

the Howard League for Penal Reform

Early Career Academics Network Bulletin

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Introduction



Stemming the flow is the Howard League for Penal Reform's organisational focus for the next few years. This means that much of our work will identify issues and ideas aimed at reducing the numbers of people being sucked into the penal system. The research agenda is definitely reflecting that priority. Policing has taken centre stage over the last few months. First in October, Professor Robert Reiner put his ideas about policing up for scrutiny at a seminar at the LSE. It was the first in our What if...? series of challenging pamphlets. This was a good evening with a high calibre of debate from the audience (a review of the night is in this bulletin). Look out for the pamphlet's publication at the end of January next year. This has been followed by the publication of our work looking at the numbers of under 16s that have been held overnight in police custody. The Howard League believes that such an experience can only be damaging for young children and called for a ban on under 14s being detained overnight in police custody suites. This dovetails with our view that the age of criminal responsibility should be 14 years in line with the European average age of criminal responsibility. We will be publishing more work and campaigning around these issues in the new year.

Finally, I hope that you are all readers of the Howard Journal for Criminal Justice. I am part of the Editorial Advisory Group and we want to ensure that readers are getting the range of articles they are looking for and that authors are well supported when they submit articles. We have developed a readers' survey which we would like you to complete. Just [click here](#) to tell us what you think. There's a chance that you could win journal subscriptions and book vouchers.

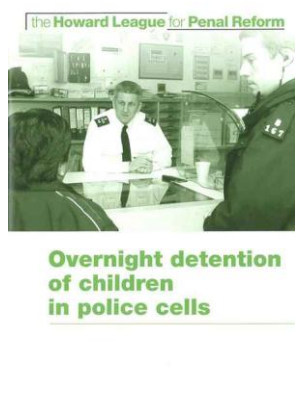
This has definitely been a busy year at the Howard League and I am sure that it has been the same for you. Wishing you all a good, restful break and a happy holiday period.

Anita Dockley
Research Director

News

Research recommends the end of overnight detention in police custody for under 14s

The Howard League published its research, undertaken by Dr Layla Skins, on the prevalence of children being detained overnight in police cells. The



analysis of data from half of all police service areas in England and Wales showed that 53,000 children under 16 had experienced a night in a police custody suite. Speaking at the publication of the report, Howard League Chief Executive, Frances Crook, said: *"I was horrified to discover how prevalent the practice of holding young children in police cells for one or even several nights across the country...What children need is somewhere safe, not somewhere secure. From conversations we have had with the police it seems that some children are being held in police cells for child protection reasons, for example when a child is found*

out alone at night. The Howard League is warning that this will increase as local authorities face cuts to children's services. If parents can't be relied upon to provide a safe place for these children, it is up to the local authority. A police cell is not an appropriate place for children, and this commonplace, dangerous and frightening practice does more harm than good." A summary of the report can be found at:

http://www.howardleague.org/fileadmin/howard_league/user/pdf/Research/Overnight_in_police_cells_final.pdf

Repeat offending damages health

Professor Jonathan Shepherd published research in the journal *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health* that suggested that repeat offending can have a deleterious effect on offenders' health once they reach their 40s. The research looked at data on 400 men who have been followed since childhood. They found offenders were more likely to be hospitalised and were 13 times more likely to be disabled.

Prof Jonathan Shepherd, the director of the Violence and Society Research Group at Cardiff University, who led the research (and is also a member of our Research Advisory Group), said: "At a younger age, offenders do seem to be healthier in many ways than non-offenders. Once they reach their 40s it seems that the health consequences of their lifestyle catch up with them. The reasons for this poorer health are not clear. High-risk behaviour and lifestyle might increase the chances of accidents and injury, leading to hospitalisation and disability."

Opportunity: Interested in becoming a news editor?

The Howard League is working with Wiley-Blackwell, publishers of the Howard Journal of Criminal Justice, on its established socio-legal community site, [Legal Focus](#).

Legal Focus was launched in late 2010 and features regular posts from the Wiley Blackwell team of news editors. It links topical news items to articles published in journals, allows readers the space to discuss the items as well as provide an academic context for current news.

