

the Howard League for Penal Reform

The Howard League for Penal Reform

Inaugural research medal

Collected papers

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Foreword

The Howard League for Penal Reform launched its Research Medal to identify the highest quality research into penal issues which offered genuinely new insights into the penal system. However, this award sought to match this academic rigour and scholarship with the researchers' ability to translate the findings into impact beyond the reach of academia itself and effectively communicate their research to a non-academic audience. As with all the Howard League's work, we wanted to identify research that had the potential to guide and influence positive change in penal policy and practice. Through our Research Medal, the Howard League is demonstrating its support for radical thinking and thinkers.

All the entries were original pieces of research that had been completed in the preceding three years. The authors all had experience of undertaking research at postgraduate level (and beyond) that was conducted through an academic institution, a NGO, in government or the private sector. The Howard League encouraged research that was based in any discipline that impacted on the penal system and may have adopted a multi-disciplinary approach.

The five papers in this collection represent the most highly regarded and impactful research according to the Competition Panel. It was made up of experts drawn from academia, the media and penal practice:

- Professor Frances Heidensohn, Mannheim Centre, London School of Economics
- Professor Fergus McNeill, University of Strathclyde
- Lord Ramsbotham
- Mary Riddell, assistant editor at The Telegraph
- Dr Stephen Shaw, Chief Executive, Office of the Health Professions Adjudicator
- Dick Whitfield, the then chair of the Howard League's Research Committee
- Frances Crook, Chief Executive Officer of the Howard League
- Anita Dockley, Research Director at the Howard League

Thanks must be extended to the Competition Panel for the time and care they took to judge the entries: Their final decision resulted in an overall winner, as well as a highly commended entry and a further three that were commended.

The winning authors have presented their research in the papers published here alongside an annex which demonstrates the impact of their research and their future dissemination and action plans. The inclusion of this annex is aimed at inspiring other researchers so that they too may enhance the potential impact of their research.

The Howard League Research Medal has been established as an annual award in memory of Lord Parmoor.

Anita Dockley
May 2012

Once a criminal, always a criminal: ‘Redeemability’ and the psychology of punitive public attitudes

Shadd Maruna, Queen’s University Belfast, with Anna King, Georgian Court University, USA

Winner, Howard League for Penal Reform Research Medal 2011

Research on redeemability beliefs

Do you believe that most offenders can go on to lead productive lives with help and hard work? Do you believe that even the worst offenders can grow out of criminal behaviour? If so, you are apparently in good company. In a project known as the Cambridge University Public Opinion Project (or “C U POP”)¹, my colleague Anna King and I asked those questions to around 1000 British adults in 2005. Over 85 per cent agreed with the first statement and 77 per cent agreed with the second statement. These items were part of a longer scale we designed to measure something called “belief in redeemability.”

We were surprised at just what an important measure this turned out to be. In our research, we found that a person’s views on these questions was one of the best predictors of all sorts of other views about criminal justice and punishment issues, in particular how “punitive” they were toward those who break the law. The more strongly respondents believed in the redeemability of law-breakers in our research, the less likely they were to want to see sentences lengthened and harsher treatment introduced into the prison system.

In order to understand these attitudinal dynamics better, the C U POP research also involved in-depth interviews with two sub-samples of our original survey respondents. The first group was drawn from the most punitive respondents to our survey and the second group (matched almost perfectly on background characteristics such as age, class, gender and geography) were among our least punitive respondents. We wanted to understand the two very different outlooks better by getting to know the individuals themselves better and the way they understood their own lives and the world more generally.

1 Both Anna and I have moved on from Cambridge where this research began. Anna is currently an assistant professor at Georgian Court University in New Jersey, and I am currently Director of the Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Queen’s University Belfast.

We found that both samples transcended the kind of easy stereotypes we often have for them (e.g., bleeding heart liberals or hang ‘em and flog ‘em punitives) and based their views of justice on complex and logically coherent foundations. One of the key differences, however, involved their views of crime and redeemability. When the most punitive sample members talked about “offending,” they typically imagined the actions of an abstracted ‘other’ – moral strangers, but also literal strangers. Whereas, when the less punitive respondents talked about crime, they tended to refer to individuals they knew well. One such low-punitiveness respondent, in her 40s and living in a very high crime area of London, gave the following response when we asked her why she thought there was so much concern about the current generation of young people in the UK:

Well, you do see kids that are a bit rude hanging around street corners and, you know, breaking in cars, and no respect, the whole, general, it's there. But, I think to an extent that always has been. I don't, I think it's just a bit of peer pressure, I'm assuming. I think, actually that they do grow out of it. I think my brothers, as teenagers, just hideous, vile kids. ... They grew out of it. I also had a nasty cousin ... horrible, horrible little boy. Lovely now. So, in the last five years he's suddenly got a job and he's fantastic. I really thought he was an absolute no-hoper.

This sense of hope for even the ‘no-hopers’ among the current generation of young people appears to have an important impact on justice views among members of the public. These redeemability beliefs probably have even more important implications for those working in the world of prisons and offender management (This is a question that several of our students are now testing empirically in a selection of prisons and departments of probation).

Drawing on the work of David Garland (2001), Carol Dweck (Dweck, Chui & Hong, 1995), and others, we argue that there are two primary cultural scripts available with regards to wrongdoing:

- Moral Essentialism (Entity theory, lay dispositionalism, “criminology of the other”)

The idea here is that criminal behaviour is due to fixed, unalterable dispositions, traits, inner character. Criminal behaviour is a symptom of who a person really is, deep down, and presumably always will be. As James Q. Wilson (1975) once argued “Wicked people exist, and nothing avails except to set them apart from innocent people.”

- Moral Redeemability (Incremental theory, lay situationalism, “criminology of the self”)

Here, criminal behaviour is separated from the permanent nature or character of the person. Criminality is not “fixed” in a person, but rather is the product of circumstances, situations and contexts. Individuals who have done wrong can prove themselves to be trustworthy (i.e. “redeem themselves”), despite whatever they may have done in the past.

We do not, in our present research, try to determine which view is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ empirically. We know, from decades of research on ‘criminal careers’ or crime in the life course, that there is considerable support for both ways of thinking about offending. That is, it is certainly true that when it comes to crime, past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour and there is some continuity of antisocial behaviour from one part of life to the next (Caspi, 1993). At the same time, we also know that age and crime are strongly correlated, and that the vast majority of one-time “offenders” desist from crime by the time they reach their thirties (Maruna, 2001). So, in a sense, both perspectives are ‘right’ (Moffitt’s 1993 theory usefully tries to combine both of these insights). That is, it is both true that youthful criminality is the best predictor of adult criminality, and it is also true that not all youthful offenders progress onto lives of crime (see esp. Sampson and Laub, 1993).

The point of our present research is not to determine which view (moral essentialism or moral redeemability) is right or wrong, then, but rather to understand the logical dynamics of the views and in particular the impact that these public narratives have for those caught up in the criminal justice system. A large body of social psychology evidence on labelling and self-labelling suggests that those who perceive their ascribed status to be permanent (be it a label such as ‘mentally ill’, ‘paedophile’, ‘addict’, etc.) are most likely to slip into hopelessness, passivity, and retreatism (see LeBel 2008). They are the least likely to make efforts to change themselves for the obvious reason that they do not think such change is possible. In criminology, we call this “labelling theory” and the idea is well known – young people who are stigmatized and labelled as being “trouble” or “no hopers”, often turn out to fulfil these negative prophecies.

The “redeemability beliefs” of criminal justice managers and staff may manifest themselves directly in the way convicted people are treated and this treatment can impact on desistance outcomes. Individuals who are treated as bundles of risks and needs can internalise these views and begin to see themselves as little more than their previous offences. The research literature on desistance from crime and

successful ex-prisoner reintegration (with which we have been closely involved for the past decade) is clear that breaking away from cycles of crime, addiction and stigma requires a tremendous sense of self-belief and personal determination (Maruna, 2001). It is hard to imagine how individuals could be expected to maintain this level of confidence and courage when those around them have all given up hope. In other words, cultures and subcultures (including professional subcultures) that do not believe that offenders can change may produce offenders who do not think they can change.

The key message of our work, then, is how important the seemingly anachronistic belief in 'redemption' may be for society and, specifically, for those involved in direct service delivery in criminal justice. As philosophers have long argued, in a society without the possibility of redemption, the "past dominates the present and the future [and] every failure results in guilt from which there is no exit" (Smith 1971). Hannah Arendt talks about this as the "burden of irreversibility" in *The Human Condition*:

Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover; we would remain the victim of its consequences forever, not unlike the sorcerer's apprentice who lacked the magic formula to break the spell (Arendt 1958, p. 213).

The belief in redeemability may not be a magic formula, but it can help to break habituated patterns or mindsets that prisoners and prison staff find themselves in, and in this way it can reduce recidivism by promoting cultures or at least subcultures of hope and desistance even within the walls of a prison.

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Annex: Redeemability and knowledge exchange

This research is intended to contribute to social psychological and criminological understandings of justice beliefs and political opinion, but the research also has obvious applications for those working in criminal justice related fields. Likewise, the findings have considerable implications for activist organisations seeking to sway public opinion or change the attitudes of policymakers. By seeking to understand both the origins and the consequences of redeemability beliefs among members of the public, our research provides clear guidance for challenging punitive rhetoric and politics.

As such, efforts have been made to make this research accessible to as wide an audience as possible. The key research findings have been published in peer-reviewed academic journals such as the *European Journal of Criminal Policy and Research*, *Punishment and Society*, and the *British Journal of Criminology*; however, we have subsequently sought to publish in outlets more likely to be read by criminal justice staff. These include an article on “Selling the Public on Probation” for the *Probation Journal* and another on probation and the media in the journal

Vista: Perspectives on Probation. The latter publication was the result of an invited keynote lecture at the Probation Centenary Conference in London in 2007. Maruna was also invited to deliver one of the Perrie Lectures in 2010 for the National Offender Management Service, and used the occasion to focus on the findings from the redeemability research, with a particular emphasis on the implications for practice. The talk, titled “Why Our Beliefs Matter in Offender Management” was subsequently published in the practitioner outlet the Prison Service Journal, published by H.M. Prison Service.

Additional presentations on the redeemability findings have been given to groups as wide-ranging and diverse as the Conference on European Probation (Malaga, 2010), the Dutch Probation Service (Utrecht, 2009), the French Prison Service Annual Lecture (Agen, 2010), the Home Office/Ministry of Justice, “Academic Roundtable Event” (London, 2010), the Japanese Bar Foundation (Tokyo, 2011), the NOMS Treatment Managers Conference (Nottingham, 2008), and the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers Annual Conference (Atlanta, 2010). Our on-going analysis has greatly improved as a result of this continual feedback and interaction with the target users of the research.

In this regard, among the most rewarding dialogues we have had have been with justice activism organisations (most definitely including the Howard League, but also including international organisations such as the Fundacion Paz Ciudadana in Chile). As a Soros Justice Fellow (2009), Maruna regularly attends what is probably the largest meeting of justice activists internationally sponsored by the Open Society Institute and drawing from remarkable groups like the All of Us or None and the Women’s Prison Association. Three years ago, at one of these conferences, he presented on some of the redeemability findings in a talk with the provocative title “Hit Them in the Gut: Anger Management Strategies for the Punitive Public”, focusing on how reform efforts might be framed to maximise impact on public opinion, and has been asked to deliver the same talk annually since then.

