

British Society of Criminology Newsletter

Number 91, Summer 2023

ISSN 1759-8354



Photo: Collage of Closing Ceremony booklet covers produced by Inside Out students, 2016-20
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Inside

Prison University Partnerships

Contributions from an impressive and international range of authors, including scholars, academics, practitioners, NGOs, undergraduate students, PhD candidates, and people with lived experience.

Plus, various other items from the BSC and academic publishers.

Editor

This issue was compiled by Caroline Chatwin.

Editorial support by Marian Duggan.

British Society of Criminology

PO Box 501, The Nexus Building, Broadway, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 9BL

Email: info@britsoccrim.org
Web: www.britsoccrim.org
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Editorial

Welcome to the Summer 2023 edition of the BSC Newsletter. As I'm sure many of you are aware, the link between educational opportunity for people who are imprisoned and a reduction in reoffending is now well-established (Ellison et al., 2017; Education Committee, 2022; Rand 2013). In part this is because education leads to qualifications and increases the likelihood of finding employment on release from prison, another well-known protective factor against ongoing engagement in criminal activity (HMPPS, 2018). In their realist review of existing research on the impact prison education can have, Szifris et al., (2018) highlight more tangible benefits such as viewing an educational opportunity as a 'hook' for further change and personal development or providing a 'safe space' within which less confident learners can explore their potential.

Much of the existing evidence base on the impact that provision of educational opportunity can have on offending rates comes from the US. In this context, the 'transformative potential' (Pompa, 2013) of prison education is widely recognised, particularly at the higher level. This has resulted in a growing effort on the part of US Colleges to engage with prisons and extend learning opportunities to their populations, often via 'prison-to college pipeline' programmes. In the UK meanwhile, despite an early interest in mutual learning between academics and people who are imprisoned (Armstrong & Ludlow, 2016), educational opportunities tend to have been more commonly provided at the basic level in line with the view that these are the skills that will provide the greatest benefit to all (Coates, 2016).

In contrast, the opportunities for people in prison to engage in higher level learning opportunities were rare. For example, the Open University has been supporting people in prison to study for degrees via distance learning since the 1970s and Goldsmiths College has engaged learners with offending backgrounds in university level courses since 2004 via their ground-breaking 'Open Book' programme. In 2015, however, there was somewhat of a renaissance of interest in educational partnerships between prisons and Universities throughout the UK, resulting in a rapid increase in programmes offering in person, mutual learning opportunities for both university and prison students, many under the umbrella of networks such as 'Learning Together' and 'Inside-Out'.

As part of this resurgence of interest, we established one such programme under the encouragement of the late Professor Roger Matthews, as a partnership between the University of Kent and HMP Swaleside. At the outset, we aimed to offer an opportunity for university and prison students to come together as part of the International Inside-Out network, to exchange perspectives on matters of criminological interest. Over time the partnership with HMP Swaleside expanded to encompass a greater range of opportunities, sparking a personal and ongoing interest on my own part in the area of prisons and education. Sadly, our partnership and many others operating within the UK between 2015 and 2020 have been 'paused' for several years now, impacted first by the tragic events at Fishmonger's Hall in 2019 and then the devastating effects of the global pandemic on the prison estate and its ability to offer programmes and opportunities of any kind.

As the world has slowly opened up over the past couple of years for many of us, the opportunities for people who are imprisoned, in many cases, have remained limited (PET, 2022). But as I attended conferences last summer and began to re-engage with my networks, I was inspired by reports of those who had managed to continue offering some sort of educational opportunity within prisons during these adversities, or who were developing new initiatives in response to them. For this summer edition of the BSC Newsletter I therefore invited people to submit contributions celebrating and promoting their new and/or ongoing partnerships with prisons in the provision of educational opportunity. I wanted to highlight the rich and diverse nature of this work, and to inspire others (including myself) to rise to the challenge and continue to offer these kinds of opportunities in whatever way we can.

Many of the submissions provide details of a particular project or partnership, but I also want to draw attention to the collaborative nature of this work. These initiatives are, by definition, collaborations between individual academics and prison staff who encourage their institutions to work in partnership. Equally, many of the contributions to this edition of the newsletter are writing collaborations: between groups of academics; between academics and their university and/or prison students; and by academics and people working in prisons or other parts of the criminal justice system. As several of the contributions have been authored by a sizeable number of people, I have referred to them below by their lead author, but full details of authors and collaborators are provided in each piece. Lead authors have also provided their email addresses and invite readers to get in touch if they want to find out more.

In the first contribution a team of staff and students from the University of Greenwich, led by Dr Schreeche-Powell, share their reflections and demonstrate the rich potential for university students to engage in transformative learning that can be provided by even a one-off visit to prison. Dr Josephine Metcalf introduces a new initiative in which the University of Hull have provided educational material via HMP Hull's pioneering in-cell TV channel. Our next two contributions celebrate innovative and rapidly developing partnerships in Ireland. First Dr Joe Garrihy (representing an extensive collaboration between academics at Maynooth University, prison and probation staff, and NGOs) provides a taster of some of the opportunities provided by this partnership including a 'story exchange', a programme of guest lectures, and lobbying efforts to implement a fair admissions policy for higher education throughout Ireland. Second, Dr Gillian McNaull describes the TOGETHER collaboration, uniting partnerships headed by academics at University College Cork and Queen's University Belfast to engage students in participatory action research and produce a bespoke prison-university partnership curriculum for Ireland.

Dr Fairleigh Gilmour, writing from Aotearoa (New Zealand), draws out some of the context specific barriers to developing initiatives in this setting, and provides a valuable perspective by co-authoring with a representative from Otago Department of Corrections. Our final two pieces provide a third perspective by foregrounding the experiences of prison students who have engaged in such partnerships. Michael Akinfenwa outlines the professional and personal journey he has embarked on since completing an Inside-Out programme. Finally, Dr Rosemary Broad promotes an exciting forthcoming book emerging from a partnership between the University of Manchester and several local prisons and combining the lived experience of a former prison student with academic expert commentary on a range of issues.

I hope you all enjoy reading them as much as I did!

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Themed articles

Taking Greenwich University students to visit HMP Wandsworth

A collaborative, reflective piece written with the students.

Dr Ed Schreeche-Powell*, Dr Jack Tomlin, Brittanie Noon, Emma Hole, Cecilie Wicklund, Oana-Alexandra Sauca, Jade Hudson, Valeria Rossi and Asya Mitisheva. *University of Greenwich*

Recently, a team of lecturers and students from a Forensic Mental Health module at the University of Greenwich visited HMP Wandsworth where we experienced first-hand the safer custody and mental health provision in this busy remand prison. This proved to be a powerful experience for those in attendance. In what follows below, we have come together to reflect on the experience and how it influences our perspectives across the discipline of criminology.

Relational Safety and the Importance of Reflective Practice: Dr Jack Tomlin

When I started this piece, I wrote: “It is easy to become inured to the peculiar spaces that are prisons and secure settings”. I felt that although these places are difficult to work and live in, you grow used to them quickly: their walls, locks, noises, barbed wire, cameras, security guards. As I reflected further, I realised this was wrong. I didn’t grow used to prisons and secure settings quickly and easily. It wasn’t a case of simply needing to grow comfortable within these spaces to work on my PhD research.

I took steps to overcome anxieties I had about being in confined places where people are deprived of their liberty. In my efforts to fit in and feel comfortable in these settings, I downplayed the emotional strain that accompanied many of my early visits to secure hospitals. I started coping in strange ways, even leaning into what I thought would be a tough persona, eschewing what is my more naturally inquisitive side in favour of one portraying knowledge, confidence, and control. These coping mechanisms belied the emotional labour, constructing a kind of straw figure to absorb concerns around safety, fitting in, risk, competency.

So, when my colleague, Ed, raised the prospect of taking 15 Forensic Mental Health students to HMP Wandsworth, I thought, “Oh great idea! This will be a fantastic visit.” I naturally considered security and safety for our students. I thought about what might happen during a critical incident, how we’d move around, or if they’d request personal alarms. But this was *procedural* and *physical* security. Once again—consciously or not—I neglected to consider adequately *relational* security: the interpersonal and emotional components of safety. It was not until we sat outside a pub immediately after the visit, taking in a bright Spring sun, that I absorbed that our students just had the same emotionally and intellectually vivid experience I once had.