Would you like to become one of its news editors? You would receive some initial training; it would take you approximately an hour a month and you will receive free journal subscriptions, free books and a profile on the site. If you are interested please contact anita.dockley@howardleague.org and tell her why you think you would be good as a news editor.

**Howard League submits evidence to the Leveson Inquiry**

The Howard League has provided evidence to Lord Justice Leveson's Inquiry into the culture, practice and ethics of the press. Our submission looks at three issues: the effect of media reporting on sentencing policy; the treatment of suspects in court proceedings; and the reporting of prisoner and prison issues. Click here to see what we said:

http://www.howardleague.org/fileadmin/howard_league/user/pdf/Consultations/Leveson_submission.pdf

New: Centre for Sex, gender and sexuality

Professor Jo Phoenix, member of the Howard League's Research Advisory Group, has just launched the Centre for Sex, gender and sexuality. The Centre will allow researchers to explore the vital questions of equality and diversity in relation to sex, gender and sexualities in societies across the world to inform practices and policies, and hopes to establish and safeguard long-term research into these intellectually vibrant, but often controversial, issues. These include the way sex, gender and sexualities impact on people's participation in key social institutions such as politics, what role Government can play in protecting vulnerable groups, such as the young, elderly and LGBTQ people, in terms of sexual health and well-being, and how the economic impact of organisations committed to sexuality and gender diversity could be maximised.



The Centre's inaugural lecture was delivered by Professor Kathryn Stockton from the University of Utah and explored the idea of the queerness of children and asked if there is such a thing as a "gay" child.

Voice of a child: follow up

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's 2011 Day of General Discussion (DGD) on the theme 'children of incarcerated parents' was the first-ever major international gathering on the issue. It was really well supported with largest number of participants at such an event; more than 200. [A number of the sessions are now available on YouTube.](#)

Chief inspector of prisons speaks at the Howard League

For those of you who were unable to attend our AGM, we have now made Nick Hardwick's speech available on our website. Just click here: <http://www.howardleague.org/agm2011/>

Feature

Children in the Care and Criminal Justice Systems

Claire Fitzpatrick

Far too many looked after children and care-leavers come into contact with the criminal justice system. This has long been the case. According to the most recent figures, only 0.6% of children in the general population have been in care (e.g. foster or residential homes) (Department for Education, 2011) compared to around 27% of children in prison (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2011). By drawing on interviews with care-leavers undertaken for a PhD and later published in the book *Young People in Care and Criminal Behaviour* (Taylor, 2006), this article explores the taken-for-granted link between care and criminal careers. In particular, it focuses on some of the system failures that may help to explain this.



Thirty-nine interviews were undertaken with care-leavers in England, half of whom were in prison at the time of interview. Most interviews were conducted between 1999 and 2000. Interviewees ranged between 16 and 27 years of age with the most common age being 18. (All names have been changed for the purposes of confidentiality). Whilst this data was collected some time ago now, a brief exploration of recent research reveals that many of the issues identified remain frustratingly similar today.

The prosecution of minor offences in children's homes

Firstly, young people in the care system are generally under more rigorous systems of control and surveillance than their peers, and consequently their behaviour is much more likely to be subject to official intervention. Indeed, the routine prosecution of minor offences by young people in some children's homes emerged as a key issue in the research and continues to be a problem (see House of Commons, 2009) despite efforts to reduce this.

"My criminal record is through care, for assaulting staff. I've got nowt else on my record apart from one charge...if I'd have flicked me fingers and it accidentally caught them it was assault, do you know what I mean"? (Donna, aged 16).

