

Early Career Academics Network Bulletin

February 2011 – Issue 8

Contents

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Introduction Anita Dockley, Research Director | 2 |
| 2. News | 3 |
| 3. Members' notice board | 6 |
| 4. Features: | |
| Values, practices and outcomes in public and private sector corrections Dr Ben Crewe, Professor Alison Liebing and Susie Hulley, University of Cambridge | 7 |
| Deliberative consultation: where qualitative and quantitative methods merge Dr Mai Sato, University of Oxford | 11 |
| Prisoners' Children at the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child Oliver Robertson, Quaker United Nations Office | 15 |
| 5. Member profile: Alex Collis Anglia Ruskin University | 19 |
| 6. Get involved: Community awards programme 2011 | 20 |

Guidelines for submission

Introduction



The new year has got off to a flying start for the Howard League. We have already announced three competitions for you, your colleagues, students and research partners to get involved with.

First we have the [Research Medal](#). This is a new award we have established to recognise the wealth of research that is undertaken. We are particularly looking for entries from those of you who can show that your research has made a real difference, either to practice or policy. Has your work supported change to the way probation officers undertake their role? Has your work been used by a local police service to develop its response to young people? I do not believe that research should be primarily for the academic community to pore over; it must be made more accessible to non-academic communities. This award will look for research that has a strong emphasis on dissemination and changing things. Look in the news section to see how you can enter.

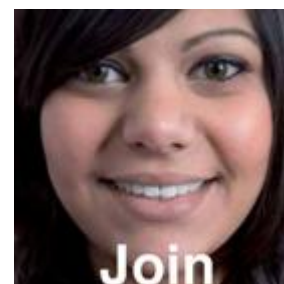
We have also announced our annual [Community Programmes Awards](#). Every year we seek to celebrate and promote good, effective community programmes – so if you have worked with a good programme in your area, encourage them to get nominated. More information about this is in the Get Involved section.

Finally, I would urge you to get students in your departments to have a look at our [essay competition](#). This year's theme is "Why short prison sentences don't work" and will again be judged by the Guardian's prisons correspondent, Eric Allison.

I look forward to the entries flooding in.

Anita Dockley

P.S Look out for news in your inboxes about our postgraduate bursary to this year's British Society of Criminology conference.



News

New Research Prize: The Howard League Research Medal

The Howard League for Penal Reform wants to celebrate your work, especially those of you whose research offers genuine new insights into the penal system and can demonstrate that it can make an impact and change penal policy and practice through high quality research.

The winner of the Research Medal will receive a prize of £1,000. In addition the recipient will be asked to present an aspect of their research at an event in central London on 14th June 2011. The deadline for entries is 4th April 2011. Find out more about the [Research Medal and how to enter here](#).

Baroness Corston's progress report: Women in the penal system



The All Party Parliamentary Group on Women in the Penal System (APPG), chaired by Baroness Corston, has published [a second report](#) on women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system, which revealed bipartisan support for closure of women's prisons. Although many of Baroness Corston's original recommendations have been implemented, the most significant one, to shut down women's prisons and replace them with a limited number of small, multi-functional custodial centres, remains. The APPG report also highlights concern that there are still too many women in prison for non-violent offences, and too many women being remanded into custody.

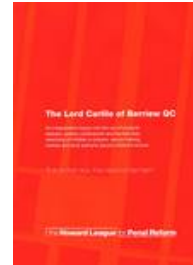
Preventable deaths?

Thirteen men have died in prisons in England and Wales so far in 2011 (8 Feb 2011): three self-inflicted; another three that are unclassified and seven men who have died of 'natural causes'. The Howard League has a well established interest in campaigning for change in how deaths in custody are monitored, understood and, importantly, how to support people who are vulnerable in prison.

