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**Special edition:
Engagement and Co-production**

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The Editorial Board wishes to make clear that the views expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Prison Service.

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Editorial Comment

This special edition of the Prison Service Journal is dedicated to the subject of 'engagement and co-production' with people living in prison or who are under supervision in the community. Engagement and co-production include a range of collaborative practices which involve 'professionals and citizens making better use of each other's assets, resources and contributions to achieve better outcomes and/or improved efficiency'.¹

We start the edition with a synthesis of the existing empirical evidence on the subject, by Nicola Cunningham and Dr Helen Wakeling. The authors describe the varied forms of engagement and co-production, and through their review of prior research they succinctly describe the potential benefits of these activities in Criminal Justice settings. Their identification of factors that are more likely to make engagement and co-production activities a success (presented in both text and infographic form), as well as barriers to this, provide a particularly helpful resource for readers wishing to develop their own, or others' practice.

The next three articles present examples of co-production in practice. Firstly, Jason Morris and Zack Haider focus on the role of co-production in the development of digitally enabled interventions in justice settings. The authors share four exemplars and reflect towards the end of their article on considerations for doing this work well and safely. Secondly, Professor Beth Weaver writes about User Voice Prison Councils. Her article provides a fascinating consideration of the concept of 'epistemic justice', referring to a particular type of injustice that an individual suffers in their 'capacity as knower' because of their social position and association with a specific social group.² Weaver revisits prior research conducted with User Voice Prison Councils to explore the potential of this model as a mechanism for enabling epistemic participation in prison settings. And thirdly, Dr Sarah Lewis and Emma Hands' article introduces their evolving Integrated Model of Prison Engagement. They illustrate and bring the model's steps to life with prison-based case study examples.

The next article, authored by a young man in prison, Dr Isabelle Cullis and Annaliza Gaber, describes Project Future, a community based holistic mental health and wellbeing service for young people aged 16-25 who have experiences of the criminal justice system and/or are affected by serious youth violence. Project Future is a co-produced service, and in this article the authors reflect on their experiences as part of it; themes of trust,

respect, truly listening, and respecting choices appear often in their accounts.

As several of the previous articles point out, co-production and engagement in prison and probation settings is still in its infancy. The next article, by Ruth Walters, provides an account of some key milestones in developing this in HMPPS over recent years. In addition to describing areas of good practice that exist, Walters describes achievements including the development of Standards of Excellence for lived experience engagement work, the delivery of lived experience engagement events, and the creation of a national lived experience engagement network.

This edition includes two interviews. Firstly, Ian Walters, Beccy Archer, Carl and Dion (Governing Governor, Treatment Manager, and two Champions) are interviewed by Flora Fitzalan Howard about the 3Cs initiative at HMP Guys Marsh. This initiative aims to take collaborative working between staff and people living in prison a step further than more traditional schemes. Together the four reflect on their experiences, both positive and challenging, along the 3Cs journey from inception to present day. They identify suggestions that could help others develop similar schemes. Secondly, Karen Kendall, Participation Lead in HMI Probation is interviewed by Dr Marcia Morgan, about the dedicated role created by HMI Probation to support participation activity across all of probation inspections (adult, youth, and thematic).

This edition concludes with a book review, written by Dr Marcia Morgan, on 'Conviviality and Survival: Co-Producing Brazilian Prison Order' by Sacha Darke. The book maps the Brazilian prison system that is centred on co-governance and conviviality, drawing on data from ethnographies, biographies, and fieldwork to illuminate how order is co-produced by prisoners who have to collaborate, organise and self-govern to function within an environment that is overcrowded, understaffed, and underfunded. Morgan describes the book as 'compelling and discerning'.

We hope this edition will be a valuable and inspiring resource for people living and working in prisons, policy makers, and others with an interest in this field, and in engagement and co-production especially. Together, the contributions to this edition illustrate the value in more collaborative engaged, and co-produced practice in prison and probation settings. This special edition showcases some excellent examples of this and hopefully inspires us to further develop this practice.

1 Clinks and Revolving Door Agency. (2016). *A guide to Service user involvement and co-production*.

2 Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford University Press.

Engagement and Co-Production with People with Lived Experience of Prison and Probation: A synthesis of the evidence base.

Nicola Cunningham and Dr Helen Wakeling are part of the Evidence Based Practice Team in HM Prison and Probation Service

In recent years there has been mounting interest in the role of user engagement and co-production within public services, encouraging more voices to be heard and in doing so to improve service delivery. Whilst not yet as well-established within the Criminal Justice System (CJS) as in other fields such as healthcare,¹ the CJS has placed greater emphasis on engaging, involving, and empowering individuals and communities to shape and influence the services they receive.² This has been motivated by an interest in creating the right conditions for calm, constructive environments, characterised by trusting and respectful relationships that enable and reinforce positive change.

User engagement within the CJS has been defined as 'a participatory and collaborative approach between citizen consumers of services, policy makers and professionals to the design, delivery and evaluation of criminal justice policies, services and practices.'³ Co-production can be regarded as an extension of user engagement, defined as 'the public sector and citizens making better use of each other's assets and resources

to achieve better outcomes and improved efficiency'.⁴ The aims of co-production have been described as:⁵

- perceiving the people who use services as equal partners with something valuable to give,
- breaking down barriers between people with lived experience and professionals,
- building on people's capabilities,
- developing peer support networks,
- facilitating services to become agents of change, and,
- ultimately, improving service outcomes.

The terms engagement and co-production will be used interchangeably within this article. Also, the term 'people with lived experience' will be used to describe those people who have experience of either spending time previously or currently in prison, or with experience of being on probation through serving a community sentence or a period on licence.

There are many ways in which engagement and co-production can be applied within the CJS as shown in the table below. Whilst there has been significant increase in these sorts of activities, most schemes have been local or ad hoc rather than collective or led at an organisational level.⁶

-
1. Freeman, L. R., Waldman, M., Storey, J., Williams, M., Griffiths, C., Hopkins, K., Beer, E., Bidmead, L., & Davies, J. (2016). Working towards co-production in rehabilitation and recovery services. *The Journal of Mental Health Training, Education and practice*, 11, 197-207.
 2. Weaver, B. (2018). Co production, governance and practice: The dynamics and effects of User Voice Prison Councils. *Soc Policy Admin*, 53, 249-264.
 3. Weaver, B., & McCulloch, T. (2012). *Co-producing Criminal Justice Executive Summary*. Scottish Government Social Research. www.sccjr.ac.uk.
 4. Clinks and Revolving Door Agency. (2016). *A guide to Service user involvement and co-production*.
 5. Weaver, B., Lightowler, C., & Moodie, K. (2019). *Inclusive Justice. Co-producing change. A practical guide to service user involvement in community justice*. University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.
 6. See footnote 5: Weaver, B., Lightowler, C., & Moodie, K. (2019).

Type of Engagement and Co-production	What does this look like?
Consultation and feedback	Gathering feedback from people with lived experience via questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, workshops, suggestion boxes, complaints procedures etc. Gathering the voice of people with lived experience in this way helps in feeding back what has been heard into service design and delivery.
Forums, councils, or panels	Involves a group of people with lived experience coming together to discuss a topic or policy. This engagement can be used as part of a one-off consultation process or as an ongoing route for hearing the voice of prisoners or people on probation. At some, prisons senior staff may use the council as a means of sharing information or setting out the rationale for different decisions. At other sites, the council is a place for more collaborative working in which prisoners are actively engaged in decision-making processes and reform. ⁷
Peer-led work	Involving people with lived experience in the communication, education, and skills development of others; the provision of social, emotional, or practical support provided and received by people with similar experiences; developing supportive relationships with others; or helping to connect, support, and engage people with similar attributes or experiences to them with health and welfare services.
Service design and delivery	Involving people with lived experience in the design and delivery of services or one-off projects. ⁸
Recruitment and Governance	Involving people with lived experience in the selection and recruitment of staff and trustees or sitting on the organisation's board or management committee.
Participatory action research, quality assurance and monitoring	Involving people with lived experience in the evaluation and research of services or projects, or supporting quality assurance processes and monitoring of the implementation of services to ensure they meet the needs of users.
User led-organisations	Involvement of organisations (such as User Voice and Unlock) which are led by people with lived experience and intend to access, hear, and act upon the experiences and insights of those with lived experience. These organisations often conduct research and engage in consultancy and advocacy work and create space for the expression of interests and views to diverse audiences.

In this article, we aim to summarise the peer reviewed literature on engagement and co-production within prison and probation settings, as well as in other settings. A thorough literature review was conducted using EBSCO and Google scholar. This article will outline the ways in which engagement and co-production are thought to improve outcomes and explore whether these activities achieve this, as well as to identify some of the reported barriers to engagement and co-production. We will also draw together the evidence on how best to deliver these types of activities, in ways which are most

likely to achieve positive outcomes. We can do so with some reliability although more work needs to be done to establish causal links between different types of engagement and better outcomes.

The theory behind engagement and co-production. Why might this practice make a difference?

The intention of engagement and co-production is to provide benefits to everyone involved — to the

7. Solomon, E. & Edgar, K. (2004). *Having Their Say: The work of prisoner Councils*. London: Prison Reform Trust.

8. Morris, J., & Knight, V. (2018). Co-producing digitally enabled courses that promote desistance in prison and probation settings. *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice*.

people subject to prison and probation and their families, to staff across prison and probation and to our partners in different agencies and to the wider public. It is proposed that such engagement supports several different outcomes which are set out below.⁹

1. Desistance from offending and social integration

Involvement in activities that contribute to the well-being of others (such as peer mentoring, peer support or other volunteering activities) can change the way people see themselves, and how others see them, resulting in a shift in identity (towards a pro-social identity) alongside the benefits being delivered to others. There is good evidence that activities that enable people to 'do good' can reduce antisocial and risk-taking behaviour among young people, and some evidence that this can support desistance from crime.¹⁰ Being involved in these activities can also support the development of new social networks and can increase peoples' social capital.¹¹

Providing people with opportunities to shape change, drive direction, and improve outcomes can be an important component of supporting desistance. These opportunities also have the capacity to promote civic reintegration, to build trust and respect and can contribute to a sense of social inclusion and community.¹²

2. Promoting citizenship and social justice

Engagement and co-production can be regarded as examples of active citizenship, enabling people to engage with, and have access to, public services and resources.¹³ Such activities can promote social cohesion providing equal opportunities for participation and mitigating circumstances that might otherwise permit exclusion or discrimination.

3. Increasing effectiveness, compliance, credibility, and legitimacy

Using the experience and expertise of those with lived experience to inform the development and delivery of services can enhance the credibility, meaning or legitimacy of those services for users, and potentially make them more fit for purpose and more effective.¹⁴ Evidence suggests that engagement can improve the delivery of services both in operational terms but also in relation to outcomes, such as supporting compliance, and perceived improvements in self-esteem, self-efficacy, and confidence.¹⁵

4. Improving relationships and culture

Co-production can also encourage collaborative practices between people with lived experience and professionals supporting the development of positive relationships.¹⁶ For example, prison councils have been described as a conflict management tool aiding greater understanding between staff and people in prison, through discussion and negotiation.¹⁷ Co-production also sits well within the model of a 'rehabilitative prison', in which the environment, the staff and everyday processes all aim to create the right conditions for calm, for hope and for positive change.¹⁸

What does the evidence tell us about different methods of engagement and co-production?