One consequence of involving the police for behaviour that would not necessarily result in an official intervention for those living at home with their parents is that children in care are more likely to be criminalised. Living in an environment where some report that it is "a lot easier to get arrested than not", it is no surprise that so many end up with a criminal record

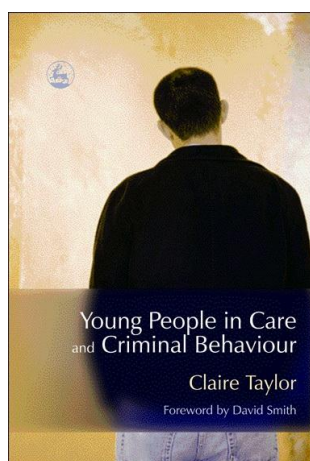
After-care support

Regardless of experiences whilst in care, the experience of leaving care itself was a key turning point for many interviewees, and one that had the potential to redirect individual pathways. In particular, a complete lack of support for care-leavers was a very common theme, with one young man who had spent almost his entire life in care commenting:

“Social services disowned me as soon as I hit my 18th birthday and I’ve got the birthday card to prove it. ‘Good luck in life’ it said” (Jamie, aged 21).

Indeed, a number of interviewees left care even earlier. Mark (19) was placed in a hostel shortly after his 16th birthday.

“They placed me in a few hostels and that, and they kind of got fed up in the end cos I were kicked out of one of them. Drinking on the premises, taking drugs on the premises and breaking the rules like that and getting caught. I ended up sleeping rough on the streets”.



Whilst progress has been made since the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 in enabling young people to remain in care until they are at least 18 years old, many continue to leave at 16. Nearly all experience compressed and accelerated transitions to independence in comparison to their peers, for whom the average age of leaving home is 24 (House of Commons, 2009). In combination with the lack of appropriate accommodation for care-leavers and the post-code lottery that exists in relation to the provision of leaving-care grants (Higgs, 2011), the prospects for young people leaving the care system today remain bleak.

Lost in Prison

Despite the fact that prison is a completely inappropriate place for vulnerable children, a number of interviewees who had previously been in residential care reported finding comfort in the familiar surroundings of jail.

“It’s just like a home, people get used to it and they think they need to go back. And they go out there and they think they just can’t cope...Like you’ve got no sense of independence in here and when you’re doing a long sentence it’s hard out there. I can see it being hard for me” (Liz, aged 17).

Meanwhile, Gemma (18) noted that it was very easy to get used to life in prison, “because everyone I knew was in here, from the kids’ homes. It was like a big family reunion”! Clearly, care-leavers who regard prison as a home from home have not made a successful transition to independence and in this sense have been failed by their local authorities (Taylor, 2003). Furthermore, there is a danger that those who go to prison directly from a care placement will also be failed by the system and left to languish in jail. This is a particular

risk for those accommodated in care under voluntary agreement who are regarded as children in need of welfare and protection right up until they enter prison. At this point, due to an anomaly in the law, they cease to be viewed as 'looked after' and may lose their entitlement to associated support.

A recent report by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2011) highlighted various failings in the treatment of some looked after children who go into custody. This included a lack of information sharing between agencies, a failure to identify all looked after children which means that needs go unmet, a failure by social services to provide consistent support even to those who retain their looked after status, and a lack of clarity over who takes the lead in planning for release.

Yet without access to appropriate local authority support, looked after children may simply be forgotten and become lost in the prison system. Furthermore, without access to a placement in care and/or leaving care services upon release from prison, those without a family home to fall back on are at increased risk of following a pathway that leads them right back to the criminal justice system. Michael, placed in custody five times since leaving care aged 16, expressed a common sentiment: "I worry more about getting out [of jail] than I do about coming in". That young people feel this way is a damning indictment of the support available to them in the community, and of the system that claimed to care for them.

Dr. Claire Fitzpatrick (née Taylor) is Lecturer in Criminology at Lancaster University and has a long-standing research interest in children in the care and criminal justice systems. Email: claire.fitzpatrick@lancaster.ac.uk

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Feature

Abuse around Difference: Gay Men's Experiences of 'Hate Crime' and Policy Responses to it

Peter Dunn

Despite much academic and policy interest in hate crime, there are a number of questions about gay men's experiences of it that are under-researched, which I set out to explore and which became the focus of my research. These included:

- How are gay men affected by hate-motivated victimisation and the criminal justice system's response?
- What are the meanings of victimisation for gay men and what helps them recover from it?
- To what extent do they experience criminal justice responses to hate-motivated victimisation as helpful? McGhee writes that the legislation has "a declaratory purpose" to show how much we "hate those who hate" (McGhee 2005: 8) but are victims really empowered by it?
- What are the experiences of people targeted by hate crime perpetrators for more than one reason? There is little understanding of the "specificity of violence experienced by people who occupy multiple positions of culturally defined inequality: women with disabilities, gay men of colour" (Perry 2003: 33).



