Howard League for Penal Reform

Early Career Academics Network Bulletin Themed Issue

2020 – a year of crisis or *Kairos*? Part Two

March 2021 – Issue 47

Contents

 ECAN Facebook Group

   The Howard League for Penal Reform is active on Facebook and Twitter. There is a special page dedicated to the Early Careers Academic 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.

Introduction

Harry Annison

This edition of the ECAN Bulletin is the second of a themed double issue that curates reflections on the issues and experiences of 2020, and the provisional lessons which may be emerging. Contributors include early career academics, practitioners and people affected directly by criminal justice institutions. Written pieces are complemented by audio contributions.

Erin Condirston begins this second themed issue, reflecting on the importance of prison education and the ways in which COVID-19 and associated lockdowns have both considerably reduced the ability for learning to take place, whilst highlighting its pressing need. **Condirston** notes the ways in which learning can, amongst other benefits, improve individuals' mental health and wellbeing. Informed by letters from prisoners, and her broader doctoral research, **Condirston** argues that there is great importance attached by prisoners to 'boredom-relieving and hope-inducing' educational pursuits. She raises concerns that while education in the general community has been treated as a top priority, 'we have not seen the same level of urgency in the prison context'.

An **anonymous contribution** from a recently released prisoner gives us insights into his experience of exchanging 'one lockdown for another'. We learn about COVID-19 outbreaks within prisons, and the toll of the heavily restricted prison regime that has been in place. We are told about problems, but also the efforts by 'good people', both prisoners and staff, to achieve and maintain a level of decency. **Our contributor** raises concerns about the system for release, and the lack of

support for those leaving prison. And, importantly, points to the trauma experienced by many prisoners that will take some time to be recognised and understood, let alone addressed.

In our first two audio contributions for this issue, **Stan Gilmour** is Director of the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit and a serving police officer. In his recorded contribution, he reflects on the inter-relationship between policing and public health that has been brought to the fore by the pandemic. He speaks to the long-term effects of the pandemic that we are likely to see, especially on those who are most vulnerable.

Our second audio contribution is by **Anne Reyersbach**, a magistrate. She speaks about her experience through the pandemic, reflecting on the likely impact on young people and the youth justice system.

Laura Janes and **Marie Franklin** reflect on their legal work at the Howard League during the pandemic, focusing in particular on their experiences of remote parole hearings. They discuss the challenges of providing appropriate support to clients within the present constraints, and concerns about the extent to which remote hearings may be traumatic for prisoners, especially young clients.

Joseph McAulay considers the lessons that COVID-19 and related responses might pose in terms of research methodology. Drawing on his experience of conducting research with male victims of same-sex domestic violence, **McAulay** discusses the ways in which online methods of qualitative research can have benefits in terms of access, autonomy, and anonymity. Notwithstanding some potential limitations that **McAulay** identifies, overall, he argues that online qualitative methods should not be treated just as second best, a mitigation in response to a pandemic. Rather, he argues that it provides valuable opportunities to engage with hard-to-reach groups.

Insa Koch is Associate Professor of Law and Anthropology at the London School of Economics. In her audio contribution, she speaks to her ethnographic research on 'county lines' drug trafficking and the use of modern slavery legislation by the police in relation to it. Informed by her wider research on communities' experiences of the state, **Koch** argues that if one is seeking to reduce harm, and improve citizens' lives, it is crucial to recognise and examine underlying structural dynamics in play. In particular, **Koch** highlights the British state's long history of slavery and empire, and the increasingly punitive nature of the welfare state.

In her contribution, **Arta Jalili-Idrissi** explores the possibility that the unprecedented developments of COVID-19, and its global nature, may herald the end of what Zygmunt Bauman termed 'liquid modernity'. **Jalili-Idrissi** discusses the extent to which neo-liberalism, seen as the political economic driver of liquid modernity, has suffused political, economic, and indeed penal policy and practice. Nonetheless, she considers whether 2020 may come to be seen as a turning point, where consumerism and international mobility might be reduced,

and the value of essential workers better recognised. Specifically, as regards penal policy, **Jalili-Idrissi** considers the possibility that we might see greater public understandings of the pains of imprisonment (of 'lockdown'). But that for those who remain in prison, the conditions and experiences may become harder to bear.

In closing, I reflect upon some of the issues and ideas raised across the themed double issue. I do not seek to draw together the contributions into a single coherent narrative; this would be somewhat artificial and risk closing down the debates and discussions that this themed double issue hopes to stimulate. Therefore, in the closing piece, I seek to draw out the kinds of questions raised by the contributions and to offer a sketch of how these questions might coalesce.

About the editor

Harry Annison is an Associate Professor at Southampton Law School. He is a member of the Howard League's Research Advisory Group. His research interests centre on penal politics and policymaking.

Features

Lockdown Learning: Exploring prison learners' experiences of prison education during the COVID-19 lockdown

Erin Condirston, Royal Holloway University of London

Studies researching the impact of prison education have uncovered prisoner-identified positive personal development outcomes such as improved self-esteem and confidence (Hughes, 2000; Parker, 1990; Taylor, 2004; Tootoonchi, 1993; Worth, 1994). However, the mental wellbeing impact of education in prison has not been a topic of prominence with respect to prison education research. The positive impact of education on health, and increasingly wellbeing, has been well-documented (Economic and Social Research Council, 2014; Field, 2009; Schuller, Preston, Hammond, Brassett-Grundy and Bynner, 2004; Vila, 2000). In her co-authored book, *The Benefits of Learning: The Impact of Education on Health, Family Life and Social Capital,* Hammond outlines her study on the health-related impacts of education. Hammond explores the ways in which learning can positively impact an individual's sense of well-being and mental health with respect to self-esteem, sense of identity, confidence, self-efficacy, and "sense of purpose and future" (2004, p.40). Hammond (2004) also notes that these positive outcomes of education can contribute to the promotion of mental health and well-being, including the ability to more effectively cope with stress and hardships, and through improved resilience (2004, pp. 37-38).

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK, prisons in England and Wales introduced measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 in order to protect the prisoners, staff, public, and NHS workers. In order to comply with social distancing measures, the recreational activities of prisoners were temporarily ceased, resulting in an increasing amount of time in which prisoners were confined to their cells (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2020). Prison gyms, chapels, and libraries were suddenly off-limits, meaning prisoners were no longer able to participate in the activities that might normally provide them some much-needed respite and mental stimulation. With respect to education in prisons, out-of-cell education classes were cancelled, with learning materials and resources developed to provide prisoners with in-cell alternatives to the educational activities they had been engaged in prior to the onset of the pandemic (Buckland, 2020).

Given the above-named restrictions to movement and activity that have been implemented in prisons in England and Wales, a greater awareness of the coronavirus-related impacts on prisoner wellbeing is vital. In particular, the suspension of out-of-cell education activities under lockdown regulations

raises important questions about the impact of the interruption to learning on prisoners. The larger study on which this paper is based aims to offer a critical glimpse into the wider mental wellbeing benefits of accessing education in prison within the context of a pandemic-induced interruption to prison education. The study analyses written testimonies submitted by prison learners about their experiences of education during lockdown to the prison newspaper publication *Inside Time.* As part of a larger dissertation on the exploration of the mental wellbeing benefits of prison education from varying perspectives, my 'Lockdown Learning' study aimed to investigate the issue of wellbeing from the standpoint of prison learners during the COVID-19 lockdown. This small-scale study involved analysis of six letters from prison learners in adult men's and women's prisons in England and Wales who responded to an advert published in *Inside Time*. It is acknowledged that the small number of contributions received are important but can only give a partial impression of the opinions and observations of the wider prison population. With that said, the present paper succeeds in acting as a small window into the world of the potential benefits of prison education on prisoners' mental wellbeing, exploring prison learners' accounts of how the removal of this vital lifeline of support and hope has impacted them during the coronavirus crisis.

While official accounts of prisons during the pandemic have begun to emerge (HMIP, 2020a; HMIP, 2020b; HMIP, 2020c), the voices of prisoners have so far been largely absent. An overall air of concern was present within the letters submitted by prison learners to the 'Lockdown Learning' study. Lack of motivation, ambivalence, coping

inadequacies, difficulties concentrating and sleeping, forgetfulness, anxiety, and boredom surfaced within the letters as some of the struggles facing prison learners and prisoners in general during lockdown.

This article will emphasise some key issues raised in the 'Lockdown Learning' study. It will bring the voices of prison learners within the current COVID-19 climate to the forefront, highlighting some of the main themes that surfaced in relation to learning during lockdown as told by the prison learners themselves. These themes will be explored according to the primary issues raised within the prison learner responses, namely a lack of communication and educational support, a loss of hope, and an absence of the ability to use education as a means to cope with life in prison.