Recently two inquest verdicts have come to our attention. The first was a young man who killed himself in Chelmsford prison in January 2008. The young father had been diagnosed as having an emotionally unstable personality disorder and mild learning difficulties. He also had a history of self harm. He hanged himself shortly after returning from a period in the healthcare centre to a single cell, despite the view of the visiting consultant psychiatrist that he should be placed in a shared cell. A jury inquest returned a verdict of an accidental death, adding that the death of James Connolly happened "in part because appropriate precautions were not taken to prevent his death" ([Chelmsford Weekly News](#)).

The second was the inquest into the death of fourteen-year-old Adam Rickwood at Hassockfield Secure Training Centre in 2004. He is the youngest person to die in penal custody. He had been subject to the [‘nose distraction’ restraint technique](#).

The inquest ruled that an unlawful use of force by professionals contributed to his death. The jury concluded that there was a serious system failure on the part of the Youth Justice Board in failing to prevent the regular and unlawful use of physical control in care (PCC) at Hassockfield and that staff at the Serco-run centre had not been adequately trained in suicide awareness, behaviour management and high-risk assessment, and that PCC instructors at Hassockfield were not adequately trained by the prison service in the use of PCC. We have had a long running concern about the use of restraint in the children’s secure estate (for example, [The Carlile Inquiry report](#)) and are planning to publish again soon on the subject.



Enough on their plate?



Our work with young people through [U R Boss](#) has exposed their concern about food in prison. It is a perennial issue for prisoners and the source of much discontent. Our work also suggests that food can be used as ‘currency’ in young offender institutions (YOIs) with some youngsters being bullied into buying food and fruit for others to supplement their diet, while others would bulk buy fruit to exchange for prison phone cards.

We are just beginning to work alongside young people to find ways of improving the quality and content of their prison diet, but also to help them make healthy choices. To begin this process the Howard League has produced [a briefing about food in YOIs](#).

What to do about knife crime?

In the last couple of weeks there has been the publication of Brooke Kinsella’s report, [Tackling knife crime together - a review of local anti-knife crime projects](#), which was quickly followed by a Home Office commitment of £18m of funding for police, local agencies and the voluntary sector to tackle knife, gun and gang-related violence and prevent young people entering a cycle of crime. In many ways, the recommendations are laudable, and include: anti-knife crime presentations for school children; more data sharing between police, schools and other agencies on local issues; and a best practice website for local organisations. However, sadly much of the debate did not progress beyond the well rehearsed reasons behind carrying a weapon; fear or fashion. A couple of years ago the Howard League published



some research, [*Why carry a weapon? A study of knife crime amongst 15-17 year old males in London*](#) by Nicola Marfleet. When we launched her research, Nicola Marfleet said “Several young people spoke honestly about their desire to live in a world where they didn't need to carry a knife, but most felt that it had ‘gone too far now’ and that there was nothing really that could be done to turn back the tide of knife crime”, while Frances Crook highlighted the need to broaden the focus of support beyond the criminal justice sector; “Targeted investment in health and education, as well as community projects that value young people and the skills they can offer, are vital if we are to find lasting solutions to knife crime.”

Members' notice board

Youth Custody and Human Rights Conference

University of Plymouth

2nd - 3rd June 2011

The University of Plymouth's conference aims to explore youth custody, primarily in England and Wales, and human rights using three core themes: 'Youth Custody as a "Last Resort"', 'Conditions Inside Custody' and 'Resettlement and Social Exclusion'. Each theme will be introduced, explored and developed by four keynote speakers who have renowned academic and professional



reputations in this field. Confirmed speakers include Professors Barry Goldson, John Pitts and Kathryn Hollingsworth, as well as the Howard League's lawyer, Laura Janes who will be speaking at the session on resettlement and social exclusion. She will be drawing on the work of our legal team to support young people's resettlement when they leave custody.

[More information about the event can be found here](#) or by contacting the conference organiser, [Dr Patricia Gray](#). You can [register here](#).