Penal theorist Gresham Sykes (1958, p63) famously articulated that “each man brings to the custodial institution his own needs and his background and each man takes away from the prison his own interpretation of life within the walls”. Accordingly, we encouraged our students to reflect further on their experiences.

‘Ex-Prisoner, Prison Re-entry’: Dr Ed Schreeche-Powell

There is literature that discusses *prisoner* re-entry to society; however, this was an opportunity for *prison* re-entry. The prison visit was one that saw me return to what I sometimes view as a past life, and a past identity. It marked the first time that I had returned to a prison since I was released over 3 ½ years ago. I had spent over 20% of my life in prison at the time of my release – all served as one sentence. During that time, I had crafted a new identity, first as a student but now as an academic with a doctorate lecturing at university in Criminology and Psychology.

The self is not a passive, rigid concept and as such is in a constant flux of shaping through interaction and interpretations of our social environment, the influence of other people and institutions. As individuals we ‘act to promote the self, developing a narrative of who we are, who we have been and who we plan to become’ (Nicolson, 2018, p31). The mechanism of reflexivity helps us to work out our position in a range of contexts, both in the short- and long-term. As an active and responsive social agent, I am continuing to make sense of my social world and myself longitudinally, which involves processing and reflecting upon information about my life and its contexts, managing ‘the story that I tell myself of who I am and project it to those around me’ (Nicolson, 2018, p31).

Exposure to the mechanisms of the penal establishment, especially for those on long sentences, can spoil positive former identities based around legitimate roles. Offenders face the prospect of losing the roles that ‘locate themselves within the social world’ (Jewkes 2005, p 369) and can be left with simply the identity of prisoner (Hughes, 2009). Prison education allowed me to develop skills and qualities which “may help to reduce the tarnish of an identity blemished and ‘spoiled’ through [my] criminal conviction” (Hughes, 2009).

During our visit to Wandsworth, aspects of prison life came flooding back—the hyper vigilance and hyper awareness that accompanied me during my imprisonment—yet not as threatening or insecurity provoking as whilst a prisoner: they were more of an undercurrent as I was enacting my academic identity (Schreeche-Powell, 2019, 2020).

Student Reflections

Anticipation and Expectations

Affective forecasting refers to the prediction of one’s future emotions (Wilson & Gilbert, 2005). Research has shown that we engage in affective forecasting when predicting not just positive emotions, like happiness, but also negative emotions, such as hostility and loneliness (Wenze, Gunthert, & German, 2012). Here we share the diversity of our expectations ahead of the prison visit:

“We have all studied prison environments and architecture and have a personal belief about how the system works based on our studies. However, one thing is studying it in the book, and another is going there and seeing it with my own eyes,” (Oana-Alexandra Sauca)

“I had some particular expectations about the atmosphere and what I expected to see and feel there. I remember I said that I am expecting to feel the weight of the walls on me, to sense the isolation from the outside world, and the feeling of lost privacy. Now, I can say that I felt all of it, plus so much more.” (Asya Mitisheva)

“While for some students, this was their first time in a prison environment, I have volunteered at a prison previously. By doing so, many anxieties typically felt on an initial prison visit were alleviated. Going into Wandsworth, my main interest was taking a more comparative approach between the nature of this, and the previous prison I visited.” (Jade Hudson)

The Realities of Prison vs Hyper-reality

“Watching documentaries and reading about prison cells does not fully capture the reality of the size and atmosphere in prison. The profound realisation when seeing the tiny prison cells and limited space available first-hand is a difficult realisation to replicate through other means.” (Cecilie Wicklund,)

“What shocked me the most was how non-threatening the whole experience felt. Perhaps I had built prisons and prison guards up in my head to be more intimidating and scary than they actually are. I had expected people who work in prisons to be intimidating and threatening, but everyone we met was really friendly.” (Emma Hole)

Sensory Overload

‘The very contestability of social science suggests that its objects of knowledge are not simple reflections of naturally occurring events, but that social science creates its own objects by a process of theoretical and ... practical relevance and reflections’ (Garland and Young, 1983:2). “Cold and eerie, with such tension and feelings of hopelessness that will forever live in my memory. The prison was not loud and violent but carried a deafening silence where emotions of anger and despair draped over my body, feelings which seemed to be absorbed in the very walls that confined the prisoners. Stepping inside the prison cell, the walls begin to feel as if they are closing in; the reality of being deprived of freedom almost feels like a suffocating weight positioned directly on your chest.” (Brittanie Noon)

“Once inside I saw the place was very dark and sad. There was no air coming inside, I honestly could not wait to get out from that place. The cells were extremely small for two people and there was a small window in which air did not even come through. I tried to stay inside the cell for 3 minutes to see how I would feel to be there, but I cannot imagine how these people can stay 23 hours locked inside that small cell.” (Valeria Rossi)

“The lack of privacy hit me when I first entered the prison cell. As we are young women, the experience of a high degree of intimacy forced upon us, squeezing past each other to move around, led me to reflect on the psychological impact of such conditions on grown men, who

easily are twice the size of us. It is a sobering experience when a prison cell's psychological impacts wash over you, even when you only spent a minute inside it." (Emma Hole)

Prison as a Fruitless Endeavour

"We live in a society that has forgotten how to forgive. Incarceration is an experiment that has failed because the system never looks at prisoners who should get care or should never lose their dignity and the criminal justice system is not providing the care that those prisoners need. The CJS is just punishing them, and this is why prisons are places where prisoners worsen their mental well-being." (Valeria Rossi)

"Prisons are not made to produce change; they were designed to punish and nothing truly good can happen by locking people up when other means might be more productive for the benefit of society." (Asya Mitisheva)

"Reflecting on the stress that the mental health system is under in prison environments and, although there have been positive developments, I believe this wing and wings in other prisons should be able to accommodate more individuals who require support, which often is not available for all who need it." (Jade Hudson)

Challenging Perception, Fuelled by Experience: Prison as a place of hope?

There are some key considerations our students took away. Although power is often associated with coercive applications, good power can achieve positive outcomes in custodial settings if utilised with the intent to improve safety and quality of life (Schreeche-Powell, 2020, Foucault, 1977).

"Very positive impression of the prison's personnel we had the pleasure to talk to. I was particularly impressed by the young lady who did not allow the routine and old traditions to break her will to make a change and deliver a more holistic approach to the inmates, and their needs as human beings, behind the label 'prisoners'." (Asya Mitisheva)

"Learnt that the people who work in prisons are just people too. Most of them want to help the prisoners, be it to inspire them to change their life around once they get out or by making their life on the inside easier. The guards we met showed a strong level of empathy and understanding that the situation these men live in is not normal and to treat them as normal people means a lot to them." (Emma Hole)

We left Wandsworth with a mixture of sadness, despair, pain, and frustration but also hope and aspirations to support better opportunities, conditions and outcomes for those who are imprisoned or who may be in future. A truly profound personal and educational experience.

**For more information about this work, please contact Edwin Schreeche-Powell:*
e.schreechepowell@greenwich.ac.uk

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Developing Effective University-Prison Partnership Policies: Educational Resources & In-Cell TV at HMP Hull

Josephine Metcalf*, *Co-Director of Cultures of Incarceration Centre*

Stewart Mottram, *Co-Director of Cultures of Incarceration Centre*

Laura Skinner, *Transatlantic Cultures of Incarceration PhD Scholarships cluster*

An Introduction

This University of Hull (UoH) project commenced in January 2022 with the aim of developing educational content for HMP Hull's pioneering TV channel, HTV, and putting mechanisms in place to monitor the impact on prisoners of the educational materials. Jo Metcalf already had well-established relations with HMP Hull, having worked with the Head of Reducing Re-offending and the Learning & Skills Manager to provide an online learning module for prisoners in 2020. Metcalf along with Stewart Mottram furthered this partnership by providing HMP Hull with recordings of research talks delivered as part of the Cultures of Incarceration Centre's (CIC) interdisciplinary seminar series (launched April 2021), to be shown, with each speaker's permission, on the in-cell education channel of HTV. These resources helped HMP Hull deliver on its Ofsted obligations; supported continuity of prison education provision during recent prison lockdowns; and were offered in support of the premise that education can reduce re-offending.

