facility dog in the criminal justice system. Answers are anonymous and confidential; we only ask for honesty.

Section 1: About you

Please note the below information will not be used to identify any individuals.

1. Please input the first three letters of your forename, the last three letters of your surname, and the year your date of birth in dd/mm/yy format to generate a unique code. This will be used if you decide to withdraw your data from the current research.
2. Please select your gender below

Male

Female

Transgender

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

Other [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

3. Age (in years): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
4. Ethnicity: [Choose an item.](#)
5. Job title: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
6. County and province/state of work: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
7. Amount of time worked with facility dogs (months or years): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
8. How often do you use a facility dog in a legal setting on a weekly basis? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
9. What legal setting(s) do you use a facility dog in (e.g. police interview, courtroom)? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Motivates victims/witnesses to perform well during interview or when providing testimony	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helps victims/witnesses cooperate more during interview or when providing testimony	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helps victims/witnesses stay committed to the goals of the interview	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Please use this space to expand on any of the answers above.

Section 3: Perceived impact on professionals

Listed below are statements about the impact facility dogs may have on the professionals in your respective area of work (e.g. police interviews, judges, juries, etc.). Please tick the most appropriate box based on your own experiences. Do not spend too much time on any one answer and go with your initial response.

1. Facility dogs...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Allow the interview to build a better rapport with victims/witnesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enable me to deal more effectively with victims/witnesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allow me to positively influence people's lives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help me feel inspired through the work I do with them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help me deal with the emotional aspects of my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help me cope with the strains of my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help me feel less fatigued at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide me with a greater sense of job satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
May cause bias in favour of victims/witnesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
May cause victims/witnesses to be viewed as more credible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Please use this space to expand on any of the answers above.

Section 4: Other personal views you may have

1. Do you feel facility dogs would particularly benefit some populations of victims/witnesses over others? (e.g. age group, gender, type of crime etc.) Click or tap here to enter text.
2. In your opinion, what, if any, issues present themselves with the use of facility dogs in any part of the criminal justice system (e.g. police interviews, courthouses)? Click or tap here to enter text.
3. Do you have any concerns about the use of facility dogs in the criminal justice system that you would like to share? Click or tap here to enter text.
4. Please use this space to indicate any other thoughts on this subject matter. Click or tap here to enter text.
5. Are you interested in participating in a half-hour interview to express your thoughts further?
Yes No
 - a. If yes, please provide an email address you can be contacted on. Click or tap here to enter text.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you have any queries you would like to raise about this study, please email si75@canterbury.ac.uk (Sanjidah Islam, researcher).

3.7 – Semi-structured Interview

1. Please tell me more about your role within the organisation you work in and how facility dogs are involved.
2. How, if at all, do you feel facility dogs impact victims/witnesses?
 - a. Prompts: interviews, attendance, testimonies, general engagement, how victims/witnesses appear when they have a facility dog compared to when they do not
 - b. Specific types of crime/populations that may benefit and how they benefit
3. How do you feel facility dogs compare as an intervention to other interventions your service users to support victims/witnesses?
 - a. Prompts: does your service use video links, advocates, other forms of supporting victims/witnesses
4. How, if at all, do you feel facility dogs impact legal professionals?
 - a. Prompts: staff wellbeing, staff burnout, job satisfaction, jury bias, interviewer bias, interviewer rapport
5. Is there anything else you would like to share that you have not already?

Chapter Four Appendices

4.1 – Invitation to Participate in Research

Hello,

You are being invited to participate in a study conducted by Sanjidah Islam, PhD student at Canterbury Christ Church University in the UK, and supervisor Dr Philip Ulrich. The purpose of this study is to examine jury decision-making processes in the British criminal justice system. If you would like to participate in this study, please follow the below link which will take you to a bookings page hosted by YouCanBook.Me. Please choose a time slot you would like to attend.

Participation in this study should take approximately 1.5 hours. Your participation is voluntary and confidential, and you can withdraw at any time up until 13 November 2023. For your participation in this research, if you wish to, you will be entered in a prize draw to win one of 10 £10 Amazon vouchers, one of two £25 Amazon vouchers, or one £50 Amazon voucher.