Anna King is currently drawing on the redeemability research in her work on the development of narrative strategies that can increase public support for re-entry programs in the United States. Her current work explores the views of residents of high-crime urban areas on justice with a focus on race and gender issues. Shadd Maruna is in the process of writing a book with the working title Redemption RIP?: Do we still believe people can change? Although very much based on the scientific foundation of the redeemability research, the book will be non-academic in style and intended for a somewhat wider readership than traditional academic publishing.

Finally, efforts are being made to reach an even wider audience through the production of a film about desistance from crime and implications for practice. In 2011, Shadd Maruna and colleagues Fergus McNeill and Stephen Farrall received a “knowledge exchange” grant from the Economic and Social Research Council to produce a documentary film on the emerging research on desistance. The film, tentatively titled “Discovering Desistance”, is due to be released in spring 2012, and is intended for professionals and clients of the criminal justice system at all levels as well as interested members of the wider public. Featuring a number of life stories of former offenders who have turned their lives around, the film is intended to literally give a human face to desistance. See <http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/discoveringdesistance/>. Our research on beliefs in redeemability suggests that these sorts of stories, presented through the vivid medium of film, may have far more influence on changing attitudes than a dozen publications in academic journals.

Professor Shadd Maruna is the Director of the Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the School of Law, Queen’s University Belfast. Previously, he has taught at the University of Cambridge and the State University of New York. His book *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives* (American Psychological Association, 2001) was named the “Outstanding Contribution to Criminology” by the American Society of Criminology in 2001. His more recent books include: *Rehabilitation: Beyond the Risk Paradigm* (2007), *The Effects of Imprisonment* (2005), *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Ex-Offender Reintegration* (2004), and *Escape Routes* (2011).

Anna King is an Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at Georgian Court University in the USA where she teaches in the areas of public opinion, terrorism, research methods, criminal justice policy and ethics. Her current research is focused on narrative strategies for increasing public support for re-entry, and on the radicalisation of marginalised populations. Previously, she held a post-doctoral NIMH fellowship at the Center for Mental Health Services and Criminal Justice Research at Rutgers University and a lectureship at Keele University. She is a Gates Cambridge Scholar. Her work has appeared in journals such as *Feminist Criminology*, *The British Journal of Criminology*, *Punishment and Society*, and the *European Journal of Criminal Justice Policy and Research*, and in several edited books.

User views of punishment: Qualitative research on the comparative experience of short prison and community-based sentences¹

Sarah Armstrong, Glasgow University and Beth Weaver, Strathclyde University

Highly Commended

This research examined how people experience short periods of punishment. It sought to capture characteristic features of ‘doing’ a sentence whether in prison or in the community - what makes each setting feel like punishment, and what impact those doing it felt it would have for them. While ample research has documented the persistent re-offending and imprisonment of those who leave prison after serving a short sentence, there is much less information offering the perspective of these prisoners – what happens during a brief spell in prison and how this helps or hinders life once they are back in their communities. The research attempted to redress this imbalance by including the views of those directly affected by this most common of sentences. It found that the negative impact of short prison sentences accumulate and are amplified over the course of a lifetime – interfering with employment, family life and substance abuse recovery. By contrast, the experience of community punishment, regularly described as ‘payback’ by those doing it, was described more often as a positive, two-way process of both paying back by giving back to others for harm done, and taking something away from the experience rather than having something taken away from one.

This research was undertaken in Scotland, where a major reform effort, begun in 2008, is attempting to change the country’s reliance on prison as a place for holding people for very short periods of time. Through it we seek to engage with efforts in the wider UK and beyond, to understand the effects of short sentences and to offer new insights into their persistently poor outcomes (Scottish Government, 2011a). It does this by presenting the perspectives of those being punished, albeit mediated through our own perspective as researchers, in the hope of improving the ability both of policy makers and the public to understand how sentences work for those doing them.

This would seem to be an essential piece of information to develop more efficacious responses to the types of offending for which short sentences are used. In this brief article, drawing on published reports of the project (Armstrong and Weaver 2010, Weaver and Armstrong 2011), we describe the background of the research, how we conducted it and the characteristics of the people we spoke with before moving on to highlight the key findings of the research and the impact such work might have on public and policy debates about criminal justice.

Background

Short prison sentences are the most common custodial sentence handed down by courts in the UK; they are a particularly characteristic feature of the Scottish penal system, where between 70% and 80% of all prison sentences ordered in any given year are for six months or less (e.g., Scottish Government 2011b). There is concern that this sentence achieves little, being: too short, allowing insufficient time to work with a prisoner; too numerous, thus creating order and management problems in prison; and too easy, for courts to issue and for prisoners on whom few demands are made while imprisoned.² But because short sentences are assumed to be minimally intrusive compared to long-term or life sentences, there is little research on their effects. We sought to fill this gap in knowledge and provide relevant and independent research on short prison sentences, which are now the focus of policy reform in Scotland and England and Wales.

Methodology and participant information

The research design was qualitative comprising semi-structured interviews with 35 people who at the time of the research were serving short sentences in Scotland, either in prison (n=22) or the community (n=13). All of those serving community sentences (mainly on probation or community service, or some combination of these) had also had experience of serving a short prison sentence, which was helpful for gathering comparative views of prison and community as penal settings. We interviewed 26 men and 9 women ranging in age from 19 to 55 about their experiences of punishment. The crimes of this group are typical of those on short sentences generally: most of the group were being punished for low value property offences, minor assaults, breaches of the peace or of a prior order (such as violating probation), and most reported moderate to lengthy histories of these types of offending. We asked about a person's past experiences of punishment; current punishment (length, what they got up to, what was difficult or helpful about it); comparative views (preference for prison or community sentences and why, how each worked or did not); and their plans once released.

Two issues featured in the backgrounds of almost all of the people we spoke with. These were having extensive experience of prior short prison sentences, and having a long term problematic relationship to drugs or alcohol. Widespread addiction issues and long term criminal justice involvement are well known features of prison populations, and to this extent, the group of people to whom we spoke were representative of people serving a criminal sentence. The qualitative nature of our inquiry allowed us to probe these issues and to get at the well-established relationship between substance abuse and criminal justice involvement, considering how these factors might interrelate.

Findings

Short prison sentences are experienced as a form of ‘doing life by installments’ While the fact that most people had long-term involvement in the criminal justice system was not surprising, it is difficult to get across how extensive this history of being in ‘the system’ was. One indicator is that most of the people interviewed counted the times they had been in prison not in terms of numbers but as frequencies, that is, by how many times per year they are in prison.

Hundreds of times I been in. I couldn't say. It's easier to say how much I been out. In a good year I'll be outside for four or six months and in for the rest and it's been like that for years. (29 year old man, probation, shoplifting)

Maybe 2 or 3 times a year I think. I done 3 sentences, 3 six month sentences and a 4 week remand, last year.' (36 year old man, 60 days, theft)

The phrase ‘doing life by installments’ is in regular circulation among prison and other criminal justice actors in Scotland (Scottish Prisons Commission 2008) emphasising the perception that such a phenomenon is now a mundane feature of the Scottish prison system. The people we spoke with described constantly going into and coming out of prison conveying a sense of the short prison sentence as a routine life activity. But while some of the routine activities of life – attending school, seeing a doctor, going to a job – aim to support development of a healthy and sustainable existence, those we interviewed described prison mainly as undermining this. For those at the end of a long penal ‘career’ prison had displaced both the time and the will to pursue other paths:

I've got to the attitude where I just don't give a shit. Pardon my French, but I don't, I just get on with it, I do it. ... I'm goin' out [of] here with basically nothing you know? I'm better off in here. (49 year old man, 180 days, breach of the peace)

The cumulative effect of doing many short prison sentences is more than the experience of any single sentence

The constant coming and going between community and prison interrupted the ability to deal with drug and alcohol issues, support and be supported by family relationships, and become employable. The justification occasionally used for a short, 'sharp' sentence to scare the wrongdoer straight failed to materialise even for the few first time prisoners we spoke with. There was no fear or concern about doing any particular short prison sentence. Instead, anger and hopelessness were the more common emotions expressed by those with dozens of sentences behind them. Sometimes this was connected to tangible examples of loss – of a job, a relationship, contact with children, and training opportunities.

I was nearly out of it [cycle of prison sentences], I was doin' so well with my nice house, I was startin' to take drivin' lessons, I was startin' to feel things, goin right for me, and the sentence I got I just felt pure, pure heartbroken y'know... I hit one ae yer officers and I get sent tae prison ...He wis an off duty officer, that's whit it wis. I was arguing wi my mate outside Morrisons and he was an off duty copper. (35 year old man, 180 days, breach of the peace)

[Prison] sucks. But at the end of the day it's nothin'. It's nothin' now. It's not punishment anyway, it's a joke. Plus the fact if you're doin' less than 6 months you get nothing. By the time you get in on your sentence you're getting out. (Interviewer: What do you feel is the purpose of your prison sentence?) (Laughs) I cannae even say what that means. (35 year old man, 180 days, breaking and entering)

Another negative effect of the cycle of short prison sentences was a gradual decoupling of a person's sense of guilt about their crimes from their sense of the point of their punishment. Interviewees commonly talked about feeling ashamed and guilty about their offending. However, the short prison sentence seemed unable to capitalise on this sense of remorse. Having no one to speak to about their shame, no programmes with which to work through it, and no treatment regimens to address the underlying substance abuse fueling offending, most felt their prison sentence was vindictive and a waste of their time.

Look at my previous convictions. If you're so sure these fucking paltry sentences are doing me any good, look at my previous convictions. If I had gotten just one big one at the start I probably wouldn't be here. (35 year old man, 180 days, breaking and entering)

I'm nae entitled to walk oot to shops and jist help myself. I realise that I've got to be punished for daein it. ... [What impact has being in jail had on you?] Made me worse [Can you tell me about that...?] It's just because when I get out I dinnae like police, I dinnae like any form of authority, like I'm anti-authority now. Cause I've been locked up quite a while. It makes ye like that. Especially if you drink. (55 year old woman, 120 days, breach of an ASBO)

A short prison sentence entails mainly inactivity and numbing routine

Little can be accomplished during any given short sentence for those wanting to change their lives. Short sentenced prisoners mostly spend their time waiting to get out and often locked in cells. There are two reasons for this. First, most offence focused programmes last longer than the amount of time many of these prisoners will be in prison, and so they are ineligible for them in the first place. Second, longer term prisoners will have priority for other activities, such as jobs. This is partly because they will be able to fulfil the job over a longer period of time and partly because having been in for a longer period of time their risks will have been more thoroughly assessed, enabling placements that involve trust and independence.

it's a long weekend [locked up at a] quarter to 5 on a Saturday then you're back in your room and that's you til the next morning again...then it's the same Sunday ... see the boredom in the rooms it would absolutely knock ye off yer head. Just locked in a room. ... You get outside for like half an hour everyday but it's frozen, yer just outside standing. (39 year old woman, 190 days, 'domestic')

Many interviewees reported taking advantage of whatever activities were available, often to alleviate boredom but also to bolster their ability to succeed outside of prison. Ironically, it was the fact of having so many short sentences which allowed a number of interviewed prisoners to accumulate educational credits and course certificates over time.