Six systematic or narrative reviews relating to engagement and co-production were found.¹⁹ Although not all were related to the CJS they provided helpful sources of learning on the topic. Much of the evidence was qualitative in nature. There was some promising evidence that community engagement and co-production has a positive effect on a range of health

9. See footnote 5: Weaver, B., Lightowler, C., & Moodie, K. (2019).

10. Intravia, J., Pelletier, E., Wolff, K. T., & Baglivio, M. T. (2017). Community disadvantage, prosocial bonds and juvenile reoffending: A multi-level mediation analysis. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 15, 240-263.

11. Maruna, S. (2001). *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts reform and rebuild their lives*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association Books.

12. See footnote 3: Weaver, B., & McCulloch, T. (2012).

13. See footnote 3: Weaver, B., & McCulloch, T. (2012).

14. See footnote 3: Weaver, B., & McCulloch, T. (2012).

15. Clinks (2011). *A review of service user involvement in prisons and probation trusts*; Robinson, G., & McNeill, F. (2008). Exploring the dynamics of compliance with community penalties. *Theoretical Criminology*, 12, 431-449.

16. Weaver, B. (2018) Co production, governance, and practice: The dynamics and effects of User Voice Prison Councils. *Soc Policy Admin*, 53, 249-264

17. See footnote 7: Solomon, E. & Edgar, K. (2004).

18. Mann, R. E., Fitzalan Howard, F., & Tew, J. (2018). What is a rehabilitative prison culture? *Prison Service Journal*, 235, 3-9; Mann, R. (2019). Rehabilitative Culture Part 2: An update on evidence and practice. *Prison Service Journal*, 244, 3- 10.

19. O'Mara-Eves, A., Brunton, G., Oliver, S., Kavanagh, J., Jamal, F., & Thomas, J. (2015). The effectiveness of community engagement in public health interventions for disadvantaged groups: a meta-analysis. *BMC Public Health*; Lloyd, N., Kenny, A., & Hyett, N. (2021). Evaluating health service outcomes of public involvement in health service design in high-income countries: a systematic review. *BMC Health Services Research*, 21, 364; Boswell, N., & Woods, K. (2021). Facilitators and barriers of co-production of services with children and young people within education, health, and care services. *Educational & Child Psychology*, 38, 41-53; Sicilia, M., Sancino, A., Nabatchi, T., & Guarini, E. (2019). Facilitating Coproduction in Public Services: Management Implications from a Systematic Literature Review. *Public Money & Management*, 39, 233-240; Clifton, J. (2020). ICT-enabled co-production of public services: Barriers and enablers. A systematic review. *Information Policy*, 1, 1-24; Rosenberg, D., & Hillborg, H. (2016). Systematizing Knowledge of User Influence – A study of user advisory boards in substance abuse and mental health services. *Social Policy and Administration*, 50, 336-352.

behaviours and psychosocial outcomes. However, as engagement was often part of a wider intervention, it proved difficult to attribute better outcomes to that one element alone, or to determine the magnitude of these improvements due to inadequate descriptions of study design and poor levels of reporting.

Forums, Councils or Panels

We found several research studies on the utility of councils or forums. A survey of English and Welsh prisons found that the voices of people in prison are most often heard through forums such as prisoner councils,²⁰ which provide a platform to share proposals, review practices and listen to concerns.²¹ Studies were largely UK-based and qualitative, although findings from studies that took mixed method approaches, or used a comparison group complemented the qualitative findings. This body of evidence suggested that prison councils and forums were valued by both staff and people in prison. Prison councils can aid the development of mutual and stronger relationships between people with lived experience and professionals.²² For instance, staff reported that positive engagement with people in prison improved job satisfaction. Those with lived experience spoke of becoming ambassadors for others through their participation, in councils, by creating fairer and safer systems for all, and empowering others also to make positive changes. This encouraged wider participation enabling quieter voices within the population to be heard, and for senior prison staff to understand the impact of policies and areas of concern more fully.

A UK service evaluation found that councils helped build trust between staff and people in prison.²³

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However, there was a mixed picture in terms of any links between the use of prison councils with metrics such as assault rates, complaints, or numbers of adjudications in comparison to similar prisons without such councils — and the research could not isolate the specific impact of prisoner engagement from other influences on these outcomes.

Further research indicates that forums may have the potential to reduce rates of recidivism. An American study explored the effects of Project Safe Neighbourhood (PSN) forums on the rates of recidivism of men on licence with convictions for violence.²⁴ The aim of the forum was to strengthen connections between people on licence and professionals within the CJS, to promote desistance. The researchers reported that forums (incorporating principles of procedural justice into a wider crime reduction framework) impacted on rates of recidivism. It was found that forum groups effectively lengthened the amount of time a person spent in the community with rearrest rates 30 per cent lower than the comparison group. These positive results were attributed to the characteristics of the forum and improved perceptions of legitimacy.

Peer Led Work

Several theoretical papers propose that peer-led work can aid desistance by providing good role modelling to others, building resilience, supporting people to learn to cope with criminogenic factors, providing hope, connecting people with services, enhancing social capital, and developing more positive and trusting relationships with others.²⁵

A number of evaluations of peer-led projects have found peer support to be beneficial for both the person delivering the support and the person receiving the

20. Levenson, J., & Farrant, F. (2002). Active Citizenship and volunteering by Prisoners. *Probation Journal*, 49, 195-204.

21. See footnote 7: Solomon, E. & Edgar, K. (2004).

22. Weaver, B. (2018). Co production, governance and practice: The dynamics and effects of User Voice Prison Councils. *Soc Policy Admin*, 53, 249-264; Schmidt, B. E. (2013). User Voice and the Prison Council Model: A summary of key findings from an ethnographic exploration of participatory governance in three English prisons. *Prison Service Journal*, 209, 12-17; Schmidt, B. E. (2020). *Democratising Democracy: Reimagining prisoners as active citizens through participatory governance*. Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge.

23. Barry, M., Weaver, B., Liddle, M., Schmidt., & Renshaw, J. (2016). *Evaluation of the User Voice Prison and Community Councils. Final Report*. University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

24. Wallace, D., Papachristos, A.V., Meares, T., & Fagan, J. (2016). Desistance and Legitimacy: The Impact of Offender Notification Meetings on Recidivism among High Risk Offenders. *Justice Quarterly*, 33, 1237– 1264.

25. See Freeman, J. R., et al. (2016); Lenkens, M., Nagelhout, G. E., Schenk, L., Sentse, M., Severiens, S., Engbersen, G. et al. (2021). 'I (really) know what you mean'. Mechanisms of experiential peer support for young people with criminal behaviour: a qualitative study. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 44, 535-552.

support.²⁶ Peer support has also been found to reduce reoffending and to improve the quality of life for those released from prisons (although again it is difficult to isolate the influence of the peer mentors from other parts of the service).²⁷ The Listeners scheme within prisons is probably the most widespread peer-led approach, and there is growing evidence of the positive impacts this can have on those involved in the scheme.²⁸

Service Design and Delivery

A small number of qualitative studies relating to the use of engagement and co-production in service design and delivery were found, but very few of these were within the context of the CJS.

Outside of the CJS, one study exploring co-production with vulnerable young people through digital storytelling stressed the importance of mutual learning between professionals and young people.²⁹ The aim was to make the organisation more responsive to the needs of the young people by giving them the chance to take on the role of educator thereby improving communications within formal childcare meetings and decision-making forums. A similar study echoed these findings — mutual learning and operating within the comfort zones of young people were described as key features in securing young people's involvement.³⁰

Research has also been conducted within the prison setting. People with lived experience described

co-producing a UK digitally enabled offending behaviour programme (Timewise) in prison as being a transformative and rehabilitative experience.³¹ The study concluded that involving people in prison in this work created legitimacy as well as increased the chances that the user needs were understood and met during programme design.

Further, it was reported in a recent report by HMI Probation that staff surveyed felt positive that engagement and co-production activity led to improvements in service delivery and skill development for those with lived experience.³²

Participatory Action Research

We could find only a few studies involving people with lived experience in evaluating services or interventions, but these studies do indicate that the involvement of people with lived experience in research can lead both to new knowledge and personal transformation. Studies report a sense of increased agency, self-worth, and confidence for co-researchers.³³

In an evaluation study of an American prison education program Think Tank (an inside-outside model in which members meet regularly on a voluntary basis to facilitate learning

community focused work) it was found that participation provided opportunity for growth, skill development, social capital and facilitated identity transformation.³⁴ And in a further qualitative study involving young people in prison with care experience,³⁵

The participatory approach allowed the development of empathy among the young people and a desire to help other members of their newfound community.

26. South, J., Bagnall, A., Hulme, C., Woodall, J., Longo, R., Dixey, R., Kinsella, K., Raine, G., Vinall, Collier, K. & Wright, J. (2014). A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of peer-based interventions to maintain and improve offender health in prison settings. *Health Services and Delivery Research*, 2(35). ISSN 2050-4349; Whyte, B. (2011). Evaluation of the Routes Out of Prison: Final Report. The Wise Group.
27. Pro Bono Economics. (2001). *St Giles Trust's Through the Gates: An Analysis of Economic Impact*.
28. Stone, R. (2016). Desistance and identity repair: Redemption narratives as resistance to stigma. *British Journal of Criminology*, 56, 956-975. Perrin, C., & Blagden, N. (2014). Accumulating meaning, purpose and opportunities to change 'drip by drip': The impact of being a listener in prison. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 20(9), 902-920.
29. Heron, G., & Steckly, L. (2020). Digital storytelling using co-production with vulnerable young people. *Journal of social work*, 20, 411-430.
30. Franklin, P., Hossain, R., & Coren, E. (2016). Social media and young people's involvement in social work education. *Social Work Education*, 35, 344-356.
31. See footnote 8: Morris, J., & Knight, V. (2018).
32. HMI Probation. (2019). Service user involvement in the review and improvement of probation services. *Research and Analysis Bulletin*, 2019/03.
33. Haarmans, M., PAR Team (Aaron, Dean, Iain, KT, Lee, Paul, Stefan, Steven), Perkins, E., & Jellicoe-Jones, L. (2020). "It's Us Doing It!" The power of participatory research in prison: A contradiction in terms? – Phase 1. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 20, 238-252.
34. Allred, S. L., Boyd, C., Cotton, T., & Perry, P. (2020). Participatory Evaluation in a Prison Education Program: Meaning & Community Building within Inside-Out Think Tanks. *Corrections: Policy, Practice and Research*, 5, 6- 27.
35. Hartworth, C., Simpson, D., & Attewell, H. (2021). Coproduction, participation and empowerment: A participatory evaluation of a young care leavers project in prison. *Probation Journal*, 68, 107-115.

the research team suggest that co-production and the participatory approach allowed the development of empathy among the young people and a desire to help other members of their newfound community.