Features

Values, practices and outcomes in public and private sector corrections

Dr Ben Crewe, Professor Alison Liebling and Susie Hulley

Prison privatisation was initially conceived as an ‘experiment’ – a test of different models of the provision of custodial ‘services’. Yet, as a number of academics have highlighted, we still know fairly little about the relative quality or effectiveness of public versus private prisons in the UK or beyond (Harding 2001; Perrone and Pratt 2003; Gaes et al. 2004). It is important to try to assess some of the claims that have been made for (and against) private sector involvement in prison management rather than allow debates to rest on rhetoric and ideology alone. The need for a scrupulous empirical research base in this area is all the more important in the current political context. The recent Green Paper on Criminal Justice proposes to “open up the market to new providers from the private, voluntary and community sectors” (2010: 10) and to pay this more diverse range of providers according to reoffending outcomes. It promises to transform a vital area of public policy but is able to draw on little existing evidence about the relative performance of public and private punishment provision, despite the fact that the modern era of prison competition started in 1992 with the opening of HMP Wolds.



Part of the problem is that there is little consensus about the best way to conceptualise and measure prison quality. Should we judge prisons only by ‘external’ measures, such as their impact on reoffending, or by ‘internal’ measures, such as suicide rates, or the quality of life experienced by the imprisoned? What are the criteria by which we should

measure the prisoner experience? What is the relationship between a prison’s ‘moral performance’ (Liebling and Arnold 2004) and the future behaviour of its captives? Might it be the case that the public and private sectors have different strengths and weaknesses which lead to different kinds of outcomes, and which might be combined in the institutions of the future?

The research

In 2006, with many of these questions in mind, the authors, along with several colleagues, embarked on a detailed study of values, practices and outcomes in public and private corrections. Taking advice from practitioners in both sectors, we sought to ‘match’ two public and two private sector prisons (that is, ensure that they were comparable in terms of age, function, security level) and compare their cultures, relationships and the experiences of prisoners and staff within them. Our ethnographic research in these prisons – two of

which were training prisons for adult males, and two of which were local prisons, also for adult males – involved observations of, and interviews with prisoners and staff, plus the administration of quality of life surveys to both groups. In all four establishments we were given keys and allowed free access to all areas of the prison, enabling us to talk openly with prisoners, uniformed staff and managers about their experiences. This ‘deep’ fieldwork was supplemented by shorter research visits to three further private sector prisons (Rye Hill, Lowdham Grange and Altcourse), in which we distributed our surveys and conducted a small number of interviews.

Results and evaluation

In our evaluation of the two pairs of matched prisons, the two public sector prisons (Bullington and Garth) generally outperformed their private sector comparators (Forest Bank and Dovegate). The public sector training prison scored significantly higher than its private sector comparator on 17 of our 21 prisoner ‘quality of life’ measures and below it on none, while the public sector local prison scored significantly higher than its private sector comparator on eight of the measures and below it on none. These measures included prisoner assessments of the respectfulness of their treatment, their safety, their psychological wellbeing and the professionalism of prison staff.

Data from the three supplementary private prisons complicated this picture. One of the private sector training prisons (Lowdham Grange) scored significantly above the public sector training prison on nine of the 21 dimensions (and below it on none), while the additional private sector local prison (Altcourse) scored significantly higher than the public sector local prison on fifteen of the twenty-one dimensions (and significantly below it on none). The public sector prisons in our study were considered to be fairly high-quality. This made the prisoner evaluations of the two high-performing private sector prisons all the more striking.

On the other hand, the *least* impressive prisons in our study were also in the private sector. Both of the private prisons in the main ethnographic study exhibited weaknesses in the areas of policing and control, organisation and consistency and the ‘personal development’ of prisoners (e.g. their feeling that the prison regime was constructive and was helping them to lead a law-abiding life on release).