Theme one: communication and educational support

> "I was always taught that communication is fundamental to good practice, continuity and the provision of a stable and functioning business environment. This has not been present during Lockdown. The sudden ending of the education service was the root cause to the problems and anxiety that ensued…Those on externally supported courses could have had processes explained. These courses are a lifeline to our stability and not everyone is able to cope with change in such a brutal fashion"
>
> 'Lockdown Learning' prison learner

One of the most prominent notions within the testimonies of prison learners was the lack of communication and ill-

preparedness with respect to the lockdown education. Prison learners expressed concerns over the lack of communication as to how education courses would proceed during lockdown, if or when learning would resume post-lockdown, and lack of educational guidance, tutoring, and support available. Frustration surfaced in the midst of the uncertainty surrounding lockdown educational processes and procedures, with both prison learners and prison education departments alike experiencing confusion over changes to the prison education regime. Prison learners expressed irritation at inefficiencies of this altered prison education system. Education materials were either in short supply or not distributed at all, prisoners experienced difficulties in completing in-cell education activities due to increased noise levels on the prison wings, and there was a lack of feedback and grading on work completed during lockdown. "Filling the gap" in education during lockdown, according to one respondent, was left up to prison learners themselves (Wesley, prison learner).[1] This left some learners adrift with respect to the completion of education activities autonomously with no support.

With such lack of educational guidance, some learners simply gave up. The limited communication from prison educational departments and external tutors, including when and if education would be able to resume, conceivably provided a barrier to prison learners being able to focus on the future. One respondent to the 'Lockdown Learning' study indicated that their sense of purpose was absent during lockdown

due to the suspension of educational activities. This emphasises the importance of communicative practices in custodial environments, particularly when the communication pertains to information regarding positive pursuits such as education.

The lack of communication regarding prison learners' educational progress only served to aggravate the stressors placed upon prisoners during this uncertain time. The removal of valuable support networks during a time where they may conceivably have been needed more than ever placed an undue strain upon prisoners who required such guidance in order to sustain themselves. Even though some education courses were specifically designed to be completed in-cell once lockdown began, the feedback from prison learners suggested that these courses may have been structured hastily without consideration of the impact on students. One prison learner highlighted the difficulties in distribution, discussing the case whereby education packs (described as "distraction packs") were not able to be reproduced after their initial distribution (Charlie, prison learner). Another learner indicated that subsequent study units were being distributed to prison learners without feedback or grading on previous units completed, resulting in a reluctance to continue studies without having received grading or comments for previous work. The reticence that was displayed during lockdown was discouraging for prison learners and was aggravated by the fact that an end to lockdown and return to "normality" was yet to be determined. One prison learner spoke of the

---

[1] Names of participants have been changed in order to preserve anonymity. Longer quotations are not attributed to specific 'Lockdown Learning'

respondents, even pseudonymously, in order to further preserve anonymity.

"devastating impact" of lockdown on prison education, noting that it appeared as though "the education department closed and threw away the key" (Mohamed, prison learner).

Theme two: hope and optimism

> "A continued application of learning and advancement that have been left in a hiatus that is not being explained. People are saddened by the inability to continue. So much hope – so much lost...One could say that there are in-cell learning experiences but they do not provide the one-to-one, the motivation, the learning experience or support to create the drivers to learning. These people need the resources to improve their lives, assist in their rehabilitation and put their lives and the lives of their families on a road to stability and achievement."
>
> 'Lockdown Learning' prison learner

By definition, hope can be considered a tool of "survival and well-being" through which individuals believe in their ability to achieve their goals and realise and generate conceivable pathways to doing so (Martin and Stermac, 2010, p.693). As such, hope is thought to be an important tool in coping with desperate circumstances (Martin and Stermac, 2010). Hope provides prisoners, and in particular those on long term sentences, with a means through which they can, in due course, navigate emotionally turbulent existences and experiences (Crewe, Hulley, and Wright, 2020). The ability for education to factor into prisoners' ability to survive and find hope within the context of their prison existence is supported by Crewe, Hulley,

and Wright (2020). They assert that family, religion, and education were the primary aspects of life in prison that prisoners in the middle and later stages of their sentences considered most prominent in providing a sense of purpose and hope and influencing goal-oriented thoughts.

The frustration experienced by prisoners in relation to the struggles of learning during lockdown speaks to the importance of further educational aspirations for those undertaking education in prison. The forward-thinking and future planning element of wellbeing that is represented by having further educational aspirations was absent with the removal of educational activities during lockdown. This was evidenced by one prison learner's testimony that lockdown had "taken away opportunity, a chance to enhance ones [sic] life…it has not provided a provision to replace this learning experience" (Wesley, prison learner).

Prison learners who responded to the 'Lockdown Learning' study communicated that the optimism, or hope, that was once instilled in prisoners by participation in education was absent. One such individual indicated that the sense of purpose that was once associated with studying was now gone, exacerbated by the fact that the end of lockdown and recommencement of prison education was indeterminable. Another prison learner noted that the COVID-19 lockdown removed the ability for learners to improve their lives through prison education, and that the educational opportunities and resources provided during quarantine were unfulfilling and failed to measure up to the learning experiences provided pre-lockdown.

Prison learners' support networks and their sense of achievement and confidence that developed from engaging in prison education prior to lockdown was notably absent during lockdown. The support networks that prison learners develop through participating in education in prison provide more than just tangible educational skills and support from peers. This was evidenced in a testament to the cooperative wellbeing benefits of prison education expressed by one participant. These networks also provide valuable mental wellbeing support with respect to the "companionship of the learning process" (Wesley, prison learner). That is, the ability to learn to understand and accept others, to learn about equality, other cultures, and ways of life. Prior to lockdown, one prison learner detailed what they believed to be a very supportive education department within the prison and indicated that this department has provided immeasurable benefit to those engaged in education. However, the same learner later indicated in their letter that the positive experiences that had been provided by the prison education department pre-lockdown were non-existent during, and because of, lockdown. In a prison environment with a pre-existing and positive education system, the absence of education due to lockdown is felt more acutely than in those prisons where education is not prioritised.

One 'Lockdown Learning' respondent provided a different viewpoint. This prison learner indicated the opposite with respect to being bereft of education and work activities during lockdown. They felt that not having anything to focus on during lockdown forced the individual to focus on themselves and reflect upon their life and future trajectory. Further

research could explore whether other prison learners would express the same feelings, and the effect of further prolonged lockdown. This learner did, however, acknowledge that whilst lockdown may have provided a positive opportunity to reflect upon their life and potentially improve their wellbeing, this may not be the case for others in prison who may have struggled with lockdown.

Theme three: Coping mechanisms and boredom relief strategies

"I am luckier than most, being able to find activities to keep me engaged, but it is fair to say that even I have been struggling, especially as there appears to be no end in sight. I have seen no evidence whatsoever that there has been any attempt to support education during the lockdown. Something that saddens me greatly. Education has been the one aspect of survival I have felt able to embrace during my sentence."

'Lockdown Learning' prison learner

The 'Lockdown Learning' letters illustrated the benefits of prison education. These benefits included its use as a tool of mental engagement, a way to keep occupied, and a coping strategy whereby prisoners can mentally escape the monotony of the prison regime. 'Lockdown Learning' respondents discussed how education in prison typically provides a way to endure life in prison, and how they have essentially been devoid of this coping mechanism during lockdown. This reinforced the notion that prison education is a necessary and vital element of surviving the prison experience. Education during lockdown, according to some prison learners as

expressed in their 'Lockdown Learning' letters, became a method of relieving boredom. This concept is reinforced by academics and researchers who ascertain that prison education can be a valuable boredom-alleviating tool (Behan, 2014; Hughes, 2012). It is possible that lockdown has exacerbated boredom, rendering it more acutely felt by prisoners. Boredom can be one of the challenging side-effects of life in prison. An excess of time is an aspect of prison life which prisoners cannot escape.

The boredom, loneliness, and isolation that prisoners suffer from are some of the factors that can contribute to self-harm and suicidal behaviours (Liebling, 1999). Liebling (1999) ascertains that those who have attempted suicide in prison consistently articulated feeling "worse off than their fellow prisoners" (p.315) with respect to wanting or being given opportunities to participate in activities that would keep them occupied and distracted (such as education and work). These individuals are thus particularly vulnerable to self-harming behaviour and suicidal thoughts through a dangerous combination of not being able to keep themselves engaged in productive ways, along with isolation, "enforced idleness" (HMIP, 1999), and "forced contemplation" (Liebling, 1999, p.316). It is important to consider the impact of lockdown-induced boredom and isolation on prisoner's mental health and self-harm rates, especially in the context of the uncertainty that characterises the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst rates of self-harm were much lower than initially expected (HMIP, 2020c), there was still an air of disquiet with respect to the effects of the continual isolation of prisoners during the ongoing pandemic (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2020). Concern remained about the state of prisoners'

mental wellbeing during prolonged periods of isolation into the Autumn and beyond, following rising COVID-19 cases and subsequent national lockdowns (Iacobucci, 2020; Mahase, 2020; Prison Reform Trust, 2020). Feelings of loneliness, boredom and anxiety that can typify life in prison were perhaps exacerbated by the context of a viral pandemic in which a regime of prolonged isolation was adopted in order to contain the virus. It was concerning that in this context, the coping resources that prisoners might have typically used to help them survive the experience of prison were removed.

Conclusion

"We are bereft of our sense of achievement, our confidence removed and our support networks taken away and maybe destroyed. For who knows when we will return and how that process will affect us. We will have lost friends, some staff may not return, plans change. The return will not be easy."