If you would like further information about this study, please contact the researcher by email si75@canterbury.ac.uk.

Thank you,

Sanjidah Islam

Psychology PhD student at Canterbury Christ Church University

4.2 – Research Advertisement Flyer



**PARTICIPATE IN
GROUNDBREAKING
RESEARCH**

You are invited to participate in exciting research
investigating jury decision-making.

WHERE? Verena Holmes, Canterbury Christ Church University
WHEN? Tuesday, 7 November 2023, 11:15 or 13:15
WHAT WILL I HAVE TO DO? For the chance to win an Amazon
voucher, you will participate as a member of a jury in a state-of-
the-art simulation suite where a fictional court case will be
presented to you. Scan the QR code or see the link below for
more information and to book your place.

Contact: si75@canterbury.ac.uk
For more information: <https://forms.office.com/e/JGVqiLM5KL>



4.3 – Information Sheet

Introduction

My name is Sanjidah Islam and I am a Psychology PhD student at Canterbury Christ Church University in the UK. The purpose of the present study is to examine the decision-making process in British juries. I will be providing information about the study and I invite you to partake in this research.

Purpose of the research

At present, there is limited empirical evidence investigating the aspect of jury decision-making which the current study focuses on. The purpose of the present research is to understand the perspectives and any potential biases of British juries deliberating a case concerning sexual contact with a child.

Type of research

Research for this particular study consists of watching a few short video clips illustrating the court case that is being presented. You will then be asked a few brief questionnaires, including demographics, opinions on the case presented, and a brief personality test. You will then be allocated to a syndicate room where you will be with at most eleven other jurors who have received the same information as you, and you will be asked to deliberate the court case together. The audio will be recorded for analysis at a later stage, which will help to inform the decision-making processes of British juries. After you have reached a verdict or when the time limit has been reached, you will be asked to complete the questionnaire on your opinions again. You will then be debriefed. If you would like to, you can sign up to the prize draw and/or leave your details if you would like to find out about the outcome of the research.

Participation selection

I am inviting any adult members of the British public to participate in this research. Participants must meet the following criteria

- * Be over the age of 18
- * Not have direct experience working in law or policing
- * Not have participated in a real jury before
- * Be comfortable using an iPad (a demonstration will be provided for you).

Please note, the court case presented relates to sexual contact with a child, which may be upsetting for some individuals.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you choose not to participate in this research or withdraw your responses, you will still be offered the findings following completion of the study. You may stop participating at any point up until 13 November 2023 when the data will begin to be analysed. You will receive written confirmation when your data has been deleted.

Description of the procedure

The study will commence when you arrive at the briefing room in Verena Holmes at Canterbury Christ Church University. You will be taken to a consent form which you will be asked to sign. Following this, you will be asked to review questionnaires and the video clips of the court case you are expected to discuss. After you have completed the questionnaires, you will discuss the court case with other 'jurors' and reach a verdict. When a verdict has been reached or the allocated time is finished, you will be asked to complete the questionnaire on your opinions of the court case again. You will then be debriefed and given the opportunity to ask questions about the research. Participation should take between 60-75 minutes.

Risks

There are no risks involved in this research. All you will need is to arrive at Verena Holmes in Canterbury Christ Church University. All technology needed for this research will be provided to you.

Benefits

Participation in this study will assist the understanding of the decision-making process in British juries. If you would like to, you can sign up to receive the results of this research at the end of the project (approximately September 2024). After completing participation, you have the option to be placed in a prize draw to potentially win an Amazon voucher.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The information collected from this study will be maintained with confidentiality. The data collected from the questionnaires and audio recordings from the syndicate rooms will be stored on a secure, password-protected cloud used by Canterbury Christ Church University, and only the researcher will have access to this folder. Your data will be assigned a unique study ID which will allow you to withdraw your responses at any time; this information will also be stored securely in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). We encourage participants of this research not to discuss the specific details of any particular victim/witness that could lead to identifying the victim/witness involved.

The lawful basis for processing this data is that it is in public interest as the research is being carried out by Canterbury Christ Church University; if you are interested in reading the university's Data Protection Policy, please see this link: <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/services/governance-and-legal-services/data-protection>. By providing this personal data, you are agreeing to having your data stored securely until the project end date (approximately September 2024).