Research also supports the use of participatory action research in probation settings. A recent User Voice research study within Leicestershire and Rutland Probation areas reported that both staff and people who used their services recognised the value of having people with lived experience contributing to the design, evaluation, and delivery of services; although all recognised that developing this agenda further would require investment, time and commitment from both users and service providers and commissioners.³⁶

Summary of key findings

The small body of evidence we found indicates that there are many potential benefits to engaging with people with lived experience and to collaborate on co-production including:

- enabling voices and enhancing a sense of fairness
- improving relationships amongst peer groups and with professionals
- influencing culture change
- role modelling and reinforcing citizenship
- giving hope and autonomy
- creating opportunities to support processes of desistance
- demonstrating an inclusive and responsive approach in using different methods, channels, and media for different group

What does 'good' look like?

The evidence we have reviewed indicates several factors which are more likely to bring greater success in engagement and co-production activities. These include:

Responsivity is important; listening to what people want to get involved in, and how, is critical to success.

Clear structure and routines: Taking the necessary steps to prepare and planning to embed activities, having a clear strategy and action plan for developing engagement are more likely to lead to successful outcomes.³⁷ Providing continuous leadership and promoting opportunities for learning and skill development is important.³⁸ Clear roles and structures also help establish legitimacy of the activities.

Accessibility: Making sure everyone can contribute is important, as is ensuring diversity in participation. In one study which examined people in prison's understanding of co-production, it was seen by many as a 'tick box' exercise and not a real way for them to contribute, demonstrating the importance of setting up these activities well and making sure they are accessible.³⁹ In another study many felt that to be able

to actively engage in co-production they had to no longer be dealing with issues of mental health, addictions, or literacy etc. In this way, practices of co-production may not always involve a fully representative group of those in prison. However, successful co-production within the CJS requires involvement from all members of the community, including from underrepresented and/or rarely heard groups.⁴⁰

Design schemes to meet the needs of the people in prison or on probation:⁴¹ Responsivity is important; listening to what people want to get involved in, and how, is critical to success. This may be achieved by focusing on individuals' strengths;⁴² thus building confidence through peoples' strengths as experts in their own experience. Evidence from outside of the CJS also highlights how the use of digital technology can be used to enable co-production activities, particularly for younger people.⁴³

Leadership, buy in and resources: Success of engagement and co-production is more likely when there is buy-in from Senior Management Teams (SMT) as demonstrated within a large prison-based UK study.⁴⁴

36. User Voice. *Involving Service Users in Probation. Developing a continuum of staff and user support in Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Service.*

37. See footnote 4: Clinks and Revolving Door Agency. (2016).

38. See footnote 1: Freeman, L. R., et al. (2016).

39. McCulloch, T. & Members of Positive Prison? Positive Futures (2016). Co-producing justice sanctions? Citizen perspectives. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 16, 431–451.

40. Weaver, B. (2011). Co-producing Community Justice: The transformative potential of personalisation for penal sanctions. *British Journal of Social Work*, 41, 1038-1057.

41. See footnotes 1 and 5: Freeman, J. R., et al. (2016); Weaver, B., et al. (2019); Edgar, K., Jacobson, J., & Biggar. (2011). *Time well spent: A practical guide to active citizenship and volunteering in prison.* Prison Reform Trust.

42. De Leon, N., Mager, B., & Armani, J. (2018). Service Design in Criminal Justice: A Co-production to Reduce Reoffending, *Irish Probation Journal*, 15, 139-147

43. See footnote 30: Franklin, P., et al. (2016).

44. See footnote 7: Solomon, E., & Edgar, K. (2004).

In this study, SMT support (for councils) ensured that any issues raised were quickly responded to. Within these establishments prison councils were also more clearly at the centre of prison life, suggesting buy-in from the staff and prisoners. Protecting time and resource in the prison day for these activities is important.

Effective and regular communication: Timely and relevant information from the early set-up stage and through to recruitment is essential, as is creating feedback loops and being transparent in decision making. Providing reasoning for why recommendations have been actioned or not is also more likely to lead to sustained change, build trust and promote legitimacy of the initiative.⁴⁵

Positive relationships: Research indicates that empowering, trusting, non-punishing, nurturing and reciprocal relationships which aim to build people's confidence, capacity, self-worth and purpose, aid positive co-production. Allowing space and time for relationships to form and processes to embed will make a difference.⁴⁶

Consider influence of hierarchical structures:⁴⁷

Acknowledging professional and hierarchical attitudes will be helpful, as will finding ways to mitigate barriers so that everyone feels encouraged to contribute and to share their knowledge.

Procedural justice: Related to all the aforementioned factors the research suggests that to fully progress co-production and engagement within the CJS we need to further improve the perceptions of our systems as fair,⁴⁸ inline with the theory of procedural justice.⁴⁹ Applying the four principles of procedural justice (neutrality, respect, voice, and trustworthiness) in engagement and co-production activities, has found to boost levels of engagement, energy, and connectedness, as well as mitigated some resistance and promoted diversity in the voices heard.⁵⁰

Whole system approach: Ensuring that the policies, procedures, resources, support, activities, opportunities, skills, and knowledge are in place to enable people in prison or on probation to become involved is critical. Making sure that the structures are in

place to embed this within the organisation, that any activity is sustainable,⁵¹ and ensuring evaluation systems are in place to monitor, review and evaluate practices are also key.

What are the barriers to effective engagement and coproduction activities?

A number of studies highlight some barriers to successful implementation of engagement and co-production activities. These include:

Culture and trust: The increased use of engagement and co-production within prisons can represent significant shifts in more traditional ways of working and communicating. In several qualitative studies,⁵² researchers found that the process of co-production was negatively affected when prison officers felt themselves to be overlooked by management, particularly during periods of turmoil and rapid change. If there is no platform for staff voices to be actively heard, then there is likely to be much less support for engagement with the people in their care.

A large-scale UK study found that prison environments that hold onto or revert to more traditional cultures in times of adversity, are difficult places for prisoner engagement and co-production to flourish, as resistance, perceptions of injustice, and 'us and them' attitudes prevail. Further, even when councils have been established, poor standards of delivery can be detrimental to creating a more positive culture for staff and prisoners.

A further UK study monitored the Measuring Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) and Staff Quality of Life (SQL) survey data at two prisons across a 3-year period.⁵³ It was found that 'traditional prison culture' (negative/unhelpful attitude towards people in prison and management) impacted negatively on the function of the councils and attempts made to implement purposeful change. Prisons with a higher rating of 'traditional culture' showed greater resistance to councils, although the nature of the study meant they

Allowing space and time for relationships to form and processes to embed will make a difference.

45. See footnotes 1 and 19: Sicilia, M., et al. (2019); Freeman, L. R., et al. (2016).

46. See footnote 33: Haarmans, M., et al. (2020).

47. See footnote 19: Rosenberg, D., & Hillborg, H. (2016).

48. See footnote 39: McCulloch, T. (2016).

49. Fitzalan Howard, F., & Wakeling H. (2020). People in Prisons' Perceptions of Procedural Justice in England and Wales. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*. 47, 1654-1676.

50. See for example, footnotes 2, 7, and 29: Solomon, E., & Edgar, K. (2004); Weaver, B. (2018); Heron, G., & Steckly, L. (2020).

51. See footnote 5: Weaver, B., et al. (2019).

52. See footnotes 22 and 23: Barry, M., et al. (2016); Schmidt, B. E. (2013).

53. See footnote 22: Schmidt, B. E. (2020).

could not establish direct links between council activity and positive change.

Lack of motivation for participation: It can be hard to motivate people, both staff and people in prison or on probation, to get involved in co-production activities.⁵⁴ This may stem in part from negative attitudes towards activities, or from a lack of trust.⁵⁵ Additionally, people may drop out of initiatives, or move on from that area/site, so services will want to anticipate this and build in means of sustaining engagement activity and maintaining strong communication channels to attract engagement.

Lack of time, commitment, managerial support and resources:⁵⁶ When co-production is undertaken inefficiently or ineffectively this is often through lack of coordination, lack of investment, lack of skills or over-regulation.⁵⁷ Commitment at every level is critical — aligning engagement with the core values of that institution.⁵⁸

Lack of training: For some co-production activities, particularly those involving the generation of research, a lack of knowledge about conducting research can be problematic. Providing digital training to develop or advance technical skills is also helpful particularly when engaging with older people and women (as reported in a systematic review examining the barriers of information and communications technology enabled co-production of public services).⁵⁹

Lack of good quality evidence: Co-production is often localised, small in scale, and unfortunately often not robustly evaluated. This makes it difficult to understand what works, with whom and how best to implement these activities.⁶⁰ We require a stronger agreed understanding of co-production and a stronger evidence base to enable those activities that make a real impact for all involved.⁶¹

Conclusion

The evidence base for engagement and co-production activities within the prison and probation

settings is still developing — there is certainly a need for more robust studies that more clearly demonstrate the value of collaboration and co-production in different areas of HMPPS services. Much of the research is exploratory or qualitative in nature although has the advantage of being predominantly UK-based. Most of the research we found relates to co-production and engagement in the prison setting; little research was found within probation settings. As the evidence grows so too will our confidence in the various benefits for people across various outcomes.

One review on prisoner engagement concluded that without co-production, and the associated signals of trust and respect for the people in our care, effective and safe management of prisons would be under threat.⁶² And indeed, the evidence reviewed in this article signals those activities which promote the voices and engagement of people with lived experience have the potential to support HMPPS' purpose. But further robust research is needed to determine the mechanisms that work best and to further understand the impact for different groups of people. At present the evidence suggests that co-production and engagement could be beneficial for people with lived experience and prison and probation staff, and may improve relationships, develop services which better meet the needs of those they are designed for, support a learning culture, develop more positive and rehabilitative cultures in prisons and generate feelings of hope and citizenship. But to enhance the potential of co-production and engagement several elements need attention. This includes ensuring support from leadership, protecting time and providing the right training and resources, ensuring we are responsive to all, and focusing on good communication and positive relationships. A summary of the key findings from this review are shown in Figure 1.

54. See footnote 1: Freeman, J. R., et al. (2016)

55. See footnote 19: Clifton, J. (2020).

56. See footnote 19: Clifton, J. (2020).

57. Loeffler, E., & Bovaird, T. (2019). Assessing the impact of co-production on pathways to outcomes in public services: The case of policing and criminal justice. *International Public Management Journal*, 23, 205-223.

58. See footnote 1: Freeman, J. R., et al. (2016).

59. See footnote 19: Clifton, J. (2020).

60. McCulloch, T. (2015). Beyond compliance: Participation, co-production and change in justice sanction. *European Journal of Probation*, 7, 40-57.