Hull TV Survey

The University of Hull was due to host the prestigious British Association for American Studies (BAAS) conference in April 2022. Prior to this, with the support of a Research Assistant, Laura Skinner, we conducted a survey at HMP Hull in March 2022 to investigate whether prisoners would be interested in viewing BAAS content or materials from other academic disciplines. We received nearly 200 responses (from a total population of 900) and some of the key findings of that questionnaire were as follows:

- Prisoners generally do engage with HTV but have found that recent content is overly repetitive and therefore uninteresting.
- There is unequivocal support for educational material provided by the UoH, an interest in a broad range of academic areas, and a general desire to participate in follow-up activities, specifically in-cell learning and film screenings.
- If the UoH were to supply more educational content for use on HTV, the following subjects polled as priorities: Film; Music; History; and Criminology.

BAAS Conference

From 21-23 April 2022 the UoH hosted the annual BAAS conference with around 150 delegates from across England, Europe and the US, and many more online. All presenters

were asked if they would be willing to let their talk be recorded and screened on HTV, and Skinner was responsible for collating consent forms, working with information and communications technology (ICT) colleagues to record appropriate panels, and uploading them to a YouTube channel for the HMP Hull digital team to access. For the most part, we were overwhelmed with delegate support, with a number reporting that this was “a worthy project” and “long overdue”. We drafted a schedule of screenings for the prison alongside further content to play on alternative days (e.g., if a conference paper discussed a specific movie, we arranged for that movie to be subsequently screened). We also worked with the HMP Hull librarian who set up a dedicated “BAAS shelf” and ordered a number of books relating to the presentations to be made available.

BAAS Book Club

Our original survey indicated an interest among prisoners in further study / reading groups arising from academic content screened on HTV. Furthermore, the Learning & Skills Manager was keen “not to let this conference sit in a vacuum” but rather follow up with any available workshops where possible. With financial support from the British Association for American Studies, we ran 12 weeks of book groups centring on key texts discussed in the conference papers. The books we ultimately shortlisted for discussion (one per week) were informed by prisoners’ areas of interest as flagged in the questionnaire, and by discussions with the prison librarian about literacy levels, reading trends, and popular genres in HMP Hull.

Thus, 12-15 participants read US novels ranging from Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) to Luis J Rodriguez’s *Always Running* (1993), and also including *From Our Land* (2020); Brian Vaughan’s *Y: The Last Man* (2002); Angie Thomas’s *The Hate U Give* (2017); and John Gardner’s *Grendel* (1971). Each book session would end with a brief creative writing exercise relating to the key themes of the text / discussion. At the end of the 12 book groups, a questionnaire indicated that participants had engaged in positive and productive ways. One participant wrote, “I enjoyed the wide range of books. They aren’t books I normally would read, but they challenged me and I found I did enjoy the different styles of writing in them as well as the content”. Meanwhile, “gaining confidence in my ability to correctly articulate my own views to a group of people that may have opposing views” was a key development outcome for another participant. The American remit worked well as a starting point; after all, as one participant noted, “everyone has something to say about America”.

Publications & Research

Luis J Rodriguez is a former gang member turned bestselling author and activist. Given that there will soon be a published anthology exploring the life and legacy of Rodriguez, a number of the papers at the BAAS conference were related to his works (several US-based Rodriguez presenters attended the event, sponsored by the Global Latindades Project at UCSB).¹ Two Rodriguez texts were discussed at the book group and Rodriguez himself actually recorded a short video for prisoner participants alongside his son Ramiro, who had served a lengthy sentence in the US. We secured permission from the HMPPS National Research Committee

¹ See Josephine Metcalf and Ben Olguin (eds.), *In the Long Run; the Life & Works of Luis J Rodriguez* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2024).

(NRC) to record the two Rodriguez sessions so that we could analyse what readers in prison settings “did” with Rodriguez’s texts, within a wider discussion of whether an American theme “works” for UK prisoners in a book group. This piece of research is due to be published in the *Journal for American Studies* as well as the Rodriguez anthology. There are also obvious knowledge exchange / impact links at the heart of this work, both in terms of creating and sustaining a range of research activities.

Moving forwards

We are keen to continue to build on the work done thus far along these lines. As the Cultures of Incarceration Centre seminar series moves towards the end of its third year, we will once again make the recordings of our talks—which address a range of carceral topics, from photographs about the Belsen POW camp in World War II, to memoirs about mental health—available to HTV to screen as they see fit. Metcalf is currently in the US as a visiting scholar and is running exactly the same American Studies book series with a group of female prisoners, as part of a wider comparative US-UK study of reception practices in prison settings.

**For more information about this work, please contact Josephine Metcalf: j.metcalf@hull.ac.uk*

Maynooth University Mountjoy Prison Partnership and the Unlocking Potential Project

Dr Joe Garrihy*, *School of Law and Criminology, Maynooth University*, and Collaborators
(see below)

Introduction

The school-to-prison pipeline is well-rehearsed in penological literature (Bacher-Hicks, 2021). Pathways from prison to university are less developed but are constructive steps toward profound positive changes for individuals and society (Ludlow et al., 2019; O’Grady and Hamilton, 2019). This brief note will provide some context of Mountjoy Prison before discussing the partnership between Mountjoy Prison and Maynooth University (Ireland) and its instigation of the complementary Unlocking Potential Project (UPP).

Mountjoy Prison Campus (hereafter Mountjoy) comprises two distinct prisons in Dublin’s North Inner City, Ireland. Opened in 1850 and designed by Joshua Jebb (designer of HMP Pentonville, London), Mountjoy Main Men’s Prison is a medium security closed prison for those over 18 years of age (Carey, 2000; IPS, 2023b). A similarly aged separate radial design prison building—formerly St Patrick’s Institution for Juvenile Offenders—now operates as an annexe of the main men’s prison but is named The Progression Unit. The unit remains a closed medium-security prison but functions as a more open regime for enhanced men including porous activities such as day release for academic endeavours. There is a third annexe building named the Training Unit which houses 95 older men; the combined population is 804 (IPS, 2023c). The Dóchas Centre—Dóchas meaning ‘hope’ in Irish—opened in 1999 and completes the campus confining 168 females over the age of 18 (as of 28 April 2023) in a closed medium-security prison (IPS, 2023a; 2023c).

Maynooth University Mountjoy Prison Partnership (MJMU)

Maynooth University has a strong track record of engaging with people with prison experience or convictions and supporting penal reform. This tradition contributed to the University’s decision to identify ‘prisoners and former prisoners’ as an under-represented group in our student population in the most recent strategic plan. In 2019, Maynooth University and Mountjoy Prison came together to establish Ireland’s first university-prison partnership. The MJMU Partnership aims to harness the transformative power of education to promote access to higher education and support the reintegration of prisoners and former prisoners in society. We support the engagement of the university with the prison through a range of educational activities and the creation of shared learning spaces for students in prison and students in university.

Building on the great work which has already been taking place between the university and Mountjoy, the partnership provides strategic direction and support for a range of new

initiatives, some of which are detailed below. Our work is guided by a Steering Group, whose membership is drawn from both organisations and includes current and formerly incarcerated people. Supported by the Public Service Innovation Fund 2019, the MJMU Partnership was launched on 19 April 2021 with Minister Simon Harris TD² (Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and currently Acting Minister for Justice) attending to provide his department's endorsement of the partnership.

The programme of initiatives within the partnership are numerous so for the sake of brevity, two of particular note will be elaborated on here: the 'Story Exchange' and the 'Mountjoy Lecture Series'.

The Story Exchange

The Story Exchange is a collaborative initiative between the MJMU Partnership and [Gaisce – The President's Award](#) (Gaisce). Gaisce is a "self-development programme for young people aged 14 -25" which focuses on core values of empowerment, inclusion and equality, respect and excellence (The President's Award, 2023). Established in 1985, Gaisce "has been proven to enhance confidence and wellbeing through participation in personal, physical and community challenges" (The President's Award, 2023).

The Story Exchange originally ran from September 2019 to March 2020 and brought together young people incarcerated in the Mountjoy Prison Progression Unit and MU students over 13 weeks. The Story Exchange works by randomly partnering people in the group to swap a story from their lives. Assembling the group once more, each student re-tells their partner's story in the first person. The MU students taking part in the project are part of the [MAP Ambassador Programme](#), a volunteering student-led initiative which promotes access to higher education for people with fewer opportunities. Participants worked with [Emer McNally](#), a data harvester, to explain their experience of the project and the power of story exchange to foster connection, solidarity, and self-belief ([see a short film here](#)). Ever evolving, this year's story exchange is currently running with an additional focus on power and change while integrating mentoring and leadership skills.

