

CRIMINOLOGIST CORNER(ED)

The BSC's monthly interview with the great, the good and the...hoping for greatness

Number 31

May 2025

Dr Sarah Waite

Senior Lecturer - Leeds Beckett University



Where is home?

Leeds, and I am proud to have lived here all my life! I have strong roots within the city and have always been a home/family girl so never had any real desire to stray far. I did my undergrad and postgrad at the University of Leeds and my PhD at Leeds Beckett, where I now work.

How did you become a Criminologist?

Similarly to most people, I took a bit of a wandering path - I'd always had a strong interest in issues of injustice and went to read law as an undergraduate. However, all my electives' modules were criminology/ criminal justice, and it was here I became introduced to a broader and more critical understanding. After my undergraduate degree, I spent some years working on Drugs Intervention Programme and then for the Youth Offending Service, where I learned so much more in a 'real world' context. After this I moved to qualify as a teacher and led curriculum in an FE environment for several years. As much as I loved teaching, I was curious, loved learning, and wanted to develop research, so I made the jump to HE and started my PhD - which is probably when I began to recognise myself as a criminologist.

Who/what inspires you?

A tricky one - Generally, I'm inspired by strong, collaborative women, who lead and practice with empathy, and try to make a positive impact on society, often negotiating challenges within their own lives. I've been lucky enough to have worked with and met several women like this over the

years and have taken inspiration from each and every one. Women that are just doing their best and getting stuff done!

More specifically, as an undergraduate I remember feeling particularly inspired when I first read Pat Carlen's work, and then later, the work of Kelly Hannah-Moffat. Methodologically, my good friend and colleague Danica Darley changed the way I thought about co-production.

What advice would you give to your undergraduate self?

Be confident, stay true to yourself, and treasure all that you bring. I was painfully shy in my classes at university - purely because as a 21-year-old (which felt old!), first gen, with a regional accent at a Russell Group, I didn't identify or relate to any of the people in my year group. I didn't really understand why at the time, I just felt 'different'. I did well but I did isolate myself and would've probably gotten more out of the time had I had more confidence.

What is your greatest fear?

Workload allocation models...

What are you most passionate about?

My children, and social justice.

Who would play you in the film of your life?

It would have to be someone Northern, and with a bit of grit! Maybe someone like Sophie Willan - I love what she's achieved.

Which book that you haven't read do you most want to read?

There are a few books in my 'to read' pile at the moment. Gilly Sharpe's 'Women, Stigma, and Desistance from Crime', and 'Girl Zines: Making Media, Doing Feminism' by Alison Piepmeier are at the top!

What criminological work are you involved in at the moment?

I'm engaged in a number of projects are the moment, all of which are centered around the notion of 'gendered justice' and how the criminal justice system responds to women. It's an interesting time for this work, as it has had quite a bit of policy attention over the past few years. One project I've been working on is an evaluation of the Greater Manchester Problem Solving Courts for women with my colleague Dr Alexandria Bradley. We're currently writing up our report and really looking forward to being able to share the findings.

What do you hope to do next?

I've a few projects lined up that I'm very excited to work with colleagues on, all focused on women and the CJS. I've also been working with colleagues to explore Zines and their use in pedagogy and research, so I'm looking forward to seeing where 'Team Zine' go next.

What would you have done if you hadn't become a Criminologist?

I would've probably stayed in teaching as I do love being in the classroom, either that or something in the voluntary sector working with women.

And finally, please share the one Criminological book, one album and one luxury item you would take to your desert island.....

Book - Una Barr's 'Desisting Sisters, or (sorry, I know it's two) Stigma by Imogen Tyler

Album - anything by Oasis, but if I had to choose one, Definitely Maybe.

Luxury Item - I wouldn't want to be there without my tweezers!

BSC Hate Crime & Policing Networks Conference

5 June 2025

Hate Crime Perpetrators: The effectiveness of Criminal Justice Responses.

5 June 2025 9:30am - 4pm, Nottingham Trent University, NG1 4FQ.

A one-day hybrid conference organised by the BSC Hate Crime Network and BSC Policing Network, hosted by the NTU Hate Crime Research Group at Nottingham Trent University. The aim of this conference is to examine the motivations of hate crime perpetrators and the effectiveness of Criminal Justice responses to hate crime offending. The conference is targeted at academics, PGR candidates, researchers, policy makers, practitioners, professionals and interested others. There is no fee for the conference registration.

Any queries can be directed to Dr Irene Zempi (email: irene.zempi@ntu.ac.uk)

Appear in Criminologist Corner(ed)

DO YOU enjoy being scrutinised by strangers? Are there pressing issues you would like to shout about? Or do you just have a new book or article you would like to plug? If so then please get in touch and you could be the next face of 'Criminologist Corner(ed)'. Email steven.rawlings@britsoccrim.org

next month...

Tunde Adeparusi - Doctoral researcher at Keele University