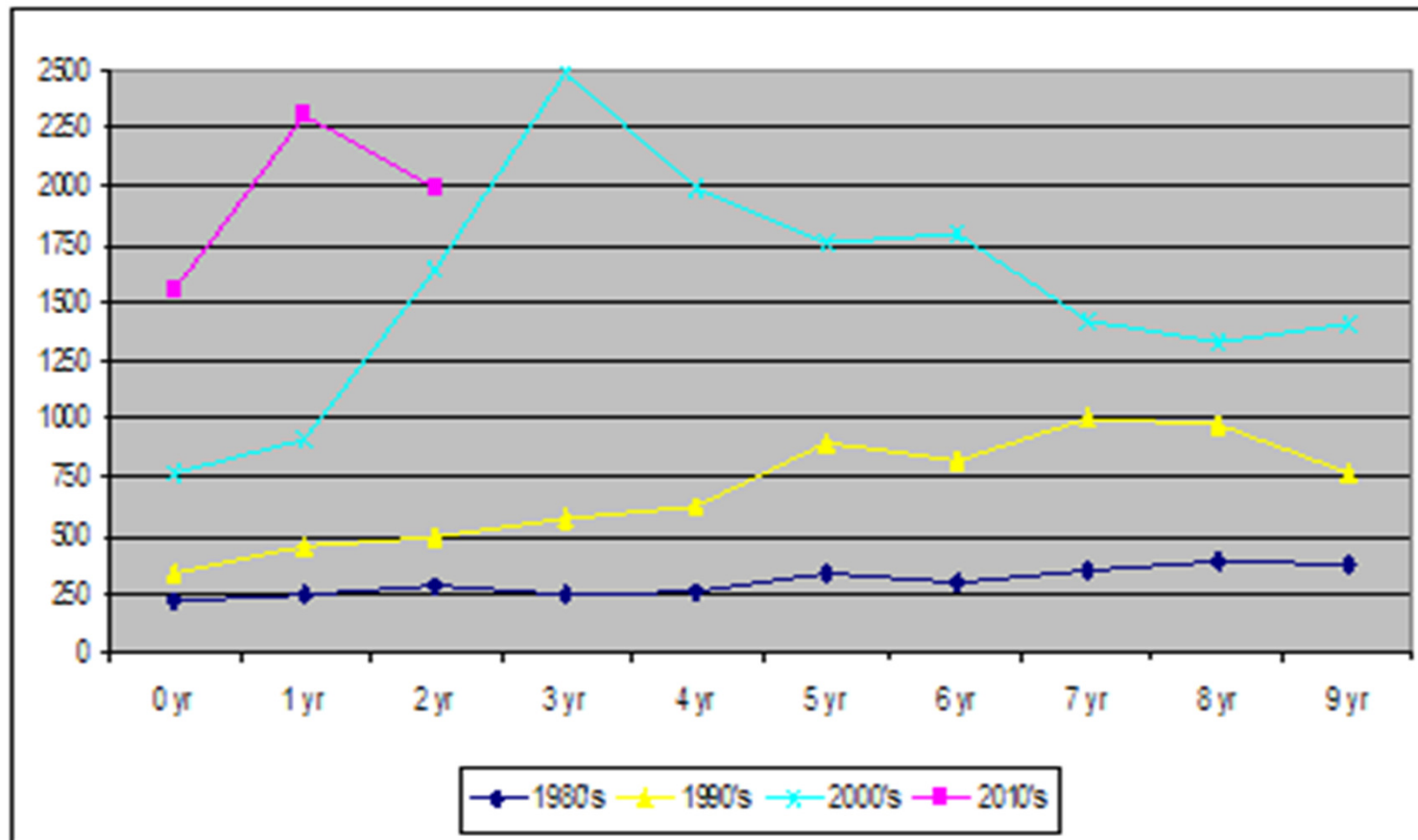


CEPOL Research and Science Conference, Lisbon 6th October 2015

Dr. Mary Walker
An Garda Síochána

- 
- Five countries in the world have registration and/or notification requirements for their sex offenders with varying approaches to managing sex offenders.
 - America, Australia, Canada, Ireland and the UK.
 - This presentation presents Ireland's approach and findings from evidence-based evaluations.