The Story Exchange uses the [Gaisce Award framework](#), which means that participants received a Gaisce award for their contribution to the project. The project was documented and evaluated by Sarah Meaney Sartori (Research Manager, College Connect Project & Department of Adult and Community Education). You can read the full report: [Evaluating the Story Exchange Project](#) or the summary report: [Introduction to the Story Exchange](#).

Mountjoy Lecture Series

Those entering higher education (HE) from under-represented backgrounds, including people with convictions, can sometimes find themselves funnelled into particular disciplines and careers such as sociology, social work, community and/or addiction services. The MJMU Partnership runs multiple series of lectures in Mountjoy to open up a broader range of academic experiences to the people in prison. The lecture series launched in February 2020

² TD is an abbreviation of 'Teachta Dála' meaning 'Deputy to the Dáil' in Irish. The Dáil is Dáil Éireann, the lower house of the Oireachtas (the Irish Parliament). Other jurisdictions' equivalents are Member of Parliament (MP) or Member of Congress.

with the initial lecture being delivered by Dr Conor Murphy (Geography Department) on climate change. The lecture, held in the Progression Unit, was attended by over 40 people in prison. Inspired by what they heard, members of the audience initiated the placing of recycling bins on the prison landings. After navigating unfortunate COVID-19 enforced postponements, the series resumed with [Dr Rory Hearn](#) (MU Department of Social Policy) discussing his recent popular book, '[Gaffs](#)' (2022), on the current housing crisis and solutions – further demonstrating the shared experiences of those in prison and the wider community. The 2023 programme continues with a diverse range of lectures while seeking expand the offerings in all sections of the prisons.

The Unlocking Potential Project

The [Unlocking Potential Project \(UPP\)](#) brought together a consortium of six partners: MU Access Programme; MU School of Law and Criminology; Irish Prison Service; (Irish) Probation Service; Pathways Centre (City of Dublin ETB); and the Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT). Drawing inspiration from recent developments in the UK including the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#) (UK) '[Criminal Convictions: Good Practice Guide](#)' and the Unlock UK '[Fair Chance Pledge](#)', the UPP seeks to build on these to further remove barriers by implementing the innovative fair admissions policy facilitated by the toolkit developed for all higher education institutions (HEIs). The UPP aims to make higher education more accessible for people in prison and those in the community with convictions and in doing so to support their reintegration into society. It also aims to support HEI staff to unlock the potential of students with convictions and ensure the transformative power of education is accessible to all.

The UPP developed a suite of resources for higher education staff interested in developing a fair admissions policy, as well as information and resources for prospective students regarding accessing third-level education including:

- A [toolkit](#) for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their administrators, including a fair admissions policy template, principles for fair admissions, and information on collecting criminal records data in line with GDPR and student admissions.
- A [student portal](#) with resources for prospective students with convictions, including information on their rights, Garda (Police) vetting, testimonials, student supports and funding opportunities including the new [KickStart Scholarship Fund](#) providing financial support for current and future students.
- A new [podcast series](#) and [documentary](#) exploring the project's aims, and celebrating and amplifying the achievements and stories of graduates with convictions.

Minister Harris TD referred to the 'transformational' potential of the project (Baker, 2022). Funding for the project was awarded by the Public Sector Innovation Fund 2020 with additional funding from the Irish Prison Service and Maynooth University.

Impact and Next Steps

The MJMU Partnership and UPP continue to evolve at a pace while achieving significant impact to date. Recent developments in the MJMU Partnership include the development of

the Strategic Plan 2023-2028 (forthcoming in July 2023) and the establishment of relationships and plans to run a series of lectures in Portlaoise Prison, Ireland's only high security prison. The MJMU Partnership and the UPP were key factors in establishing people with convictions as a target group in the new [National Access Plan 2022-2028](#) (Higher Education Authority, 2022). The projects were also central to the establishment, in 2022, of the [Kickstart Scholarships](#) (funded by the [Irish] Probation Service) in partnership with MU, developed exclusively to support students with convictions to access higher education. The Scholarships distribute various awards totalling €100k to students (with convictions) in higher education in Ireland. In 2022, the MJMU Partnership and the UPP were also pivotal in including people with convictions as a target group for the [1916 Bursary Fund](#), a national scheme to support students from low income households to access higher education.

The next phase of the UPP includes an ongoing empirical project which was awarded funding from the Irish Research Council New Foundations Fund 2022. The study examines the attitudes and experiences of higher education staff and those with criminal convictions in Ireland while analysing perceptions of risk in policy and practice. In a parallel study, the employers' policies and practices regarding people with convictions are being examined. These complementary studies will further the aims and broaden the scope and future integrations of the MJMU Partnership and the UPP respectively. The first project is in partnership with the [IPRT](#) while the latter is funded by the IPRT, the [Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission](#) and the [Open Doors Initiative](#).

While the principle of prison being a last resort requires constant assertion and implementation, the MJMU Partnership and the UPP projects demonstrate the opportunities to collaboratively ameliorate prison conditions to build positive pathways for those imprisoned or with a history of contact with the criminal justice system.

**For more information about this work, please contact Joe Garrihy joe.garrihy@mu.ie*

Collaborators (listed alphabetically)

- [Dr Ciara Bracken Roche](#), [Dr Joe Garrihy](#), [Prof Claire Hamilton](#), [Dr Ian D Marder](#) ([MU School of Law and Criminology](#))
- [Prof Aislinn O'Donnell](#), [Dr Seamus Taylor](#) ([MU Department of Education](#))
- [Ms Martha Brandes](#), [Ms Grace Edge](#) (2019-2021), [Ms Gemma Lynch](#), [Dr Rose Ryan](#), [Dr Sarah Sartori](#) ([MU Access Programme](#))
- [Gov Edward Mullins](#), Gov Donnacha Walsh (ret) (Irish Prison Service, Mountjoy Prison)
- [Irish Penal Reform Trust](#), [Irish Prison Service](#), [Our Public Sector](#), [The Pathways Centre](#) (City of Dublin ETB), [Probation Service](#)

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Collaborating across prison walls and borders: co-creating an all-island curriculum that builds empathy and mutual understanding between diverse communities of North and South of Ireland prison-university partnerships.

Gillian McNaull*, Shadd Maruna, *Queen's University Belfast*

Katharina Swirak, James Cronin, Maggie O'Neill, Kathleen White, *University College Cork*

Academics from University College Cork and Queens University Belfast have over the past two years established university-prison education partnerships with Cork Prison and HMP Hydebank Wood. Borrowing from similar US and UK based models, the Cork 'Inside Out' and Belfast 'Learning Together' projects are the first such courses on the island of Ireland, with university students and incarcerated persons studying side-by-side as equals in the prison classroom. Students and educators report that participation in the prison-university classroom raises empathy and provides skills for entering into dialogue across social differences. The North/South HEA-funded 'TOGETHER' collaboration between these two projects will now research the learning from these innovative approaches to university-prison education with incarcerated and university students in and across both sites. TOGETHER will facilitate incarcerated and university students to act as researchers, who will document and analyse how their different backgrounds shape their experiences of justice, stigma, labelling and harm. Through creative, visual and participatory methods, incarcerated and university students will record moments of learning in the prison-university classroom. Importantly, this will also provide insights into how prison-university classrooms facilitate students in building empathy towards their peers from diverse backgrounds. Both Belfast and Cork classrooms will also collaborate to further improve each other's work. As a result of this process, TOGETHER will then produce the first all-island Curriculum for prison-university partnerships. This Curriculum will be the first of its kind on the island of Ireland, adapted specifically to an all-island context, and moving beyond the imported ideas from the US and the UK.

Learning from Irish university prison education partnerships

International research suggests that prison-university partnerships in different jurisdictions (primarily the US and UK) have transformative potential for involved learners and educators (MacLennan and Gosling, 2020; Pompa, 2013). Proponents argue that the pedagogical model of learning side-by-side across social differences can 'overcome social barriers and prejudices to embrace and celebrate diversity; support students to critically explore their own beliefs and identities; and go on to utilise this educational experience to foster social change on both sides of the prison walls' (King et al., 2019: 66). Proponents argue that prison-university partnerships can also address several inter-related concerns, relevant not only to incarcerated students and the goals of rehabilitation and reintegration, but also to university students and the way

we envisage education more generally (Gray et al., 2019; Trasher et al., 2020). These include the creation of learning spaces where learners from different walks of life and diverse backgrounds can encounter each other as equals (Ludlow et al., 2019; Maclaren, 2015). Through the deployment of creative and collaborative teaching praxis, learning and communication happens across often challenging social barriers (MacLennan and Gosling, 2020; Wyant and Lockwood, 2018).