Sharing of the results

A summary of the findings of this study can be made available to those wishing to see it upon the project completion (approximately September 2024). Research findings may be shared more broadly at conferences and within potential publications. No identifying information of the participants will be included in any of the dissemination protocols of the study

Your right to withdraw

It is essential you are aware of the voluntary nature of your participation in this study. You may withdraw your participation at any time before 13 November 2023 as this is when the data analysis will commence. If you decide to withdraw from the study, you have the right to request to withdraw any data collected to that point. You do not waive any legal right by consenting to this study.

4.4 – Consent Form

Please read the below carefully and select as appropriate.

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| Have you read and understood the participant information sheet? | YES / NO |
| If you have any questions, have you asked the researcher? | YES / NO / N/A |
| Have all the questions been answered satisfactorily? | YES / NO / N/A |
| Have you received enough information about the study? | YES / NO |
| Do you understand you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason? | YES / NO |
| Do you agree to take part in the study? | YES / NO |
| Do you agree to maintain the confidentiality of other participants? | YES / NO |

Participant signature: _____

Date: _____

Participant name: _____

4.5 – Transcript of Mock Trial (No Judge’s Instruction)

Scene 1 – Judge’s introduction

Judge: Members of the jury, today we will begin by providing you with an overview of the case you are going to hear. The case falls under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in relation to Sexual Activity with a Child under Section Nine. The incidents reportedly occurred from September 2022 until January 2023 at the complainant’s home in Newington. As a jury you must decide the case based solely on the evidence provided in court, it is imperative that no juror has any personal connection with, or personal knowledge of, the current case or anyone associated with the case. Throughout the trial, you need only try the case based on the evidence presented and remain faithful to the legal oath you took. There is a collective responsibility for ensuring that the conduct of each member is consistent with the jury oath and the directions about the discharge of your responsibilities are followed. The collective responsibility of the jury for its own conduct must be regarded as an integral part of the trial itself. You are not permitted to use the internet for matters relating to the trial, nor to discuss any aspect of the case with anyone outside your own number. Do not take into account any media reports about the case. Should you have any concerns, including concerns pertaining to the conduct of others, please bring this to my attention.

The trial will proceed as follows. You have been provided with a summary of the case. Please ensure you have read this. The prosecution and the Defence will then call witnesses to present their respective cases. I will then provide you with instructions after which you will make some decisions about the case, including the guilt or innocence of the defendant. Please now read the summary of the case.

Judge: A video-recorded interview is being presented as it avoids the complainant revisiting material in court whilst seeing the defendant give their evidence. This is therefore the most sensible way of getting evidence into court, although the question as to whether the evidence of the complainant is reliable and truthful is a matter entirely for you to decide. Please pay attention as if you were hearing it live from the witness box.

Scene 2 – Complainant interview

Interviewer: Part of my job today is to talk to people about things that have happened to them. I meet with many children and adolescents so they can tell me the truth about what has happened

to them. Before we begin, I just wanted to make sure you understand how important it is to tell the truth. If I say my shoes are red, is that true or not true?

Samantha: Not true.

Interviewer: Right, that would not be true because my shoes are actually black. Now, if I say that I am sitting down, would that be true or not true?

Samantha: That's true.

Interviewer: Exactly, it would be true because you can see that I am actually sitting down. So you understand what telling the truth means, it's very important that you only tell me the truth today. You should only tell me things that actually happened to you. If I ask a question you don't understand, just say 'I don't understand', okay?

Samantha: Okay.

Interviewer: And if I don't understand what you say, I'll just ask you to explain. If I ask you a question and you don't know the answer, just tell me 'I don't know'. And if I say things that are wrong, you should tell me – okay?

Samantha: Okay.

Interviewer: So, I want to talk to you about why you're here today. Tell me why you think your dad brought you here today.

Samantha: Because my uncle touched me in places he wasn't supposed to.

Interviewer: Tell me everything from start to finish.

Samantha: My uncle touched my private parts. He was at our house while my dad had to go away on work so my uncle housesits for us and makes sure we're okay. I was just minding my own business when he came into my room and touched my private parts.