Senior managers in both of these prisons acknowledged that their staff were less good at following procedures than those in the public sector, that the quality of uniformed staff and middle managers was highly variable and that the high turnover of staff was a major problem. The emphasis in staff training on interpersonal skills – and the effort made to inculcate staff cultures that were positive and respectful – did not lead to our two main private sector prisons outperforming their public sector comparators in the expected areas. In these private prisons relationships

between prisoners and staff were courteous and prisoners generally recognised that staff were benign and committed. However, the lack of experience and expertise among uniformed staff (and their low numbers) meant that prisoners' legitimate expectations were often unmet. The relatively low levels of staff professionalism in these prisons was also manifested in both the over-use and under-use of authority.

In the public sector prisons officers were confident and knowledgeable, delivering regimes that were safer and more reliable than in the matched private sector prisons. Relationships with prisoners were fairly informal and, in general, power was exercised fairly and confidently. However, prisoners sometimes described an experience of imprisonment that felt 'heavier' and more 'edgy' than in the private sector comparators. Uniformed staff could sometimes be indifferent towards prisoners and the dispositions of staff towards prisoners were more negative than those of most private sector staff.

The two high-performing private sector prisons that were added into the study seemed to combine many of the strengths of both sectors. They were unencumbered by some of the cultural 'weight' of the public sector – in particular, a powerful trade union culture that has often promoted an ethos of cynicism – allowing relationships between staff and prisoners to be respectful, supportive and caring. Uniformed staff seemed confident and knowledgeable, having built up more experience than staff in the poorer-performing private prisons. Interestingly though, there were indications that in the domain of security and policing even the high-performing private prisons were less strong than in other areas of quality. Staffing levels were tight and power was slightly under-used.

Conclusion

Not all of the most important issues about prison privatisation can be addressed through these kinds of evaluations. Questions remain about the ethics and longer term effects of private sector involvement in incarceration, and we do not wish to diminish the significance of these matters. Yet our data suggest that some lessons can be drawn from the privatisation 'experiment'. First, since there are huge variations in the quality of private prisons, we should not assume that the private sector is in itself any better at running prisons than the public sector; second, there are some risks in doing privatisation 'on the cheap'; third, there are some hidden strengths in the public sector, particularly in relation to staff professionalism and the use of authority; and, finally, the quality of management really matters and might account for the differences between the performance of otherwise similar establishments.

Ben Crewe is a senior research associate at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge and a member of the Howard League's Research Advisory Group. He has written about various aspects of prison life, including prison drug culture, staff-prisoner relationships, and compliance and resistance among prisoners.

Alison Liebling is professor of criminology and criminal justice at the University of Cambridge and director of the Prisons Research Centre. She has carried out a wide range of empirical research in prisons, including studies of young offenders through care, an ethnographic study of staff-prisoner relationships, an evaluation of close supervision centres, and a study measuring the quality of prison life.

Susie Hulley is a research associate at the Prisons Research Centre, University of Cambridge.

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Deliberative consultation: where qualitative and quantitative methods merge

Dr Mai Sato



I have recently completed my PhD thesis. I examined public attitudes to punishment, using attitudes to the death penalty in Japan as a case study. The research had three empirical parts. The first two were quantitative surveys with a large online panel survey (N=20,000) providing a profile of public opinion and the factors that underpin retentionists' views, and a survey with an experimental design (N=3,000) testing the effect of information on how public opinion is formed on the subject.

The last part, deliberative consultation, is the focus of this short article. I used a mixed-method approach with both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Deliberated views on the death penalty were examined from the following perspectives:

- Changes in death penalty attitudes (quantitative analysis);
- How participants justify their position on the death penalty before and after deliberation (qualitative analysis); and
- How participants interpret and use information during deliberation (qualitative analysis).

The deliberative consultation measured people's considered views, based on information and discussion, rather than "top of the head answers" or "vague impressions". Most surveys ask for people's views on topics regardless of whether they are informed on the issues or whether they have thought about the issues. Eliciting "considered" opinion involves both ensuring that people are informed, and giving them time to think about the issues. Deliberative consultation pays particular attention to "dialogue" and "deliberation". In my deliberative consultation, participants were given time to learn about the death penalty, exchange views, and engage in debate with other participants as well as experts.