In Ireland, the TOGETHER teams have set up the first prison-university partnerships based on emancipatory principles in 2019, building on programmes originating in the UK (Learning Together) and US (Inside Out). In Cork, the collaboration between the Department of Sociology and Criminology at University College Cork (UCC) and Cork Prison Education Unit, involves the delivery of a module on criminal justice and social justice. Over the course of 12 weeks, 10 UCC BA Criminology students and 10 incarcerated men enter into a dialogue and learn together across social differences through a range of diverse and creative group work activities in Cork Prison. Preliminary findings have shown that both inside and outside students have benefitted from the Programme in various ways.

In Belfast, a collaboration between the School of Social Sciences, Education & Social Work at Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and HMP Hydebank Wood was initiated in 2019, affiliated with the 'Learning Together' collective of mainly England-based partnerships. Hydebank Wood is a unique facility in that it houses both women and young males (between the ages of 18 and 22, primarily). For the most part, these two populations are kept separate, including in educational provision, so the initial Learning Together course in 2019 was actually the first time a mixed gender cohort studied in the same classroom. The Learning Together course with QUB is the only opportunity for Hydebank residents to experience a face-to-face university classroom and interact with other university students. The QUB course focuses on theory and research around prisoner rehabilitation and desistance from crime, so even though the Hydebank students have had little exposure to academic criminology, they find they have a great deal to say about the subject. TOGETHER will unite these two prison-university classrooms with a view to develop an all-island approach to convivial prison-university education.

Participatory action research as a tool of fostering symmetrical communication in the context of highly unequal power relations

The TOGETHER project methodology is informed by participatory methodologies originating from the global south (Fals-Borda 1988; Freire, 1970; Illich, 1973), to work with students as researchers (Mena and Messiou 2020) using creative and sensory criminological methods (McNeill and Urie, 2020; Herrity, Schmidt and Warr, 2021; O'Neill et al., 2017). Participatory Action Research (PAR) is based on the principles of inclusion, participation, valuing all voices and action oriented interventions emerging from the collaborative knowledge produced and facilitates the space for marginalised voices to speak and be heard. The voices of those incarcerated are often mediated by others; or they are silenced and indeed 'othered'. Participatory approaches to research facilitate the space for collaboration, dialogue, and action. Participatory action research produces 'symmetrical communication' (Fals-Borda, 1988), indeed 'symmetrical reciprocity' in the relational field of the research. This relates well to the models of teaching and learning in both project locations in Cork and Belfast and in turn opens a space for dialogue and interpretation that can lead to better knowledge and

understanding of action oriented interventions. Attention to rigour, validity, and an ethic of care is also central to participatory research as a social and relational good. The principles and practice of participatory action research also connects, for the TOGETHER research team, with the aims of a 'public criminology' and by this we mean criminological analysis that promotes public dialogue, reflection and understanding of critical criminal justice issues.

The research methods deployed in TOGETHER will facilitate the inclusion of incarcerated and university students as co-researchers by including training on participatory research methods as part of the research process. The TOGETHER research methods will include a variety of participatory and creative research methods, particularly through visual practices and also facilitate peer-feedback between both student cohorts in Cork and Belfast, creating symmetry and collective recognition of students across south and north as collaborators and co-creators of knowledge and understanding. Finally, the TOGETHER project will produce collaborative documentation, analysis and curation of a catalogue of artefacts of learning.

Conviviality in the Criminology Prison-University Classroom

Through PAR methods, TOGETHER aims to mobilise the learning of the two pioneering university-prison education partnerships on the island of Ireland, in order to develop a joint all island curriculum that can build empathy and mutual understanding between diverse communities. The TOGETHER research collaboration will transcend the heritage of US/UK models of prison-university partnerships by conducting foundational comparative research on both prison-university classrooms and by co-producing with students in and across both locations a bespoke all-island curriculum for 'convivial learning'. Borrowing from Illich's idea of conviviality (1973), 'convivial learning' emphasises participatory decision-making and collaborative explorations of justice within and beyond the third-level classroom, paying particular attention to often unheard voices. Participatory methodologies alongside a dialogical exchange between these two classrooms, will provide meaningful insights into how incarcerated and university students draw on their differentially lived experiences when entering into dialogue on themes of criminalisation and experience of criminal justice and rehabilitation.

As a transdisciplinary project, TOGETHER crosses the disciplinary boundaries of Criminology and the Science of Teaching and Learning. This approach means that the project deploys a holistic approach to developing research on the impacts of teaching and learning praxis in prison-university partnerships. The prison-university classroom where incarcerated and university students from diverse backgrounds meet, acts as an intensified social microcosm where teaching and learning tools for fostering dialogue and mutual understanding can be researched and further developed.

Ultimately, the project will co-produce the first all-island curriculum for prison-university partnerships and create a joint north south research-practice network for third-level educators, interested in authentically developing convivial classroom experiences. We will utilise the academic discipline of Criminology as a vehicle to identify *how* we can facilitate empathetic understanding and mutual dialogue amongst students from diverse communities on contentious issues that ultimately affect us all, while supporting consensus and capacity building on all-island approaches to emancipatory learning in third level institutions.

*For more information about this work, please contact Gillian McNaull:
gillian.mcnaull@qub.ac.uk

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Teaching ‘inside the wire’ in an Aotearoa New Zealand prison: A collaboration between the University of Otago and Otago Corrections Facility

Dr Fairleigh Evelyn Gilmour*, *University of Otago*

Sherie Lucke, *Department of Corrections*

Associate Professor Anaru Eketone, *University of Otago*

While the benefits of prison education have been established[1], access to education in prison faces multiple barriers including limited opportunities provided by tertiary institutions; a lack of digital access; institutional barriers (including limited movements to classrooms and restrictions on mixing of cohorts); and motivational barriers (often brought about by poor experiences with formal education) [2]. Potential students often have histories of experiencing social disadvantage and structural inequality that have impacted their prior-prison learning. In Aotearoa New Zealand prisons, there are currently only about 30 learners engaged in higher education (out of a population of 7,708 on 29 April 2022). It is a key goal of Ara Poutama Aotearoa/Department of Corrections (Corrections) to invest further in education [3] and to ensure people being released from prison have the necessary levels of education for full participation in society [4].

In 2021, as part of a pilot spearheaded by the first author (University of Otago) and second author (Corrections), students at Otago Corrections Facility (OCF) have been able to enrol in a University of Otago first-year Sociology course. This pilot is the only current initiative in which university courses are being taught in person ‘inside the wire’ in an Aotearoa New Zealand³ prison. The “in person” teaching experience has provided the students with the opportunity to maintain the same schedule as students in the community, and Corrections staff have observed that it has had a positive impact on their confidence, behaviour and planning for their future. As a result of this successful pilot, as of 2023, learners have been able to enrol in additional courses through University of Otago.

Aotearoa New Zealand has fewer in-person collaborations in terms of higher education than other jurisdictions. While some Universities offer distance learning initiatives, in-person teaching is a key area that requires development as it can prepare incarcerated students, many of whom were excluded at an early age from formal schooling and may not have the confidence for the independent learning required for distance education, for further education. As we develop our initiatives, we are drawing ideas and inspiration from other countries’ approaches. However, as Ludlow et al. [5] argue, we also need to “reflect critically on how different socio-political and cultural realities” might shape the particular nature of higher education and criminal justice institution partnerships in the local setting.