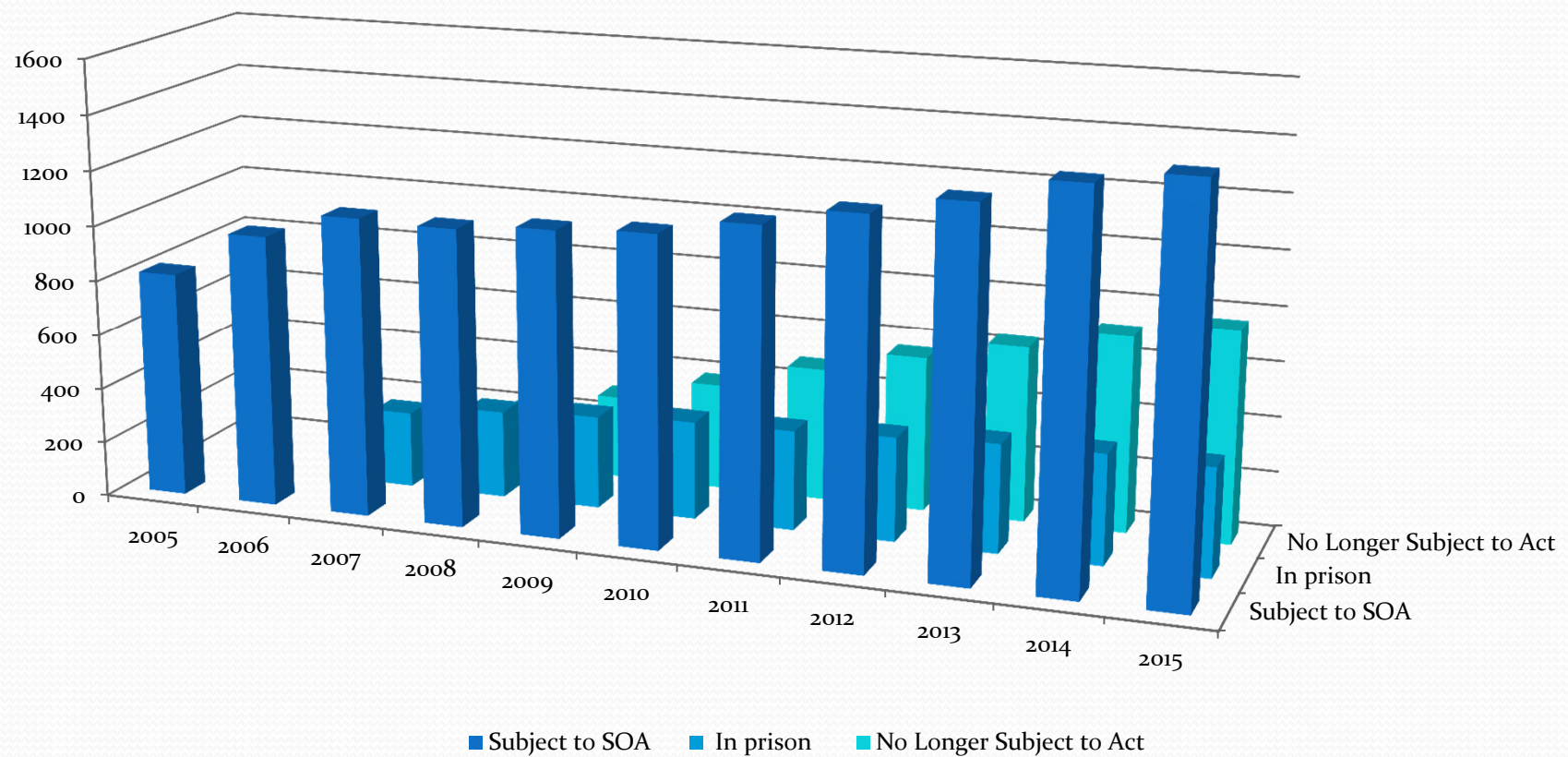
Reporting Rates for Sexual Offences 1980-2013