61. Boyle, D., & Harris, M. (2009). *The Challenge of Coproduction. How equal partnerships between professionals and the public are crucial to improving public services.*

62. See footnote 41: Edgar, K., et al. (2011).

Figure 1: Engagement and co-production with people with lived experience of prison and probation evidence review: summary of findings and recommendations

ENGAGEMENT AND CO-PRODUCTION WITH PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF PRISON AND PROBATION

The evidence base for engagement and co-production is still developing. Evidence indicates that there are **several factors** more likely to bring **greater success** in engagement and co-production activities. *What does good look like?*

Evidence suggests that engagement activities contribute to the development of a calmer, more rehabilitative culture creating the conditions necessary to support desistance.

Leadership, buy in and resources creates trust that co-production activities are for the benefit of all

- Protect time and resource for co-production activities.
- Raise awareness of the potential benefits of co-production and engagement activities.



Design schemes to meet the needs of the people in prison or on probation

- Actively listen to what people want to get involved in, and how.
- Build confidence through a 'strengths-based approach'.
- Consider the most appropriate medium for co-production activities.

Accessibility

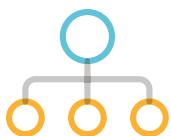
- Provide a continuum of opportunities to secure engagement and promote inclusiveness.
- Be responsive to 'individuals' needs' to secure contribution from everyone.

Effective and regular communication is more likely to lead to sustained change

- Provide timely and relevant information about the purpose, need for and importance of engagement and co-production activities.
- Set up communication routes from the early set-up stage and through recruitment.
- Demonstrate how views have been acted upon providing explanation for in-action or non-intervention.

Clear Structure and Routines help to establish legitimacy

- Take steps to prepare and plan.
- Ensure that roles are defined and that there is clear organisational structure.
- Build in routines for collaborative practices.
- Promote opportunities for learning and skill development.



A whole system approach

- Create a culture and ethos by putting co-production approaches into action.
- Consider whether the correct policies, procedures, resources, support, opportunities, skills, and knowledge are in place to enable people with lived experiences to actively contribute.
- Ensure evaluation systems are in place to monitor, review and evaluate practices.

Consider influence of hierarchical structure

- Acknowledge professional and hierarchical attitudes and how they may influence engagement and co-production activities.
- Demonstrate respect and appreciation of varying cultures, knowledge, and experiences.

Positive relationships

- Identify opportunities to empower people, provide support and show appreciation.
- Consider ways to develop reciprocal relationships which aim to build people's confidence, capacity, self-worth, and purpose.



Applying the **four principles of procedural justice (neutrality, respect, voice and trustworthiness)** when delivering engagement and co-production activities can **boost levels of engagement, energy, and connectedness**, mitigate **potential resistance**, and promote **diversity in the voices heard**, maximising the chances of **success**.

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Co-production and digitally-enabled interventions in justice settings

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Technology has been used to good effect for many years within educational settings and the personal development arena more broadly. Digital media, apps and virtual learning environments are now standard tools for many of us when developing new knowledge and skills. By comparison, the criminal justice sector has lagged behind in its use of technology to support people who choose to work towards positive life goals. Notwithstanding, the focus of government digital services on 'user needs, not government needs' provides an important direction for efforts to digitally-enable the desistance agenda. This article brings together two unique yet converging perspectives on how we can place service users at the heart of technology designed to promote desistance.

Although the authors of this article come from very different backgrounds, both have led initiatives to design and support the delivery of interventions. One common observation made on these separate paths has been the appetite for innovation amongst lived experience leaders, academics, interventions facilitators, managers and service users. This has inspired and encouraged both authors to explore opportunities to co-produce technological adjuncts to make interventions more responsive to the needs of participants. Recently, these perspectives have been combined in a project to share the stories and voices of experts-by-experience by co-producing digital content for an intervention for people with drink or drug driving offences. This collaboration has affirmed the authors' belief in the importance of co-production and user-led design in creating responsive interventions. In this article, we aim to articulate how co-production can lead to more inclusive, culturally competent services by blending theory with lived experience. We also discuss some potential future directions for the development

of digitally-enabled interventions made with and for people with lived experience of justice settings.

This article provides an exposition of the views of the authors in an emerging area of policy and practice. These views are not intended to pre-empt or prohibit any future changes to the way that digital strategies are used within interventions in HMPPS.

Lived experiences within justice settings

The value of 'subjective perceptions' of lived experience in the criminal justice system is evident in the growing number of peer-led organisations and networks delivering services to people in prisons and on probation in England and Wales.² Within HMPPS, there is increasing recognition of the benefits of incorporating lived experience into the design and delivery of services. Through forums such as the HMPPS Lived Experience Engagement Network, practitioners and policy leads can now forge collaborative partnerships with lived experience leaders and peer-led organisations.

One such organisation is Intuitive Thinking Skills, which was established in 2004 by the second author and his co-Director (Peter Bentley). They were motivated by their own personal experiences of the healthcare, social care, and criminal justice sectors. They sought to offer a peer-led 'recovery orientated' alternative to medicalised and spiritual/faith-based services that were prevalent at that time. Recovery orientated practice requires a commitment to creating preconditions for recovery (as defined by the service user) by enhancing hope, building working relationships and developing 'citizenship skills' (e.g., being active, empowered, self-determining and self-managing in one's own life).³ Recovery oriented practice inspired the second author to design and deliver a range of educational and skills-based services. This has

1. Bracken, M. (2015). Mapping New Ideas for the Digital Justice System. Available at: <https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2015/08/18/mapping-new-ideas-for-the-digital-justice-system-2/> (Accessed 02/04/22).
2. Maruna, S. & LeBel, T. (2003). Welcome Home? Examining the "Reentry Court" Concept from a Strengths-based Perspective. *Western Criminology Review*, 4(2), 91-107.
3. Le Boutillier C., Leamy M., Bird, V., et al (2011). What does recovery mean in practice? A qualitative analysis of international recovery-oriented practice guidance. *Psychiatric Services*, 62, 1470-6.

been aided by an agile service development approach that attunes service design to the challenges faced by communities. This model embeds lived experience at every level of the business. Ex-service users are recruited as mentors, trainers and 'impact and quality assurance officers' who deliver peer review sessions to capture, read, listen to, collate and most importantly act on the insights, feedback and suggestions of current service users.

The first author's career path reflects 21 years working within HMPPS in various roles developing and delivering psychologically informed interventions that promote desistance. The last five years of this have involved the development of 'complementary digital media'⁴ which aims to incorporate lived experience into the design of interventions. These clips are used to get conversations started during intervention sessions by helping facilitators deliver key information about rehabilitative skills and ideas.⁵ These animated audio-visual explainer clips are embedded within HMPPS interventions for men and women with criminogenic needs relating to emotional regulation, interpersonal skills, attitudes, etc. The clips are short (usually no more than 4 minutes) and often depict a relatable character using a specific skill to successfully manage a challenging situation that could lead to offending. Through co-production, complementary digital media also uses the voices and stories of 'experts-by-experience' to show intervention participants how therapeutic ideas and skills might work for them in practice.

Such is the interest in incorporating lived experience within the design of interventions, stakeholders have shown an appetite for articles like this one that aim to reflect on and share learning relating to co-production methods and the impacts of this kind of work. Many co-production approaches exist along Arnstein's ladder of citizen power from tokenistic rituals to services developed entirely with and for their service users.⁶ Described below are examples of co-

production on different rungs of this ladder that signal the potential of digital co-production techniques to promote desistance.

Digital interventions within justice settings

The therapeutic skills of intervention facilitators are critical to ensuring that evidence-informed interventions are responsive to the needs of participants. Notwithstanding, digital co-production can help developers to make responsive intervention content that is more reflective of the day-to-day lives and needs of participants.⁷ With a few notable exceptions (such as the Breaking Free Online substance misuse initiative),⁸ digital approaches have been conspicuous by their absence from most interventions in justice settings.

In recent years, Intuitive Thinking Skills has co-produced digital tools and approaches that augment the delivery of their community services. Their recovery orientated interventions are complemented by interactive eLearning content that sits within a cloud-based, integrated learning management system. Service users can access this platform either as a standalone or as part of a blended service (which can include remotely

delivered or in-person sessions). These innovations have been further supported by investments in staff skills, infrastructure, and security standards such as ISO, GDPR and Cyber Essentials Plus.

Accelerated by the adversities of the Covid-19 pandemic, mainstream HMPPS interventions have also adapted by incorporating complementary digital media and other technologies (including video conferencing software, smartphones, and media platforms like YouTube) to enable remote access delivery of intervention sessions. Within this context, the benefits of co-produced complementary digital media have come to the fore in terms of bringing engaging lived experience perspectives into intervention sessions, whether delivered remotely or in-person.

Digital co-production can help developers to make responsive intervention content that is more reflective of the day-to-day lives and needs of participants.

4. Morris, J. & Graham, H. (2019) 'Using technology and digitally enabled approaches to support desistance' (chapter 16) in P. Ugwu-dike, H. Graham, F. McNeill, F. Taxman & C. Trotter (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Rehabilitative Work in Criminal Justice*. London: Routledge.
5. Morris, J., Raducu, A. A., Fuller, M., et al. (2021). Towards a desistance-focused approach to probation supervision for people who have committed Intimate Partner Violence: A digital toolkit pilot study, *Probation Journal*, 68(2), 261–281.
6. Arnstein, S. (1969). A Ladder of Citizen Participation, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216–224.
7. Morris, J. & Knight, V. (2018). Co-producing digitally-enabled courses that promote desistance in prison and probation setting. *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice*, 4(4), 269–279.
8. Elison, S., Weston, S., Dugdale, S., Ward, J. and Davies, G. (2016). A qualitative exploration of UK prisoners' experiences of substance misuse and mental health difficulties, and the Breaking Free Health and Justice interventions. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 46(3), 198–215.

Co-production in practice: Examples of complementary digital media projects

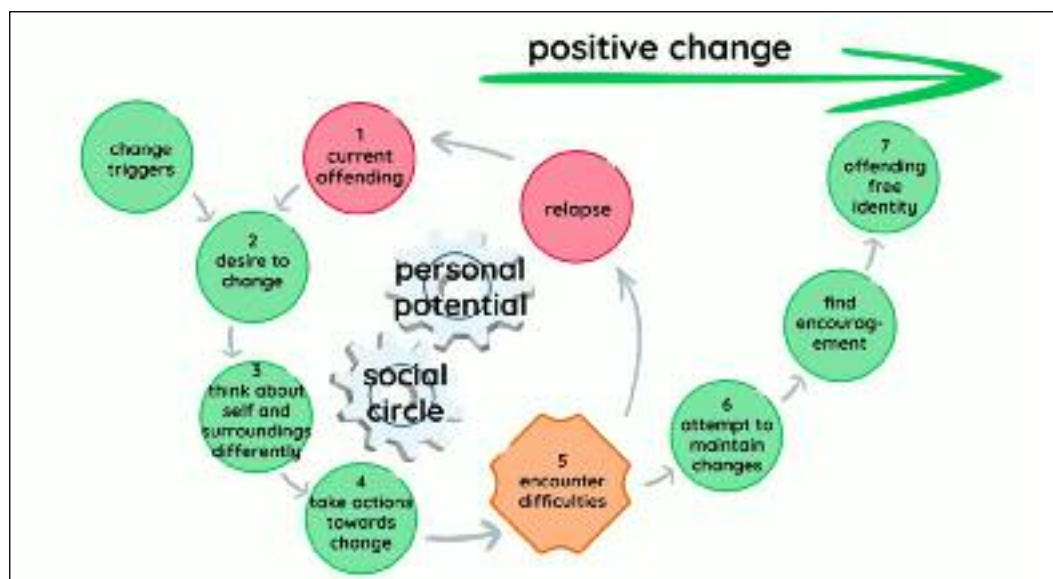
Whilst peer-led organisations are (by definition) built on the lived experiences of their founders and service users, HMPPS provides a distinctly different context in which to do co-production. Service User Reference Groups (SURGs) offer an effective method for service designers in large organisations to tune into the needs of service users. This process involves recruiting service users from target audiences to work collaboratively with practitioners to co-produce specific outputs. The first author has used the SURG approach on multiple occasions to co-produce complementary digital media. This requires discussions and workshops where co-creators with relevant lived experiences develop vignettes, write scripts, record voiceovers, and advise on the design of content. To illustrate some of the processes and benefits involved in co-producing complementary digital media, four exemplar projects are described below.