³ Aotearoa is the Māori language name for New Zealand

Key considerations for tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand prisons:

1. *Treaty of Waitangi obligations:* Due to the ongoing impacts of colonization, the prison population in Aotearoa New Zealand is disproportionately Māori (15% of the general population and 54% of the prison population) [6]. The question of equitable access to education in the prison setting (or the lack thereof) is not just one of access more broadly but raises key issues in terms of Treaty principles and obligations with both University of Otago and Corrections being treaty partners that represent the government. Our initiatives, in aiming to facilitate further engagement from incarcerated learners in higher education, meet the strategic goals of both the University and Corrections.
2. *Cultural Responsivity:* It is not only that Aotearoa's Indigenous population are over-represented in prison, but they are also the majority group in Aotearoa New Zealand prisons. Educational initiatives therefore need to be culturally responsive wherever possible.
3. *Prisoner Demographics:* Aotearoa New Zealand generally has a higher incarceration rate overall than comparable countries such as England or Australia, but like settler countries such as Australia, it has a particularly high incarceration rates of indigenous people. Aotearoa has a higher proportion of violent and sexual offenders, and sex offenders doing long sentences, than comparable Commonwealth or European jurisdictions[7]. While transfers do mean that the population of OCF can be somewhat unstable, which can make continuous teaching across a semester occasionally challenging, there are a sizeable number of people with sentences long enough that tertiary teaching is both viable and important. On the other hand, security concerns will always be a factor in managing on-site prison teaching.
4. *Limited number of courses offered:* A key issue facing incarcerated students is a lack of available tertiary education options and a clear pathway to achieving a degree. Our initiative involves expanding the available offerings. In 2023, students will be able to enrol in a first-year political science course and social work course. This pilot will allow increased opportunities for incarcerated men to explore a range of subjects in areas of interest and provide a pathway to ongoing higher learning.
5. *Informational access:* Prisoners may face similar barriers to other adult learners, including limited information about education programmes and procedures [8]. Imprisoned students in particular may have little information about the programmes available or the processes through which they apply or pursue courses [2]. While the students who have completed the available course have done so successfully, only a small number of students have thus far participated. Informational barriers are a key challenge for increased enrolment. A project is currently underway to produce a handbook containing relevant information.
6. *Digital access.* Digital access is a key issue. Higher education practices in the contemporary era often assume a particular type of student – standard entry, preparedness for learning, digital access and digital literacy. Higher education is

increasingly supported by digital resources, a development accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to hybrid and distance delivery models. This shift means that the right of access to education is jeopardised for those without access to digital resources, including incarcerated students [9]. Although digital access for the students at Otago Corrections Facility during the recent Sociology course improved, with lectures viewed live via audio-visual link, people under the care of corrections continue to have limited digital access for educational purposes compared to learners in the community. We are therefore looking to collaborate on exploring and evaluating new initiatives in this space.

7. *Economic pressures on Universities and Corrections.* Aotearoa New Zealand universities are trying to manage with continual underfunding and are looking to either cut programmes or not to take part in programmes that cost rather than bring in money. Much of what we do as academics comes out of our own pocket, (e.g., travel to a rural prison), is not counted as part of workloads, or if it is, is counted at the same rate as providing classes for on-campus students. Education provision in prison is resource-intensive and class sizes are small. However, given that correctional educational programming is one of the most effective tools in the reduction of recidivism [10] and particularly so for tertiary level education [1], such programmes are cost-effective compared to costs associated with recidivist prisoners. It is therefore vital that tertiary education providers and the Corrections continue to collaborate to provide quality educational opportunities and adequately resource these initiatives.

While there are key challenges to be addressed when providing tertiary education in the Aotearoa New Zealand prison setting, the current collaboration between University of Otago and Otago Corrections Facility highlights the potential for positive movement in this space. We anticipate that planned initiatives for this collaboration, in terms of additional options, increased information provision and digital access, will allow more incarcerated people to participate in tertiary education. This will have positive impacts on recidivism and contribute to the safety and wellbeing of incarcerated learners, their families and communities.

**For more information about this work, please contact Fairleigh Gilmour:*

fairleigh.gilmour@otago.ac.nz

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Inside Out: The Start of a Journey

Michael Akinfenwa*

As someone who spent the part of my life between age 16 and 29 in prison, I have never been involved in anything else like the Inside-Out programme. I want to explain here why it was so valuable and how it has helped me in everything I've achieved since, from my work, to the people I've met, the places I've been and in becoming the man I am today. The truth is, if I never did this course or met the lecturers who ran it, I honestly do not believe I'd be doing as well as I am since coming home. I provide guest lectures, seminars and workshops at a university; I'm a prison leaver consultant on a project evaluating a programme of work for the Ministry of Justice; I give inspirational talks at prison establishments to tell the men that I'm no different from them and that they can achieve the same things I'm achieving.

I remember when the Inside-Out programme was first advertised I actually wasn't going to do it until being convinced by a friend who was part of the first cohort of prison students. I wasn't going to do it because prison education sounds good but often amounts to nothing outside. But it was a transitioning year for me: I'd got to the point where I'd had enough of being in trouble, my D-Cat was around the corner, and my friend persuaded me it would be fun.

In the first few sessions I felt anxious because I was with academics and university students, and as someone who had been in prison since age 16, I didn't know if I was intellectual enough to do work with people like that. Most of my years, I've just been around guys in prison and this was a whole different environment. But participating in the course really helped open my eyes to my academic abilities that I had just never applied. It was such a nice thing to have in an environment that I hated. At the end, when the lecturer came up to me and said I got a high 2:1 – better than most of the people on the module – and told me I should seriously think about going to university I thought she was joking. Usually, in my everyday life, I didn't really think of myself as someone who is educated.

I loved it so much I stayed on to become a prison teaching assistant for the next cohort. It felt good to convince some other students to be part of it and then see how they got on with it. It was daunting to lead parts of the session but I did it and got over it. I enjoyed hearing other people's thoughts and opinions on weekly topics and comparing them to what I had heard from my own cohort. I had been helped by teaching assistants the previous year to do my assessments and stick with the course when I felt like dropping out and I started to do that for people on the new cohort, reminding them what they had to do and explaining it to them in layman's terms. Through the Inside-Out thinktank for people who had completed the course, I went on to design my own workshop about gangs, highlighting how people get involved and encouraging students to try to see it from the angle of those who live within that lifestyle. Leading a small group of people from inside the prison, I delivered the workshop to groups of university students who came there on visits.

Whilst I was in open conditions, I started coming out on release on temporary licence (RoTL) to the university. Going to my first lecture was a new experience for me. University wasn't a place I'd ever imagined going. I worked with the next cohort of Inside-Out students, but this time the university students rather than the prison students, helping them prepare for their first time in the prison, supporting the grading of their essays and even talking to them about their assessment on other modules. I also did some guest lectures and seminars on some of the modules and was invited to another university to do a talk and seminars based on gangs and prison life.

Going back into the prison where I'd done my Inside-Out course, this time to deliver a session, was a surreal moment. If you'd told me years ago that I was going to be a teaching assistant at university, taking students into prison and delivering classes, I'd have laughed at you. It was a pinch myself moment. I was really doing something I honestly didn't think was in my abilities to do. That's something I can say that I'm proud of. When I go into prisons it's the message of what I'm showing people like me can do, even though no one ever tells us that. I go in there and say, I'm just like you, I still am just like you, but look what I'm doing now.

Upon full release from prison things were hard. Work was very hard to come by. I see so many people who were inside like me, not even lifers, and they come out and then go back in. I ask them why and they say they can't get a job or a chance. You can't always rely on friends and family to support you. Then I was given an opportunity to work as a research consultant on the evaluation of a large programme of work commissioned by the Ministry of Justice. My role draws on my lived experience of the system. I've loved it so much as I've met the kinds of people I never would have crossed paths with in my past life, I've travelled and seen more of this country than I ever did or thought I would, and all of that is priceless to me. My colleagues are always there to help me, and I keep learning new skills.

My end goal is to be going into prisons regularly, holding purposeful workshops and still giving the men hope that my story can be theirs if they just apply themselves and give themselves the opportunity to make something of themselves and right the wrongs of their past.

*If you'd like to get in touch to hear more about my story or hire my services as a lecturer, researcher or inspirational speaker, please contact me at my [linkedin](#) or by email. Michaelakinfenwa42@gmail.com

Co-authoring a book with a former Learning Criminology Inside student

Drs [Rose Broad*](#), [Emily Turner](#) and [Caroline Miles](#), *University of Manchester*

(Book co-editor, [Prof Shadd Maruna](#), *Queen's University, Belfast*)

We met Billy when we were in our first cohort of our [Learning Criminology Inside](#) (LCI) programme at HMP Risley in 2017. The LCI programme provides the opportunity for third year BA Criminology students and Master's students at the University of Manchester and prison-based students to learn together. The workshops take place in prisons (HMP Risley and HMP Wymott along with some one-off workshops in HMP Styal) and allow students to discuss topics such as desistance and drug regulation. Initially sceptical of the programme, Billy increasingly engaged with the material, recognising many of his own experiences in the literature and submitted an interesting and thoughtful end of programme essay. On submission of the essay, he said:

"sorry it's late, I just wanted to do yourself, Shadd and everyone else justice for the course"

Following Billy's release towards the end of 2018, he contacted us to explore options of being involved with the University. Working in a pub kitchen and being presented with the opportunity to run the Manchester marathon with one day's notice (which he completed!), Billy was determined to create a different path, away from drug use and drug dealing. Having met some of our BA Criminology students through LCI and understanding their aspirations to learn, Billy was interested in sharing his experiences of offending, prison and desistance and later asked us if we would help him to tell his story in a book.