"Deliberative consultation" was inspired by "deliberative polling" (e.g. Fishkin, 1997, 2003, 2009; Luskin, Fishkin and Jowell, 2002) and was developed by the Center for Deliberative Democracy, led by Professor James Fishkin. Fishkin (1997: 162) describes the principle and the utility of deliberative polling as:

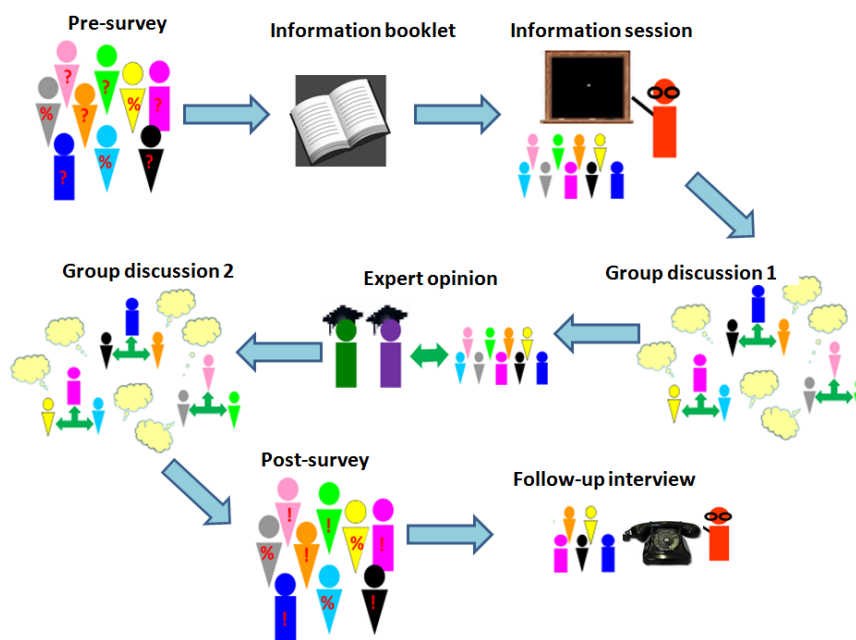
The deliberative poll is unlike any poll or survey ever conducted... A deliberative poll is not meant to describe or predict public opinion. Rather it prescribes. It has a recommending force: these are the conclusions people would come to, were they better informed on the issues and had the opportunity and motivation to examine those issues seriously. It allows a microcosm of the country to make

recommendations to us all after it has had the chance to think through the issues.

“Deliberative polling”, and the “deliberative consultation” used in my thesis, stems conceptually from Habermas’ theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1984, 1978) and aims to elevate “public opinion” to “public judgment” (Yankelovich, 1991) and to elicit views of “ideal citizens” (Fishkin, 1997:162) through deliberation. I have used the term “deliberative consultation” to differentiate it from “deliberative polling” because: 1) the deliberative consultation has a smaller sample with a different sampling method; and 2) the deliberative consultation involved follow-up interviews which are not usually undertaken in deliberative polling.

The deliberative process

The sample consisted of 50 Japanese participants, 25 males and 25 females, aged between 20 and 58 living in the Tokyo metropolitan area. These participants were drawn from a panel of people registered with a Tokyo-based market research company. The selection of participants by death penalty attitudes was roughly based on the results from the first survey, where retentionists comprised the majority and abolitionists the minority. This uneven distribution of attitudes was used to create a “mini Japanese society”, rather than create what one may find in a “debating contest” with equal numbers of retentionists and abolitionists.