Firstly, to address heterosexism within domestic abuse interventions,⁹ the SURG approach was used to develop an evidence-informed intervention for men in same sex relationships (as well as a variant for heterosexual men). SURG members were interviewed after their involvement and spoke of their pride in representing their target audiences. The SURG process can surface a range of issues of importance to people experiencing minority stressors and their contributions can often signal resilience in the face of discrimination

and inequality. Capturing these dynamics within co-produced intervention content, resonates with HMPPS's aim to develop inclusive services.

Whilst co-production can be a vehicle for inclusivity and cultural competence, effective interventions are also characterised by underpinning theories and models of change. To preserve the integrity of interventions, co-production activities will often blend the input of experts-by-experience with contributions from practitioners and academics. In a second exemplar, digital co-production was used to both preserve and advance previous innovations from one of the recently renationalised Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs). The Probation Reform Programme (PRP) Service Design Team enabled an ex-CRC probation officer (Don Nesbit) to build upon co-production work completed at Northumbria CRC in partnership with Professor Fergus McNeill. The original project in 2015 used a SURG approach to develop a clinical application of a Model of Desistance¹⁰ for use within intervention sessions. In 2021, to support the development of a national suite of Structured Interventions,¹¹ this model was adapted (see Figure 1) and incorporated into a piece of complementary digital media co-produced with Gethin Jones (then employed by PRP as a Lived Experience Consultant). Feedback from stakeholders (including the authors of the model itself) highlighted that the model of desistance being accurately represented and that Gethin's own lived experiences added a unique element that brought the model to life.

Figure 1. A Model for Desistance (Adapted from Bottoms and Shapland, 2011)

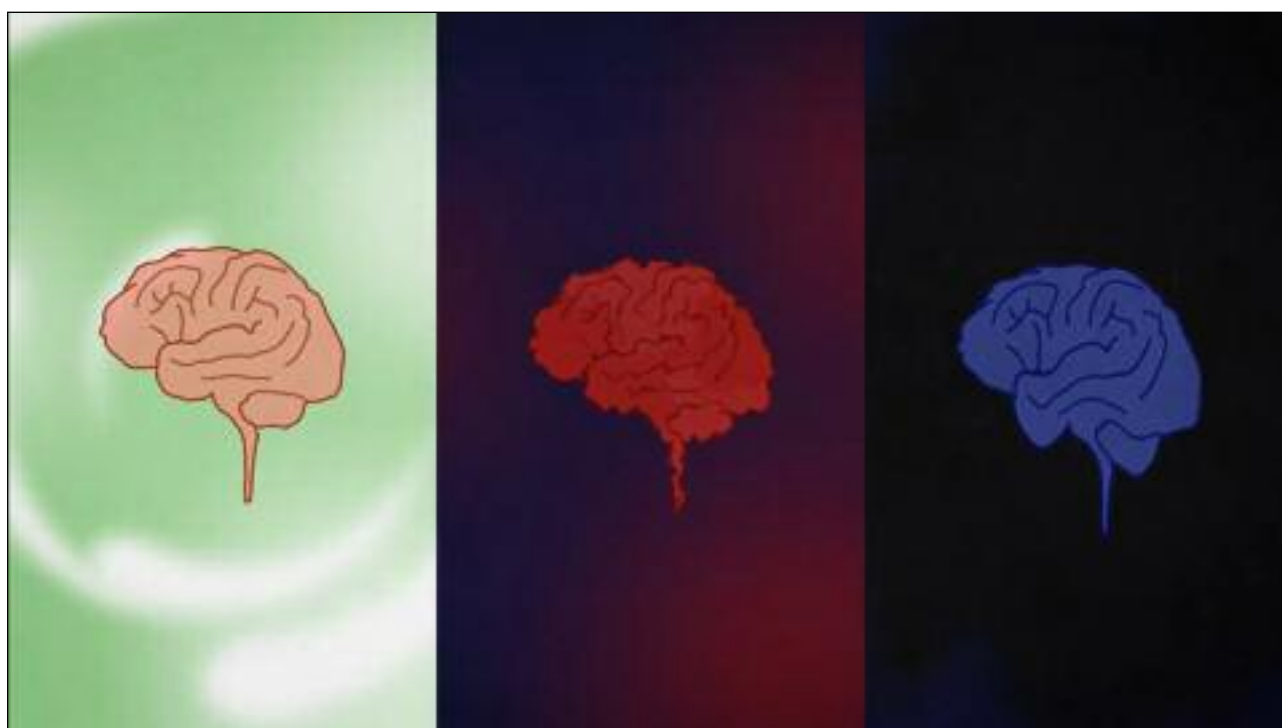


9. Morris, J. & Baverstock, L. (2021) Gibbs, C., Jonah, L., Bloomfield, S., Weatherstone, P. & Ireland, J. L. (2019). Developing content to promote desistance in men who have committed intimate partner violence in same-sex relationships. *European Journal of Probation*, 11 (2) 96-113.
 10. Bottoms, A. E., & Shapland, J. M. (2011). Steps towards Desistance among Male Young Adult Recidivists. In S. Farrall, M. Hough, S. Maruna & R. Sparks (Eds.) *Escape Routes: Contemporary Perspectives on Life after Punishment*. Routledge.
 11. Delivering Quality Interventions in Probation: The Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR) - HMPPS Insights

A third co-production exemplar also highlighted how lived experiences can be blended with theoretically robust therapeutic approaches.¹² This paper described how a visual language (influenced by Polyvagal Theory)¹³ was developed to help communicate the internal states of characters within co-produced complementary digital media. Within these clips a 'fight/flight' visual signalled a feeling of threat; a 'shutdown' visual corresponded to exposure to

prolonged stressors; and a 'safe/social' visual highlighted a positive emotional consequence for characters when they successfully overcame challenges (see Figure 2). This strategy aimed to give an emotional dimension to complementary digital media by providing subtle visual cues to reinforce emotional insight and prompt further exploration of this during therapeutic discussions within intervention sessions.

Figure 2. Polyvagal states: 'safe/social', 'fight/flight', 'shutdown'



Anecdotal evidence collected from training events has revealed positive reactions to this new content from Probation Service staff. Further feedback (including that from participants) will be obtained to during a Structured Intervention implementation review approved by the HMPPS National Research Committee.

In this article's fourth (and final) exemplar, the authors combined their skills and expertise. In a commission brokered by the HMPPS Lived Experience Engagement Network, the second author has fulfilled a creative brief developed by a working group representing interventions teams in several Probation Service regions. The project involved:

- ❑ developing a 'look and feel' that incorporated the polyvagal-informed visual language described above.
- ❑ recruiting volunteers with relevant lived experiences to share their skills, stories and voices.

- ❑ implementing tools such as mood boards, 'Storyline 360', Adobe software and a newly acquired sound booth.
- ❑ responding to feedback on character micro-movements, background music, the reinforcement of psychological principles and the inclusion of additional voices of lived experience.

The success of the project depended on several factors, including:

- ❑ a tight turnaround from start to finish.
- ❑ meeting basic requirements against a limited budget.
- ❑ meeting the literacy needs of participants.
- ❑ ensuring simple, effective, attractive, and user-friendly end-products.

To quality assure the end-products, a roundtable of practitioners and experts-by-experience was convened, which provided feedback from a range of perspectives.

12. Ferguson, R. (2021). Transforming criminal justice through co-production. *Forensic Update*, 139, 12-15.

13. Porges, S.W. (2011). *The polyvagal theory: Neurophysiological foundations of emotions, attachment, communication, and self-regulation* (Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology). WW Norton & Company.

Both authors have learnt several lessons from this process. An analysis of staff and participant reactions to this content will be completed in future research.

Managing co-production and impact

Whilst the worlds of the authors are distinct, there are many similarities in their perspectives of co-production. First and foremost, the potential emotional labour required to do co-production should never be underestimated. Co-production can bring up a mixture of thoughts and emotions for co-creators and for staff. The need to create a safe environment is paramount due to the potential of this work to evoke memories of traumatic events (e.g., experiences of victimisation and discrimination). Safety can be created by explicitly addressing power imbalances through open discussion and genuinely inviting co-creators to share their concerns, interests, strengths, hopes, preferences, and goals.

Following best practice principles is also essential to create safety, maximise positive outcomes and minimise the potential for unintended harms. Frameworks like the HMPPS National Service User Involvement Standards of Excellence can be supplemented with other frameworks like the 4Pi user Involvement Standards (developed by the National Survivor User Network; NSUN).¹⁴ 4Pi helps developers to think about user involvement in terms of principles, purpose, presence, process, and impact. The 4Pi framework raises many questions about how to deliver co-production projects responsibly:

- ❑ How can we enable equality of opportunity in the recruitment of people who adequately reflect the target audience?
- ❑ What information can be provided to participants to ensure they are able to give full and informed consent?
- ❑ What meeting times, locations, venues, tasks and activities will be inclusive for all contributors?
- ❑ What do co-creators want to achieve from their involvement and what can be done to help them achieve this?

First and foremost,
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thoughts and
emotions for co-
creators and
for staff.

- ❑ How can the authenticity of co-creator contributions be preserved whilst maintaining the integrity of the project's requirements?
- ❑ What supports are in place for co-creators after sessions and after the project has ended?

As well as supporting the responsible management of co-production projects, the emphasis of 4Pi on evaluating 'impact' (both positive and negative) ensures that important lessons are learnt from co-production projects.