The presence of a serious drug and/or alcohol problem

For nearly everyone interviewed, drugs and alcohol played some role in their offending, typically shoplifting or other low level theft (to pay for drugs), assault (while under the influence) or breaches of the peace (such as resisting arrest while drunk). Most of those we spoke with volunteered information about a chronic addiction issue, and among the prison sample even those who claimed not to be substance dependent mentioned being high or drunk while offending. Hence a problem with drugs or alcohol is not just consistent with a risk of offending but also with being caught and punished. However, the continuing cycle of involvement with the justice system meant most people saw imprisonment as having little positive effect on their sobriety. This perception would appear to be supported by the annual reports on reoffending rates. Some saw a short prison sentence (with no access to drug treatment and little contact with drug workers) as a challenge where they would attempt to get clean and stay out of jail. In fact, those with the most chronic drug problems talked about the only positive effect of prison as providing a brief spell of detox; a moment away from an intense phase of one's addiction.

Em, well the positive things [about prison] is basically just being in here and being drug free for a couple of months. Gies ye a chance to kinda think about things know what I mean? (30 year old man, 120 days, assault)

I was drug user ...all my convictions are to do with drug use. And if I hadn't gotten jail I'd probably be deid, so that's the only positive. (35 years old man, 180 days, breaking and entering)

Community sentences meant people could keep their lives going, or get their lives back on track

Other research has shown many people would choose a short period in prison over a longer period on probation (Petersilia & Deschenes, 1994; Petersilia, 1990; Payne & Gainey, 1998; Wood & Grasmick, 1999; Searle et al., 2003; Trebilcock 2011). We found the opposite: most people would prefer serving their time in the community, largely to preserve links to family and work and to be able to keep their lives going and get support to get their lives back on track. Relatedly being on community sentences seemed to mean that not only they, but their families were spared from experiencing the loss of a parent, wife or husband, a reminder that short prison sentences impact on families as well. However, there was a slight preference for prison if a person was experiencing an acute phase of an addiction problem, suggesting reforms to community-based sentences need to develop

effective means of addressing drug and alcohol dependency. Equally, the extent to which short prison sentences offer little more than a hiatus from a chronic addiction emerged so frequently it is worth re-emphasising here.

I've had the jail 3 or 4 times and that doesnae work cos I was coming back out and taking heroin each time and I had nobody but now I see my girlfriend, my pals, my house is in order so I don't want to lose all these things like that cos it can take you two minutes to lose it all and three or four year to build it all back up if you can find the energy, cos you give up and all. (31 year old man, combined probation and community service order, domestic assault and breach of the peace)

When I was single – it wouldn't have bothered me [going to prison] but cos I'm married with weans now it would have affected me more getting prison than it would have getting CS cos my wife was working at the time and she'd have had to give up her job to get the weans to school so it was a godsend getting CS. The weans were used to me being there every day, taking them to school and making sure everything was alright so it would have been confusing for them thinking I'd have just disappeared cos I wouldn't have wanted them coming in to the jail to see me. (38 year old man, community service, theft)

Probation is about getting help to understand past offending and to avoid future offending, often by dealing with pressing presenting issues

People identified the focus of probation as being both retrospective, in terms of getting help to understand their own past offending behaviour, and prospective, in relation to the provision of support to move on from offending. However, in realising these aims, the types of help offered through probation interventions were rather more immediate in terms of receiving help with people's pressing problems; with drugs or alcohol, with housing or homelessness, and less frequently with support in relation to employment. What the examples below further illustrate is that the approaches used in probation are often centred around addressing addictions and supporting people to find stability in otherwise chaotic lives as either a prelude to, or as a means of addressing, offending behaviour.

I've just came and spoke to my social worker³ and if I've got any problems she will help me deal with them – any sort of problems she will deal with, but we also talk about the reasons why I'm here. During my background reports I had told her a lot of things about my past so she is also helping with things like that so. (Woman, probation, reset and fraud)

On probation they just like to see how you're getting on, we've been taking things slowly really just now and setting wee goals for myself, helping me to get into a normal way of life again, cos I was on heroin for 12 years and when you're on drugs, that's all you care about – everything else can wait basically so you need to get into a whole new frame of mind and that's really hard after 12 years. (32 year old man, combined probation and community service order, domestic assault)

We'll sit and talk if I've got problems and work stuff out like when I got evicted from my house she sat with me all day and helped me sort it all out and got me somewhere to stay. I'm going to be going to drug and alcohol counselling but she wants to get me more stable before that starts. (31 year old woman, probation, shoplifting)

What is also clear from the preceding examples is the value people placed on their social worker taking things at their pace and dealing with the concerns that mattered to them. In other words, personalising the supervisory process - in the sense of giving the individual attention on a one-to-one basis, paying attention to the individual, their needs, and tailoring the intervention to those individual needs.

Perceptions and experiences of community service: the dynamic meaning of payback

The concept of community payback is generally portrayed as a retributive, uni-directional process from the offender to the community (Casey, 2008). However, emerging from this research is a more dynamic, generative and reciprocal meaning of payback, a term used spontaneously by a number of interviewees. Paying back by giving help seemed to work in both directions. Giving something back to the community was experienced as personally restorative for those being punished and went some way to helping people feel that not only were they paying back, they were also taking something away from the experience as opposed to having something taken away from them – crucially a sense of self worth and self esteem. That people frequently mentioned undertaking this work for perhaps more vulnerable members of society who could not necessarily undertake this work for themselves, or who had no one else to do it for them, would suggest that this dynamic further contributed to the distinction between what might otherwise be construed as simply manual and menial labour for its own sake and the more constructive configuration of community service as giving help. Significantly, the emphasis on 'visibility' in contemporary policy conceptions of payback (Casey 2008; Ministry of Justice 2008) may be neglecting the importance of incorporating a constructive component within it (Maruna and King 2008), that of social recognition.

On community service you do feel like you're giving something back but if you go to jail you done nothing, not a thing, for anybody. What can they say you paid back to society? Time? Does society need time fae me spent lying in a cell. No. You've took from society the money it costs to keep you there. If you're on community service, you can honestly turn round and say you have worked in an old folks home, or delivered a bed to young mum for her wean. Or you do work in the parks and when you go by you can say, I done that. It makes a difference to you when you can see you've done something whereas if you get 6 month you've done nothing. Vegetated and got bitter and tried to work out how not to get caught next time. (44 year old man, combined probation and community service order, RTA)

When you're causin' trouble you feel bad about yourself but you feel good about yourself when you're out there helping handicapped people and doing their grass and that. You've helped people that need you there. (27 year old man, probation, assault)

Conclusion

This research has drawn attention to and illuminated one of the most common but neglected features of penal systems in the UK, that most punishment is for very short periods. The research draws on the experience of community and prison-based punishments suggesting that contemporary political discourses of 'soft' or 'hard' punishments are simplistic and inaccurate. Short stays in prison are both too soft and too hard: it is not difficult to survive any individual sentence, but serving many of these sentences has unintended and disproportionately destructive and punishing effects on an individual over his or her lifetime, and critically his or her relationships, roles and responsibilities in respect of family ties, employment and accommodation, factors increasingly recognised as critical factors in supporting re-entry and desistance. In contrast, those on community sentences felt they had a constructive effect on their lives, which was related to retaining one's liberty and being able to keep one's life going, or get one's life back on track. However, what made community sentences more onerous were the challenges of sustaining compliance over time, in contrast to the forced but passive compliance characteristic of prison regimes (Weaver and Armstrong 2011). There were critical views of community punishment, particularly probation when a social worker had violated a person's trust, but it was this setting of punishment that for nearly all our informants provided an opportunity to trigger and work through their sense of remorse. Most of those in prison expressed guilt, shame and remorse for their crimes. However, the prison sentence which was the consequence of these crimes was seen as irrelevant to addressing this sense

of wrongdoing; over time, this disjuncture seemed to harden into hostility and perceived illegitimacy of the criminal justice system itself. Taken together these findings may enhance the public understanding about the purpose, possibilities and limits of particular forms of punishment.

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Annex

Our communication plan has been to target a variety of audiences including justice practitioners, policy makers, academics and the public. The research has been written up and disseminated in a number of forms and channels including teaching, advice to government, public education and academic and professional discussion using a variety of media. This annex provides an overview of dissemination activities for this research

Two key practitioner audiences are social workers and judges. We have disseminated the key findings and implications in lectures and seminars to social work students at universities in Scotland. The focus on social work students and practitioners as one of our target audience arises from an interest in influencing thinking and action on the front line. Criminal justice services are located within social work services in Scotland, and social workers play a major role in establishing appropriate conditions of sentences by writing background reports for the courts and others. This research has also been presented through Scotland's Judicial Studies Committee to Sheriffs, similar in jurisdiction to English magistrates, who issue the bulk of criminal sentences, and to The Scottish Association for the Study of Offending (SASO) which includes all professional groups and individuals concerned with offending related issues in Scotland.

We have presented our findings in this way to a broad base of practitioners at the World Social Work Day in Glasgow and to local criminal justice social work teams as well as policy maker audiences (including judges, social work managers, civil servants). Moreover we have, and continue, to participate in invited meetings with the Scottish Government to discuss the implications of this work. This medium has therefore allowed us to reach a wide and diverse population of interested parties and partners engaged in administering, enacting and developing penal policy and practice and contributing to penal reform, whilst providing the opportunity to engage in discussions and debates on the issues our research raises. Partly as a result of conducting this research, we put on a workshop on families and criminal justice ('Who Are you Calling Dysfunctional?' Families and Criminal Justice Explored, Glasgow University 28 March 2011), at which Scottish Government policy

makers responded to the importance of including user voices and criminal justice service users presented their stories about how their experience of criminal justice impacted on family life. We also presented the key messages from our research at the Howard League ECAN event on short sentences research on 7 June 2011 for students, academics and Howard League members.

We have presented this research to academics at a number of conferences and workshops (at the European Society of Criminology Conference 2010, for example) with the intention of provoking increased reflexivity amongst academics about how they too might pursue allied inquiries in their jurisdictions. While the research has identified a number of substantive issues that might inform policy debates, one of our key aims was not only to bring 'user voices' into these debates but to do so with integrity – allowing the perspectives of the punished to emerge without being filtered through particular reform agendas. Their experiences are critical in developing new insights into the limitations, opportunities, failings and potentials of the penal system. Our presentations have thus included providing theoretical, ideological and empirical arguments as to why the voices of (ex)offenders matter.