'Lockdown Learning' prison learner

Analysis of the letters submitted by prison learners in response to the 'Lockdown Learning' study indicated themes of uncertainty and disquiet amongst prison learners studying during lockdown. Respondents expressed that they lacked the optimism they once gained from participating in education. The lack of educational support during lockdown emerged as a damaging by-product of the COVID-19 prison restrictions. Prison learners who looked to education as a means of providing hope and guidance in an otherwise demoralising environment became disheartened. The 'Lockdown Learning' study has laid the groundwork for further

research into the concerns and experiences of prisoners who have been unable to access their usual programme of education during the pandemic. Given the protracted nature of the pandemic, it is anticipated that the education provision for prison learners will continue to be limited to a degree for the foreseeable future.

The 'Lockdown Learning' study has suggested that prisoners attach great importance to boredom-relieving and hope-inducing educational pursuits. It can be a valuable coping mechanism in an otherwise challenging experience. The stability that prison education provided pre-lockdown has eluded prisoners during the pandemic. While the government has repeatedly stated that the continuation of learning – ideally in person – for school pupils, college and university students in the general community is a top priority, we have not seen the same level of urgency in the prison context. The power of education to positively contribute to aspects of mental wellbeing is arguably enhanced within the environment of prison, thus further exploration into the impact of the removal of education activities in prison on mental wellbeing is required. There is an urgent necessity for the government to consider prison education as a priority. We should question whether it was necessary to restrict education during the COVID-19 lockdown, and whether such a constraint aggravated the mental health issues plaguing prisoners. Could the experience of lockdown have been made tolerable for prisoners if they had been allowed access to education? The ways in which the global pandemic and lockdown in prisons in England and Wales has affected the ability of learners in prison to continue with their studies is a pivotal juncture in the narrative of prison education research. Research into the benefits of prison education could not come at a more crucial time.

Acknowledgements:

References

Behan, C. (2014). Learning to Escape: Prison Education, Rehabilitation and the Potential for Transformation. *Journal of Prison Education and Re-entry, 1*(1), 20-31.

Buckland, R. (2020, April 6). *Update to the Justice Select Committee on Covid-19.* UK Parliament Justice Committee. Retrieved from https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/739/documents/4264/default/

Crewe, B., Hulley, S., and Wright, S. (2020). *Life Imprisonment from Young Adulthood: Adaptation, Identity and Time.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Economic and Social Research Council (2014, July). Evidence Briefing: *The wellbeing effect of education.* Retrieved from https://esrc.ukri.org/files/news-events-and-publications/evidence-briefings/the-wellbeing-effect-of-education/

Field, J. (2009). Good for your soul? Adult learning and mental well-being. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 28*(2), 175-191.

Hammond, C. (2004). The Impact of Learning on Well-being, Mental Health and Effective Coping. In T. Schuller, J. Preston, C. Hammond, A. Brassett-Grundy, and J. Bynner, *The Benefits of Learning: The Impact of Education on Health, Family Life and Social Capital* (pp.37-56). London: Routledge Falmer.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons. (2020a, May 19). *Prisons Holding Women.* Retrieved from https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/06/Womens-prisons-SSV-2020.pdf

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons. (2020b, May 18). *Local men's prisons during COVID-19 – communications key to prisoner acceptance of severe restrictions.* Retrieved from https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/media/press-releases/2020/05/local-mens-prisons-during-covid-19-communications-key-to-prisoner-acceptance-of-severe-restrictions/

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons. (2020c, April 28). *Report on short scrutiny visits to local prisons.* Retrieved from https://www.justice inspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/05/Locals-SSV-web-2020.pdf

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for England and Wales. (1999). *Suicide is Everyone's Concern A Thematic Review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales.* Retrieved from https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/07/suicide-is-everyones-concern-1999-rps.pdf

House of Commons Justice Committee. (2020, July 27). *Coronavirus (Covid-19): The impact on prisons* (Report No. HC299). Retrieved from https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/2154/documents/20016/default/

Hughes, E. (2012). *Education in Prison: Studying Through Distance Learning.* New York: Ashgate Publishing.

Hughes, E. (2000). An Inside View: Prisoners' Letters on Education. In D. Wilson and A. Reuss, (Eds.), *Prison(er) Education: Stories of Change and Transformation* (pp. 138-157). Hook: Waterside Press.

Iacobucci, G. (2020, October 9). Covid-19: Leaders warn of "full blown second surge" as hospital admissions rise. *The British Medical Journal, 371,* m3941. Retrieved from https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/371/bmj.m3941.full.pdf

Liebling, A. (1999). Prison Suicide and Prisoner Coping. *Crime and Justice, 26*, 283-359.

Mahase, E. (2020, October 30). Covid-19: UK government must "get its act together" as modelling suggests 85 000 deaths in second wave, experts say. *The British Medical Journal, 371*, m4242. Retrieved from https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/371/bmj.m4242.full.pdf

Martin, K., and Stermac, L. (2010). Measuring Hope: Is Hope Related to Criminal Behaviour in Offenders? *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 54*(5), 693-705.

Parker, E. (1990). The Social-Psychological Impact of a College Education on the Prison Experience. *Journal of Correctional Education, 41*(3), 140-146.

Prison Reform Trust. (2020, October 20). *October 2020 - Peter Clarke HMCIP: Minutes of the meeting of the Virtual Meeting of the All-Party Group on Penal Affairs, held on 20 October 2020.* Retrieved from http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/PressPolicy/Parliament/AllPartyParliamentaryPenalAffairsGroup/October2020PeterClarkeHMCIP

Schuller, T., Preston, J., Hammond, C., Brassett-Grundy, A., and Bynner, J. (2004). *The Benefits of Learning: The Impact of Education on Health, Family Life and Social Capital.* London: Routledge Falmer.

Taylor, J. (2004). The Value of Higher Education. *The Journal of Prisoners on Prisons, 13*(1), 76-91.

The Faculty of Public Health. (2019). *Concepts of Mental and Social Wellbeing.* Retrieved from https://www.fph.org.uk/policy-campaigns/special-interest-groups/special-

interest-group/better-mental-health-for-all/concepts-of-mental-and-social-wellbeing.

Tootoonchi, A. (1993). College Education in Prisons: The Inmates' Perspectives. *Federal Probation, 57*(4), 34-40.

Vila, L. E. (2000). The Non-monetary Benefits of Education. *European Journal of Education, 35*(1), 21-32.

Worth, V. (1994). The same difference: tutoring for the Open University in prison. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning, 9*(1), 34-41.

About the author:

Erin Condirston is a PhD student at Royal Holloway University of London. She completed her MA in Criminology at the University of Ottawa, Canada in 2011, where her focus was on comparing discourses of risk in conceptualisations of traditional and corporate crime by Canadian criminal justice organisations. Under the guidance of supervisors Professor Rosie Meek and Professor Nicholas Hardwick, Erin's doctoral research focuses on the impact of further and higher education in prison on the mental health of prison learners.

Experiencing prison and release during the COVID-19 pandemic

Anonymous

I have just been released from prison after two and a half years. I was expecting my first steps back into the outside world to feel something akin to Dorothy's full technicolour experience in the Wizard of Oz. It hasn't quite felt like that. Being released at the same time as a global pandemic somewhat muted the occasion. For the most part I've exchanged one lockdown for another. I prefer this one.

I've followed how the UK has coped with the pandemic a lot over the last ten months. But from what I can tell, there's been precious little attention paid to how prisons have been coping with the pandemic. Early last year, concerns were raised that Covid could ravage prisons in the same way as it had care homes. To my recollection, these concerns lasted less than a week. The government announced an early release scheme for up to 4000 prisoners, but then quietly cancelled it a few months later with a grand total of 316 prisoners released.

Most of my sentence was spent in a C category prison. During the last ten months, the prison suffered two major Covid outbreaks. The second time, over a quarter of prisoners tested positive for the virus. In a farcical (though thankfully not fatal) error of judgement, the prison let infected prisoners out of isolation and back into the normal prison population whilst they still had the virus. You wouldn't have read about that anywhere.

Whilst there have been deaths of both prisoners and staff due to Covid in the last year (close to a hundred), it so far hasn't been on the scale predicted. This

is a good thing. So good that you might consider it a success story. However, the only reason that has been achieved is due to a heavily restricted prison regime: ten months of 22-23.5 hour a day lockdown. That's ten months of no purposeful activity. No education or workshops. No offender courses. No access to the gym. No visits for most of the year. For ten months, we were getting only an hour or so a day out of our cells. Because of the weather, often we weren't even getting that – you try walking around a small concrete yard in the pouring down rain with no coat. Time out of our cells was even more limited when we had outbreaks at the prison. With a limited number of phones on the wing, it was often a choice between using the time to make a phone call or have a shower.

We had difficulty getting books sent in for about two months, as gate staff were under the mistaken impression that they were entitled to refuse parcels due to the pandemic. There was a period of nearly three months when paracetamol and hand sanitiser were not available to buy on the prison canteen. As there was no shortage of these things in the community, presumably prisoners just weren't a priority for the suppliers.