The research, which was completed in June 2010, explored the effects of victimisation on mixed-race partnerships, and the interaction of masculine identities with the concept of victimisation, which were strong themes that arose during fieldwork.

Methods

The fieldwork took place in London during 2008 and it encompassed a mixed methods approach with:

- A survey of gay men undertaken in gay bars and public sex environments to gather data on the extent of homophobic victimisation, its consequences, patterns of reporting to the police etc.
- Semi-structured interviews with 25 gay men and one transgender woman who had all experienced hate-motivated victimisation, from verbal abuse to stabbing. Six participants described themselves as being of Black and Minority Ethnic heritage
- Interviews with 23 support services staff and police officers
- Participant observation of specialist LGBT¹ liaison police officers.

¹ Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

Some participants had reported their victimisation to the police, others had not. A few had used support services. In semi-structured interviews with gay men, the Holloway and Jefferson free association narrative interview technique was applied, which helped engage people who might be reticent about recounting painful experiences (Holloway and Jefferson 2000). This was important in view of the tendency of men to offer factual accounts of difficult events instead of focusing on emotionality (Stanko and Hobdell 1993). Indeed, when discussing the consequences of their victimisation, several participants revealed that they had never discussed their feelings about what happened with anyone before.

Findings

Most, but not all, participants had a very negative experience of reporting victimisation to the police. Many were not believed. They felt their victimisation was seen as trivial, they were passed around from one police department to another, and few received protection from further victimisation.



Three participants had excellent help from police officers, and they felt they had no need for further support. For some men, reporting to the police resulted in the damaging aftermath of the offence being compounded by a discriminatory or ineffective police response. There are clear implications here for police forces who seek to persuade gay men to report homophobic crime, yet fail to respond effectively.

Several participants had been harassed, assaulted, and threatened by neighbours. In none of these instances were local authorities of any help. There is a dual vulnerability to which gay men can be subject: they are expected to conform to male stereotypes of invulnerability so they do not receive help, yet they are vulnerable to revictimisation. A housing department told one participant who was repeatedly threatened by violent homophobic neighbours that as men, he and his partner should be able to “look after themselves”.

The concept of victimhood had a wide range of loaded and problematic meanings for the participants. For most, a victim identity was not wanted. It signified weakness, a failure of masculinity, the inability to exercise agency, and intolerable powerlessness in relation to the offender. My findings support the contentions that gay men are unlikely to be construed as ‘innocent victims’ (Richardson and May 1999) and that gay men and transgender people will not meet the criteria in the conception of ‘ideal victim’ that Christie (1986) described. This is because people tend to blame victims who appear to be different to them (Elias 1986). Yet the typification of victim may be instrumental in determining if victims are offered support (Rock 1990). My data suggest that the unwelcome identifier of ‘victim’ has to be claimed before any help is forthcoming. While there have recently been significant

improvements in criminal justice attitudes to victims (Reeves and Dunn 2010), if people cannot bring themselves to accept a 'victim' identity, they are unlikely to avail themselves of criminal justice or victim services, particularly if the term 'victim' is used in the marketing of services. The claims of Furedi (2004 and 2006) that victimhood is a status that is increasingly promoted and desired were not supported by my research. Victimhood was incompatible with a masculine gay identity, associated with times when the participants had, through pervasive homophobia and other abusive experiences, felt powerless.

The interaction of racism and homophobia held many painful meanings for the Black participants in this study. Some felt that by coming out as gay they had rejected their racial heritage by distancing themselves, or being distanced, from their families; yet they felt excluded by predominantly white LGBT subculture. The relative invisibility of Black gay men seems to be a cause and an effect of the continuing dominance of heterosexist norms and hegemonic masculinity. Heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity create, uphold and promote violent homophobia (Duggan 2002), while homonormativity closes-off any support options to Black gay men that in a diversity-aware culture, we might otherwise assume should be equally available to them. Therefore the Black gay men in the research had more to lose than their white counterparts through the actual or potential rejection by their families that results from the process of 'outing' that is often a consequence of homophobic victimisation. The particular needs of Black LGBT people are poorly understood and often overlooked in anti-hate crime initiatives. The intersectionality of racism and homophobia has the capacity to simultaneously amplify the aftermath of hate-motivated victimisation, while stripping away conventional sources of informal support.