We have prepared two research reports which have also been published on the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice website in order to put the material into the public domain. All of our work has been intentionally disseminated in such a form and through media that would allow unlimited public access to this work. We have also disseminated these reports directly to the Scottish Prison Service, Criminal Justice Social Work services, to the Scottish Government and to on-line discussion forums such as UNLOCK (The National Association of Ex-Offenders) to stimulate further debate. In addition, we have used Twitter to highlight key findings to professionals and publics we might not otherwise have reached, and engaged with other online discussions or blogs . We are in the process of preparing academic articles on this work for international journals. We have already provided a briefing paper disseminating early findings to the Howard League ECAN Bulletin (Issue 4, June 2010) and the online newsletter of CEP, the European Organisation for Probation. We recently recorded an audio-podcast of us talking about the findings and implications of this research for public dissemination. This medium was selected not just for its capacity to reach a wide and varied audience but is perhaps a more accessible format than research reports to particular audiences . This work has also attracted media attention and resulted in newspaper, radio and TV coverage of the findings (STV, BBC Radio Scotland, The Herald newspaper).

4 <http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/discoveringdesistance/2011/12/20/prisons-and-desistance/>

5 http://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/user-views-punishment?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+irisspodcast+%28Institute+for+Research+and+Innovation+in+Social+Services+Podcast%29

Both the subject matter and methodological approach of our work seeks to provoke discussion and reform in sentencing practices and the way in which these sentences are administered and therefore experienced. Our work also aims to generate an impetus for change as regards promoting user involvement in the debates and development of penal policy and practice. This is reflected in the focus of our communication and dissemination approach which has been on promoting impact and to this end we have engaged intensively with policy makers, particularly in Scotland, and with practitioners to change thinking and practice. The decision to develop audio and public reports and to use diverse media outlets aims to participate and adjust the approach of the public debate, allowing our work to reach key policy, practice and public audiences with the intention of increasing pressure for sustained, lasting and meaningful change at a time which holds so much potential for penal reform.

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Researching the impact of a prison music project

Laura Caulfield, Birmingham City University

Commended

Overview of the research

This research explored the long-term impact of taking part in a music project on participants while still in prison, and on participants when they were released from prison. It was set against a background of official concerns about the “public acceptability” of some arts in prisons projects. This article presents findings from 26 men and women in prison and in the community who had taken part in a music project in prison: Good Vibrations. The participants’ attitudes, emotions, and behaviours were measured through interviews, adjudication reports and prison records, and interviews with prison staff.

The findings suggest that for some offenders, participation in art-based projects can contribute to changes in behaviour, and that these changes can come directly from taking part in creative activities and also from the by-products of such activities including improvements in self-confidence, communication and social skills. The key findings from this research suggested that this particular music project:

- Acted as a catalyst for change in the lives of offenders, and that this positive change is sustained as offenders move through the prison system and out into the community.
- Had a significant impact on male and female offenders in the general prison population and in therapeutic communities.
- Significantly improved confidence, listening and communication skills, tolerance, levels of self-expression, and ability to cope with stress and prison life. For many participants these changes were sustained in the long-term.
- Enhanced participants’ levels of engagement with further education and training.
- Had a significant positive impact upon the emotional well-being of female offenders.
- Was responsive to the differing needs of men and women in prison.

Overall, what this revealed was that participating in this music project can provide the starting-block for positive change in offenders. Many project participants were able to leverage the impetus from the project and use this to go on to achieve, both personally and practically. Participants experienced sustained positive, emotional, psychological, and behavioural improvements. However, what was also clear was that offenders involved in a therapeutic regime were more able to build upon the positive benefits experienced through the project, and thus thought needs to be given in the general prison system as to how positive changes can be sustained and further developed. There is a need for the prison service to adequately plan for the completion of projects, particularly when vulnerable individuals are involved.

Background to the project: Good Vibrations

Good Vibrations presents an example of a charity providing a service beyond the remit of 'traditional' education and training providers, using a unique form of music training and group work. Good Vibrations uses gamelan percussion music from Indonesia that has been identified as suitable for community or group settings; it has an informal and inclusive approach; and includes a variety of instruments that can be played without any prior musical training or knowledge of musical notation. Gamelan is the term for a collection of Indonesian bronze percussion instruments, consisting of a variety of metallophones, gongs, chimes and drums. It is a particularly communal form of music-making where participants are compelled to work together.

Good Vibrations projects typically run over one week for around 15-20 offenders. They run in the prison and probation services and are available to any offender in contact with these services (or, in some prisons, to targeted groups e.g. the unemployed, the very low-skilled, people in touch with mental health teams, self-harmers). As well as learning how to play traditional pieces of gamelan music, participants create their own compositions as a group. They also learn about Indonesian culture and associated art-forms (e.g. shadow puppetry, Javanese dance). At the end of the week, offenders perform a concert to which staff, peers, family members and others are invited.

The need for this research

Anecdotal evidence suggested that arts in prison programmes could have a significant effect on prisoners; on their emotional and psychological wellbeing, self-esteem, behaviour, and engagement with further learning. Recently research has begun to focus on the impact of the arts in criminal justice. However, there

still remains a paucity of high-quality research and in particular few studies have investigated the longer-term impact of arts programmes on offenders after the completion of participating in a project. Additionally, there had been some disruption to the prison arts sector following the publication of prison service guidance to prison staff to consider the ‘public perception’ of programmes offered in prisons. In late 2008 media attention focused on certain arts in prisons projects, suggesting they were unsuitable for offenders serving prison sentences. Concerns about acceptability need to be responded to with robust evidence about the effectiveness of projects, which is now beginning to emerge. Previous research on the Good Vibrations project has highlighted the short- and medium-term value of the project with male offenders (Wilson and Logan 2006; Wilson et al. 2009). Given the need to consider fully the long-term impact of arts-based projects, the research discussed in this article investigated the long-term impact of this particular arts-based programme on prisoners and ex-offenders in the community. Here it should be noted the working definition of “long-term” means having completed the Good Vibrations project at least 12 months ago. Furthermore, for projects to maximise their impact it is vital to ensure that they are able to engage offenders, by matching the style of programme delivery to participants’ needs, and being sensitive to offenders’ gender. In light of these issues, this article also presents findings on the effects of the project upon women in prison. It is vital for the prison service and funders to be able to make informed decisions in order to provide appropriate interventions for offenders. The research aimed to inform these decisions through the following objectives:

- To track previous research participants from HMP Grendon through the prison system to assess the long-term institutional impact of participating in a Good Vibrations project.
- To follow a sample of participants in the community - who previously took part in a Good Vibrations project in prison - to assess the long-term impact of participating in a Good Vibrations project.
- To assess the impact of Good Vibrations on a new cohort of participants at HMP Grendon, in order to test the claims of previous research.
- To review the effects of participating in a Good Vibrations project on adult female offenders.
- To assess any changes in participants’ attitudes, emotions and behaviour, via self-report assessment, and official documentation.
- To compile data on participants’ engagement with further learning, education and self-development.

The research process

The research was conducted in four simultaneous stages:

- Stage One considered the potential long-term impact of the Good Vibrations project on offenders who had taken part in previous research as they progressed through the prison system.
- Stage Two evaluated of a new cohort of project participants, in order to increase the validity of the findings of previous research.
- Stage Three reviewed the effects of the project on participants from a variety of prisons as they moved out into the community.
- Stage Four evaluated the work of the project with female offenders.

Participants were interviewed at length and were asked to describe their experiences of the project; what they gained from it; and specifically to focus on their experiences and behaviour after the project. The interview schedules were based on those used in previous research (Wilson et al. 2009) and were amended for use at the different stages of this research. In Stage One participants and prison staff were interviewed to assess emotional and behavioural change, and this stage also involved an analysis of disciplinary and other relevant prison records. This stage of the research also investigated any further training, education and personal development activities undertaken by the participants after completing a Good Vibrations project.

Stage Two replicated the interview process for Stage One. Stage Three comprised interviews with people who had recently been released into the community. These participants came from a range of men's prisons across England and they had taken part in a Good Vibrations project within the last 18 months. Stage Four investigated the impact of Good Vibrations on female offenders. Miles (2005) suggested that female offenders were particularly affected by arts programmes, so focusing on this group allowed for a comparison of data across different prison populations and an assessment of the level of responsivity across each group were possible.

Findings

The full report on this research provides an in-depth analysis of the data (Caulfield et al. 2009). Below is a summary of the key findings.

Summary of the findings with male offenders and ex-offenders

The results suggested that for many taking part in a Good Vibrations project acted as a catalyst for change. Those men resident in a therapeutic environment at the time of the project often took part with the aim of working on something specific to them that may

have been identified as an issue during group therapy. Whether this had been to improve confidence, learn listening skills, or develop tolerance for other people, the project was able to address all these needs. However, we should also not lose sight of the fact that for the majority of people the decision to take part is at least partly because they want to do something to occupy their time and try something different. In male prisons, in particular, doing something as different as learning to play the Gamelan can be a big step that is driven by a number of motivations. Aside from all other positive factors, Good Vibrations provided participants with a stimulating week that stays vivid in their mind, where they were able to explore something of themselves, the music and the group. The feelings of freedom and being 'normal again' engendered by the project appeared to give some offenders the 'head-space' to begin making a positive change in their lives. The research suggested that continued change was easier for participants in a therapeutic environment where high levels of support were available. For those men who had recently taken part in their first Good Vibrations project, all of whom reported a positive experience of this,¹ it was expected that their experience will be similar. However, even where project participants returned to 'normal prison life' after the project, they clearly took something of the project with them and for some this acted as the start of positive change which they may be able to gradually build upon. This group, in particular, may benefit from taking part in subsequent Good Vibrations projects to allow them the space and time to move forward with their positive changes.

Summary of the findings with female offenders

It was significant that nine of the ten female participants who took part in this research were already actively engaged in formal education with the prison. This suggested that this group differed in no small way from typical Good Vibrations groups where levels of participation in prison education were typically much lower. Given that previous research has found that one of the most significant outcomes of participating in a Good Vibrations project is the way that, for many offenders, it acts as a 'stepping-stone' to further education, there was a potential risk here that the project would be of limited use to this group of participants. Happily, this was not the case. The project had a significant and potentially far reaching impact on these women. The project improved participants' communications skills, levels of self-expression, and their ability to cope with stress and prison life. Furthermore, the findings suggested the project may have a positive impact upon women's levels of self-harming behaviour, but given the limited numbers of participants in this research with a history of self-harming behaviour, this requires more investigation. The results from prison staff clearly map on to the reports from participants. In addition, these results add support to the positive findings identified with male participants in this and previous research. As this research took place only days after the participants had taken part in a Good Vibrations project prison staff had somewhat limited ability to comment on any changes in these prisoners, but positive changes in demeanour and behaviour were observed.

¹ This supports the findings of previous research.

Conclusions

The results of this research suggested some common themes in the way different groups and individuals experienced taking part in a Good Vibrations project. The research demonstrated the positive impact of participating in a Good Vibrations project for a range of offenders and showed that for many participants this impact may be sustained in the long-term. Perhaps most significant was the finding that the initial positive changes observed in individuals seemed to prompt continued positive change. Indeed, of those men whom we were able to make contact with in the community after their release from prison, most of whom had completed the Good Vibrations project at least twelve months beforehand, many were still reporting positive attitudinal changes that were prompted by their initial participation in the project. It may of course be that participants have on some level already decided to make positive changes in their behaviour, but the results from this research point towards the positive emotional, psychological and personal changes associated with the Good Vibrations project as being a catalyst for future behavioural change.