People volunteer to get involved in co-production activities for many different reasons and the impacts of their involvement on them and others are equally diverse. It is important to understand what co-creators want out of their involvement and to do what is reasonably possible to help them achieve this. Post-involvement surveys and follow-up conversations provide important insights into their experiences. Positive impacts may include refreshing and developing knowledge, skills and ideas that supported their own desistance. In some cases, involvement may support their professional development by providing skills and experiences of processes involved in the development and delivery of services in justice settings. People can derive a sense of belonging

from involvement too by being part of something bigger than themselves that also offers an additional layer of support. Helping others, feeling valued and having a sense of purpose are also common benefits that co-creators report:

'if I can give my guidance and knowledge to someone and make someone else's life better, there's nothing better than that is there?' (pp. 17).¹⁵

Although resource intensive, formal research studies delivered in partnership with academic institutions provide credible independent appraisals of the impact of the outputs of co-production on services. For example, research that systematically sampled the reflections of participants and practitioners has

14. 4Pi Involvement Standards - NSUN website

15. Morris, J. (2021). Enabling effective probation practice using complementary digital media, *Forensic Update*, 139, 16-21.

suggested that co-produced complementary digital media was a beneficial part of a practitioner toolkit used to help people with domestic abuse offences develop new relationship skills.¹⁶ As noted above further research is planned to assess the impact of the co-production exemplars described above.

Co-production can also have a profound impact on service designers and has potentially transformative potential for services and the broader social system.¹⁷ Working in partnership helps providers to gain a more authentic appreciation for service user perspectives, their strengths and how they overcome challenges. The successes of co-creators, and the steps they have taken to attain their goals, are inspirational. This inspiration is the day-to-day: the conscious efforts they make, the positive things they do and the people who help them keep moving forwards. Without belief in people's potential to move forward, everything we do would be tokenistic and ultimately unsuccessful.

Technology for good: Co-production and whole system intervention design

Believing in the transformative potential of lived experience in justice settings is not enough. Interventions also need to adhere to theoretically robust behaviour change models and wider strategic aims. The exemplars in this article provide evidence that the parameters of 'What Works' do not preclude the ethical use of digital techniques to co-produce complementary digital media that better reflects the needs of service

users. These digital building blocks can be curated within integrated learning management systems accessed via in-cell computers in prisons and on smart devices in the community. Usage data and insights into user journeys can drive future iterations of these systems to create more joined-up experiences for intervention participants across the whole system. Ensuring quality user experiences of these platforms will be key to the extent to which they can support the wider rehabilitative environment (i.e., outside the group room). Ready access to consistent, culturally competent, desistance-focused messaging across prison and probation settings has the potential to empower participants to take ownership of their desistance journeys and self-direct their own learning at times convenient for them. Importantly, creating access to needs-led cohort-specific sets of content selected from a broader framework also has the potential to assist (often over-stretched) sentence management staff to support people in prisons and on probation to consolidate their learning from previous rehabilitative activities. Rather than 'starting from scratch' at each transition in the system, integrated complementary digital approaches to traditional probation practice can create more teachable moments to help people build working alliances and keep moving forward wherever they are in their sentence.

Acknowledgements to Peter Bentley, Gethin Jones, Robert Ferguson and Don Nesbit for their contributions to this article.

16. Morris, et al. (2021).

17. Ferguson, R. (2021).

Coproducing Justice in Carceral Contexts: User Voice Prison Councils as a Model of Epistemic Participation.

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Co-production, as a form of participatory governance manifesting (to different degrees) in democratic innovations is, essentially, a term for a particular type of relationship between services, service users and others, from which an inherently different way of 'doing' services emerges.¹ While it denotes a range of collaborative practices, in general, co-production has been defined as 'professionals and citizens making better use of each other's assets, resources and contributions to achieve better outcomes and/or improved efficiency'.² However, rather than focusing principally on their outcomes, the value of, and rationale for, co-productive approaches may be more normative than instrumental, and reside rather in their processes (on which the outcomes depend) to the extent that they represent a form of, and generate opportunities for, epistemic participation, by enabling differently situated but interdependent actors to forge new norms of interaction, new forms of knowing, and new ways of being and doing.

This paper draws on an analysis of the User Voice Prison Councils, as a case study, to explore the potential for such collaborative dialogic structures and practices of engagement as a vehicle for the pursuit and promotion of epistemic justice through epistemic participation. In what follows, this paper commences by elaborating theories of epistemic injustice, and epistemic participation, prior to providing an outline of the emergence and approach of the User Voice Prison Councils. Drawing on data from a wider mixed method study,³ commissioned by User Voice this paper

demonstrates how User Voice Prison Councils, in certain contexts, represent a means of epistemic inclusion and a source of, and resource for epistemic recognition. In so doing, it outlines a framework through which co-productive initiatives may be evaluated to the extent that they support epistemic participation.

Co-production and Epistemic Participation

Arnstein's ladder of participation is perhaps one of the most frequently cited typologies for evaluating participatory and co-productive practices and processes,⁴ but it is not without its critiques or limitations. In particular, as Tritter and Callum have observed, Arnstein's sole focus on the outcomes, and specifically the redistribution of power, undermines the potential of the process, by ignoring the existence of different and relevant forms of knowledge and expertise and conceptualising participation as 'a contest between two parties wrestling for control over a finite amount of power'.⁵ The authors suggest, rather, that the key contribution that non-professional participants make is asking questions that professionals have not considered, generating new insights into their experiential realities. Put simply, and in contrast to Arnstein's adversarial model, one of the core aims — and outcomes — of co-productive initiatives and participatory practices may be to 'break down barriers, share experience, and build understanding. This suggests not a hierarchy of knowledge — relevant professional versus irrelevant lay — but rather a complementarity between forms of knowing, set within a willingness to acknowledge differences',⁶ closely

1. Weaver, B. (2019). Coproduction, Governance and Practice: The Dynamics and Effects of User Voice Prison Councils. *Social Policy and Administration*, 53(2), 249-264.
2. Bovaird, T., & Loeffler, E. (2013). The Role of Coproduction for Better Health and Wellbeing. In E. Loeffler, G. M. Power, T. Bovaird, & F. Hine-Hughes. (2013). *Coproduction of Health and Wellbeing in Scotland*. Governance International.
3. Weaver (2019). See n.1
4. Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216-224.
5. Tritter, J. Q., & Callum, A. (2006). The Snakes and Ladders of User Involvement: Moving Beyond Arnstein. *Health Policy*, 76(2), 156-68.
6. Tritter & Callum (2006: 164). See n.5

resembling notions of epistemic participation and epistemic justice.⁷

Epistemic injustice refers to a particular type of injustice that an individual suffers in their 'capacity as knower' because of their social position and association with a specific social group.⁸ Fricker identifies two types of epistemic injustice: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. Testimonial injustice occurs when a person's testimony or knowledge is dismissed precisely because they belong to a particular social group; their credibility as a knowledge-bearer is discredited by the hearer 'because of the hearer's prejudice regarding the social group to which that person belongs'.⁹ Perhaps, for example, a prisoner witnesses an assault or other offence in prison, but the investigating prison officer dismisses their account because it is deemed to be unreliable precisely because they are a prisoner and they are deemed epistemically untrustworthy. Hermeneutical injustice occurs when an individual's social experience or interpretation of a phenomenon is wrongfully misunderstood because of their social group's unequal participation in, or marginalization from, the production of collective understandings of phenomena.¹⁰ Such injustices can be identified in professional interpretations of the meaning, effects or effectiveness of punishment which can be disconnected from the experiences of those subject

to it, precisely because this group are denied the opportunity to influence those understandings. Importantly, while such epistemic injustices can and do manifest in and through interpersonal interactions, they also operate at a systemic and institutional level, when subjugated groups routinely experience 'epistemic marginalization' manifest in the prejudicially-driven dismissal and disregard of their opinions, and experiences, and 'their exclusion from participation in

communicative exchange' because of their social position.^{11 12}

In a departure from Fricker's emphasis on testimony, K. Schmidt has reconceptualised epistemic injustice through a lens of participation in inquiry centred on the act of participation rather than testimony, and in so doing, shifts the focus from individuals and on to groups.¹³

'Rather than understanding epistemic injustice as a denial of one's capacity for testifying [and role as a knower and informant] an account of epistemic injustice can focus on denying an agent's capacity to participate in the social activity of inquiry. Agents can be wronged in a variety of ways when they are marginalised or excluded from this central epistemic activity due to prejudice'.¹⁴

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Epistemic injustice is conceptualised by K. Schmidt as a form of oppression, in that it happens to and is experienced by a social group, not just individuals, and is based on their subjugated status or social location, and results in their marginalisation or exclusion from participation in epistemic activities. Epistemic marginalisation in K. Schmidt's formulation then denotes exclusion from social epistemic practices because of discrimination and prejudice associated with, and attributed

to, their group membership.¹⁵ Understood through this lens, the pursuit of epistemic justice necessarily focuses on facilitating epistemic participation.

It is not difficult to find examples of epistemic injustice occurring through both criminological research and criminal justice practices where the knowledge and expertise of researchers and professionals has largely been valorised over those who live the life. In this vein, Garland is right to suggest that offenders' [sic] voices

7. Schmidt, K. (2019). *Epistemic Justice and Epistemic Participation*. Arts & Sciences Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 1787. https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/art_sci_etds/1787

8. Fricker, M. (2007: 1). *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford University Press.

9. Catala, A. (2015: 425). Democracy, Trust and Epistemic Justice. *The Monist*, 98(4), 424-440.

10. Catala (2015). See n. 10

11. Schmidt, K. (2019). See n. 8

12. Johnstone, M. (2021: 638). Centring Social Justice in Mental Health Practice: Epistemic Justice and Social Work Practice. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497315211010957>

13. Schmidt, K. (2019). See n.8

14. Schmidt, K. (2019). See n.8

15. Schmidt, K. (2019). See n. 8

have also been subordinated in the 'criminological monologue'... because of their potential threat to expert (or even common-sense) discourses: [I]f only they were allowed to speak [offenders] might challenge some of the certainties with which we divide the world into normal and abnormal, right and wrong.¹⁶ It is this dismissal of expertise and experience, the subjugation and epistemic marginalisation of incarcerated people — in this context — that dialogic, co-productive initiatives such as the User Voice Prison Councils seek to address and redress.

Epistemic injustice matters due to the 'wrong that it does to an individual but also because of the societal harms that it generates'.¹⁷ In a penal context, we know from research into procedural justice that encounters with oppressive social structures and practices engender disenfranchisement, undermine attributions of legitimacy, and breed resistance.¹⁸¹⁹ There are therefore compelling normative and instrumental arguments for enhancing participation and listening to the voices of those that have heretofore been marginalised. Indeed, procedural justice seems to require at least an element of epistemic justice to be present; notions of voice, trust, neutrality, and respect are central to procedural justice and penal legitimacy. It could be argued then that pursuing epistemic participatory practices could not only undo the historical legacy of epistemic injustices in carceral contexts, but support perceptions of procedural justice and penal legitimacy, and thus there are strong normative as well as instrumental rationales for so doing. K. Schmidt reasons that 'preventing and remedying epistemic injustice requires

creating inclusive communities that respect and foster participation in inquiry'²¹ because 'promoting justice requires more than simply believing [or viewing as credible] members of marginalised groups; it requires promoting their ability to act as individual inquirers'.²²

Overcoming epistemic injustice can, then, be achieved by facilitating participation in dialogic or communicative spaces where people can freely share their experiences, where people are held to account, and within which there is a willingness to listen and take the ideas and experiences of another person or groups of people seriously as epistemic agents. As K. Schmidt recognises, 'our models of citizenship and civic decision-making revolve around equal participation from various agents in different life situations', and it is this ideal that resides at the heart of notions of both epistemic participation and coproduction.²³ In what follows, I propose that the User Voice Councils might, in certain contexts,²⁴ represent a dialogic and communicative space that facilitates epistemic participation and through which more just epistemic interactions can be achieved.