To be fair to the prison and the officers, when we had outbreaks of Covid they did their best to deal with a difficult situation. The action taken to shield vulnerable prisoners and to split the wings up into bubbles undoubtedly saved lives. They deserve credit for that. But, during the first outbreak, overcrowding meant that when my elderly cell mate tested positive and became quite ill, I was simply locked in the cell with him for a fortnight to isolate. I was presumably asymptomatic – I was never tested, and thankfully he recovered, but for the best part of a week I felt a lot like his carer and was

genuinely unsure as to whether he was going to die or not.

I saw a lot of selfish, dishonest, manipulative, and aggressive behaviour from many other prisoners. Some of the people I lived with over the last couple of years were quite clearly a danger to the public. Some had committed horrific crimes that can't really be rationalised in any way. But most were not intrinsically bad people.

Some prisoners are innocent. Some were not guilty of exactly what they'd been convicted of, even if they had done wrong. Some were unfortunate to have ended up in prison rather than receiving a non-custodial sentence (inside, it was generally agreed that going to court for sentencing was like flipping a coin). Some had just made mistakes – in some cases a single mistake – and were paying for that. Many had owned up to their mistakes at the first opportunity. Some really did deserve their prison sentence, but still weren't bad people. Some were 'bad' people, by any definition of the word. But even then, few people are truly irredeemable.

What you don't hear about are the small acts of kindness and common decency you see every day in prison, just as you'd see in any community of people. Like the genuine concern shown towards the man who walked into his cell one afternoon to find his cellmate in a pool of blood. Or the group of quite laddish men who went out of their way to ensure a visibly autistic young man wouldn't be taken advantage of by some of the more unscrupulous inmates, because even they could see that he really shouldn't have been in prison. You probably won't know that the confidential 24-hour listeners service is operated by prisoners themselves, trained and supported by the Samaritans not the prison system. Or that prisoners are also responsible for

providing maths and English mentoring to other prisoners. You won't have heard about the hundreds of pounds raised by prisoners from their own wages for the family of a young prison officer who died suddenly. Or that when the nation was clapping for carers every Thursday for ten weeks last year, we all joined in too.

Our prisons are overcrowded, with shockingly high levels of suicide and self-harm. Many have high levels of violence and drug use. Some of our prisons were originally built in the Victorian era and are no longer fit for human habitation. The government advocates for new super prisons so even more people can be locked up, as if the American penal system is a model rather than a warning. An increase in prison officer recruitment goes nowhere near to making up for the numbers that were cut ten years ago. The chairman of the Prison Officers Association successfully lobbied for officers to carry PAVA spray for their own protection and says that the current lockdown restrictions should continue after the pandemic ends because it makes their job easier. A lack of support sees many prisoners released into homelessness and the stigma of a prison sentence is a serious barrier to future employment. The stark reality of our justice system is that despite the misery and the punitiveness, we have stubbornly high levels of reconviction for many categories of offender.

There are some very good people working across all areas of the prison and probation service. But the system they work within is simply not designed to help prisoners. And the biggest failing is in the lack of support provided for preparing you to actually leave prison.

My own release should have been straightforward – I had a home to go to and there were no concerns about me returning to the area. Yet, the build up to

my release was probably the most stressful period of my entire sentence. Despite acknowledging that I had been referred to the wrong probation area a full 11 months before my release date, nothing was done by the prison to rectify it. Inertia comes as standard in prison, but Covid made things even more difficult. Being locked up for 23 hours a day and only let out at times specified by that week's regime meant it was just not possible to contact the OMU or phone my family to sort things in the same way I could have done before lockdown. My family had to spend the four weeks prior to my release chasing outside probation themselves, finally getting it resolved with four working days to spare. Had they not done so, whilst I'd have been sent to a hostel (in an area I don't have any links to), I'd technically be homeless – which is quite frankly absurd.

I had no assistance with my universal credit claim, allegedly because of the pandemic, yet the government website tells me that I was supposed to have. The DWP weren't aware that I had been released from prison, which caused issues in proving my address when making my claim. HMRC were unaware that I had even been in prison, despite the prison taking my National Insurance number for that purpose shortly after I was convicted, and I now have a tax issue to sort out because of it.

For those still inside, the restricted regime is something they're going to have to keep putting up with for at least the next six months and potentially the entire year. By the time the pandemic is over, some prisoners will have spent their entire sentences under these conditions. The toll taken on the mental and physical health of those that do has yet to be fully realised. With offender courses not running and contact with outside agencies limited, it's even harder for prisoners to progress through

sentence plans and prepare for release than it was already. That there have been no offender programmes running for an entire year now, perhaps says something about the value actually placed in 'rehabilitation' and the usefulness of the courses. If they were anything more than just a box-ticking exercise, surely prisons could have found a way to keep them going in some format? If there is supposed to be any point to a prisoner's incarceration beyond simple punishment, it is no longer apparent. And if that all sounds a bit grim, well it is.

COVID-19 and the criminal justice system: Audio contributions

Stan Gilmour
Director, Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit and serving police officer

Listen to Stan speak about the long-term effects of the pandemic, and the crossover between policing and public health that has been brought to the fore.

Anne Reyersbach
Magistrate

Listen to Anne speak about her experience through the pandemic, reflecting on the likely impact on young people and the youth justice system.

Dr Laura Janes and Marie Franklin
Legal Director and Trainee Solicitor, the Howard League for Penal Reform

Listen to Laura and Marie speak about their legal work during the pandemic, in particular their experiences of remote parole hearings.

Victims beyond reach: Evaluating the utility of online methods of qualitative research in studying hard to reach populations during the COVID-19 pandemic

Joseph Patrick McAulay, The University of Oxford

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically altered the environment in which social science researchers can carry out fieldwork. Many of the methods traditionally utilised in qualitative research such as in-depth interviews, participant observations, and focus groups, have become impossible to conduct in-person due to both legal restrictions and a desire to ensure the safety of participants. As a consequence, many academics have begun to consider what new approaches to fieldwork might be used to continue research in a way that keeps both participants and researchers safe whilst ensuring the quality of the data gathered. In response, many have turned to online methods of data collection which are uniquely placed to overcome these new challenges (Mradones-Bravo, 2020).

There is, however, an argument to be made that online methods have utility beyond their ability to abide by COVID-19 related public health requirements. Indeed, they may present a unique means to contact so-called hard to reach populations of vulnerable or stigmatised people, long thought to be resistant to participation in academic studies. In this article, I will make such an argument, by evaluating my own experiences of utilising online methods as part of my PhD research. This will specifically focus on my fieldwork, which was conducted between March and December of 2020 during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic with male victims of same-sex domestic violence. I will first outline the context of my research and note why online methods can account for some of the difficulties found in accessing hard to reach populations. Following this, I will describe the online tools used to gather data and evaluate their benefits and limitations. I will then conclude by arguing that the utility of online methods should be extended beyond the eventual end of the pandemic as they present a new way of reaching those who have long been considered beyond the scope of traditional research.

Research context and background

My doctoral research is concerned with understanding how men who encounter domestic violence negotiate abuse in their intimate relationships with other men, and what barriers they encounter when subsequently seeking help. From the moment that I began to conceptualise my research, I realised I was dealing with people that would traditionally be considered hard to reach. Though the term hard to reach is used frequently in the research literature, there is little definitive consensus over what constitutes such a population. My research relies on Ellard-Gray et al's (2015) definition, which defines hard to reach populations as those that are removed from researchers through physical or social position, are hidden and act secretively, or are vulnerable to stigmatisation and discrimination. Queer

men and victims of domestic violence are both groups that would clearly fit into these definitions. Members of the LGBTQ+ community have long experienced intense stigmatisation from wider society that has made many of them hide their sexual or gender identity in public. In addition, victims of domestic violence have long presented problems for researchers looking to recruit participants. The typically hidden and coercive nature of their abuse removes them both physically and socially from potential researchers, whilst the stigmatised nature of victimisation by a partner may make them unwilling to disclose their experiences to an unfamiliar person. Thus, even before the pandemic I was considering how I would overcome these barriers, and COVID-19 only exacerbated the problem.

The government lockdown imposed in March led to a dramatic increase in domestic violence, which was particularly pronounced within the LGBTQ+ community (Andersson, 2020 and LGBT Foundation, 2020).[2] Domestic violence victims struggled to access help and support through informal means during the first lockdown due to the intense restrictions in their movement and thus had to rely on already overwhelmed charities and shelters (ibid). The pandemic has also had an impact on the wider LGBTQ+ community itself. The closure of almost all indoor venues meant that LGBTQ+ social spaces, which are often lifelines to vulnerable queer people, had to close (Levine, 2020). In addition, the small number of charities dedicated to providing welfare and assistance to the gay and trans population, which includes domestic violence support, began to buckle under the pressure of skyrocketing demand for

service (Strudwick, 2020). These trends had a large impact on how I would eventually design my data collection plan.