After the 50 participants had been selected, they were asked to complete the pre-deliberation survey on-line in their own time. As soon as participants completed the pre-survey, they were sent an information booklet and a leaflet explaining what would happen on the deliberation day. The information booklet summarised issues surrounding the death penalty. Particular attention was paid to providing objective, balanced information in a simple manner that would be short and easy to understand. A week or so later, the 50 participants gathered at a university in Tokyo to deliberate on the death

penalty for a whole day. The day included an information session, two sessions of group discussion, and an expert session. Each group discussion consisted of 12 or 13 participants in a small seminar room led by professional moderators. The expert session was conducted in the lecture hall with all participants in one room. The two guest speakers were invited to give a short speech and to debate their positions on the death penalty. At the end of the day, participants were asked to complete a post-deliberation survey. They were then paid a gratuity. Follow-up interviews were also conducted with ten participants at a later date.



One of the group discussions

Expert session

Lessons from the deliberative process

There were some lessons to be learnt from the deliberative consultation. For example, statements – or the lack of them – by guest speakers in the expert session were likely to have influenced participants' informed decisions on the death penalty. It is fair to say that the retentionist speaker (a journalist) was more eloquent and a skilled speaker. This was evident from the post-survey which asked the participants which speaker was the more persuasive. The journalist skillfully tapped into participants' emotions about victims and their families throughout the session. Some participants also felt that the information session, which I provided before the first group discussion, was leaning towards abolition despite my best efforts to remain neutral.

As for results, the most important finding from the deliberative consultation – consistent with the other two surveys – is that attitudes towards the death penalty are flexible. Deliberation made people change their opinion in various directions. It not only created attitudinal change towards abolition or retention, but also created change in terms of “why” people support or reject the death penalty. Some shifted towards abolition, but the overall balance between retentionists and abolitionists remained broadly unchanged. People became more nuanced in their views, and more uncertain. My key conclusion was that the Japanese government could provide more leadership in pushing public opinion towards abolition without any serious political risks.

Dr Mai Sato is the Oxford-Howard League post-doctoral fellow. She is based at the Centre for Criminology, University of Oxford. Email: mai.sato@crim.ox.ac.uk

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Prisoners' Children at the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

Oliver Robertson



The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the world's premier body concerned with child rights. It was created primarily as the body of experts that oversees how well governments uphold the children's rights to which they all (bar the USA and Somalia) have signed up through ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It does this by going on country visits (seeing for itself the position of children in situ), writing General Comments (its authoritative interpretation of a child rights issue) and, at most once a year, holding a Day of General Discussion (DGD).

DGDs are an opportunity to discuss in more detail an issue that has received little attention, either generally or from a child rights standpoint. It can also be an early step in a process that leads to more concrete international protection or which encourages governments to better look after their children – one recent example is the role a DGD played early on in the development of UN Guidelines on Alternative Care for Children. This year, the Committee will look at the neglected issue of children of prisoners.

Issues affecting prisoners' children

Children of prisoners are a severely under-considered group. Despite affecting around 160,000 children in Britain (six times the number on the child protection register (Glover 2009:2)), 800,000 across the EU (Eurochips 2010) and millions worldwide, the impact of parental imprisonment on children is rarely considered by policymakers, practitioners or academics. It is something that affects children at all stages of the criminal justice process – from arrest to investigation to trial to sentencing to imprisonment to release to reintegration into the community. It can result in children:

- moving home, if they need a new carer or the family can no longer afford the old one (needing new carers is more common when mothers are imprisoned, because while mums are often still around to look after the children when dad goes to prison, the reverse is less likely (Murray 2005:452)).
- moving school and change friends, often as a product of moving house (Cunningham 2001:36).
- having their schooling affected, with children missing school to visit parents, and attendance, behaviour and achievement all suffering (Cunningham and Baker 2003:34, Gampell 2002-3:23, Meek 2006:13).
- experiencing financial difficulties. The family, which is often economically marginalised before imprisonment (Rosenbluth and Krupat 2007) may experience greater financial difficulties and stigmatisation by the community (King, undated).