The Origins of User Voice Prison Councils

Since the Strangeways Prison riots and the Woolf Report,²⁵ local prison managers have recognised the need to establish legitimacy and encourage cooperation amongst prisoners. 'As a result of the Woolf Report, there was a growing awareness that a credible and legitimate prison regime must involve a dialogue in which prisoners' voices are registered and then responded to'.²⁶ The rationale for this, however, is far

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16. Garland, D. (1992: 419). Criminological Knowledge and its Relation to Power: Foucault's Genealogy and Criminology Today. *British Journal of Criminology*, 32, 403-22.
17. Schmidt, K. (2019: ix). See n.8
18. Tyler, T. R., & Huo, Y. J. (2002). *Trust in the Law: Encouraging Public Cooperation with the Police and Courts*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
19. The four interdependent principles underpinning Tyler and Huo's (2002) conceptualization of procedural justice are: 1. voice: an opportunity to tell one's story, voice one's concerns and perceptions of the issues involved and how they might be handled, and to participate in decision-making processes; 2. neutrality: making decisions with transparency, and based on proper procedure; 3. respect: feeling that interactions are respectful rather than demeaning or dismissive; 4. and trust: influenced by people's perceptions of the intentions of authorities and the extent to which they feel heard and understood further included trustworthiness of the decision-makers.
20. Tyler & Huo. (2002). See n. 19
21. Schmidt, K. (2019: vi). See n.8
22. Schmidt, K. (2019: 27). See n.8
23. Schmidt, K. (2019: 81-2). See n.8
24. It is worth noting that both Weaver, B. (2019) (see n.1) and Schmidt, B. (2020) (see n. 41) identify contexts where individual and institutional resistance or disengagement undermine the workings of some User Voice Prison Councils and thus their potential outcomes and effects.
25. Woolf, Lord Justice. (1991). *The Woolf Report: Prison Disturbances April 1990: The Report of the Inquiry*, London: HMSO.
26. Solomon, E., & Edgar, K. (2004: 3). *Having Their Say: The Work of Prisoners Councils*. London, Prison Reform Trust.

more ameliorative, if not instrumental, in aspiration than democratic in orientation, transformative in effect and normative in intent. This might, in part, explain why Prison Services across the UK have resisted a national policy on this form of engagement, despite the fact that European Prison Rules (Rule 50)²⁷ specifically recommend that prisoners are enabled to discuss prison conditions and processes with prison management and explicitly encourage the establishment of prison councils and related structures.²⁸ Internationally, a number of countries have, to different degrees and with different effects, made legislative provision for prisoner participation.^{29 30}

Aware of these deficits, and the widespread epistemic marginalisation of prisoners within the English and Welsh Prison Service, and informed by their own experience of the criminal justice system, User Voice was established in 2009 as a user-led charitable organisation. Their overarching aim is to 'foster dialogue between service providers and users that is mutually beneficial and results in better and more cost-effective services'.³¹ The origins of their Council model thus lay in this awareness of shortcomings in a system designed primarily to work 'on' rather than 'with' prisoners, and Councils were proposed by User Voice as a means of changing this dynamic. User Voice, as an independent organisation, operates as a mediating agency in a co-productive partnership with prisoners and prison staff. Consultation between elected Council Members and other prisoners inform the development of proposals for change that are the subject of Council meetings. User Voice employees attend regular meetings with Council Members. Monthly meetings with the prison Governor involve a discussion in which the proposals are negotiated and agreed. Agreed

proposals are thereafter discussed at monthly Council meetings, chaired by the Governor, and can include a diverse range of affected and interested parties.

Distinctively, User Voice Councils are oriented towards matters of collective concern, proposing solutions, rather than airing individual complaints, and they aim to be representative rather than elite, operating on mechanisms of representative democracy.³² User Voice Prison Councils can thus be described as 'participatory and dialogic' oriented to promoting 'democratic values...involv[ing] consultation [and] decision-making'.³³ In this sense, they might be construed as a platform for epistemic participation.

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Methods

This paper draws on a wider mixed method study, commissioned by User Voice, whose overarching aim was to determine the impact of User Voice Prison and Community Councils on individual participants and services as well as the wider social environment.³⁴ The research took place in three geographical areas of England and Wales (A, B and C), including six prisons, between May 2014 and March 2016. Ethical approval was granted by the University's Ethics Committee and the National Offender Management Service. This paper draws on interviews and focus groups with

21 Prison Council participants who ranged in age from 28-56 years old. Two were on remand, one was convicted and awaiting sentencing, and one was serving a life sentence. The remaining 17 were serving sentences that ranged from 3-27 years.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. An inductive, thematic approach to analysis was undertaken.³⁵ This involved identifying key themes through a process of repeated reading of the data and

27. Council of Europe. (2006). European Prison Rules. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/european-prison-rules-978-92-871-5982-3/16806ab9ae>

28. Bishop, N. (2006). Prisoner Participation in Prison Management. *Prison Field*, III <https://journals.openedition.org/champpenal/487>

29. Bishop. (2006). See n.29

30. Solomon & Edgar. (2004), See n.27

31. User Voice. (2012). Mission: *What Do We Do?*. Retrieved from <http://www.uservoice.org/about-us/mission/what-do-we-do/>

32. User Voice. (2010). *The Power Inside: The Role of Prison Councils*. User Voice.

33. Bevir, M. (2013: 205). *A Theory of Governance*. Available online at: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/2qs2w3rb>

34. Barry, M., Weaver, B., Schmidt, B., Liddle, M., & Maruna, S. (2016). *Evaluation of the User Voice Prison and Community Councils*. Nesta: <http://www.nesta.org.uk/user-voice>

35. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

the manual generation of initial codes according to thematic areas of inquiry broadly outlined in our interview schedule, including those common to the majority of respondents but also those outliers and differences between the case study areas. Thereafter, like categories of data were collated in a master list of major codes, further sorting the codes into themes and sub-themes, and assembling relevant coded data-extracts into the identified themes. The theoretical framing of epistemic participation represents a secondary analysis, conducted for the purposes of this article, and the data were revisited through this lens to explore the potential of the User Voice Prison Council model as a mechanism for enabling epistemic participation in a carceral context.

Findings: User Voice Prison Councils: Enabling Epistemic Participation in Prison

K. Schmidt outlines three pre-requisites for epistemic participation.³⁶ In the first instance, individuals need to have access to the basic resources and sites of intellectual or knowledge exchange. Secondly, once access is gained, individuals need a nominal level of epistemic recognition in order to participate in the kinds of social exchange that constitute inquiry. Thirdly, they need to be afforded appropriate epistemic appraisal [credibility]. Failure in any of these ways, according to K. Schmidt,³⁷ disregards an epistemic agent's capacity to participate and constitutes an epistemic injustice.

Access

In this context, access to the resources and sites of knowledge exchange might be most obviously attributable to both the implementation of the Councils and direct participation in and on the Council. This was conceived by some participants to directly influence levels of accountability both among participating actors and to the broader prison community in a way that was previously absent.

Now we're gonna have a voice, we're gonna have a point to stand, they're gonna bring us

Now we're gonna have a voice, we're gonna have a point to stand, they're gonna bring us to the table, which they should have done a long, long time ago. Even just the first meeting, we were all to be there, be accountable, be able to stand up and speak to the person.

to the table, which they should have done a long, long time ago. Even just the first meeting, we were all to be there, be accountable, be able to stand up and speak to the person. Until then, we didn't know who the number one governor was, what he looked like, you know. No sort of — yeah. So yeah, to be able to have — the bottom man to be able to talk to the top man (Council Member, Area B)

You have to understand from the prisoners, they try to raise their voice without an organisation, they're told, OK we'll look into it and that's the end of that subject. When they try to go to the management, they may respond or they may not respond and if they do respond, they say, talk to your landing staff. It's a loop that goes round and round. When we come in, we are now prisoners liaising with staff and management and also in interviews we're recorded like it's being recorded now and minutes are drawn up which then gets distributed to other prisons and from time to time we'll send up in what we call the Voice magazine as well, something that comes up whenever it comes up. So that every prisoner gets one of the copies of these and they see what we do and what we're here for. (Council Member, Area B)

Well, it's just — it's mainly having a voice and then you can get to speak to the governors and you can try and get some changes. Like if it wasn't in place, I can imagine a lot of things what has been put forward and gone through wouldn't have never happened, they would never have even looked at it, know what I mean. (Council Member, Area B)

Of course, not least for pragmatic reasons, not every prisoner participates in the User Voice Prison

36. Schmidt, K. (2019: 54-5). See n.8

37. Schmidt, K. (2019). See n.8

Councils directly and indeed most of the Council Members, across this sample, were older, serving longer sentences and were nearly all 'enhanced' prisoners as per the Earned Incentives and Privileges (IEP) policy.³⁸ While this may be problematic in terms of representativeness in relation to the broader prisoner population, Council Members do, as previously noted, engage with others on the wing who are not directly involved to solicit their views, concerns and proposed solutions.

We provide an ear for them to speak, we listen and we voice the words that have to be spoke (Council Member, Area B).

Interestingly, K. Schmidt argues that 'not all cases of denied access are cases of epistemic injustice, as some goods may be unevenly distributed for a number of reasons'.³⁹ This line of reasoning suggests that people are only subject to epistemic injustice when their ability to access epistemic resources is grounded in discrimination and prejudice tied to their social identity. Through this lens, then, both direct and indirect participation by virtue of the presence of the User Voice Prison Councils and interactions with and between Council Members and non-Council Members, might be conceptualised as both direct and indirect access to the basic resources and sites of knowledge exchange.

Recognition

Failures of epistemic recognition occurs when one is not recognised as having basic and equal epistemic standing — before a speaker can be appraised they must first be granted basic recognition that allows them to speak and their audience to listen and respond.⁴⁰ This implies an acknowledgement of individuals' capacity for participation in inquiry in terms of their standing as a capable epistemic subject, as a knowledge bearer, and as a knowledge seeker. They must be apprehended and treated as a person who can appropriately contribute to the discussion and, as such, this is closely connected to notions of respect, and that ought to be conveyed in

the manner of relating between differently situated people in that communicative space.

All interviewees felt that that they were both heard and listened to, and that they had a contribution to make, and that that contribution was valued. Indeed, the experience of 'having our voice heard' was invaluable, not only for identifying problem areas (and solutions), but also because most felt their voices were usually silenced within the prison setting. Listening and being heard, the recognition of their equal epistemic standing, were therefore at the heart of Council participation and effecting change.