Some of the men who participated in this research described being caught up in a 'rolling aftermath' of victimisation. This included further victimisation; loss of friends, family and home; illness or dependence on prescribed or illicit drugs; involuntary 'outing'; and secondary victimisation from state authorities that they attributed to institutional homophobia and bureaucratic inertia. They wanted support in 'fighting back' as some described it – protecting themselves from further victimisation, being protected, being believed and having the serious consequences of their experience affirmed. Few received that support.

Peter Dunn works as an inspector for HM Inspectorate of Prisons

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Feature

Convict criminology in Britain?

Rod Earle, Sacha Darke and Andy Aresti

Some background: Convict criminology in the USA

At the 1997 meeting of the American Society of Criminology (ASC) a small group of criminologists with criminal convictions met to propose the establishment of a Convict Criminology group. The group emerged out of the frustration that they, as ex-convicts, experienced with the established methods and conceptual priorities of US criminology. They realised that an indirect consequence of the explosive growth of the US penal population was to generate a small number of academically qualified 'internal critics', convicts with PhDs and other academic qualifications who had made the transition from prison yard to college campus. They also recognised the isolation and marginalisation of these individuals, and their unique perspectives.

In 2001, two of the group's instigators, Richards and Ross, published their 'manifesto', 'The New School of Convict Criminology', in the journal *Social Justice*. This was followed shortly afterwards with a co-edited collection of essays *Convict Criminology* (Richards & Ross, 2003) establishing their perspective and methods.

Convict Criminology has grown with increasing momentum over the last decade, establishing a vibrant website, publishing articles and presenting conference papers, lobbying for reform and making policy interventions. They have supported the *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*, established in 1988 by likeminded academics keen to foster the publishing work of convicts and ex-convicts. Led by former prisoners, Convict Criminology takes a critical approach to criminal justice issues and in particular, it challenges traditional understandings of crime, the penal system, prisoners and former prisoners and how such matters are conceptualised, represented and discussed. Importantly, Convict Criminology approaches existing practices, research and political commentary in the USA with a critical lens focussed through personal experiences (Jones *et al.*, 2009).



British cons, criminology and conferences

At the 2011 British Society of Criminology annual conference in Newcastle a small group of academics discussed the viability of establishing a Convict Criminology group in the UK, drawing from the success of Convict Criminology in establishing a presence in the USA. As in the US, for several of us these discussions arose from personal experience of conducting prison research and becoming more aware of the significance of corresponding

experiences of 'doing time' and 'crime' among the British criminological community. It is possible that in the UK the expansion of both university criminology courses and prisons over the last twenty years may have also generated an otherwise unlikely convergence of experience that we feel is potentially productive but overlooked and underexplored (Earle 2012).

As noted, a Convict Criminology group here could be loosely modelled on the 'New School of Convict Criminology' in the USA because we recognise our



common starting point in trying to bring forward and develop the perspectives of prisoners, ex-prisoners and ex-offenders in British criminology. Whilst there are significant differences between the US and UK regarding crime, criminal justice and penal system issues, the underlying philosophy and critical theoretical orientation of the US Convict Criminology group is relevant to the UK. As in the USA, a principle

aim of the group is to work collectively to challenge misrepresentations of crime, prisons, the criminal justice system and particularly prisoners and former prisoners.

British criminology has an established record of critical innovation, evident in much of the work of critical criminologists and a new generation of prison ethnographers. However, what may have been neglected is a much needed 'insider perspective', the experiences of those that have been through the criminal justice machine and who can provide analysis and theorisation as academics rather than exclusively as research subjects. Therefore, whilst in keeping with the US New School's strategic aims and guided by its theoretical and methodological orientations, the group here needs to be flexible in its constitution and approach. Although the group here could benefit from establishing and maintaining a strong connection with the US group, we also need to be independent and foster our own network. In an international context this is likely to include European relations, where they are relevant and can be identified, as much as those across the Atlantic.