Originally, I had constructed my research around a series of face-to-face interviews with gay and bisexual male victims of domestic violence. Access to this group was to be achieved through negotiation with LGBTQ+ focused service providers who would put me in contact with their clients. Research was to be conducted in three cities in the South of England where several relevant support services had been identified. I had also planned to collaborate with LGBTQ+ social spaces to advertise my research in locations at the heart of the gay communities of these cities. However, the stay-at-home orders closed the vast majority of physical gay and trans venues, removing my ability to advertise with them. In addition to this barrier, both LGBTQ+ and general domestic violence organisations no longer had the time or resources to assist a doctoral student. Faced with a tough decision of what to do next, I decided that rather than postpone my fieldwork until conditions improved, I would instead alter my research plan to make it work during the pandemic. This led me to investigate the literature on how online methods might assist me in contacting the men I wanted to interview as part of my study.

Online research and hard to reach populations

Certain aspects of online-based research are not new. Remote or asynchronous research has a long history within academia, from telephone or postal surveys to the use of diaries or journals for data collection (Novick, 2008 and Harvey, 2011). Indeed, online methods

---

[2] For a more detailed account of the impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ communities and victims of domestic violence, and for further references see: McAulay (2020), Covid-19 and L.G.B.T.+

Victims of Domestic Abuse: Suffering in Silence. https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/centres-institutes/centre-criminology/blog/2020/07/covid-19-and-lgbt-victims-domestic-abuse

can be seen to have the same benefits as all traditional remote research has, in that they allow the researcher to transcend traditional barriers often located in geographical space. The internet also gives additional benefits when it comes to the study of hard-to-reach populations. Firstly, the internet can allow for a greater degree of anonymity and autonomy than traditional research methods, as participants can complete research instruments without ever identifying themselves and can exercise more choice in their participation through flexible digital design (Rodham and Gavin, 2006). Secondly, online methods may allow researchers to gain a greater degree of access to hidden and vulnerable populations, which can be facilitated through advertising or joining the unique online communities and spaces where these groups gather to socialise in the digital world (Matthews and Cramer, 2008). With my understanding of the potential utility of online methods established, I could turn to design my new data-collection instruments.

My online research design
I decided to keep qualitative interviews at the centre of my research design, but to utilise the online video conferencing platform Skype to facilitate them. This allowed the interviews to be conducted remotely in a COVID-19 safe manner. In addition, I added an online anonymous qualitative survey into my research which would enable victims to write about their experiences of abuse confidentially. This survey would serve the dual purpose of acting as an advertisement and recruitment tool for the follow-up qualitative interviews, and as a means to gather more qualitative data itself. The survey was advertised via social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter and on gay male-specific social networking apps such as Grindr, Scruff, and Hornet.

As of the end of December 2020, 35 men had participated in the research. Of this group, 30 had participated in the online anonymous qualitative survey. Of the survey participants, 19 agreed to participate in a follow-up interview, whilst 11 declined. Of the 19 who agreed to participate, 13 responded to follow up emails confirming their interest in further participation and were subsequently interviewed. Additionally, five men reached out directly upon hearing about the research through social media and asked to be interviewed without completing the survey.

Evaluating my use of online methods
From utilising online methods of data collection for several months, I have identified three major benefits these methods had for my ability to research male sexual minority victims of domestic violence. These benefits centre around three themes: access, autonomy, and anonymity.

Access
The internet has long been recognised as a place where marginalised and stigmatised groups in society can meet, socialise, and share information in ways that are often not possible in physical environments (Barrat and Maddox, 2016). For researchers, such spaces provide the opportunity to contact and advertise their research to participants who might otherwise be completely unaware of its existence. In my case, the Coronavirus pandemic moved much of the normally vibrant LGBTQ+ social scene online to places like Facebook and Twitter. These online communities allowed me to contact potential research participants in a direct and targeted manner, increasing my pool of candidates. Furthermore, the choice to target online communities specifically may also have expanded my options for participants. Digital spaces allow members of marginalised populations

who would be unwilling to socialise in public to access group resources in an environment where they can retain their anonymity and limit their chances of being exposed to stigmatisation. For gay and bisexual men, this means even those who are not public with their sexuality can still meet other community members without disclosing their identities. Moreover, online communities are not bound in physical space, which allows individuals to connect across geographic boundaries. This is particularly significant within the LGBTQ+ community where men in rural or suburban areas are often isolated from the large city centres where most queer activity is located (Sanders, 2020). Thus, the internet provides a means to access resources and socialise with others. In the case of the online groups I was advertising in, this meant that many of the users were men who were either not publicly out or did not live in the large metropolitan city centres where LGBTQ+ social and political organisations tend to be centred. Indeed, many participants noted that they would likely have missed advertisements for the research had they been confined to physical LGBTQ+ social spaces such as nightclubs, bars, or community centres which they did not frequent or live close too. As such, many of the men who participated in my research could only have been effectively contacted through online means, men who may otherwise have been missed.

Autonomy
The benefits explored above apply largely to my use of online advertisement for the research, not for my use of online data collection tools such as the survey or Skype-based interviews. However, these methods of data collection themselves brought substantial benefits over the use of physical alternatives. Previous scholarship has emphasised that online methods provide participants

with the flexibility to shape their participation in the research in ways that would not be possible in traditional face-to-face research (Hanna, 2012).

In terms of the survey, the asynchronous nature of the research instrument allowed participants to fill it in at their own pace, and participants could submit their responses whenever they were ready. Yet perhaps the most significant choice participants had was in where and when they chose to be interviewed over Skype. Online methods allowed participants to be interviewed in a location of their choosing and easily fit the research around their other responsibilities. Within my study, almost all participants chose to be interviewed in their homes. This choice of setting had a significant impact on the interview, as the participants were discussing incredibly sensitive topics relating to abuse and victimisation. The use of Skype and the fact most of the participants were in their home environment allowed them to take breaks if necessary and have access to their creature comforts. Even something as simple as making a cup of tea could allow a chance to recuperate before continuing a discussion. This helped to reduce the formality of the interview process and increase my rapport with the men I was speaking to. Whilst arguably such benefits could equally be achieved through physically interviewing participants at home, this would raise a host of ethical and practical questions and may make vulnerable participants uncomfortable with a stranger invading their physical privacy. Video conferencing enabled men to feel more comfortable, willing to open up, and fully discuss their experiences. For hard-to-reach populations, this flexibility allows participants to maintain a sense of control and agency when discussing sensitive topics such as domestic abuse. As a consequence, they may feel more comfortable participating in what may

otherwise be an alienating or intimidating experience, which for stigmatised and marginalised groups can be a significant barrier that keeps them from engaging in research.

Anonymity

It has been noted that online data collection tools that allow participant anonymity have produced a disinhibiting impact on responses to research. Participants feel more able to reveal their true thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment (McKenna and Bargh, 2000). For populations with stigmatised and marginalised identities, the anonymity of internet-based research can allow participants to disclose their experiences in a space where they cannot be linked back to their identities in the real world (Bouchard, 2016). When designing my fieldwork, I made anonymity a key part of my research design. My online survey, for example, could be completed with no identifiable information from the participant being disclosed. Likewise, even when it came to the interview, I allowed the participants to choose how much information they disclosed regarding their identity, including their name, location, or whether they wanted to show their face during the interview itself. These measures did seem to have a disinhibiting impact on the men I interviewed, with many noting that this was the first time they had ever disclosed their experiences of abuse. Others were not open in their sexuality to their family, friends, or co-workers yet were able to discuss their relationships with other men candidly with me. Thus, the ability to choose their desired level of anonymity allowed them to express their thoughts and experiences in a place free of judgment or the potential for stigma. This appeared to make them more confident and more willing to be involved in the research in the first place. In this way, the propensity for online research to allow participants' anonymity can be a

great boon for researchers examining the experiences of marginalised or vulnerable groups. These tools allow participants to disclose their experiences with the confidence that there is limited risk of their identities being disclosed or stigmatised.

Limitations

Despite the benefits I have identified, it is also important to consider the limitations of these tools. Indeed, whilst eliminating some barriers, online methods inevitably create new ones. First and foremost, utilising these methods is inherently limited in that they assume that all potential participants will have easy access to a reliable and safe internet connection. This is not something that can be taken for granted. Whilst internet usage has risen significantly in the past decade, even in affluent countries such as the United Kingdom it is by no means universal. Indeed, it is often the most disadvantaged and marginalised communities that have the most difficulty accessing these technologies (Serafino, 2019). Moreover, using digital methods creates a whole host of ethical issues that should be considered, such as the potential risks of data breaches (Seymour, 2001). In addition, when specifically researching vulnerable and marginalised groups, online methods carry further risk. For example, the fact that many participants choose to complete research instruments, such as surveys, or participate in online interviews in their homes, increases the risk that other household members may interrupt or become aware of their involvement in the research. This raises issues of confidentiality, particularly when the research concerns issues such as violent victimisation or involves sexual minorities who may not be out to family members, partners, or housemates. Researchers must therefore take steps to stress to participants the potential risks of involving themselves in the

research, and to take precautions when completing research instruments at home.