Interviewer: What do you mean by your private parts?

Samantha: He rubbed my private parts between my thighs.

Interviewer: Did he touch your private parts over or under your clothes?

Samantha: Over my clothes.

Interviewer: How many times did this happen?

Samantha: He touched me a few times.

Interviewer: How many times do you think?

Samantha: Maybe around four times.

Interviewer: What did he use to touch you?

Samantha: He used his hand.

Interviewer: Did he touch any other part of you?

Samantha: Um, no.

Interviewer: So he touched your private parts four times over your clothes?

Samantha: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there any other touching you can tell me about?

Samantha: No.

Interviewer: Did you touch any part of your uncle?

Samantha: No.

Interviewer: Thank you, Samantha. You have told me lots of things today, and I want to thank you for helping me. Is there anything else you want to tell me, anything else you think I should know?

Samantha: No.

Interviewer: Thank you, Samantha.

Scene 3 – Witness interview

Interviewer: Part of my job today is to talk to people about things that have happened to them. I meet with many children and adolescents so they can tell me the truth about what has happened to them. Before we begin, I just wanted to make sure you understand how important it is to tell the truth. If I say my shoes are red, is that true or not true?

Max: Not true.

Interviewer: Right, that would not be true because my shoes are actually black. Now, if I say that I am sitting down, would that be true or not true?

Max: Yeah, that's true.

Interviewer: Exactly, it would be true because you can see that I am actually sitting down. So you understand what telling the truth means, it's very important that you only tell me the truth today. You should only tell me things that actually happened to you. If I ask a question you don't understand, just say 'I don't understand', okay?

Max: Yeah.

Interviewer: And if I don't understand what you say, I'll just ask you to explain. If I ask you a question and you don't know the answer, just tell me 'I don't know'. And if I say things that are wrong, you should tell me – okay?

Max: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, I want to talk to you about why you're here today. Tell me why you think your dad brought you here today.

Max: My uncle inappropriately touched my sister.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit more about everything from start to finish?

Max: My uncle touched my sister inappropriately. He was meant to be looking after us and the house while my dad was away for the weekend. I was just going back to my room, and I have to walk past my sister's room to get to my room if I went to the bathroom, and I saw him touching her.

Interviewer: What area was he touching?

Max: It looked like he was touching her between her thighs.

Interviewer: Did he touch her over or under her clothes?

Max: Over her clothes.

Interviewer: How many times did this happen?

Max: I only saw it happen once, he stopped when he saw me.

Interviewer: What did he use to touch your sister?

Max: His hand.

Interviewer: Did he touch any other part of her?

Max: Not that I saw, no.

Interviewer: So he touched your sister between her thighs over her clothes?

Max: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there any other touching you can tell me about?

Max: No.

Interviewer: Did you see Samantha touch any part of your uncle?

Max: No.

Interviewer: Thank you, Max.

Scene 4 – Defendant testimony

Defence: Please can you confirm for us where you were on the night of the 6th of January 2023.

Defendant: I was at my brother's house taking care of the house and the kids for him while he was away for the weekend on work.

Defence: And this was an arrangement the two of you had?

Defendant: Yes, he doesn't go away for work often but when he does, I housesit for him. It's a way for me to see my nephew and niece because I don't get to do that often.

Defence: What happened on the night in question?

Defendant: I had cooked dinner for the children, nothing fancy, just Bolognese. We had had an argument because Samantha wanted to go to a party that evening but I wouldn't allow it as my brother hadn't approved it. Samantha got very upset and stormed to her bedroom taking her dinner with her. I finished my dinner and cleared the table and then went to Sam's room to talk to her. She was very upset with me so I was trying to console her – I did touch her but I only rubbed her arm to comfort her.

Defence: What happened after that, after you rubbed her arm?

Defendant: She went to take a drink of her juice and spilled it down herself. I tried to help with my handkerchief and that's when Max walked past.

Defence: Where did you touch her when you were helping her clean up?

Defendant: Nowhere inappropriate, I only patted her belly with my handkerchief, I didn't go any higher or lower. She was quite upset about spilling juice on her party dress and I just wanted to help.

Defence: Thank you. No further questions, Your Honour.