The lived experiences of prison life are, perhaps, universally resonant on a number of levels, but it is also manifestly true that they can be quite divergent, especially when the focus is more detailed, elaborate and local. Therefore, regardless of the more self-evident similarities and differences between the UK and US, we need a strong and active voice here in the UK that can push forward alternative, distinctive, criminological perspectives, that may, in turn, feed into policies, strategies and initiatives that are more humane in their recognition of prisoners' experiences.

Establishing aims and objectives for British convict criminology

We recognise that there are likely to be a variety of strands to a Convict Criminology group here, but our over-riding concern is to establish a collective basis for developing a more inclusive, creative and critical approach to research around prisoners and prison. Central to this objective is the relevance of our personal experiences of the criminal justice/penal system and/or our work in this field. We are convinced, on the basis of our experience in British criminology, that there is a great need for critical and 'insider' perspectives on prison research and its associated policy implications. For example, resettlement strategies and initiatives directly impacting on prisoners and their families may benefit from the more structured development and inclusion of academic accounts generated by prisoners and ex-prisoners.

Importantly, whilst much of the focus of the group is on prisons, prisoners and former prisoners we also need to consider the experiences of those former offenders with non-custodial convictions, who like many former prisoners still experience the negative consequences of their label 'ex-offender', particularly in the context of widespread malpractice surrounding the Criminal Records Bureau.

We suggest aspects of the group's aims and objectives include:

- Providing support to prisoners and ex-prisoners in establishing themselves as academics in criminology and its cognate disciplines
- Developing critical perspectives on prisons and research with/on prisoners and former prisoners
- Utilising our collective knowledge, experiences and expertise to influence, or at least attempt to influence, policy change through our academic work and connections to advocacy/campaign groups
- Developing strong links with non-statutory sector organisations in the field i.e. penal reform advocacy & campaign groups
- Developing the membership and profile of the group through organising seminars, guest lectures and conferences
- Sharing experiences and developing ideas that draw from the convergence of academic study of prison and experience of it as a prisoner.

Next Steps: Convict Criminology membership

The group is not intended to be only for those with prison experiences (i.e. ex-convicts in the US vernacular) and we welcome wider support. Disclosure of any such relevant past is a matter of personal discretion that should be respected by all participants in the group. We want to avoid privileging or stigmatising particular convictions or time inside. Having said that, we don't think it would be appropriate for ex-prisoners to be a minority in the group and we need to be able to identify this factor. We would thus respectfully ask people, when contacting us at this stage, to declare an absence of convictions by just putting 'non-con' after their name. The last thing we want to do is

operate as some kind of reverse CRB vetting procedure but doing so will help us to establish the contours of interest in the group.

In terms of organisation, we recognise the need to have nominated individuals steering the development of the group and guiding its formation. Currently, the authors of this document are taking this role and will continue to do so as long as this seems appropriate. We will invite others to join this steering group as the organisation develops momentum, reviewing such structures and their suitability as it, hopefully, grows.

The British Society of Criminology has recently published an article which develops these ideas in a little more depth.

http://www.britsoccrim.org/volume11/pbcc_2011_Earle.pdf

Further information can also be found on the American Convict Criminology website.

<http://www.convictcriminology.org/bcc.htm>

Rod Earle, is a Lecturer and Academic Lead on Youth Justice at the Open University; Sacha Darke, is Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Westminster University; and Andy Aresti, is a Lecturer and Research Consultant at Westminster and Birkbeck University

Member Profile

Claire de Motte, Nottingham Trent University



I am currently completing my doctoral research at the School of Social Sciences, Nottingham Trent University (NTU). Before beginning my doctoral studies, I completed both my undergraduate degree in psychology and postgraduate masters in forensic psychology at NTU.