Conclusion: The promises and pitfalls of online methods in a post-COVID-19 world

Though my reasons for utilising online methods were, initially at least, largely a product of the immediate practical concerns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, I have realised that the benefits extend beyond simple mitigation in response to a public health crisis. Indeed, the lessons learned from using online methods during this period can inspire us to re-think how we approach hard to reach populations. Moving forward we should be willing to utilise these methods whenever we are designing research that we know will involve remote, vulnerable, or hidden groups. The digital space provides us with the possibility of creating opened ended, asynchronous, responsive, and anonymous research instruments. It should also push us to consider how we can give hard to reach populations the flexibility to participate in research with the confidence that their anonymity and autonomy will not only be respected, but actively empowered. It is thus imperative to find a means to integrate these methods into the wider lexicon of research methodology. This should be done in the hope that there will come a time when these methods are not just used out of a sense of necessity, but simply because they are the best placed to help us understand the experiences of populations once thought out of reach.

References
Andersson, J. (2020). 'LGBT domestic abuse victims staying with perpetrators in lockdown because they can't secure refuge space, charity warns', *I News.* https://inews.co.uk/news/lgbt-victims-perpetrators-refuge-space-domestic-violence-423847

Barratt, M. J., and Maddox, A. (2016). 'Active engagement with stigmatised communities through digital ethnography', *Qualitative Research*, *16*(6), 701–719. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794116648766

Bouchard, K. L. (2016). 'Anonymity as a Double-Edge Sword: Reflecting on the Implications of Online Qualitative Research in Studying Sensitive Topics', *The Qualitative Report*, *21*(1), 11.

Ellard-Gray, A., Jeffrey, N. K., Choubak, M., & Crann, S. E. (2015). 'Finding the Hidden Participant: Solutions for Recruiting Hidden, Hard-to-Reach, and Vulnerable Populations', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *14*(5). https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406915621420

Hanna, P. (2012) 'Using internet technologies (such as Skype) as a research medium: a research note', Qualitative Research, 12(2), pp. 239–242. doi:10.1177/1468794111426607

Harvey, L (2011). 'Intimate reflections: private diaries in qualitative research', *Qualitative Research 11(6):* 664-682. doi:10.1177/1468794111415959

Levine, N. (2020). 'The Future of the UK's Queer Clubs Is More Precarious Than Ever', *Vice News*, https://www.vice.com/en/article/3a8m99/lgbt-clubs-coronavirus-closure-uk

LGBT Foundation (2020), Hidden figures: The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on LGBT communities in the UK, https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/lgbt-website-media/Files/7a01b983-b54b-4dd3-84b2-0f2ecd72be52/Hidden%2520Figures-%2520The%2520Impact%2520of%2520the%2520Covid-

19%2520Pandemic%2520on%2520LGBT%2520Communities.pdf

Matthews, J., and Cramer, E. P. (2008). 'Using Technology to Enhance Qualitative Research with Hidden Populations', *The Qualitative Report*, *Volume 13*, 301–315.

McAulay (2020), Covid-19 and L.G.B.T.+ Victims of Domestic Abuse: Suffering in Silence. https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/centres-institutes/centre-criminology/blog/2020/07/covid-19-and-lgbt-victims-domestic-abuse

McKenna, K. Y. A. and Bargh, J. A. (2000) 'Plan 9 From Cyberspace: The Implications of the Internet for Personality and Social Psychology', *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 4(1),* pp. 57–75. DOI: 10.1207/S15327957PSPR0401_6.

Mradones-Bravo, D. (2020). 'Doing e-fieldwork in Criminology: The pros and cons of doing online interviews', *British Society of Criminology: Postgraduate Blog*. https://bscpostgrads.wordpress.com/2020/07/23/doing-e-fieldwork-in-criminology-the-pros-and-cons-of-doing-online-interviews/

Novick, G., 2008. 'Is there a bias against telephone interviews in qualitative research?', *Research in Nursing & Health 31*, 391–398. https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.20259

Rodham, K. and Gavin, J. (2006) 'The Ethics of Using the Internet to Collect Qualitative Research Data', *Research Ethics*, 2(3), pp. 92–97. DOI: 10.1177/174701610600200303.

Sanders, S. (2020). 'Sexual orientation, UK: 2018', *Office for National Statistics.* https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2018

Serafino, P. (2019). 'Exploring the UK's digital divide', *Office for National Statistics.* *https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/articles/exploringtheuksdigitaldivide/2019-03-04*

Seymour, W. S. (2001) 'In the flesh or online? Exploring qualitative research methodologies', *Qualitative Research, 1(2),* pp. 147–168. DOI: 10.1177/146879410100100203.
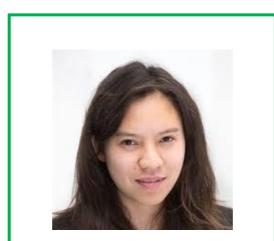
Strudwick, P. (2020). 'Under Lockdown, Parents Are Discovering Their Children Are LGBT And Dumping Them on The Street', *Buzzfeed News,* https://www.buzzfeed.com/patrickstrudwick/coronavirus-lockdown-lgbt-domestic-abuse-teens

About the Author
Joseph Patrick McAulay is a PhD student at the University of Oxford's Centre for Criminology. His project examines the help-seeking behaviours of gay and bisexual men fleeing domestically abusive intimate relationships. He is currently funded by an Economic and Social Research Council 1+3 Studentship. Joseph's research interests include domestic violence, victimology, digital victimisation, and political violence.

COVID-19 and the criminal justice system: Audio contribution

Insa Koch
Associate Professor of Law and Anthropology, the London School of Economics

Listen to Insa speak about her ethnographic research on 'county lines' drug trafficking and the limits of modern slavery legislation.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the abrupt end of 'liquid modernity'

Arta Jalili-Idrissi

The unprecedented scale of the global pandemic has unleashed unparalleled state intervention and new controls over our lives. Could this be an opportunity for a societal shift into a new era of post-consumerism that puts the break on self-destructive consumer societies? Is this another turning point in history, presenting the possibility of radical social change? Such questions help us to imagine the future, while finding meaning in the unconventional arrangements where the world is turned upside down. As defined by Antonio Gramsci (1999: 556) at the beginning of the twentieth century, an interregnum is a period where 'the old is dying and the new cannot be born'. Thus, academics and social activists should use this period to reflect upon the 'old ways' of social control while envisioning future strategies for dealing with these issues. This article provides a theoretical account of the notion of 'liquid modernity' - in which social control mechanisms have been embedded under neoliberalism - and asks whether the COVID-19 pandemic offers an opportunity for a new conceptual framework for the mechanisms of social control to emerge, which unlike its predecessor should be named 'firm modernity'.

'Liquid modernity'
Coined by Zygmunt Bauman, the notion of 'liquid modernity' captured the rapidly changing modern world where 'change is *the only* permanence, and uncertainty *the only* certainty' (Bauman, 2020: viii, original emphasis). Bauman saw modernity as 'liquid' due to its inability to 'maintain its shape for long' (Bauman, 2011: 11); in 'liquid modernity', society is

characterised by a carpe diem approach and short-term gains, as well as increasingly fragmented social bonds. 'Liquid modernity' poses a constant requirement of 'becoming' as 'to be modern' means 'an infinity of improvement, with no "final state" in sight and none desired' (Bauman, 2020: viii-ix). While at a micro level, dealing with the uncertainties of life generates stress and anxiety, at the macro level this has led to the progressive separation of power. According to Bauman (2020) politics have become divorced from power; power has broken away from political control. He references, in particular, the unrestrained power of the global market economy that wields significant influence over national policies and practices.

The current political economy, or 'neoliberalism', has provided for state actors an operating framework or 'ideological software' (Peck and Tickell, 2002) through which to promote certain interests such as global market economy, free trade, capital movement and thus a business-friendly environment. By doing so, countries have become exposed and vulnerable to global market forces. For several decades now, the central role given to markets and governments have been left with a secondary role under which supporting capital takes precedence over supporting their own citizens (Harvey, 2018). This means a state's political and economic capacity has been compromised by the global market forces

that have evolved to support consumer culture (see Crouch, 2011; Atkinson et al., 2017).

Some current developments in the UK (for example, Brexit) might seemingly address this problem by using the rhetoric of 'taking back control'. However, the issue of globalised markets and the global reach of problems remain. Issues such as climate change and the global pandemic (as well as their causes and consequences) go beyond the nation state's boundaries; promised state sovereignty is inadequate to address these global challenges. Only by applying collective thinking and lines of communication that extend beyond the boundaries of the state, will benefits be felt at local, national, and international levels. The interconnected nature of the problems and solutions require a comprehensive and collaborative approach. Placed in this context, the pandemic provides an opportunity to restructure penal policy along more progressive lines, having been tethered to the ethos of liquid modernity outlined below.

Penal policy: 'Marketisation' and 'liquid modernity' in action
Penal policy has not been immune to these developments; 'marketisation' and the characteristics of 'liquid modernity' have influenced the way that punishment is delivered. In the early 1990's, Feeley and Simon (1992) conceptualised the move from 'old' to 'new penology', entailing a shift away from concerns of 'punishing individuals to managing aggregates of dangerous groups' (Feeley and Simon, 1992, p.449). According to Feeley and Simon, this shift contributed to the rise in incarceration while introducing new discourses such as

probability and risk, as well as establishing techniques that allowed 'to identify, classify, and manage groupings sorted by dangerousness' (Feeley and Simon, 1992, p.452). This ethos placed penal policy under the rules of a business model and the language of cost savings, effectiveness, and efficiency. In effect, the previous therapeutic discourses, which developed under the post-war era were replaced with managerialism and surveillance.