Timeline

- 2001 Sex Offender Act introduced
- 2001... Single agency management of sex offenders
- 2005 Risk Matrix (Static Risk Assessment Tool)
- 2007 Stable and Acute (Dynamic Risk Assessment Tool)
- 2010 Formal Probation Service/Garda Joint Working (SORAM)
- 2010-2011 1st Garda Research Unit Evaluation
- 2011-2014 PhD research on sex offender management in Ireland
- 2012 Health Service Executive inclusion in SORAM
- 2012 Full rollout of SORAM across Republic of Ireland
- 2015 2nd Garda Research Unit Evaluation commenced

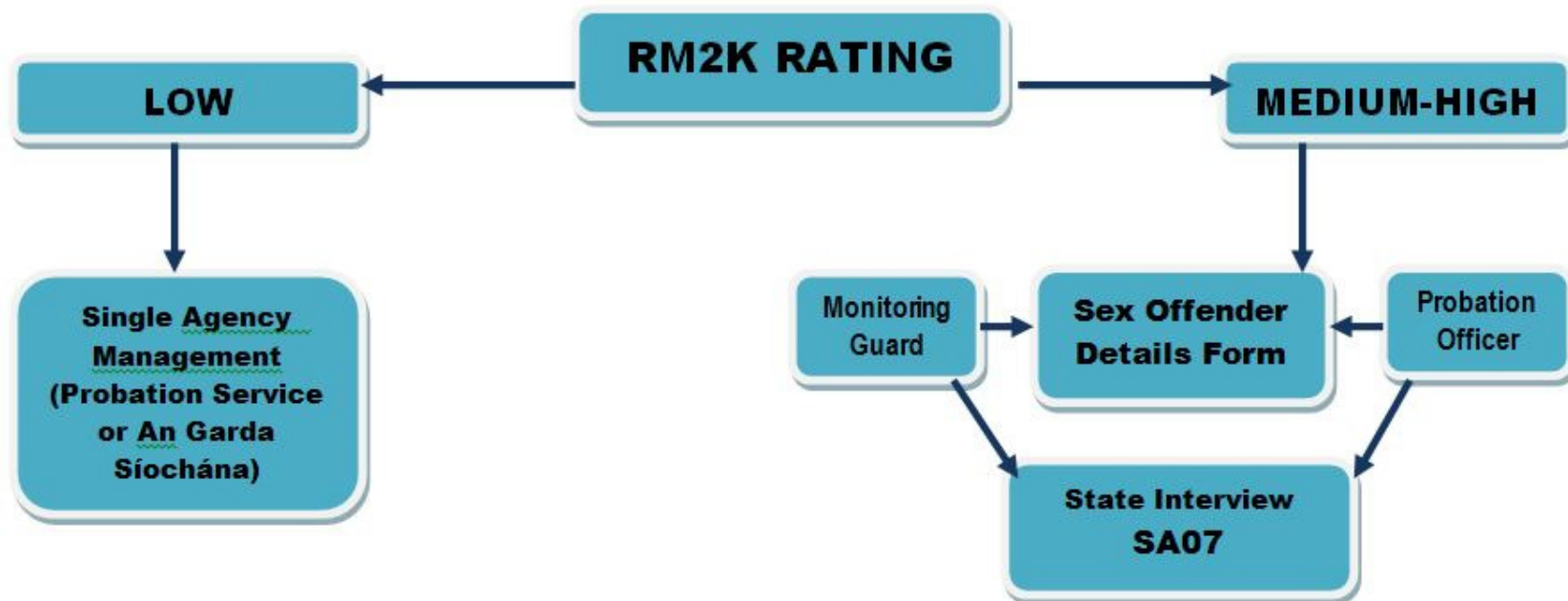
Number of sex offenders subject to the Sex Offender Act 2005-2015