Since then, Billy has delivered seven inputs for students across two course units. His family, work and sport have supported his desistance. He is honest and open with the struggles that have emerged and has been an inspiration to students and to us. He has completed several triathlons and [swam the channel](#) raising thousands of pounds for charity. He actively supports men with mental health and drug problems in his community and [received an award](#) for his voluntary work during the pandemic. Billy attended the Learning Together event at Fishmongers Hall in 2019 with us and was a great source of support during and after the tragedy.

Between us all, we developed the idea for the book and we have secured a contract with Emerald publishers. The book will be entitled 'Bringing Criminological Development Theory to Life: A Critical Exploration of Lived Experience Through and Beyond the Criminal Justice System' with a publication date of 2024. This book will cover core aspects of developmental criminology, the journeys into and out of offending, in a completely unique way. Each chapter will be framed around a single individual's life story: Billy. Yet, this is not an autobiography. Rather, Billy's rich and fascinating life will provide the scaffolding for six rigorous, evidence-

based and scholarly chapters on key issues in criminology. Along the path of his life, Billy has moved from being a soldier, to a prisoner, to a university student involved in the Learning Together curriculum, to a father and an acclaimed athlete. This journey will provide the inspiration for six commissioned essays from leading figures in criminology on each of these controversial issues from the intersection of military veterans and criminal justice, to the values of the Learning Together course made famous through the tragedy of Fishmongers Hall, to the role of sport in desistance from crime.

Billy's life-history will be told chronologically and thematically by chapter. Each chapter will be told half in Billy's words, following a narrative interviewing methodology, which will then be critically analysed and linked to theory by an academic specialising in that area. Billy's inspiring story of desistance will be pulled together in the introduction and conclusion by the editors of the book. The concept of identity, mental health and drug use and the way in which these intersect with Billy's roles, circumstances, criminality and desistance throughout his life are key to the story.

While there is a large body of literature on both theories explaining crime and journeys out of crime (desistance), and the growing discipline of life-course criminology combining these, these tend to be written about in an abstract way. While this literature often uses empirical research and examples from participants, a single case study approach is rarely taken. This book will apply theory to one person to show the interconnectedness of theories and the complexities of people's lives. The book's unique approach is the use of a number of different authors writing about one person.

We are fortunate to be collaborating with some fantastic academics who will use their expertise to contextualise Billy's story. Drs [Lisa Williams](#), [Laura Bui](#) and [Will Floodgate](#) will lead on a chapter about childhood experiences of drug related exploitation and trauma. [Dr Emma Murray](#) will reflect on Billy's experiences as a soldier and how this impacted on his mental health and drug use – sharing commonalities with other research she has conducted with veterans. Drawing on her experiences of working in prison education and Learning Together, [Dr Helen Nicholls](#) will lead on a chapter on Billy's experiences in these areas. As sport has featured heavily in Billy's desistance, [Prof Rosie Meek](#) will focus on this in her chapter. We, along with Prof Shadd Maruna will write the introduction and the conclusion and a chapter discussing Billy's experiences of prison and community supervision and Dr Emily Turner will author a chapter on the positive social bonds that have helped Billy to desist from crime. But most importantly, Billy will co-author the introduction, bringing his words and reflections on the chapters as a whole to introduce readers to his story.

Emily and Rose have conducted five interviews with Billy, each focusing on a different aspect of his life and organised in that way in collaboration with Billy. We have used a narrative interview approach to allow Billy to tell his story in his own words. The interviews have been illuminating and given us a privileged insight into Billy journey into and out of crime and drug use. The interview transcripts will be shared with the co-authors and, following their comments, we will conduct a final interview with Billy to explore any aspects of the first interviews further. Billy will review all the chapters before submission to make sure that the interpretation of his story reflects his meaning and experience.

The book will allow readers to understand pathways into crime and desistance in the context of in-depth complexities and reality of these stories. Working with Billy on the book and on his inputs at University has been an honour and we are all excited to share his stories and their interpretation. It would not have been possible without the development of the prison-University partnership, the support of the Learning Together network and, most of all, without Billy's wish to share his story.

**For more information about this work, please contact Rose Broad:*

rosemary.broad@manchester.ac.uk

A Message from the 2023 BSC Conference Organisers



We are really looking forward to welcoming you to UCLan in June!

Below we have summarised a few of the key priorities we have focussed on when organising the conference this year, which we hope will be of interest:

Inclusivity

A few examples of how we have centred inclusivity in our planning include:

- **Cost:** We have kept the costs as low as possible to maximise attendance. This was particularly important to us within the current context of the cost-of-living crisis.
- **Food:** Lunch and coffee will be included each day of the conference, so attendees won't need to worry about paying for this in addition to the conference fee.
- **EDI:** UCLan's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion lead has sat on our monthly committee meetings to ensure that EDI issues are thought through as part of our key decisions.

- **Childcare:** We have worked with our onsite nursery to secure hourly childcare options on a first come first serve basis. Please contact bsconference@uclan.ac.uk for more information about this offering.
- **Practitioners:** we want to encourage more participation from practitioners this year. If you are a practitioner or are part of an organisation that would like to showcase the work that you do as part of the conference, please contact bsconference@uclan.ac.uk as soon as possible.

Sustainability

Sustainability has been at the heart of every decision we have made in the organisation of the conference. A few examples include:

- **Sustainable food produce:** We have chosen onsite suppliers who source sustainable produce. We are also looking to adopt a voucher 'market-place' system for lunch to minimise food waste. Any non-perishable left-over food waste will be given to local foodbanks.
- **No conference bags:** We are using a conference app, Guidebooks, which will provide regularly updated information about the conference programme, social event details and other information (more information below).
- **Minimal single use goods:** We have sourced a 100% recycled reusable cup that delegates will be given on arrival to the conference. Drink stations will be available throughout the conference for colleagues to refill at their leisure.
- **Proximity of accommodation:** Due to our central location, hotel and accommodation options are mostly within walking distance of the conference venue.
- **Minimise carbon omissions:** Whilst UK-based speakers will (hopefully) be able to deliver their keynotes in person, all international speakers will deliver their talks remotely (unless they were already in the UK during the conference for other purposes).

Other important information

App: We will be using Guidebooks as our conference app. Delegates will need to download this in advance of the conference and all information will be provided here (including the programme, maps of Preston and more).

Keynotes: Information about our fantastic keynotes are now available on the website. This consists of a mixture of individual keynotes, panel sessions and a theatre performance from Certain Curtain Theatre Company. We have worked hard to ensure that the keynotes are diverse, ranging from academics, practitioners, activists and people with lived experience.

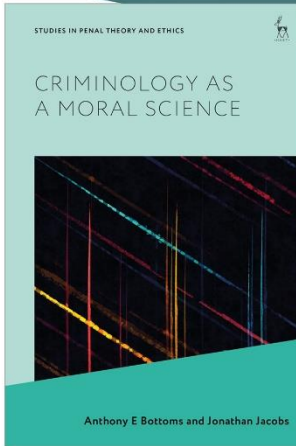
Social aspects: The main conference dinner will be held at The Imperial on Thursday 29th June and a drinks reception will be held on Wednesday 28th June at UCLan Student Centre. There will also be a conference dinner for the postgraduate conference on Tuesday 27th too. Please check the app, as we are planning on organising various other optional social meet ups throughout the conference too.

Postgraduate conference: The specific postgraduate conference will take place on Tuesday 27th June. This includes a mini keynote and a 'panel of peers' formed of academics, practitioners, and those with lived experience. As well as delegate sessions, there will be a workshop on publishing as a postgraduate and beyond. There will also be a poster competition and a prize awarded for the best paper.

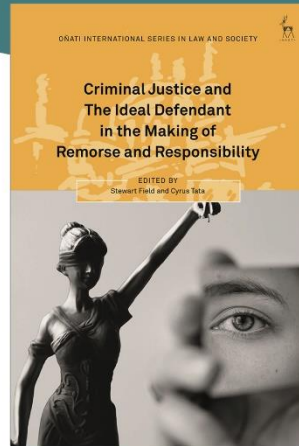
See you soon!