Scene 5 – Judge's instructions

Judge: Members of the jury, the prosecution presented you with evidence from the complainant and the witness. The defence presented you with a statement from the defendant. At the start of this case, I explained that you are responsible for weighing up the evidence and deciding the facts about the case. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in relation to Sexual Activity with a Child under Section Nine, a person is found guilty if he intentionally touches another person, the touching is sexual, and the person is under the age of 16. The burden of proof lies with the prosecution. If they have convinced you so that you are absolutely sure that the defendant is guilty, then you must convict. However, if there is any doubt in your mind as to whether the defendant committed this act after hearing the evidence in court today, you must find him 'not guilty'. You must make your decision only based on the evidence presented to you and not be influenced by any emotional reaction to the case and/or any sympathy for anyone involved in the case. Cases like this sometimes give rise to emotions and sympathy. You must not let such feelings influence you when you are considering your verdict.

You do not have to decide every disputed point that has been raised in the trial – only those necessary for you to reach your verdict. Where there is conflicting evidence, you must decide how

reliable, honest and accurate each witness is. When doing this, you must apply the same fair standards to all witnesses, whether they were called for the prosecution or for the defence.

You may draw sensible conclusions from the evidence you have heard, but you must not guess or speculate about anything that was not covered by the evidence. It is for you to decide whether any point or points made by the advocates in their speeches are persuasive or not and also for you to decide how important the various pieces of evidence are.

4.6 – Transcript of Mock Trial (With Judge’s Instructions)

Scene 1 – Judge’s introduction

Judge: Members of the jury, today we will begin by providing you with an overview of the case you are going to hear. The case falls under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in relation to Sexual Activity with a Child under Section Nine. The incidents reportedly occurred from September 2022 until January 2023 at the complainant’s home in Newington. As a jury you must decide the case based solely on the evidence provided in court, it is imperative that no juror has any personal connection with, or personal knowledge of, the current case or anyone associated with the case. Throughout the trial, you need only try the case based on the evidence presented and remain faithful to the legal oath you took. There is a collective responsibility for ensuring that the conduct of each member is consistent with the jury oath and the directions about the discharge of your responsibilities are followed. The collective responsibility of the jury for its own conduct must be regarded as an integral part of the trial itself. You are not permitted to use the internet for matters relating to the trial, nor to discuss any aspect of the case with anyone outside your own number. Do not take into account any media reports about the case. Should you have any concerns, including concerns pertaining to the conduct of others, please bring this to my attention.

The trial will proceed as follows. You have been provided with a summary of the case. Please ensure you have read this. The prosecution and the Defence will then call witnesses to present their respective cases. I will then provide you with instructions after which you will make some decisions about the case, including the guilt or innocence of the defendant. Please now read the summary of the case.

Judge: A video-recorded interview is being presented as it avoids the complainant revisiting material in court whilst seeing the defendant give their evidence. This is therefore the most sensible way of getting evidence into court, although the question as to whether the evidence of the complainant is reliable and truthful is a matter entirely for you to decide. Please pay attention as if you were hearing it live from the witness box.

Judge: I also want to inform you that the complainant has a trained facility dog supporting her today. The dog is a highly trained professional who is not a pet and does not belong to the complainant. The dog’s purpose is to allow the witness to communicate more effectively. You must not draw any inference whether favourably or negatively for either side as a result of the dog’s

presence. The complainant's testimony must be evaluated upon the instructions given during my initial directions.

Scene 2 – Complainant interview

Interviewer: Part of my job today is to talk to people about things that have happened to them. I meet with many children and adolescents so they can tell me the truth about what has happened to them. Before we begin, I just wanted to make sure you understand how important it is to tell the truth. If I say my shoes are red, is that true or not true?

Samantha: Not true.

Interviewer: Right, that would not be true because my shoes are actually black. Now, if I say that I am sitting down, would that be true or not true?

Samantha: That's true.

Interviewer: Exactly, it would be true because you can see that I am actually sitting down. So you understand what telling the truth means, it's very important that you only tell me the truth today. You should only tell me things that actually happened to you. If I ask a question you don't understand, just say 'I don't understand', okay?

Samantha: Okay.