The rationale at the time was that the introduction of managerialism and private sector competition would result in significant cost savings for the government and public sector. Consequently, under this approach not only were distinct sets of functions such as ancillary services contracted out, but privately run prisons were established. For instance, in 1992 the Wolds prison in Yorkshire became the first privately run prison in the UK. Hence, crime control became more and more embedded within the business model where conveniently 'crime seems to be in endless supply' (Christie, 2000: 13). This perfect business model is further bolstered by the state who serves as the ultimate guarantor that will bail out the private undertakers when the business fails to be profitable. A few large, global companies emerged to dominate the field such as G4S, Serco, and Sodexo. These companies reaped the benefits of the transfer of wealth from public to private sector, maximising profitability out of human distress.

Additionally, the introduction of a new national policy in England and Wales of Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) in 1995 established a system to reward people for abiding by the prison's rules.[3]

---

[3] This, of course, was not an entirely new idea but similar to the regimes introduced in the nineteenth century when it was deemed that by incorporating a reward system 'positive and

socially acceptable characteristics such as diligence and obedience' could be promoted (Taylor, 1998, p.147).

The appeal to self-interest cleverly binds prisoner desires to institutional ambitions (Crewe, 2009) and this operationalises the 'soft power' while keeping at bay the use of 'hard' and directly coercive power (Crewe, 2011). In 2019 the IEP scheme was replaced by the Incentives Policy Framework, but the system was not fundamentally changed and the focus on individual responsibility was still at the heart of the formal, transactional 'incentives' system. Prisoners are viewed as rational actors who make choices and decisions based on the system of incentives or costs and benefits, which ultimately should determine their behaviour. A good prisoner is mobile and in progression (Mincke and Lemonne, 2014). The ideal of highly mobile prisoners is linked to the 'mobilitarian ideology' within the society and the liquid state of modernity, which is based on a constant requirement of 'becoming' (see Mincke, 2016). Consequently, a prison sentence is what a prisoner makes out of it; it is an individual journey. This logic ensures that prisoners are held responsible for their rehabilitation and engagement with provided activities.

The prison estate has successfully shifted the responsibility for achieving change and the rehabilitative ideal to the individual. Such an approach is in line with 'a downward spiral of neoliberal governance' where the responsibility has been 'increasingly shifted from the state to the individual' (Cradock, 2007: 168). Struggles and failures in life are attributed to personal deficits rather than to socioeconomic (structural) conditions such as poverty, social and economic marginalisation, and consumerism. Therefore, the prison administration is more concerned about offering courses and activities to support prisoner participation than making a real difference. The managerial climate and the shrinking public budget for prison administration means there is increasing pressure to achieve more with less resources. However, on a more sombre note, as found by Crewe (2020:17) there might be more 'help' available in confinement than outside as for some the prison environment is 'more "real" or "normal" than life outside' (Crewe, 2020).

The COVID-19 shock to the system

William James, an American philosopher and psychologist in the nineteenth century suggested that we learn the most about something when we view it under a microscope, or 'in its most exaggerated form' (James, 2009: 33). The global pandemic certainly delivered that. Apart from placing the new COVID-19 virus in a very literal sense under the microscope, this outbreak also caused abrupt disruptions to social and economic life.

The spread of a global pandemic has fundamentally challenged the notion of 'liquid modernity'. Unparalleled state intervention and control over social and economic life via the UK-wide furlough scheme, the imposed international, national, and local restrictions on movement and limits on social interaction have delivered a real shock to the system. Recovery and a return to 'normal' appear challenging (and perhaps less desirable as the future lies in the new ways of thinking, acting, and behaving).

Of course, neoliberalism or 'liquid modernity' has proved resilient so far; for example, the financial crisis of 2008 did not result in a deep restructuring of global markets or a reduction in economic inequality. However, the global pandemic has had a more profound impact that cannot be reduced to the economic loss or crisis alone. Indeed, it has caused fear, sadness, loss, and grief to many, claiming over two million lives worldwide at the time of writing. This global crisis has shattered lives, dreams,

and relationships. Nevertheless, even if 2020 marked the beginning of one of the dark periods of human history, it also offered an opportunity to rethink how we live. It is precisely this profound atomisation and isolation of the pandemic, against a backdrop of unity, goodwill, and selflessness (characteristics which have been abandoned in the neoliberal era which focusses on the very opposite - competitiveness, self-interest, and the individualisation of responsibility) that allows us to reimagine a better future and give hope.

2020 can be seen as a turning point or an opportunity to reinvent a life that is more meaningful. For too long people have been guided by the market principles that have embraced individual freedoms and consumerism. Seemingly all human actions have been brought into the domain of the market (Harvey, 2007), which aims to feed people's ever-growing needs and desires. Hence, the creation of new wants and desires has been an integral part of the consumer-driven society where consumption is an activity of perpetual motion (Baudrillard, 1998) as desires are fluid and ever evolving. Bauman (2001: 12-13) refers to this notion as the emancipation of consumption that entails 'the demise of "norms" and the new plasticity of "needs", setting consumption free from functional bonds and absolving it from the need to justify itself by reference to anything but its own pleasurability'. The global pandemic has not only considerably reduced consumption and mobility but also led to the acknowledgement and appreciation of essential workers. While this certainly has come at the cost of a higher exposure to the virus, for many essential workers who are in so called 'low prestige' positions (for example, cleaners, refuse collectors and delivery

drivers) the value and importance of their work has been recognised.

Thus, the outbreak of COVID-19 has led to significant shifts in society. These currently existing and potential future changes will also be reflected within penal policy and the prison estate because it cannot be divorced from the wider context of the state, ideology, and structural conditions. Ultimately, what happens inside the prison estate reflects the society at large.

What next: 'Firm modernity'?
Ironically, as pointed out by one of the key supporters of the neoliberal doctrine, Milton Friedman (2002: xiv), 'only a crisis — actual or perceived — produces real change'. We should therefore expect a new era to shortly emerge. But what will this epoch look like? Ostensibly, the trajectory of change can be projected based on the current state of affairs. The global pandemic initiated significant state intervention, and it would be reasonable to expect a continuation of this trend. Similar characteristics that Bauman (1989) attributed to 'solid modernity' such as political governance driven by reason and science as well as some authoritarian tendencies, might become permanent features of national politics. However, global market exposure and interdependence has created a very different global context that will maintain the fluid and unpredictable state of the 'liquid modernity'. Therefore, the suggested 'firm modernity' is emerging as a combination of both solid and liquid modernity, where centralised decision making at the national level is engulfed by global politics that are volatile and unpredictable.

A greater level of centralisation of power might be needed as democracies proved to be slower and more inefficient in response to crisis situations than the authoritarian regimes. Many

governments in the West were reluctant to impose drastic measures that could interfere with fundamental rights and freedoms. This revealed some of the vulnerabilities associated with democracies where dispersed power results in a slow and at times inadequate response to crisis. Additionally, as people in a democratic society value highly their liberties and freedoms, any restrictions or limitations imposed by the government can be viewed with suspicion and mistrust. Harari (2019) has already pointed out these potential vulnerabilities of democracies, just as research from the mid-70s was keen to highlight 'the crisis of democracy' (see Crozier et al., 1975). These 'issues' with democracy prove to be costly especially when dealing with situations that require immediate and prompt action.

In terms of penality, the outbreak of the COVID-19 might have a twofold effect. On the one hand, severe restrictions and immobility in the general population has translated into more stringent constraints within the prison estate. The isolation in prison estate is enhanced by internal immobility and a lack of exposure to the outside world and visitors, which effectively means that the prison estate is being cut off. These developments are likely to embrace what Wacquant (2001) referred to as 'warehouse prisons', where incapacitation becomes the key concern with little or no provision for rehabilitation and community reintegration. The future trends towards technology in prisons are also likely to contribute towards a more mechanised and impersonal containment of prisoners.

However, on the other hand, the lockdown restrictions might contribute towards greater leniency in punishment that could reverse the penal excesses generated by penal populism. The global pandemic ensured that many people

experienced isolation and confinement to home at first-hand. Ultimately, this could reduce calls for harsher punishments and intrusive regulations due to a more profound and personal understanding of harms inflicted by confinement. This more hopeful trajectory entails a re-emergence of the 'solidarity project' (Garland, 1996) that extends full and active citizenship to all subjects, including people who commit crimes.

By placing both potential trajectories together, the future years might reduce the number of people sentenced to imprisonment. But for those who will find themselves entangled within the prison estate, the pains of imprisonment could be harder to bear.

References

Atkinson, R., Parker, S. & Burrows, R. (2017) 'Elite Formation, Power and Space in Contemporary London', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 34(5-6), pp. 179-200.

Baudrillard, J. (1998) The consumer society: Myths and structures. London: Sage.

Bauman, Z. (1989) *Modernity and the Holocaust.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2001) 'Consuming Life', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 1(1), pp. 9–29.