Following graduating with an MSc in Forensic Psychology, I was unsure of the career path that I wished to take, either in practise or academia. Along with difficulty in finding a suitable and relevant job, I was offered a temporary research assistant position at NTU, where I have worked alongside other academics in both the social care and health, and criminology departments. The projects I have worked on include: female prisoners who self-harm, female prisoners and the effects of visits and resettlement issues for male prisoners.

During this period, I applied for and won the Vice-Chancellor bursary competition to complete my doctoral research 'Growing Old Gracefully? Exploring the Quality of Life of Older Male Prisoners in HMPS'. This research explores older prisoners': quality of life; concerns about ageing within a prison setting; emotional and physical health care needs; and issues around resettlement. Through employing a case study design across four sites that will be purposively sampled to reflect long-stay prisoners, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a sample of 15-20 male offenders (approximately four men in each site). Each respondent will be interviewed on two separate occasions to allow for an in-depth exploration. As part of the first interview, each respondent will be asked to complete the Manchester Short Assessment of Quality of Life (MANSA) scale which will be tailored for a forensic population aged 50 years and above.

Anticipated themes will explore prisoners' fears of dying in prison; release into the community; victimisation and stigma as a result of being an older prisoner in custody with younger offenders; mental and physical health concerns and recidivism. These themes will be analysed to provide rich data about the lived experience of custody by older prisoners, with the intention to inform criminal justice policy and practice.

I am only in the initial stages of the PhD, but am making the most of this opportunity, by becoming involved in the teaching of penology modules and embracing the luxury of designing, implementing and publishing my own research project.

My research interests are extremely broad and range from youth offenders and substance abuse to self-harm in female prisoners and the experience of imprisonment in male prisoners. In the future I hope to continue to work with

prisoners in a more service user approach to improve the current prison system in England and Wales. I really thrive on the interaction with prisoners, and hope to always maintain this service user contact throughout any research that I conduct.

The Howard League's Early Career Academic Network has provided me with a user-friendly and convenient way to develop my research ideas. I always find it constructive to explore other academics' research interests to reflect and create my unique approach to research. The opportunity that ECAN provides to networking is invaluable, and usually one of the best ways to create opportunities is through meeting others. I will continue to use, and recommend the use of ECAN to others throughout my doctoral research and further into the development of my career as a social researcher.

Event review

What if...? In praise of fire brigade policing: Professor Robert Reiner

What if...? This is the question that the Howard League and the Mannheim Centre at the London School of Economics have been asking separately for more than a century. We both have a tradition of radical thinking and now we are working together to ask this question, what if ...?



Professor Robert Reiner was the first to think the unthinkable, and ask challenging questions about the role of the police. His ideas were put to the test back in October at a seminar which was full to overflowing with policing experts, academics and students, all wanting to challenge Robert Reiner's view that there is much to be said for retaining some, at least, of the traits of what has been termed fire brigade policing, in a modern police service. The lively discussion was

lead admirably by the two invited discussants: Sir Denis O'Connor, the Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Baroness Sally Hamwee, the Liberal Democrat peer who is Co-Chair of the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party Committee on Home Affairs, Justice and Equalities.

On the night, Robert Reiner carefully considered the questions, queries and challenges to his ideas, responding with an abundance of in depth knowledge and quick wit. He has since considered the views he first proposed and a pamphlet explaining his ideas will be published at the end of January.



So, what next for What if ...? The next seminar in the series is due in the spring. Look out for details. Whatever else it will be, it will be challenging!

Guidelines for submissions

Style

Text should be readable and interesting. It should, as far as possible, be jargon-free, with minimal use of references. Of course, non-racist and non-sexist language is expected. References should be put at the end of the article. We reserve the right to edit where necessary.

Illustrations

We always welcome photographs, graphic or illustrations to accompany your article.

Authorship

Please append your name to the end of the article, together with your job description and any other relevant information (e.g. other voluntary roles, or publications etc.).

Publication

Even where articles have been commissioned by the Howard League for Penal Reform, we cannot guarantee publication. An article may be held over until the next issue.

Format

Please send your submission by email to anita.dockley@howardleague.org.

Please note

Views expressed are those of the author and do not reflect Howard League for Penal Reform policy unless explicitly stated.