Participating in the project gave many people the skills to go on and make a positive change, be that learning how to cope with prison life, or going on to take part in formal education programmes. Clearly every individual is different, and changes will not happen for all, but the potential of this project in influencing the lives of offenders is clear. For those with a history of active engagement in education and training within prison, the project can impact on a number of factors personal to each individual. Typically this can be found in the development of social and coping skills that enable individuals to deal with prison more effectively.

This research supports the findings from previous research with regard to those with little or no history of education or training. The Good Vibrations project had all of the benefits mentioned above, but also appeared to act as a stepping-stone into further education. Many offenders with poor educational backgrounds were extremely reluctant to engage with formal education in prison. This may in part be due to feelings of dislike of the education system, but is often also due to feelings of inadequacy and fear of failure. Taking part in a Good Vibrations project showed people that they could achieve and for some participants this may be the first time they have ever really achieved anything.

For the group of female participants, the reports from prison staff clearly mapped on to the reports from participants in terms of the positive impact of the project suggesting that the women became better at coping with prison life during and

directly after the project. Furthermore, research with this group adds support to the positive findings identified with male participants in this and previous research. However, as this research took place only days after the participants had taken part in a Good Vibrations project prison staff had somewhat limited ability to comment on any changes in these prisoners. Nonetheless, positive changes in demeanour and behaviour were observed by staff and reported by participants, particularly with reference to emotional issues. Given these early positive findings and taking into account the long-term impact of the project on male participants, this suggested that the project was likely to have a sustained impact upon female prisoners. However, given the differing needs of men and women in prison, and the clear differences in the way they respond to taking part in a Good Vibrations project, particularly with reference to the significant emotional impact of the project on women, it is important to assess whether any impact will be sustained.

Overall, this research suggested that Good Vibrations can provide the starting-block for positive change in offenders. Many project participants are able to leverage the impetus from the project and use it to go on to achieve, both personally and practically. This was not the case for all participants, as each individual is different, but for a clear majority significant change was apparent. It is important to highlight the potential for arts-based programmes, such as Good Vibrations, and more traditional programmes in prison to complement one another. The research literature tells us that traditional offending behaviour programmes do not work for everyone, and neither would we expect the project discussed here to be a panacea for offending behaviour. What must be remembered is that every person is different and therefore different things will work for different people. Providing programmes like Good Vibrations helps give the widest number of offenders a chance to cope with prison, tackle their needs, and hopefully go on to become non-offenders in the future.

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Annex: Communication and impact

The work outlined in this article has proved to be of particular interest, as little research exists about the impact of arts-based projects on prisoners. Most prison-based research has concentrated on large-scale offending behaviour programmes. This research provides evidence that arts-based projects can have a positive impact on offenders, helping them work towards non-offending futures.

Since completion of the research in 2009 the impact of this research has been wide-reaching. The research has been promoted in a range of professional and academic arenas in order to reach the widest number of people to whom the research may be relevant, and has been used by arts organisations working with offenders as evidence that such programmes are important for offender rehabilitation. In particular, this research has been useful in aiding the work of the Arts Alliance (the national body representing arts for offenders) in their campaign to raise awareness to the Government and wider society of the role that the arts have to play in criminal justice. This research has aided the arts community in re-instating themselves as important contributors to offender rehabilitation.

Most recently the research has been identified as a 'Big idea for the future' by Research Councils UK and Universities UK in its report on UK research that will have a profound effect on our future. The research has been promoted in a range of professional and academic arenas, for example, the findings were presented at two recent Arts Alliance conferences, which attracted an audience of government and prison service officials, arts practitioners and others. As well as being used in the Arts Alliance's campaign to raise awareness to the Government and wider society of the role that the arts have to play in criminal justice, the research has formed part of an evidence directory, which has been designed to further aid the Arts Alliance's campaign for the recognition of the positive impact of the arts on offenders. From a methodological perspective, several examples of methodological good practice from this research were cited in a recent report by the Charities Evaluation Service.

The research has been useful in promoting a positive message about the arts in other forums, not least through an event held at Birmingham City University that attracted a great deal of attention, being covered by the press and attended by individuals from the Prison Service, Home Office, Ministry of Justice, charity sector, ex-offenders, and academia. The work has been widely published in academic and professional arenas and has been at the forefront of developing an agenda to acknowledge the importance of the arts in helping offenders to stop committing crime.

Laura Caulfield is a senior lecturer in the Centre for Applied Criminology at Birmingham City University. She is an expert in the evaluation of programmes with offenders, designing and conducting research evaluations in prisons and the community both with offenders and those at risk of offending. Since 2001 Laura has led a range of evaluations, and over the past four years this work has focused on assessing the impact of the arts and other non-traditional programmes for offenders. Laura publishes widely in academic and professional arenas, and serves on the editorial boards of a number of academic journals. She has recently been commissioned by Routledge to write a text on research methods in criminology due for publication in 2013.

The impact of prison placement on young adult offenders' substance misuse problems

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Commended

This paper examines findings from a larger research project conducted in 2010 (Taylor et al), which primarily studied the mental state change of prisoners during a period of remand. That paper discussed results as a whole and did not account for the important differences between young adult offenders and their older counterparts. In-depth interviews and self report questionnaires were conducted with young male adult prisoners (18-20 year olds) and older male prisoners (21 year olds and over) whilst on remand in prison. A range of questions were asked including questions about their childhood experiences, previous experience of offending, social context and experience of drugs and alcohol. Here, the focus will be on substance use, differences between these two groups and the impact that this could have in terms of placement within the prison system.

Introduction

In England and Wales young adult prisoners, those aged 18-20 are held separately from older adult prisoners over the age of 21. There are currently 2,800 young adult prisoners in England and Wales, (Ministry of Justice, 2011), with fewer young offenders' institutions than standard adult male prisons, this potentially means that young adults are kept many miles from their families. In other countries the separation of young adults from older adults varies, with the cut-off for separation varying from 18 years old to 21 years old (the age at which they are seen as an adult). In England and Wales prison policies are constantly changing, sometimes with little or no evidence base. In 2005 there was an announcement by the government that all prisoners in England and Wales over the age of 18 years would now be held in the same institutions, and that the need for keeping 18 to 20 year olds separate from older prisoners is no longer required. These plans however, were put on hold due to a lack of evidence base and as far as we know there still is no evidence base to warrant such a change, however the integration of young adults with older adults in the prison system is imminent.¹ This change means that young people moving from the juvenile secure estate will potentially be held with much older, and perhaps experienced, prisoners more quickly. The age split of

prisoners over the age of 18 is an ongoing debate; however this research outlines an argument, with evidence, for keeping young adult prisoners separate from older adult prisoners in England and Wales.

Previous prison research has touched on some differences between younger and older prisoners' substance abuse, focusing on this issue in prisoners is very important. Drug use has been shown to change and can also be initiated during a period of imprisonment and any differences between younger and older adults in their experience of drugs could have a serious impact if they were to be integrated in the prison system. Research conducted in England and Wales in 2002 by Boys et al, found that those in their 20s were over 1.5 times more likely to have ever used heroin and/or cocaine and more likely to have initiated drug use in prison compared with younger adults; there was no information however, about differences in use of alcohol. An Office for National Statistics (ONS) comparison by Singleton et al (1998) examined differences between younger and older adults on their self-reported substance abuse, they found that men of 24 and under were more likely to be drinking to hazardous levels than comparable prisoners over the age of 25. Findings also suggested that while younger men aged 16 to 24 had higher levels of cannabis dependency, older adults were much more likely to be opiate only dependent. A similar US study by Lo et al (2000), dividing prisoners by ages 18-25, 26-40 and 41-58 years, also found that those 18-25 were more likely to report marijuana use compared to the older groups, but older groups cocaine and opiate use. Findings from research by the Howard League for Penal Reform (2002) has also suggested that younger men have particular problems with alcohol. Young adults in this study attributed their offending to alcohol, and although many of them would have liked help with their drinking, they stated that they did not necessarily have an alcohol problem. These studies however have not examined some important issues about the use of alcohol and drugs, such as experience of withdrawal symptoms and what this means for care and intervention whilst in prison. There are currently no specific alcohol detox programmes within the prison system, and given some of this evidence there needs to be an alcohol only programme in place for offenders, in particular for young adults. Although these studies make age comparisons, the age cut-offs are not reflective of current placement within the prison system in the UK or, indeed, of many other countries. We therefore sought to examine drug and alcohol use differences between younger and older remand prisoners, the age split chosen to reflect prison placement in England and Wales, and also to examine reports of withdrawal from alcohol and drugs and whether this reflected the level of help they received during imprisonment.

Findings

Newly remanded prisoners were approached in three institutions, two in Wales and one in England, one of these was a young offender's institution (YOI). Each man was approached within a week of imprisonment, and consent was given by 257 men to participate in the study. This sample included 100 young adults, mean age (18.94), and 157 older adults, mean age (30.32). Men were asked about their social experiences, mental health and substance abuse using the drug and alcohol questionnaires the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST) and the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT).

The majority of the men were white (86.4%), they differed in an expected direction on some variables, for example, the younger men were less likely to have been married and therefore none were separated or divorced; the majority of the sample were single (73%). They were however similar on many aspects of their social experiences: both younger and the older men were just as likely to have been in some kind of employment in the 12 months prior to imprisonment. Less than half in both groups had experienced employment in this time (46% younger adults: 42% older adults), which is consistent with previous findings on employment rates prior to imprisonment (ONS survey 1999).

Over three quarters of both groups were as likely to have experienced some sort of previous imprisonment; however as expected the older ones had more occurrences of imprisonment and had spent longer in prison overall compared to their younger counterparts (Table 1), which may simply be a reflection of the time available to incur such incarcerations. No younger man in this sample had been charged with a sexual offence, compared with 6% of older men; although violent offences were the most common charge in both groups, more of the younger men were charged with a violent offence.