Interviewer: And if I don't understand what you say, I'll just ask you to explain. If I ask you a question and you don't know the answer, just tell me 'I don't know'. And if I say things that are wrong, you should tell me – okay?

Samantha: Okay.

Interviewer: So, I want to talk to you about why you're here today. Tell me why you think your dad brought you here today.

Samantha: Because my uncle touched me in places he wasn't supposed to.

Interviewer: Tell me everything from start to finish.

Samantha: My uncle touched my private parts. He was at our house while my dad had to go away on work so my uncle housesits for us and makes sure we're okay. I was just minding my own business when he came into my room and touched my private parts.

Interviewer: What do you mean by your private parts?

Samantha: He rubbed my private parts between my thighs.

Interviewer: Did he touch your private parts over or under your clothes?

Samantha: Over my clothes.

Interviewer: How many times did this happen?

Samantha: He touched me a few times.

Interviewer: How many times do you think?

Samantha: Maybe around four times.

Interviewer: What did he use to touch you?

Samantha: He used his hand.

Interviewer: Did he touch any other part of you?

Samantha: Um, no.

Interviewer: So he touched your private parts four times over your clothes?

Samantha: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there any other touching you can tell me about?

Samantha: No.

Interviewer: Did you touch any part of your uncle?

Samantha: No.

Interviewer: Thank you, Samantha. You have told me lots of things today, and I want to thank you for helping me. Is there anything else you want to tell me, anything else you think I should know?

Samantha: No.

Interviewer: Thank you, Samantha.

Scene 3 – Witness interview

Interviewer: Part of my job today is to talk to people about things that have happened to them. I meet with many children and adolescents so they can tell me the truth about what has happened to them. Before we begin, I just wanted to make sure you understand how important it is to tell the truth. If I say my shoes are red, is that true or not true?

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Max: Yeah.

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Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit more about everything from start to finish?

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Interviewer: What area was he touching?

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Interviewer: Did he touch her over or under her clothes?

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Max: I only saw it happen once, he stopped when he saw me.

Interviewer: What did he use to touch your sister?

Max: His hand.

Interviewer: Did he touch any other part of her?

Max: Not that I saw, no.

Interviewer: So he touched your sister between her thighs over her clothes?

Max: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there any other touching you can tell me about?

Max: No.

Interviewer: Did you see Samantha touch any part of your uncle?

Max: No.

Interviewer: Thank you, Max.

Scene 4 – Defendant testimony

Defence: Please can you confirm for us where you were on the night of the 6th of January 2023.

Defendant: I was at my brother's house taking care of the house and the kids for him while he was away for the weekend on work.

Defence: And this was an arrangement the two of you had?

Defendant: Yes, he doesn't go away for work often but when he does, I housesit for him. It's a way for me to see my nephew and niece because I don't get to do that often.

Defence: What happened on the night in question?

Defendant: I had cooked dinner for the children, nothing fancy, just Bolognese. We had had an argument because Samantha wanted to go to a party that evening but I wouldn't allow it as my brother hadn't approved it. Samantha got very upset and stormed to her bedroom taking her dinner with her. I finished my dinner and cleared the table and then went to Sam's room to talk to her. She was very upset with me so I was trying to console her – I did touch her but I only rubbed her arm to comfort her.

Defence: What happened after that, after you rubbed her arm?

Defendant: She went to take a drink of her juice and spilled it down herself. I tried to help with my handkerchief and that's when Max walked past.

Defence: Where did you touch her when you were helping her clean up?

Defendant: Nowhere inappropriate, I only patted her belly with my handkerchief, I didn't go any higher or lower. She was quite upset about spilling juice on her party dress and I just wanted to help.

Defence: Thank you. No further questions, Your Honour.

Scene 5 – Judge's instructions

Judge: Members of the jury, the prosecution presented you with evidence from the complainant and the witness. The defence presented you with a statement from the defendant. At the start of this case, I explained that you are responsible for weighing up the evidence and deciding the facts about the case. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in relation to Sexual Activity with a Child under Section Nine, a person is found guilty if he intentionally touches another person, the touching is sexual, and the person is under the age of 16. The burden of proof lies with the prosecution. If they have convinced you so that you are absolutely sure that the defendant is guilty, then you must convict. However, if there is any doubt in your mind as to whether the defendant committed this act after hearing the evidence in court today, you must find him 'not guilty'. You must make your decision only based on the evidence presented to you and not be influenced by any emotional

reaction to the case and/or any sympathy for anyone involved in the case. Cases like this sometimes give rise to emotions and sympathy. You must not let such feelings influence you when you are considering your verdict.