Bauman, Z. (2011) *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*. 1st edn. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2020) *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Christie, N. (2000) *Crime Control as Industry Towards Gulags Western Style*. 3rd edn. London: Routledge.

Cradock, G. (2007) 'The Responsibility Dance: Creating Neoliberal Children', *Childhood*, 14(2), pp. 153-172.

Crewe, B. (2009) *The Prisoner Society Power, Adaptation and Social Life in an*

English Prison. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crewe, B. (2011) 'Soft Power in Prison: Implications for Staff–prisoner Relationships, Liberty and Legitimacy', *European Journal of Criminology*, 8(6), pp. 455–468.

Crewe, B. (2020) 'The Depth of Imprisonment', *Punishment & Society*. Online first. Available at doi: 10.1177/1462474520952153.

Crouch, C. (2011) *Strange Non-death of Neo-liberalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Crozier, M., Huntington, S. P. & Watanuki, J. (1975) *The Crisis of Democracy*. New York: New York University Press.

Feeley, M. M. & Simon, J. (1992) 'The New Penology: Notes on the Emerging Strategy of Corrections and its Implications', *Criminology*, 4(30), pp. 449–474.

Friedman, M. with Friedman, R. D. (2002) *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Garland, D. (1996) 'The Limits of the Sovereign State: Strategies of Crime Control in Contemporary Society', British Journal of Criminology, 36(4), PP. 445–471.

Gramsci, A. (1999) *Selections from the prison notebooks.* Translated by Hoare, Q. and Smith, G. N. London: ElecBook.

Harari, Y. N. (2019) *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*. London: Vintage.

Harvey, D. (2007) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, D. (2018) 'Contradictions of Neo-liberalism ', in Democracy at Work. Available at: https://www.democracyatwork.info/acc (Accessed: 07/01/ 2021).

James, W. (2009) The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature. Available at: https://csrs.nd.edu/assets/59930/williams_1902.pdf (Accessed: 27 December 2020).

Menon, A. & Wager, A. (2020) 'Taking Back Control: Sovereignty as Strategy in Brexit Politics', *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 8(2), pp. 279-284.

Mincke, C. (2016) 'From Mobility to its Ideology: When Mobility Becomes an Imperative', in Endres, M., Manderscheid, K. and Mincke, C. (eds.) *The Mobilities Paradigm Discourses and Ideologies*. London: Routledge, pp. 11-33.

Mincke, C. & Lemonne, A. (2014) 'Prison and (Im)mobility. What about Foucault?', *Mobilities*, 9(4), pp. 528-549.

Peck, J. & Tickell, A. T. (2002) 'Neoliberalizing Space', *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*, 34(3), pp. 380-404.

Taylor, D. (1998) *Crime, policing and punishment in England, 1750-1914*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Wacquant, L. (2001) 'Deadly Symbiosis: When Ghetto and Prison Meet and Mesh', Punishment & Society, 3(1), pp. 95–133.

About the author:
Dr Arta Jalili-Idrissi is a Lecturer at Staffordshire University, UK. Her current specialisation and interests lie within punishment and society.

Crisis or *Kairos*?

Harry Annison

This themed double issue has brought together contributions, both written and audio, stimulated by an invitation to reflect on the experiences of 2020, and the lessons that might be learned from it. I cannot hope here simply to set out a list of required actions that derive from the preceding contributions, nor – for reasons I explain more fully below – would I want to do so. This themed issue has been about gathering perspectives, raising questions; operating, in its own small way, as a contributory thread within political discourse and debate (Loader and Sparks, 2020). In this closing piece, I briefly suggest ways in which we might begin to structure our thinking about how we move forwards, and the kind of questions that this might entail.

An important question raised by many of the contributions in different ways is, "who do we want to listen to?" Put another way, "Whose perspective counts?" A particularly important consideration may be "Who is not being considered?" Where are the 'blind spots', be that of public debate, politicians, policy makers or researchers? More critically, we may wish to ask if particular groups, individuals, or perspectives are being actively side-lined or silenced (Cohen, 2001).

One may then wish to ask, "What is the problem, what is the issue?" This is both in the sense of asking what a specific policy issue or concern is. But also, more broadly, in the sense of examining how a particular issue connects with wider conceptions of crime, justice, morality, order and security (Carlen, 2018: 3). In the context of COVID-19, it may be important to question what role the pandemic has actually played. In some

ways, it may have acted as an accelerant of issues; or even in some situations, of positive trends. It may have laid bare previously existing issues which had remained under examined. Or it may even be obscuring from view, or diverting our attention, from some other important issues. Many of the contributions to this themed double issue have provided important insights on these points.

Building from this, one is prompted to ask, "what needs to happen?" Or perhaps put more appropriately, what do the range of relevant stakeholders as regards a specific issue believe needs to be done? Increasingly, there are sightings of good practice where researchers, policymakers and relevant organisations appreciate their role in ensuring that the voices and views of people with (what is sometimes termed) 'expertise by experience' can be heard. Particular groups or communities of course do not speak with one voice but contain a multitude of perspectives.

One also needs to ask, "How will change happen?" I have been struck that there has been a great deal of public debate about the impact of 2020 and the possible ramifications of the pandemic; by contrast there seems currently to be far less consideration of the mechanisms by which desired change might come about. This applies with equal force to criminal justice. A growing penological literature has examined the mechanisms influencing penal trends and the dynamics underpinning penal policy reform.[4] While certainly no silver bullet, this literature is well-placed to provide wise counsel to those looking for routes by which positive penal change might be achieved.

---

[4] I identify and discuss much of this literature in Annison (2018) and Annison (2021).

Ultimately, these questions are all – in different ways – political. They are about the type of world, the type of country, the kind of community, we want to live in (see Gallo, 2018). More specifically in the context of this themed issue, these are political questions about what safety means to us, and how we want to achieve this. What role do we want the state to play? What form do we think it is appropriate for public institutions which facilitate, or promote, safety and security, to take? To what extent should these be formal criminal justice organisations? How should such organisations be structured and what should be their size and scale?

Peter Young (1992) wrote some time ago of the importance of utopias in criminological thinking. He recognised that, by definition, utopias can never be fully realised: their role is rather to act as an 'activating presence', to set things in motion (1992: 428). Readers who have sought to contribute to achieving positive change in criminal justice will also be well aware of the challenges and frustrations such activity can entail: Weber's classic conception of political activity as the 'slow boring of hard boards' may not go far enough for some. Ultimately, however, as Carlen has recently stated, 'a just state of affairs in the organisation of human affairs is…a good worth struggling for' (Carlen, 2020: 3).

References
Annison (2018) 'Politics and Penal Change' *Howard Journal of Crime and Justice* 57(3) 302-320

--- (2020) 'The Role of Storylines in Penal Policy Change' *Punishment & Society* Online First
https://doi.org/10.1177%2F14624745219895 33

Carlen, P (2018) 'Alternative Criminologies: An introduction' in Carlen and Ayres França (eds) *Alternative Criminologies* Abingdon: Routledge

--- (2020) 'Imagine, Experiment, Debate' in Carlen and França (eds) *Justice Alternatives* Abingdon: Routledge
Cohen, S (2001) *States of Denial* Cambridge: Polity Press

Commission on English Prisons Today (2009) 'Do Better, Do Less' London: Howard League for Penal Reform

Gallo (2018) 'Political Ideologies and Penality' *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia: Criminology and Criminal Justice*

Loader, I and Sparks, R (2020) 'Democratic Experimentalism and the Futures of Crime Control: Resources of hope for demotic times' in Carlen and Ayres França (eds) *Justice Alternatives* Abingdon: Routledge

Howard League for **Penal Reform**

Become a Howard League Fellow

A fellowship for academics and magistrates

Throughout the Howard League's 150-year history we have been committed to informed debate and have been highly successful in achieving real and lasting change in the penal system. A guiding principle of our work has been to develop new ideas and to understand the consequences of changes and innovations. In this time of flux and uncertainty both in communities and the penal system, it has never been more important to generate discussion, ideas, and commitment to a humane and effective penal system.

Howard League fellows will be invited to attend special events that will offer opportunities to meet informally with senior politicians and academics as well as attend seminars and events to contribute to current research streams and emerging, innovative ideas.

One of our inaugural fellows is Barry Godfrey who is both Professor of Social Justice at the University of Liverpool and a magistrate. He became a fellow 'in the hope that my research can contribute to the work of the Howard League, and do something useful. My aim is to analyse historical data and longitudinal research to show policymakers that incarceration has long been socially and financially unaffordable; inefficient as a system; and incapable of bringing about reform and rehabilitation.'

How to become a fellow

Academics and magistrates may apply themselves or be nominated to become a fellow. There is no fixed cost but a minimum donation of £10 a month is suggested. The expectation is that fellows will have supported penal reform and social justice. The criteria for elevation to a Howard League fellow are deliberately broad in order to promote individual initiatives and creative work that embeds justice in the community.

Nominations should be no more than 200 words long and emailed to Anita Dockley, the Howard League's research director at anita.dockley@howardleague.org. The nomination should also include the name, contact details (address and email) and the nominee's institution/bench. A selection panel will assess all nominations.

Nominations are assessed on a quarterly basis.

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.