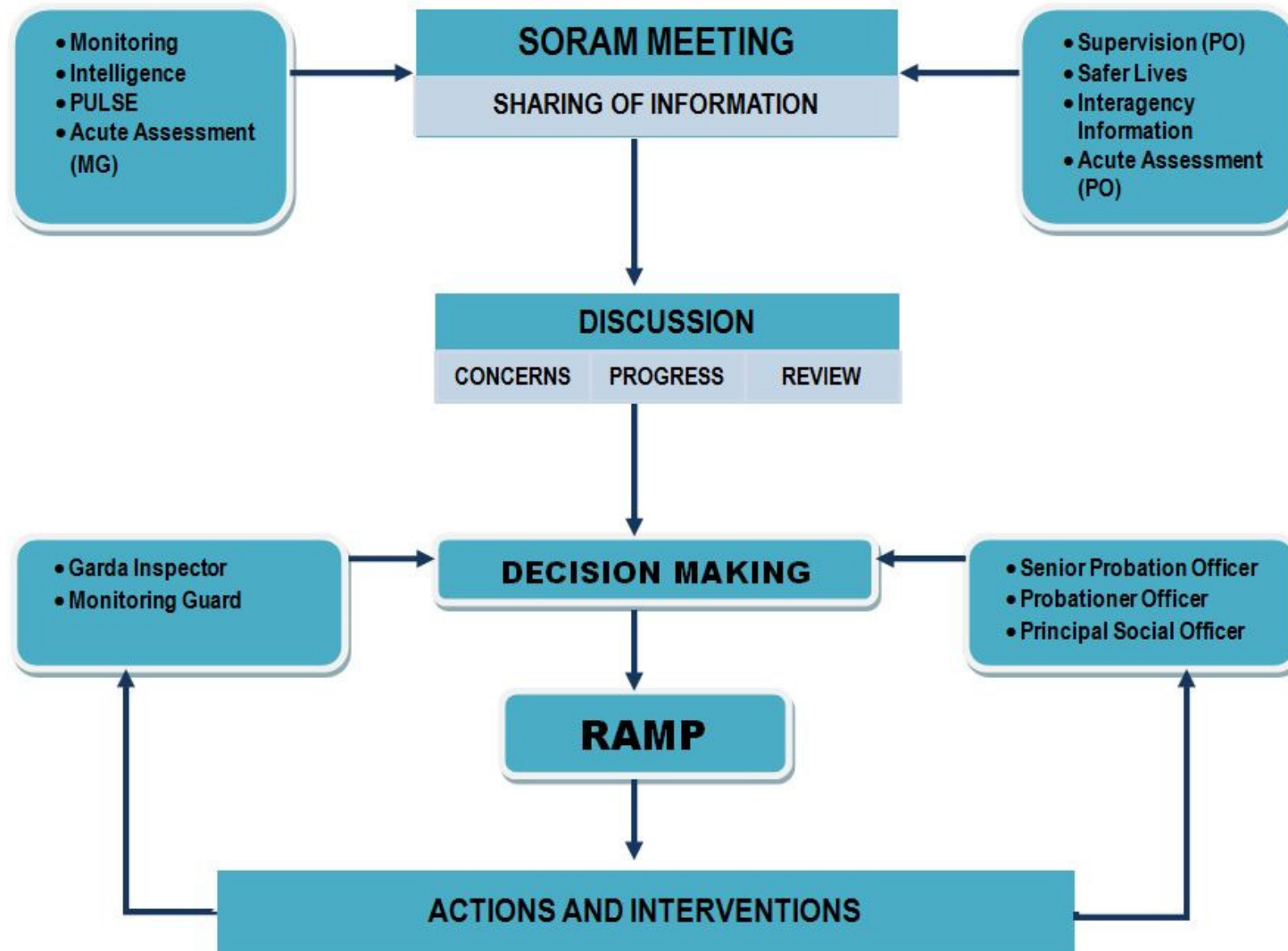


What is SORAM?