UCLan Conference Organisers: Charlotte Barlow, Laura Kelly-Corless, Jayn Pearson, Tom Cockcroft, Les Humphreys, Jen Hough, Abi Stark, Trudi Emmin, Georgia Bahri, Meg Todd, Tim Owen, Sarah Kingston, Emily Cooper, John Dempsey

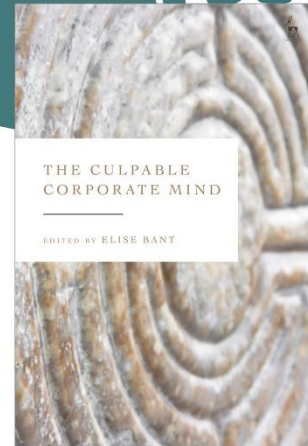
Criminology Books from Hart Publishing



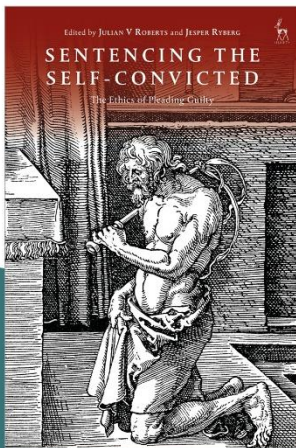
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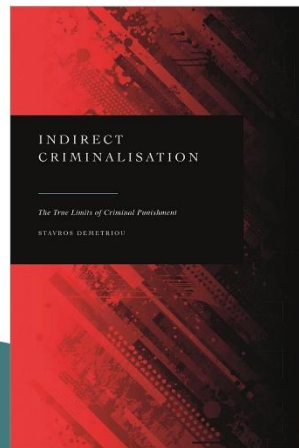
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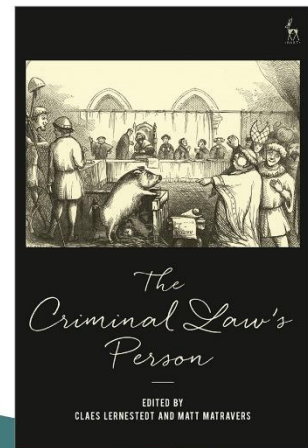
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BSC 2023

Publishing in Criminology at Emerald

Our team will be exhibiting at BSC 2023 - contact us to set up a meeting:

Katy Mathers, Senior Commissioning Editor - Books; kmathers@emerald.com Twitter: @katy_mathers

Catherine McAteer, Commissioning Editor - Journals; cmcateer@emerald.com

Journals

Find out more about our Criminology journals, and submit your paper via the journal homepages below.



Book series

The following series publish a mix of authored works and edited collections. Find out more information about each series here bit.ly/3ZDMxAx.

- Emerald Studies in Criminology, Feminism and Social Change
- Perspectives on Crime, Law and Justice in the Global South
- Emerald Studies in Digital Crime, Technology and Social Harms
- Emerald Advances in Historical Criminology
- Emerald Studies in Culture, Criminal Justice and the Arts
- Emerald Studies in Plural Policing
- Emerald Studies in Activist Criminology

Upcoming Book Highlights



The Emerald International Handbook of Activist Criminology explores the contemporary terrain around activist engagement, solidarity, and resistance.

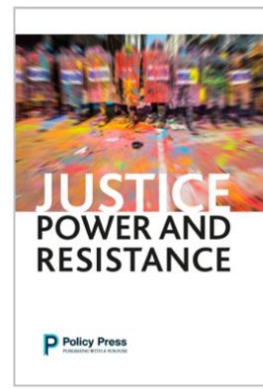
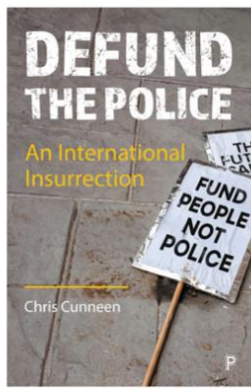
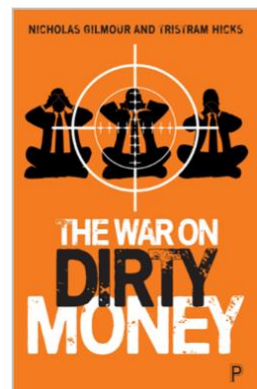
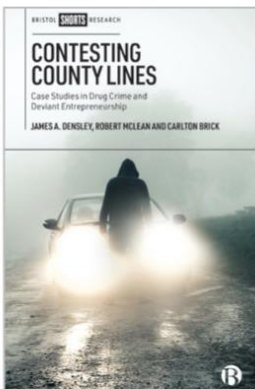
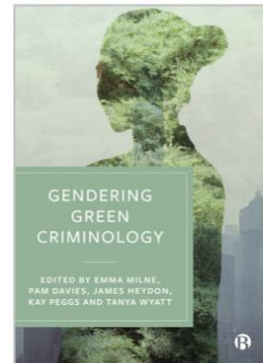
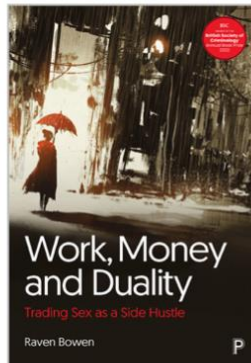
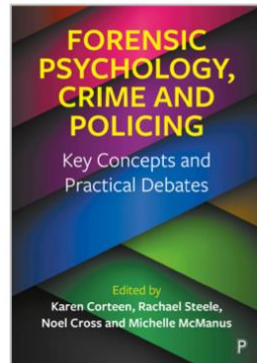
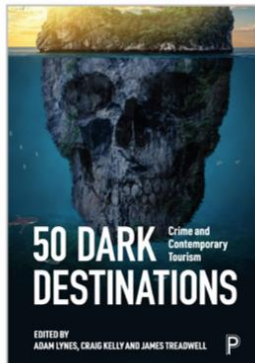


The Emerald International Handbook of Feminist Perspectives on Women's Acts of Violence challenges normative accounts of women's violence and offers new multidimensional conceptualisations of these acts.

To discuss your own book writing plans, reach out to Senior Commissioning Editor Katy Mathers; kmathers@emerald.com



Bristol University Press and Policy Press are pleased to sponsor the BSC postgraduate bursary scheme, enabling research students to attend the conference free of charge.



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The logo for the British Society of Criminology (BSC) consists of the letters 'BSC' in a white, serif font, set against a dark blue square background.

British Society of
Criminology

Papers from the British Criminology Conference 2023

Online Journal

Published by the British Society of Criminology since 1995. ISSN 1759-0043

The BSC *Online Journal* is an open-access, peer-reviewed, annual publication showcasing inspiring and insightful developments in criminological research, theories, policies, practices, and debates from contributors across all career stages.

All presenters at the British Society of Criminology annual conference, to be hosted by the University of Central Lancashire, are warmly invited to submit their plenary, panel, or postgraduate paper for consideration in the *Online Journal*.

Please email your paper to info@britsoccrim.org by **1st September 2023**.

The *Online Journal* is published annually in December.

[Click here to access the journal for free via the BSC website](#)

The very important small print

Only papers presented at the 2023 British Society of Criminology conference will be accepted for review. All papers are reviewed anonymously by at least two referees. Please indicate the category of paper (plenary, panel, or postgraduate). Papers must be written in English and will not have been published already, nor will they be under consideration elsewhere. Each paper should come with a separate cover sheet containing: the title of the paper; word count; author's full name; affiliation; email address; institutional address; telephone number; an abstract of 100-150 words; up to 5 key words; and a brief biographical note of 25-50 words. **The maximum length (including notes and references) is 6000 words.** Please use: Microsoft Word (or a compatible format), 1.5 spacing, generous margins, page numbers, and a maximum of three orders of heading. Keep essential notes to a minimum and use Endnotes (not Footnotes). Keep lengthy quotations to a minimum and indent these if over 40 words. Use quotation marks (and page number, where relevant) to indicate shorter quotations within the body of the text. Clearly present and label all Tables and Figures, including sources and explanatory notes if appropriate. Poor quality artwork will be rejected. Please make your images, tables, and artwork as accessible as possible using [Alt Text](#). Authors are responsible for the accuracy of quotations and references, and for obtaining permissions and copyright clearances if appropriate. Use Harvard referencing, for example (Hughes, 2020), and provide an alphabetical "References" list at the end (typed and 1.5 spaced). Papers should be proofread and carefully checked for errors prior to submission. *Submission does not guarantee publication in the journal.*

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