Table 1: Social experiences before index imprisonment according to age group

	Young adults	Older adults	Statistical test	df	p value
Main Charge	N (%)	N (%)			
Violence	47 (47)	62 (39.5)			
Sex	0	9 (5.7)			
Acquisitive	27 (27)	42 (26.8)			
Drugs	6 (6)	26 (16.6)			
Other ¹	20 (20)	18 (11.5)			
			FET= 15.759	4	0.003 (sig)
Been in prison/secure home before					
Yes	68 (68)	122 (77.7)			
No	32 (32)	35 (22.8)			
			$\chi^2=2.987$	1	0.084 (ns)
What is the longest time you have spent in prison?(months), mean (SD)	4.61 (5.61)	15.73 (18.52)			
			t=-5.804	254	<0.001 (sig)
Number of sentences	Mean=2.00 SD(2.563)	Mean=5.49 SD(9.789)			
			t= -3.468	253	0.001
Marital status					
Single	84 (84)	103 (65.6)			
Married/living with partner	16 (16)	38 (24.2)			
Other ²	0 (0)	16 (10.2)			
			FET=14.989	2	0.001
Accommodation type					
Own	21 (21)	89 (57.1)			
Others (including temporary accommodation)	79 (79)	67 (42.9)			
			$\chi^2=32.319$	1	0.001
Mental health of prisoners					
PDQ4	Mean=32.02 SD(16.165)	Mean=34.13 SD(17.079)			
			t=-0.909	214	0.364
BDI					
<21	54 (62.1)	66 (49.6)			
21+	33 (37.9)	67 (50.4)			
			$\chi^2=3.285$	1	0.070
CPRS					
Rating of psychosis	7 (7)	10 (6.4)			
			$\chi^2=0.039$	1	0.843

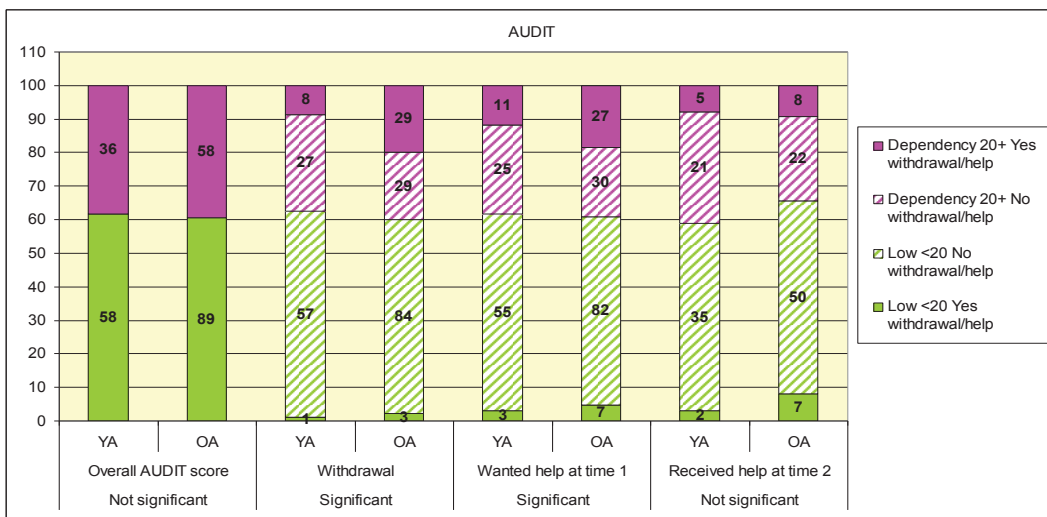
1. other charges include criminal damage (5,7)
2. divorced (11:7%) and separated (5:3.2%)

When mental state was examined, the younger and older adults did not differ on any aspect of mental state measured by the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Clinical Psychopathological Rating Scale (CPRS) or the Personality Diagnostic Questionnaire-4 (PDQ-4). A cut-off of over 21 on the BDI points towards scores indicative of depression: 38% of the younger adults and 50% of the older adults scored over 21 on the BDI. Very few prisoners had scores reflective of psychosis according to the CPRS (7% of the sample). They were also very similar on mean scores of personality disorder measured by the PDQ-4: younger adults mean score was 32.02 compared to the older adults who had a mean score of 34.13.

The younger and older adults were very similar on a number of social aspects, there are however important and surprising differences in the reports of substance use between the younger and older adult prisoners. As well as answering the AUDIT and the DAST, all participants were also asked supplementary questions about their choice of drugs, withdrawal from alcohol and drugs and also about any help that they had received or would like to receive for their substance use problems.

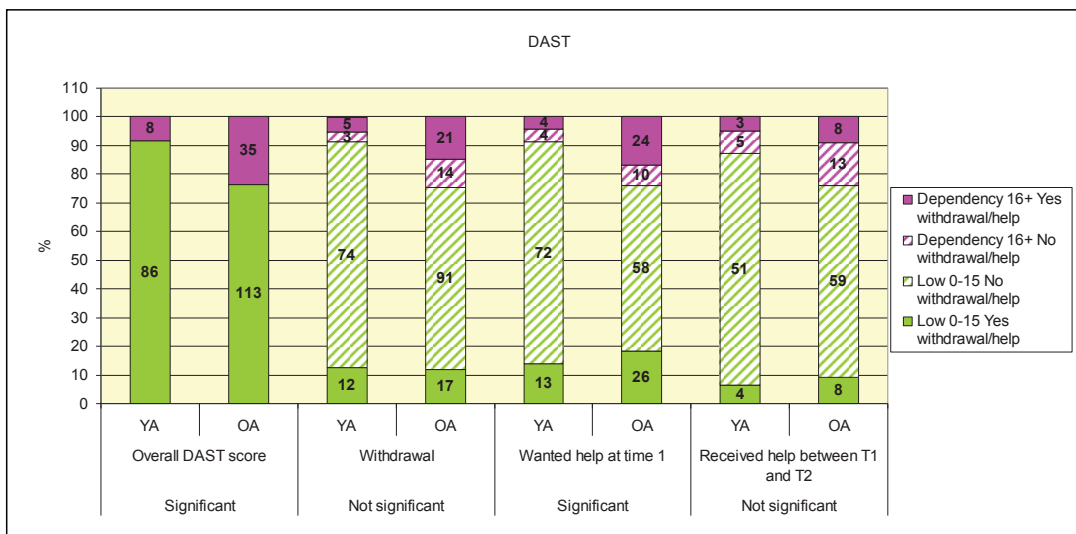
AUDIT scores over 8 indicate hazardous levels of drinking; at this level of drinking people need further investigation into their use of alcohol, as this score is indicative of developing a dependency. A score of over 20 is indicative of dependency and at this level people need intervention for alcohol treatment. Suddenly stopping drinking at this level produces dangerous withdrawal symptoms. The younger men were over two times more likely to drink to levels indicative of further investigation, both the younger and older men however were just as likely to score levels indicative of dependency, (see figure 1). Although they were both just as likely to have scores indicative of dependency, the younger men were much less likely to recognise this as a problem compared to the older men. Disclosure of withdrawal symptoms in the younger men who scored over 20 on the AUDIT was low, with only 23% reporting withdrawal symptoms from alcohol, which is significantly less compared to the older adults (50%). This indicates that fewer of the younger men recognise their drinking as a problem, and in fact when asked about whether they had a problem with alcohol at the time of imprisonment only 20% said 'yes' which does not fit with the high rates of hazardous drinking and also with the high levels of suggested dependency amongst this group. Although these are self-reports of alcohol use and also of withdrawal, it is important to note that self-reports are very important in understanding how people perceive their levels of drinking and symptoms of withdrawal.

Figure 1



A different picture was found in terms of drug use, the older adults were three times more likely to have a score indicative of dependency on drugs, (over 16) compared to the younger adults, however both were just as likely to report withdrawal symptoms from drugs despite their level of use (see figure 2). It has been known that people can over emphasise their withdrawal from drugs in order to get medication, however the participants knew that the researchers were independent from the prison staff and it was also made explicit to them that all reporting of drug and alcohol use outside and inside the prison would remain strictly confidential between the research staff and participant.

Figure 2



Seventy-nine (84%) of the younger men and 107 (77%) of the older men had used illicit drugs at some stage in their lives. The younger and older men were equally likely to have been using cannabis in the 24 hours prior to arrest, however the younger men (n=8, 8.5%) were significantly less likely to have been using heroin, methadone, crack, cocaine or speed, this trend was also found when examining lifetime use of drugs. Abuse of multiple illegal substances was also less likely amongst the younger men during the 24 hours prior to arrest, with a third reporting multiple drug use compared to nearly half of the older men. Despite the high rate of drug use, and reports of withdrawal symptoms, significantly fewer of the younger men (n=17, 8%) than older men (n=50, 33%) wanted help with drug use during their time in prison.

Drug use during imprisonment was unusual in both groups, but some men had found a way to get drugs there (n=14, 8.5%), and the younger ones seemed particularly resourceful in this respect. They were much more likely to be using illicit drugs in the prison (n=9, 64% of illicit users) whereas the older men were more likely to have been prescribed medication (n=41, 83% of prescribed drug users), possibly reducing the need to take illegal drugs at this time. At the second interview, nine (14%) of the younger adults said that they had continued to use cannabis compared with five (5%) of the older men. No younger adults reported using heroin, and only two older adults reported its use, these two adding it to their in-prison cannabis use. At this early stage of imprisonment, initiation of drug use hardly occurred - one younger adult started with cannabis, one older adult with heroin and another with illicit diazepam.

Access to help for substance misuse in prison

Few of the harmful alcohol or illicit drug users received help for this during the three weeks between interviews, and there was no difference in this according to age. Eight (12.7%) 18-20 year-olds and 15 (17.1%) 21+ year olds wanted help with alcohol but could not access it. Numbers wanting help with drugs but not receiving it were also similar (18-20 years: n=8, 12.9%; 21+ years: n=18, 21.2%). Where help was obtained for drugs/alcohol ten (15%) younger men and 27 (26%) older men had seen a CARAT worker, (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare). The older ones were more likely to be receiving medication.

Conclusions

The majority of the young adult men self-reported drinking to worrying levels, although very few of them recognised this as a problem. Alcohol detox programmes and education for prisoners are integrated with drug programmes with the focus on drug related problems. Drugs are usually thought of as more of a problem for the prison system than alcohol related problems. Alcohol however, was obviously a major problem for both younger and older men on remand in this sample, although these findings cannot be generalised to all remand prisoners, there is no reason to believe that they would differ significantly from other remand prisoners across England and Wales.

The high level of opiate use amongst the older adults indicated that the integration of the younger adults with them would potentially mean that the risk of exposure to such drugs would be intensified. Although we did not ask about the age at which heroin use started, previous research has highlighted that heroin use is more likely to start during a period of imprisonment than any other drug (Boys et al (2002), and so tentative conclusions could be made that the older adults started using heroin during a period of imprisonment, given that they have had significantly more episodes of imprisonment than the younger adult men. The fact that many of the younger men have a score indicative of alcohol dependency but do not recognise it as a problem shows their vulnerability to substance abuse. At this early stage of imprisonment therefore, there may be benefits of maintaining the segregation of younger and older adult men in the prison system. Treatment and education programmes on alcohol as well as drugs should be made readily available to young adults in the prison system. The older adult men recognise their alcohol use as a problem and are not afraid, according to these results, to ask for help.

There appears to be a lack of help received with both alcohol and drugs during imprisonment, with many reporting that they had seen a CARAT worker once in the three weeks and were waiting for a referral. A period of remand is unstable for a prisoner, however it may provide an ideal treatment opportunity. It can put prisoners in contact with help outside the prison, it is therefore very important to address some issues and give education about the effects of alcohol and drugs to these young men whilst they are in prison. Younger and older adult prisoners have very different needs, keeping them separate in the prison system will ensure that focus is given to these specific needs.

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Annex

These results were disseminated at an international level, in July 2010, at the International Annual Forensic Mental Health conference, not only to academics, but also to those working in the prison system and secure mental health units. Although this is very relevant to local policy decisions in England and Wales, it is important to draw experiences from European cultures. It may instill the need for other countries which currently house young and older offenders together to reassess young adults' needs. The offender health research network, journal publication, Welsh Assembly Government and the prisons that were involved in the research are other communication pathways that we will be using.