- Public protection arrangements similar to PPANI (N. Ireland), MAPPA (England & Wales).
- Multi-agency approach to ensure effective risk assessment and management.
- Structure
 - National Steering Group (since inception 2010)
 - National SORAM Office (2013)
 - Local SORAM Teams (since inception 2010)

SORAM PROCESS







Main Findings from 1st Evaluation

- Stronger working relationship -SORAM was welcomed as prior there was limited, informal or no interagency working.
- Considered a success as it created formal structure or framework supported by risk assessment tools, devised documentation, procedures to ensure coordinated joint agency management.
- Common goal instead of separate organisational goals or interests.
- Information sharing and the discussion from different disciplines important.
- It supported joint initiatives –
 - Joint decision making, monitoring, risk assessments, joint training, creating resources, system problem solving.
- Areas of improvements were identified .
 - Management Plan more streamlined, Termination Form created, Local SORAM Teams and Steering Group contact, SORAM awareness



PhD Findings on SORAM

- Viewed positively by both police and probation officers. The SORAM meeting was considered the crux of the process.
- The main benefit was sharing of information in a confidential manner and increased contact & communication between agencies.
- SORAM inclusion criteria was considered limited as the sex offender has to be subject to both Garda and probation supervision for inclusion.
- Main perceived drawback was it was time consuming & lack of clerical support.
- It added to practitioner defensible practice.
- The Sex Offender Act 2001 requires updating to support sex offender monitoring in the community.



In Gardaí & Probation Officers
own words.....

MG09: "I have more in-depth knowledge after attending SORAM meetings."

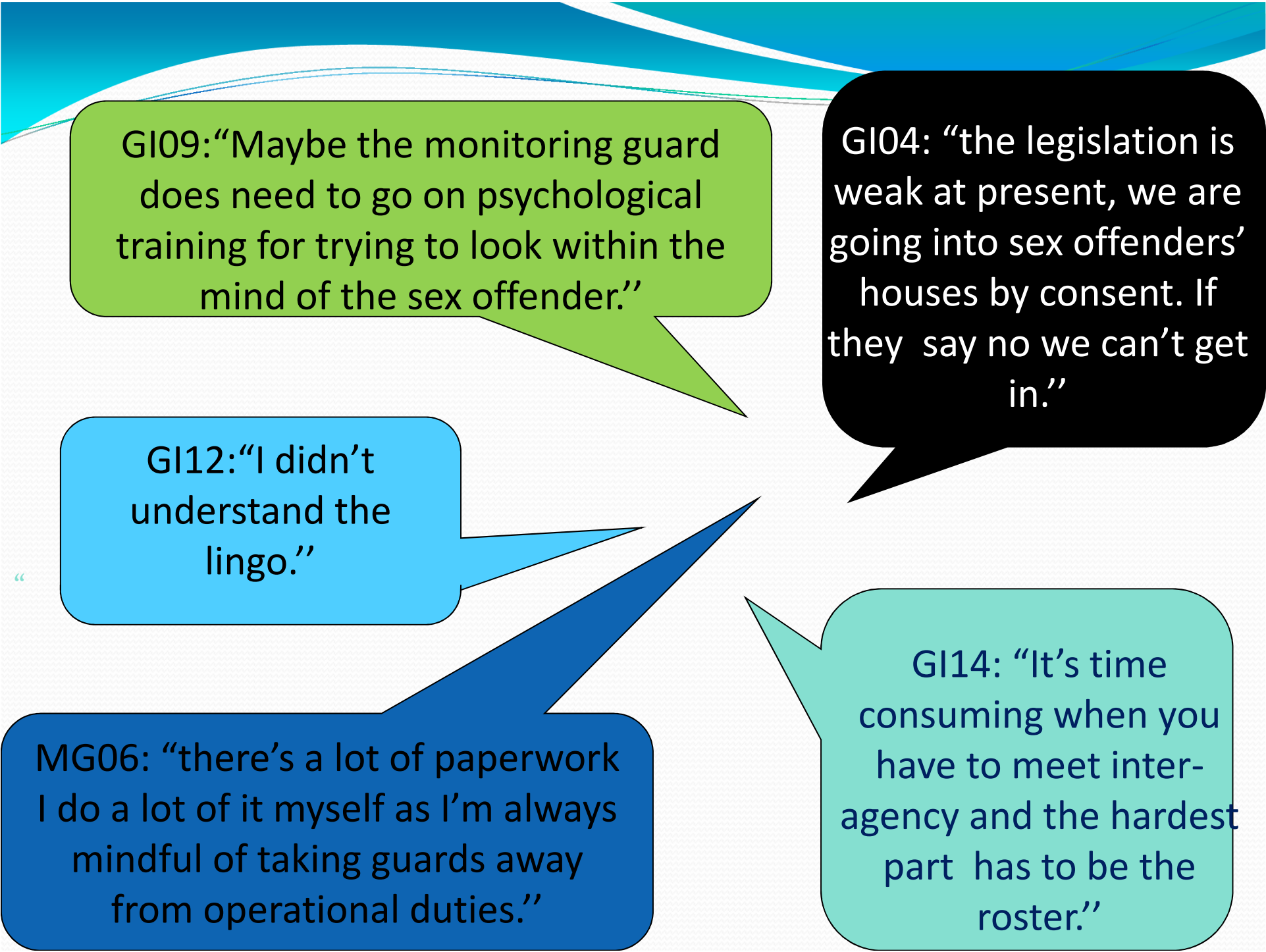
GI12: "The probation reports and SA07 assessment, it's really qualitative data that we [as police] do not get from sex offenders."