- taking on new responsibilities, such as working to replace lost income from the imprisoned parent or looking after younger siblings (these changed family roles can cause friction if and when an imprisoned parent returns to reclaim 'their' position within the household (Adalist-Estrin 2003:2)).
- suffering from poor or impaired mental and physical health, with the time of the trial being particularly detrimental (Laing and McCarthy 2004:9).
- having difficulties maintaining contact with the imprisoned parent, often through limited or restrictive visits, letters and phone calls (Bernstein 2005). Later they have to reconnect with a released parent, who has not seen the growth and development of the child and may treat them as though they are still at the age of initial imprisonment (Adalist-Estrin 2003:2).

Many of these impacts or their effects continue long after the parent comes out of jail. Not for nothing are these children called the forgotten victims of imprisonment.

Of course, every child is different and will cope differently – those who have had little contact with the imprisoned parent may find their lives are largely unchanged, while some may benefit from being separated from parents who behave dangerously or disturbingly. But the effects on children, good or bad, are rarely taken into account in criminal justice processes. The failure to consider or consult children of imprisoned parents at all stages of the criminal justice process can result in their rights, needs and best interests being overlooked or actively damaged. Hence the need for more attention to be given to the issue, as a prelude to improved action.

An increasing amount of research and policy attention is being focussed on this – we at QUNO (the Quaker United Nations Office) are involved in a three-year, EU-funded project looking at children of prisoners and mental health ([the COPING project](#)). But there are also opportunities for ensuring that what we do know is more widely understood, including at the United Nations.

Working for change with the UN

The UN is certainly not the only avenue available for campaigning, but for an organisation that works with the UN, it is an obvious one. Being very large and very bureaucratic means that it can take a long time to achieve change in the UN, but it also means that there are several different avenues you can try at once. So on children of prisoners we have raised the issue and asked for its inclusion in decisions by the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the UN General Assembly, as well as the Child Rights Committee. At first an achievement is to get a mention, a line or two in a much larger statement. Then you push for something more – a bigger and more obvious section within a resolution, or inclusion of specific aspects within related international standards (like mentioning children in the recently-adopted UN Rules on the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (The Bangkok Rules)). Then, as awareness

slowly grows of the issue, you can attempt to get something more substantive, like a Day of General Discussion.

Unsurprisingly, this process is not always uniform and smooth. Children of prisoners was only accepted for a DGD at the third attempt and involved speaking personally to Committee members and asking over 40 other organisations and individuals (including the Howard League) to co-sponsor the proposal. Moreover, getting the DGD is only the first step – more needs to happen to make sure both the Day itself and the outcomes from it are as good as possible. There is often a risk at these events for all the time being spent listening to prepared statements from governments saying how good they are on whatever the issue is and then NGOs saying how bad the governments are. This year, we are hoping for more involvement by experts, including children and young people with actual experience of parental imprisonment; we hope to consider together what role human rights can play in helping children of prisoners. How much are children consulted about what happens, as they should be under Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child? How are their rights to remain in contact with both parents upheld, as Article 9 requires? And perhaps most importantly, how are the best interests of the child taken into consideration in decisions around parental imprisonment (Article 3)?



It may be that the DGD turns up some examples of good practice that can be shared. One example we have found relates to a case in South Africa where in 2007 a Constitutional Court ruling *S v M* found that when sentencing a primary caregiver courts must take into account the impact of potential sentences on any dependent children. But it will also be via the outcomes from the Day that we may see changes start to filter through. If the Committee on the Rights of the Child asks other parts of the UN to report or write about children of prisoners, then they may start to take the issue more seriously. If it writes a General Comment, international lawyers will be able to look it up. And if it begins to consistently ask States about children of prisoners whenever the CRC visits and reports, then governments will have to start asking themselves what they are doing on this issue and consider the Committee's recommendations for change. Alone, or even combined, these measures are unlikely to solve all the problems faced by prisoners' children but they can begin to shed light on what the issues are – and how to resolve them.