The news of the proposed integration of young and older offenders in the prison system was reported in BBC reports and newspapers. This policy is of interest to the general public and there is a possibility that the findings from this research could go out in reports such as these, reinforcing the need to keep younger and older adults separate in the prison system. It would be extremely beneficial to use this means of communication to reach a wider public audience, as media interest is powerful in delivering messages and sometimes in influencing policies.

A parallel paper, focusing on alcohol problem recognition differences between younger and older adult men has been submitted to the journal of Behavioural Sciences and the Law, and currently being peer reviewed awaiting confirmation of acceptance.

The Offender Health Research Network meets quarterly and members are familiar with the ongoing research findings from this project through group discussions. This group is a very useful network in Wales and also has links with the Centre for Mental Health. Delegates include prison workers in Wales, clinicians from medium and low secure units, academics and ex-service users. There has recently been a reform of prisons in South Wales. Research assessing the differences between younger and older offenders would be beneficial in terms of prisoner management, and so communicating these findings to the prisons involved with the research is also important. The overarching research has already been disseminated to this audience.

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has funded a similar longitudinal project looking at mental state in juvenile prisoners. This research is still ongoing but a three way comparison between 15-17 year olds, 18 - 20 year olds and older adults will soon be underway. It will be very interesting to see how prisoners appear to change, possibly informing practice/interventions to stop this progression through the prison system. Results of this will be sent in a report to WAG.

I think it is important to deliver this message to a variety of audiences. This may affect where people are placed in the prison system. There are fewer Young Offender Institutions than adult prisons in England and Wales. This potentially means that young adults are held much further away from home. The integration of younger and older adults could benefit younger adults in terms of the distance they are from home. However, is it worth the risk of mixing them with older adults who are clearly more dependent on drugs and have very different needs?

There is currently research being undertaken by NOMS CYMRU which is asking young adult offenders in South Wales about their experiences of imprisonment since their integration with older adults. Findings are currently unknown, but preliminary findings were disseminated at the OHRN-C in March 2012.

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Gemma is an active member of the Offender Health Research Network-Cymru which has international links, and also the Psychology Forensic Forum in Wales. She has presented research at an international level. Her current research interests are juvenile prisoners' mental health, drug and alcohol use amongst prisoners, and psychosis in offender patients.

The invisible victims of a rising prison population: children with imprisoned fathers

Jennifer Rosenberg

Commended

Rising prison populations around the world, particularly in the UK and the US, are a frequent topic of conversation. Yet the families of prisoners, and especially the children who are left behind, continue to be the invisible victims of these alarming trends. This is marginally less true in the case of maternal imprisonment, which often has very visibly dramatic results that are harder to ignore, particularly where babies are concerned.¹ The issue of paternal imprisonment, however, is almost entirely neglected by researchers and policy makers alike, despite the fact that the vast majority of prisoners across the world are male and therefore there are many more children with imprisoned fathers than there are with imprisoned mothers (Festen et al 2008:1-3).

There is an urgent need for increased research and awareness around the impact of paternal imprisonment on children. However, this should not in any way detract from research on maternal imprisonment, and the need for more work on the effects of parental imprisonment in general. This work should take account of gender-specific requirements in identifying and promoting the best interests of children in all cases of parental incarceration.²

The situation of children with imprisoned fathers

One key difference between maternal and paternal imprisonment is that children are very rarely able to live inside prisons with their fathers, whereas this is sometimes possible for mothers with young children. There are a few notable exceptions to this rule, which include Australia, Bolivia, Denmark, Spain, and Thailand. The information available on these rare cases indicates that there is often a lack of adequate provision made and safeguards put in place for the children involved. For example, children can be subjected to restrictions and punishments, such as solitary confinement, alongside their fathers in prison (Estensorro & Friedman-

¹ Laing Supporting Prisoners and Their Families, in Young Voice Documents <http://www.young-voice.org/template.asp?Show=PrisonNotes> (accessed 03/03/2009)

² For more information on maternal imprisonment and parental imprisonment in general, please visit the Quaker United Nations Office website: <http://www.quano.org/humanrights/women-in-prison/womenPrisonLinks.htm#QUNOPUB>

Rudovsky 2009). Additionally, normal child behaviour, for example waking up in the night and making noise, can be treated as unacceptable. Some of the prisons also lack sufficient medical care, facilities, education and exposure to the outside world to care adequately for a child's wellbeing (ibid.).

Generally speaking however, children are almost always separated from imprisoned fathers, and often for long periods of time with limited contact (Parke & Clarke-Stewart 2003:4). While prison populations in the UK and the US are higher than they have ever been, prisoners' contact with family members in these countries has decreased over recent years (Schirmer, Nellis & Mauer 2009:7). This is partly due to geographical distance and economic problems. However it is also related to inappropriate visiting contexts, harsh treatment by correctional officers and a lack of support and information available to the families of prisoners (Ardetti, Smock & Parkman 2005:2).

Imprisoned fathers also tend to rely on the child's mother for contact, and the father's relationship with the mother frequently defines the contact he has with his child (ibid:11). This is less often the case when the situation is reversed, as many children with imprisoned mothers are in state care or being cared for by other family members (Schulhofer 1991:254). Where children are placed in state care, inherent gender discrimination and double standards in terms of visiting rights can also present hurdles to paternal contact. For example in the UK there is often no provision for male prisoners to attend the birth of their child and family visiting arrangements for men in general tend to be much more limited.³

There are very few programmes that facilitate child-parent contact from prison, and those that do exist have not traditionally targeted or engaged with fathers in prison, largely due to gender stereotypes (Zealand 1998:255). There may, of course, be legitimate reasons why a child should not maintain contact with their imprisoned father, particularly in cases of violent or abusive relationships, or where there are any concerns for a child's welfare. However, potentially positive and safe relationships between fathers and their children should not be prevented because of negligence, discrimination or due to an unfounded assumption that any contact with an imprisoned father will be negative. Paternal involvement has repeatedly been shown to have positive effects on a child's development, and positive relationships are still possible in a prison context (Kazura 2001:1).

The effect of having a father in prison

Children's experiences of parental imprisonment are affected by many factors, including their age, gender, position in the family, pre-prison relationships, care and contact during imprisonment, their level of understanding and the length of separation (Murray 2002). Yet there still tend to be some shared elements to this experience.

Children separated from a parent because of incarceration are often more deeply affected than children who are separated from parents in other ways.⁴ Children in this situation tend to experience a deep loss of control (Moerk 1973:305), demoralisation and fear for their parent (Fritsch & Burkhead 1981:83-88). Children are often also affected by the trauma of this forced separation, an awareness of their parent's offending behaviour, poverty, ill-health, and strained relationships with other family members (Murray & Farrington 2008:134-35). Additionally these children tend to experience bullying and stigma from their peers and local community (Boswell & Wedge 2002:5).

There are also some elements linked specifically to the impact of having an imprisoned father. One of the most obvious is increased poverty. Children with fathers in prison tend to experience higher levels of social disadvantage as most fathers entering prison lose the ability to provide for their families financially (Dyer 2005:3-4). This is compounded by new expenses associated with imprisonment, such as sending money to the prisoner, phone calls and visiting (Smith et al. 2007:19). In addition many mothers also have to give up work in order to care for their children (Ardetti et al. 2003a:3-5).

The effect of a father's imprisonment on a child's mother or other carers can also affect the child. The increased emotional stress, parenting strain, financial hardship and social stigma faced by the mother or other carers can result in declining health both for them and the concerned children (Ardetti et al. 2003b:201). Instead of receiving extra attention and support, children may take on additional responsibilities to support their mother or carer (Brown 2002:202). Behavioural disorders in children of imprisoned, or otherwise absent, fathers has been closely linked to the mental state of the remaining carer (Gabel (1992:6).

Children with imprisoned parents often suffer from a range of physical and mental health problems including depression, hyperactivity, aggression, insomnia, eating disorders, social isolation, and poor academic results (Murray 2005:446). In cases where the parent has committed a crime against the child, children can experience

additional guilt or responsibility (Van Ninjatten 1998:66). Specifically, the absence of a father in these cases has been linked to 'acting-out' behaviour such as aggression, drug or alcohol use, running away, school truancy, discipline problems and delinquency (Fritsch & Burkhead 1981:85).

One of the more commonly asked research questions is whether children with imprisoned fathers are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour themselves. Numerous studies have shown that paternal imprisonment can be linked to antisocial behaviour in children, and particularly in sons (Farrington & Coid, 2003:1). However, we should treat this link with caution, as it is hard to find concrete evidence of this and almost impossible to separate the effects of paternal imprisonment from a range of other, pre-existing risk factors (Murray & Farrington 2008:166). Children of prisoners are, for multiple reasons, at higher risk than the wider child population. So, rather than blaming paternal imprisonment for problem behaviour in children, it would be more helpful to see it as an opportunity to provide support to these children in order to counter the negative effects of both parental imprisonment and any other risks that they may be exposed to.

Parenting behind bars

In addition to a lack of support for children with fathers in prison, there is also a lack of parenting support for imprisoned fathers themselves (Hughes & Harrison-Thompson 2002). Where services are made available, they tend to be disjointed, inconsistent and inadequate.⁵ There are several examples of community and voluntary agencies providing excellent and essential services, but without a consistent Government policy framework or stable funding, these services cannot cater adequately for all prisoners. Prison and probation services are not necessarily aware of the issues concerning the children of prisoners and, particularly in cases of male prisoners; they are often unaware that these men have children at all (Ministry of Justice 2007:13).

For many imprisoned fathers, the difficulties faced in sustaining a connection with their children undermine their ability to nurture or provide for their child, which are both key elements of paternal identity today (Hairston 1995:23). If a father feels unable to parent properly, there is a risk that he may entirely change his behaviour towards his children or possibly cut contact with them altogether (Clarke et al. 2005:5). Alternatively, it is sometimes the case that separated fathers build up idealised notions of their children due to distance and limited contact, which can create disappointment and confusion during visits.⁶ All of these processes can be very hurtful and damaging for children.

⁵ CLINKS Prisons Community Links Report (1999) in Laing, K. *Supporting Prisoners and Their Families*, Young Voice Documents <http://www.young-voice.org/template.asp?Show=PrisonNotes> (accessed 03/03/2009)

⁶ Eurochips – European Network for Children of Imprisoned Parents <http://www.eurochips.org> (accessed 26/02/2009)

Of course this is not the case for all imprisoned fathers and there are many variables, including the nature of the pre-prison child-father relationship and how particular individuals react to prison. Some fathers are able to maintain positive and active relationships with their children from prison (Zealand 1998:251), however, this can only happen if they are given the opportunity to do so. Many prisoners have serious social and emotional problems before entering prison and these can inhibit their ability to parent effectively. The provision of parenting education and accessible fatherhood programmes can be one very positive element of prison for these men (Glaze and Maruschak 2008). Unfortunately, these schemes only tend to be offered to a small minority of fathers behind bars (Hughes & Harrison-Thompson 2002).