PO07: "they provide a different type of support. Intelligence is the key but also they can arrest someone, interview them, get a warrant etc. They can act very quickly when we are working together."

GI11: "SORAM has really opened up information. We are getting very good information & obviously exchanging it between both sides."

MG05: "one of the main benefits in SORAM is collective decision making. We look at the knock on effect."

PO12: "The fact that we are not doing it on our own anymore, that there is collaboration. I think it is the way forward otherwise we are working in isolation and it doesn't work and that was the way in the past and people were always trying to protect their own little area but I think there is more openness now... a common goal and focus that they share.. leading to more effective interventions basically."



GI09: "Maybe the monitoring guard does need to go on psychological training for trying to look within the mind of the sex offender."

GI04: "the legislation is weak at present, we are going into sex offenders' houses by consent. If they say no we can't get in."

GI12: "I didn't understand the lingo."

MG06: "there's a lot of paperwork I do a lot of it myself as I'm always mindful of taking guards away from operational duties."

GI14: "It's time consuming when you have to meet inter-agency and the hardest part has to be the roster."



Main Findings from PhD Research

- Sex offender management in Ireland is in its infancy and still evolving.
- Risk assessments tools in use received mixed reviews with much concern about their fitness for purpose.
- The Sex Offender Act 2001 requires updating to support sex offender monitoring in the community.
- Interagency working under SORAM was hugely welcomed. The sharing of information was considered the key benefit.
- There was a general call for an Independent National Sex Offender Authority to be established as an oversight body for policy, strategy and direction for the safe and effective sex offender management.



2nd Evaluation Focus

- To evaluate SORAM's structures, processes and practices.
- To assess the relationship between the NSSG, NSO and LSTs.
- To identify range of practices across LSTs: good practice and practice that needs attention in light of new agency dynamic.
- To identify areas where SORAM can be improved.



In sex offenders' own words.....

"I have this relationship with [probation officer] now where I can tell her anything, like if I bottle something up, I wouldn't even talk to my girlfriend about, but I can just offload to [probation officer] alright. She'd be able to handle things & give me a bit of back-up."

"If I need something, he'll (police) help me. He said to me loads of times if I need any help about anything he would see what he could do"

"I was totally anti-probation after previous experiences but they were very supportive and we built up a relationship"

"They (the police) treat you like a sex offender they don't treat you like a man and that's it."

"The police role is obviously to protect people from sex offenders without saying but they also have to protect me and see that I'm okay"



Any Questions?

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