Oliver Robertson is the programme officer at the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)

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Member profile

Alex Collis from Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge



My name is Alex Collis and I live and work in Cambridge where I have taught on the Social Policy Degree course in the Department of Family and Community Studies at Anglia Ruskin University since 2007. My first degree was actually in English but after several years in the workplace, including a period working in psychiatric nursing, I decided to retrain and started a second degree in Social Policy here at Anglia Ruskin. Two-thirds of the way through the course I transferred to the London School of Economics where I gained an MSc in Social Policy Research. It was while studying at LSE that I became particularly interested in criminal justice policy after taking a year long course on the subject. For the past few years, I have also taught an undergraduate module at Anglia Ruskin on young people and youth offending, and I have been encouraging some of the current second year students to set up a Howard League student society. My main teaching interests lie in youth imprisonment, restorative justice and the social history of youth offending.

Alongside the teaching, I have also worked on various research projects. At the moment I am researching a new faith-based offender management and support scheme working out of HMP Bedford. I have just interviewed two volunteer 'befrienders' about their experiences of supporting men released from the prison and why they chose to volunteer with the project. The research (which was commissioned by the East of England Faiths Council) is a work in progress but it has already thrown up some interesting findings. We hope to publish the report this spring. In 2009 I also led on a study commissioned by the Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Action Team looking at the support needs of local women with substance abuse issues who had been released from HMP Peterborough. Besides my research on criminal justice issues I have also maintained an interest in migration policy and have been involved in a number of projects exploring the experiences of migrant workers in the East of England.

I am also now roughly halfway through my PhD (theoretically at least!), a study of interagency working and conflict in antisocial behaviour management, although I've been slightly thrown off course by the forthcoming Home Office review. I think the proposed abolition of ASBOs can only be a positive thing but I still worry about what will take its place and the ideological drivers behind the Coalition's approach.

The Early Career Academics Network is a great opportunity for someone like me, based in a department that focuses primarily on health and social care policy, to share ideas and interests with other academics interested in criminal justice issues. Already it has pointed me in the direction of some really interesting work in progress and I look forward to learning more in the months to come.

Get involved

The Howard League's Community Programmes Awards 2011

The Howard League has just launched its annual Community Programmes Awards. It is designed to celebrate best practice but also to raise government and public awareness about the good and effective work that often goes unrecognised. Do you know of a community project that has made a difference and deserves recognition? Then encourage them to nominate themselves.

The Howard League's Community Programmes Award 2011 will celebrate work in the community that challenges and changes people for the better, be it through unpaid work, drug and alcohol treatment programmes, or restorative justice. The programmes must be part of a community sentence.

This year there are five categories:

- Children and Young People
- Adults (sponsored by the Probation Association)
- Women (sponsored by the Corston Independent Funders' Coalition)
- Education, training and employment
- Unpaid work.

Nominations close at 5pm on 3rd May 2011.

[Full information about the awards here.](#)

Open days

The Howard League has been working with last year's Community Programmes Awards winners to promote their work within their local area. We are working with them to host open days. The first open day was with Together Women at the end of last year. We are actively planning two more open days.

The first is due to be held in March promoting the work of last year's winners of the Education, training and employment category, the New Skills, New Lives Project run by Kent Probation and West Kent College. This will be followed by another open day in May with the winners of the Adult category: Thames Valley Restorative Justice Service, Thames Valley Probation.

If you are interested in receiving more information about the open days, please contact [Catryn Yousefi](#), Programme Manager.



ECAN Facebook Group



The Howard League for Penal Reform is active on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Delicious](#). There is a special page dedicated to the Early Career Academics Network that you can reach either by searching for us on Facebook or by clicking on the button above.

We hope to use the Facebook site to generate discussions about current issues in the criminal justice system. If there are any topics that you would like to discuss, please start a discussion.

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 (eg 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 the Howard League for Penal Reform policy unless explicitly stated.