The situation is even worse for young fathers in prisons and juvenile detention centres. These young men, who are often considered to be children themselves, are even more likely to slip through legal loopholes than adult male prisoners, and their children are even less likely to have their paternal contact rights recognised (Nurse 1982:282). An overlap of risk factors also means that both incarceration and young fatherhood are concentrated in the same impoverished communities, meaning that a high proportion of young men in prison are also likely to be fathers (Nurse 2009). Work with this group has shown that many of these young men would like to talk to somebody with experience of young fatherhood and to engage with their children (Sherlock 2004). If more positive parenting support schemes were made available to this group, it would be possible to protect their children from much of the potential trauma associated with this experience (Meek 2006:377).

Post-prison relationships

The effects of parental imprisonment on children do not automatically cease once a parent is released from prison. Rather, families must face new challenges in negotiating and coping with the reintegration of that person, or with the consequences of not having contact with that family member if relationships have broken down irretrievably (Codd 2008:65). It is likely that after a prison term the father and family members will have different expectations of each other, particularly if the children are much older than they were when their father was first taken away (Bedford Row Family Project 2007:36). Conflicts between couples are also common as they attempt to reorganise their lives and renegotiate their roles, which can be very distressing for children (Fisherman 1990). It can also be hard for some fathers to locate their children once they have been released, particularly if the children have been put into foster or state care.⁷

Men are particularly likely to be affected by ‘hangover identities’ from prison which can make it difficult to re-enter society, and can be potentially damaging for their children (Clarke et al. 2005:2). The highly structured and controlled prison environment gives fathers little control in any aspect of their lives and displays of aggression and dominance tend to be commonplace. Some men carry these behaviours over into the outside world with them, which can make it hard to reintegrate, and particularly hard to develop new positive parenting and family relationships.⁸

Structural issues such as child support and child welfare may also place limits on fathers’ abilities to re-establish relationships with their children. Many incarcerated fathers leave prison in debt and struggle to find work with a criminal record and limited experience.⁹ Particularly in smaller communities, the stigma of a criminal record can be hard to escape for both the father and the family (Bedford Row Family Project 2007:74). Post-prison family connections services are particularly limited for fathers, although there is very scarce provision of this sort for all parents leaving prison (Visher & Courtney 2007).

Moving forward

There are many steps that can be taken to help protect children from the risks that they face when a parent is imprisoned. One is to put a greater emphasis on restorative justice, and alternatives to pre-trial detention and imprisonment, particularly when children are involved (Boswell 2002). Another is to carry out an automatic needs assessment and care provision for any children affected by parental imprisonment (Levingston & Turetsky 2007). This could also help to identify pre-existing risk factors that a child might face, and help to prevent children from entering into recurring cycles of poverty.

In rare cases of children living in prison with their father, there should be strict safety precautions and special facilities made available in order to ensure the child’s well-being. For the majority of children, who are separated from imprisoned fathers, steps should be taken to allow for healthy contact to be kept up and father-child bonds to be maintained, as long as this is in the best interest of the child.¹⁰ More support networks should also be made available to mothers and carers in these situations in order to minimise the negative effects of imprisonment both on themselves and on their children.

8 See Festen et al. (2002), Hairston (2001) & Haney (2001) in Herman-Stahl, Kan & McKay (2008) *Incarceration and the Family; A Review of Research and Promising Approaches for Serving Fathers and Families*, RTI International for the USA Department of Health and Human Services, page 6-4

9 Op cit. footnote 7

10 See Adalist-Estrin (1994), Bauer et al. (2007), Meek (2007) & Palm (2001) in Herman-Stahl, Kan & McKay (2008) *Incarceration and the Family; A Review of Research and Promising Approaches for Serving Fathers and Families*, Prepared by RTI International for the USA Department of Health and Human Services, page 8-7

There are many opportunities for parenting classes and work schemes to be established for fathers in prison, and these support programmes need to be extended to include young fathers and juveniles, as well as to be linked up with post-prison support for ex-inmates and their children.¹¹ More research and information on this issue would help to make children a central concern in all cases of parental imprisonment and increase policy debate in this area. It is important that any additional work and provisions for imprisoned fathers and their children do not come at the expense of programmes for imprisoned mothers, as much work is needed on both accounts. The aim must be to boost protection for all children with imprisoned parents in an equal but gender appropriate manner. It is time that these children stopped being invisible and started to become a priority.

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Annex: Dissemination and impact

This article outlines some of the main findings in the policy paper *Children Need Dads Too: Children with Fathers in Prison*, published by the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva July 2009. I conducted this research as a complementary study to the research that QUNO has already carried out around maternal imprisonment and young children and babies in prison. It is hoped that this, along with the wider body of QUNO's research and advocacy work, will continue to contribute to international policy debate in this area by providing evidence-based recommendations. It was also designed to be a practical tool to be used by front-line staff working with prisoners and their families.

The publication has therefore been distributed in the following ways:

Since its publication in 2009, the publication has been circulated online (<http://www.quno.org/geneva/pdf/humanrights/women-in-prison/CNDT%20internet-1.pdf>) and hard copies have been widely distributed amongst QUNO's international network.

QUNO has disseminated this paper at Geneva-based events and amongst relevant international organisations, civil society and government representatives. It has been made available at meetings and side events of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) as well as other international structures, including the UN Crime Commission in Vienna, the UN Crime Congress in Brazil, the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) working group and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The research from this paper has also been used to make public submissions to the UNHRC, which has helped to ensure that parental incarceration has increasingly been raised as an issue during UPR working group sessions and other UNHRC meetings.

The reason for targeting these audiences in particular, is that these individuals, organisations and governments are able to directly influence policy change at an international level. It is hoped that by informing these international actors about best practice around parental incarceration, this paper will be able to encourage progressive policy reform worldwide.

The paper has also been widely disseminated in the UK. In addition to electronic newsletters and online distribution, Quaker meetings across the country have distributed copies to their members and attendees. Organisations working on related areas, such as Penal Reform International have also received copies which they have then been able to distribute to their members and service users. With the help of the Quaker Council for European Affairs, this paper has been made

available to Brussels-based European Union organisations and institutions. Finally, this paper has been distributed amongst practitioners who work with prisoners and families of prisoners. This has mainly occurred in response to requests for the paper, or to questions directed at QUNO about this area of work. It has been used by front line practitioners in their daily work, for example: in the setting up of prison support groups; at awareness raising events; and also being passed on by practitioners to service users and families of prisoners for direct use.

Jennifer Rosenberg currently works on the climate and energy campaign at Friends of the Earth in London. She began working with Friends of the Earth last year in Brussels, looking particularly at corporate accountability and transparency at an EU level. Prior to this, Jennifer worked on a range of human rights campaigns, primarily focusing on refugees, asylum seekers and access to health care in the UK. She has a background in Latin American studies and indigenous rights, and carried out this piece of research on children with fathers in prison whilst working in Geneva with the Human Rights and Refugees Programme at the Quaker United Nations Office.

About the Competition Panel

Professor Frances Heidensohn, Mannheim Centre, London School of Economics

Frances Heidensohn is visiting professor in the sociology department at LSE and Emeritus Professor of Social Policy at University of London. She is also the general editor of the British Journal of Sociology.

She graduated in sociology from LSE, gaining the Hobhouse Memorial Prize, and studied and taught at the school until 1974. She then moved to the Civil Service College, where she was director of studies in social policy, and then to Goldsmiths', University of London. At Goldsmiths' she held the chair of social policy from 1994-2004. Frances Heidensohn was Ginsberg fellow in the Sociology department in 1991 and has been a visiting professor at Queen's University, Belfast; the University of Montreal; and Macgill University. In 2000 she received the book award of the International Division of the American Society of Criminology and in 2004 she was awarded the Sellin Glueck Award of the ASC for her contributions to international criminology.

She has published widely on gender, crime, policing and comparative criminology; her books include Women and Crime, Women in Control 'and Gender and Justice.

Professor Fergus McNeill, University of Strathclyde

Fergus McNeill is professor of criminology & social work, Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, University of Glasgow. Prior to becoming an academic in 1998, Fergus worked for a number of years in residential drug rehabilitation and as a criminal justice social worker. He teaches on undergraduate and postgraduate courses in criminology, social work and sociology. Fergus is also a member of the Howard League's research advisory group.

Lord Ramsbotham, former chief inspector of prisons

Lord Ramsbotham retired from the army in 1993 in the rank of General. From 1995-2001 he was HM chief inspector of prisons. He was appointed as an independent crossbench member of the House of Lords in May 2005, where he focuses on penal reform.

Mary Riddell, assistant editor, The Daily Telegraph

Mary Riddell is a columnist and political interviewer for the Daily Telegraph. She worked as a columnist and an interviewer for national newspapers including the Guardian, the Daily Mail and the Observer before joining the Daily Telegraph as an assistant editor. She is the chair of Action for Prisoners' Families and sits on the advisory board of Out of Trouble, the Prison Reform Trust group aimed at reducing the offending and imprisonment of children and young people.

Stephen Shaw, Chief Executive of the Office of the Health Professions Adjudicator

Stephen Shaw has been chief executive of the Office of the Health Professions Adjudicator (OHPA) since May 2010.

Between October 1999 and April 2010, Stephen Shaw was the prisons and probation ombudsman for England and Wales. His role included the investigation of complaints from prisoners, those subject to probation supervision, and immigration detainees, and the investigation of all deaths in prisons and immigration removal centres, as well as the deaths of residents of probation hostels (approved premises).

Prior to becoming prisons ombudsman, Stephen Shaw was director of the Prison Reform Trust (PRT) for 18 years. He worked previously for the Home Office Research Unit and for NACRO.

Stephen Shaw has written widely on both criminal justice and economic issues. His latest publication is entitled Fifty Year Stretch: Prisons and Imprisonment 1980 – 2030 (Waterside Press, 2010).

Dick Whitfield, Trustee, Howard League for Penal Reform

Dick Whitfield is a former chair of the Howard League for Penal Reform and remains one of the charity's trustees. He has been both a chief probation officer and an independent member of the Parole Board of England and Wales. His books include The State of the Prisons, An Introduction to the Probation Service and works on community service and the electronic monitoring of offenders.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive, Howard league for Penal Reform

Appointed in 1986, Frances Crook has been responsible for research programmes and campaigns to raise public concern about suicides in prison, the over-use of custody, poor conditions in prison, young people in trouble, and mothers in prison. She writes articles for the national media and does interviews on radio and television. She was awarded an OBE for services to youth justice in the 2010 New Year Honours List. She was appointed a Senior Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics in 2010.

Anita Dockley, Research Director, Howard league for Penal Reform

Anita Dockley is responsible for developing the charity's research capacity, forging links with academics and universities, funders and partner organisations. Her own research interests include suicide and self-harm in prisons, women in prison and order and control in the prison environment. She has recently been appointed as a member of the law sub panel in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework assessments.

The Howard League for Penal Reform

The Howard League for Penal Reform is a national charity working for less crime, safer communities and fewer people in prison. It is the oldest penal reform charity in the UK. It was established in 1866 and is named after John Howard, one of the first prison reformers. The Howard League for Penal Reform is entirely independent of government and is funded by voluntary donations and membership subscriptions.

We work with parliament and the media, with criminal justice professionals, students and members of the public, influencing debate and forcing through meaningful change to create safer communities.

We campaign on a wide range of issues including short term prison sentences, real work in prison, children and prison and community sentences.

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