You do not have to decide every disputed point that has been raised in the trial – only those necessary for you to reach your verdict. Where there is conflicting evidence, you must decide how reliable, honest and accurate each witness is. When doing this, you must apply the same fair standards to all witnesses, whether they were called for the prosecution or for the defence.

You may draw sensible conclusions from the evidence you have heard, but you must not guess or speculate about anything that was not covered by the evidence. It is for you to decide whether any point or points made by the advocates in their speeches are persuasive or not and also for you to decide how important the various pieces of evidence are.

4.7 – Demographics Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

1. What is your age?
 - a. 18-24
 - b. 25-34
 - c. 35-44
 - d. 45-54
 - e. 55-64
 - f. 65-74
 - g. 75+
2. What is your gender?
 - a. Cismale
 - b. Cisfemale
 - c. Transman
 - d. Transwoman
 - e. Gender fluid
 - f. Non-binary
 - g. Other
3. What ethnicity do you consider yourself?
 - a. Asian / Asian British
 - b. Black / Black British
 - c. Mixed / multiple ethnic groups
 - d. White
 - e. Other ethnic group
4. What is the highest level of education you have completed to date?
 - a. No qualifications
 - b. Level 1: 1-4 GCSEs at pass grade or equivalent
 - c. Level 2: 5+ GCSEs at pass grade or equivalent
 - d. Level 3: 2+ A Levels or equivalent
 - e. Level 4: Higher National Certificate, Certificate of Higher Education
 - f. Level 5: Diploma of Higher Education, Foundation Degree or equivalent
 - g. Level 6: Bachelors degree or equivalent
 - h. Level 7: Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma, Masters Degree or equivalent
 - i. Level 8: Doctorate
5. Which option below best reflects your political views?
 - a. Liberal
 - b. Somewhat more liberal than conservative
 - c. Somewhat more conservative than liberal
 - d. Conservative

8 – Do you feel your verdict and opinions were influenced by the facility dog?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
In favour of defendant					Neutral – the facility dog had no impact					In favour of victim and witness

4.11 – Personality Test

Ten-Item Personality Inventory

Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other

Disagree strongly	Disagree moderately	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I see myself as:

1. Extraverted, enthusiastic
2. Critical, quarrelsome
3. Dependable, self-disciplined
4. Anxious, easily upset
5. Open to new experiences, complex
6. Reserved, quiet
7. Sympathetic, warm
8. Disorganised, careless
9. Calm, emotionally stable
10. Conventional, uncreative

4.12 – Debrief Sheet

Thank you for participating in the research. This data has been collected to understand better the decision-making processes in British juries.

In this research, you were asked your opinions about a fictional court case based on a real crime. You were then asked to deliberate this court case with other members of the jury. The purpose of this study was to understand whether the presence of a facility dog, a dog trained to provide emotional support to vulnerable victims and witnesses, impacts the jury decision-making process. You may have been assigned to a condition where there was no mention of a facility dog, or where you could visibly see the facility dog, or the facility dog was mentioned by the judge but you could not see it. The findings from this research will help to inform if facility dogs impact the jury decision-making process.

If you would like to stay informed about this research, please contact the researcher (details above). Your data will be stored securely up until the completion of this project (approximately September 2024), when the findings from this research will be circulated if you choose to opt in.

As a reminder, you have the right to withdraw from this study at any point before 13 November 2023, as this is when the data will begin to be analysed. Your data will remain confidential and will be held securely, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Thank you again for participating in this research.

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If you feel affected by the contents of this research, please find below a list of organisations that may be able to provide support.

National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)

0808 801 0331

support@napac.org.uk

<https://napac.org.uk>

Rape Crisis England

0808 500 2222

Webchat on <https://rapecrisis.org.uk>

Samaritans

116 123

jo@samaritans.org

<https://samaritans.org>