More than anything else, it's just to be heard (Council Member, Area C)

Recognition.
Recognition by the
management
team...It gives me
self-satisfaction
knowing that I'm
trusted

Recognition. Recognition by the management team...It gives me self-satisfaction knowing that I'm trusted (Council Member, Area B)

With the Council, right, we come together. We're made to feel like someone's listening and that we can be part of it (Council Member, Area A).

I mean, it's giving a voice to the prisoners....So it feels as though — it's kinda... empowering them...to the point where they feel that people are actually listening. I feel as though I'm more able to say things that I probably wouldn't have been able to say before (Council Member Area A).

When we get together in the meetings, it's kind of off the cuff and, you know, first name terms and stuff. It's that one time where the boundaries are knocked down and we share information and we kind of — we are on a kind of level par (Council Member, Area, C)

At that time when we actually meet and discussing the kind of issues, we kind of forget

38. The IEP policy was introduced in 1995. The rationale was that privileges should be earned by prisoners through good behaviour and performance and can be removed where expected standards are not met.

39. Schmidt, K. (2019: 60). See n.8

40. Schmidt, K. (2019). See n.8

that we are prisoners and they kind of forget we're prisoners (Council Member Area B).

The significance of epistemic recognition is acutely apparent in those instances where 'access' is granted but epistemic recognition denied.⁴¹ B. Schmidt writes compellingly about the experiences of Council Members in HMP Maidstone, who felt that their voices were silenced, their views dismissed, and thus their epistemic standing unrecognised.

'There is no hope here ... No one tells you anything, no one listens to you. It's screaming into a black hole. (CP)'⁴²

Indeed, this perception was echoed by the officers that B. Schmidt engaged with:

'Officers in this prison were suspicious of, and somewhat nervous about, the council, but ultimately thought it carried little power or influence. This was primarily due to the messages sent from the new Governor and his use of oppressive power to stifle any influence the council might have had. This included 'silencing' prisoners' collective voice'.⁴³

This both illustrates that it is insufficient to provide access where recognition is absent, and that recognition must occur before appraisal can be achieved.

Appraisal

Where epistemic misappraisal occurs, efforts and contributions will be seen as less valuable, and so they will be less able to shape group process, and ultimately outcomes. This means respecting both a person's capacity for knowledge and capacity to be epistemic participants in inquiry as a part of a community; it is about recognising the credibility of the epistemic agent and taking people's words seriously. While K. Schmidt does not specify as such, it is argued here that this implies that people's contributions should not only be

listened to, and valued, but taken on board and be used to inform change and result in tangible outcomes and effects.⁴⁴ To be clear, this does not mean that every proposal will be unequivocally accepted and acted on, but it does mean that every proposal should be taken seriously, and where it is not possible or feasible to act on that, reasons should be shared and discussed.

As noted elsewhere,⁴⁵ the operational outcomes engendered by the Councils studied included the provision of in-cell phones, the provision and distribution of clothing, a telephone monitoring and maintenance system, a calmer environment, and improvements to visit areas. These outcomes are oriented to an improved quality of life thereby contributing to improved service delivery. However, a

range of effects and outcomes for individuals were identified as a consequence of participation in the Council. Communication skills, confidence, increased self-efficacy, self-worth, and finding purpose and meaning in their lives through helping others were the most common benefits.

While these individual and operational outcomes testify to the value or the seriousness with which these Councils were apprehended or appraised, perhaps most revealing in this context, are the relational outcomes and the enhanced mutual understanding that these epistemic interactions gave rise

to. The relational outcomes reported by many participants suggested that the Councils had contributed to the reduction of some of the historical 'barriers' that existed between staff and prisoners, and to improved relationships, particularly between those active in the Council, and reinforced the need for a more participatory, collaborative, and co-productive approach. While this was necessary to producing tangible changes, it engendered personal outcomes for participants that were symbolic in effect. As noted, participants reported an enhanced sense of self-efficacy, reinforced by the tangible operational outcomes they co-produced, which signified to Council Members, in their own eyes and the eyes of others, that they were able to exert influence and that their contributions were both valued and taken seriously.

People's contributions should not only be listened to, and valued, but taken on board and be used to inform change

41. Schmidt, B. (2020). *Democratising Democracy: Reimagining Prisoners as Active Citizens Through Participatory Governance* <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/312797>

42. Schmidt, B. (2020: 90). See n. 41

43. Schmidt, B. (2020: 121). See n. 41

44. Schmidt, K. (2019). See n. 8

45. Weaver, B. (2019). See n. 1

Moving away from negative labels (like ‘con’ or ‘offender’) toward ‘a person of value’ was critical to reshaping one’s identity. Being viewed or treated ‘as an individual and not just a number’ enabled many to see their own capacity and worth, and enhanced perceptions of self-efficacy. Council participants felt ‘valued’, ‘recognised’, and ‘listened to’ as an outcome of Council participation but, critically — in this context, this practice engendered enhanced understanding of prisoners’ experiential realities among participating staff.

Well, they get an insight from prisoners, don’t they, an insight that they can’t get without prisoners cos they’re not living the daily lives that we have to live. So I think that’s a big bonus for them (Council Member, Area C)

Indeed, B. Schmidt’s study goes further, and reveals important instances of testimonial justice taking place during these acts of collaborative epistemic inquiry, within which those participating learnt ‘something of the world view of the other’ in order to ‘address structural issues that constrain them’ and collectively ‘strive to create some better outcome’.^{46 47} Perhaps one of the most powerful examples that B. Schmidt shares is that of a proposal to mount a wall clock in the visits room, but this quickly generated a deliberative exchange in which Council members shared different perspectives on the impacts and effects that a visible clock would have on the visiting dynamic and the pains this could engender.⁴⁸ However, as Schmidt notes:

‘This issue, of course, extends far beyond whether a wall clock was visible or not...These ‘pains’, at least expressed this explicitly and candidly, took staff aback. Many sat listening intently, some taking notes, and no one interrupted. Occasionally one might say, ‘I’d never thought about it like that’ or

*‘that’s interesting — I’ve never seen it from that angle’.*⁴⁹

As a result, a clock was mounted for those who found some benefit in this, but for others, for whom the visibility of passing time was experienced as both an intrusion and distraction, they were afforded the option of sitting with their backs to it. For the purposes of the argument being advanced here, while a seemingly simple solution was negotiated in response to a matter of great concern among those affected, this is a powerful example of differently situated people engaged in knowledge seeking; in listening and understanding; in revising previously held assumptions; and working towards a mutually acceptable agreement or solution — processes that reside at the heart of epistemic participation.

Epistemic participation through dialogic exchange and engagement reveals some normative guiding principles for coproducing and centring epistemic participation and justice.

Concluding Discussion

In this paper, I have argued that co-productive initiatives such as the User Voice Prison Councils represent the organisation of heretofore epistemically marginalised voices into a dialogic, democratic, and collaborative forum where the historically marginalised knowledge and experiences of prisoners can be shared, understood, and acted on. Moreover, as the preceding example from B. Schmidt demonstrates, these

communicative spaces can further create impromptu opportunities for people’s experiences to be shared, heard, understood, and responded to, in a way that challenges previously held assumptions, and generate new insights into prisoners’ experiential realities, and in so doing support epistemic justice and growth.⁵⁰ However, as previously noted, where people do not feel heard or listened to, this can reproduce oppression, and exacerbate epistemic injustice.

What is perhaps distinctive about the User Voice Prison Council model is the focus on co-producing knowledge and solutions which is distinct from pre-existing prisoner committees that did not benefit from

46. Schmidt, B. (2020). See n. 41

47. Bebbington, et al., (2007:364). Bebbington, J., Brown, J., Frame, B., & Thomson, I. (2007). Theorizing Engagement: the Potential of a Critical Dialogic Approach. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 20(3), 356-381. Cited in Schmidt, B., (2020:167). See n. 41

48. Schmidt, B. (2020: 139). See n. 41

49. Schmidt, B. (2020: 140). See n. 41

50. Schmidt, B. (2020). See n. 41

senior management 'buy in'. Where staff and prisoners come together, both bring their knowledge and experience into that shared communicative space, and in so doing it recognises that each participant brings partial knowledge and is an active subject who contributes to shared understandings in pursuit of a mutually agreed resolution.

Epistemic participation through dialogic exchange and engagement reveals some normative guiding principles for co-producing and centring epistemic participation and justice. If epistemic justice requires not just feeling but being included and heard, it is critical to understand how participants and non-participants engage or otherwise with the participatory initiative, and to what effect. In this article, I have drawn on evidence about the functioning, dynamics, and effects of these structured forms of engagement in carceral contexts, through the lens of K. Schmidt's framework of epistemic participation.⁵¹ As noted, in the first instance, differently situated actors require access to the kinds of deliberative and communicative spaces within which these different forms of knowledge and experiences can be conveyed, heard, understood, and responded to. However, access alone is insufficient; those who have been historically, epistemically marginalised need to be afforded epistemic recognition as equal epistemic agents, which implies a certain manner of relating. At

the very least, this requires epistemic appraisal, which means listening carefully, speaking, and engaging respectfully, being responsive to others' contributions, demonstrating critical reflection and a willingness to learn, to change, and to do things differently.

Theories of epistemic injustice and marginalisation, and their effects, create a normative mandate for epistemic participation in carceral contexts. Perhaps the first step, for some professionals and some justice institutions, is in first recognising and acknowledging that incarcerated persons are an oppressed and subjugated group whose voices and testimonies have been unjustly silenced and dismissed by virtue of their very position in the carceral context. It also provides a foundation as to how we might think about making participation just in justice contexts more broadly, and it asks us to question both the ethics and the limitations of the criminological and criminal justice reification of professional expertise over expertise by experience. In turn, this has potential to challenge the kinds of knowledge that dominate in these spheres, our approach to doing both research and services, and in turn increase our understanding of how people experience their encounters with justice practices from which an inherently different way of 'doing' justice has potential to emerge.

51. Schmidt, K. (2019). See n. 8

Trusting the Process: The Integrated Model of Prison Engagement

Dr Sarah Lewis (Director) and Emma Hands work at Penal Reform Solutions

Engaging and magnifying the voices of people in prison brings real benefits within a correctional environment. Achieving genuine and sincere engagement requires intent, motivation and commitment, as new avenues to problem solving can be realised and fulfilled. This not only brings benefits to those who live in prison but can contribute to embedded cultural change and a sense of community through the co-production of solutions. The ambition of cultural transformation involves all aspects of a prison environment, providing the resources to create safe, decent, hopeful, and optimistic spaces, for people to grow. It is the combined and integrated focus on relationships, systems and processes, management, activities, and environment, which can bring benefits to the prison community and the wider public, through its impact on reducing offending.¹

Penal Reform Solutions (PRS) worked with the Service User Involvement Team at HMPPS to provide

accessible, helpful guidance to prisons, creating a roadmap dedicated to engagement. PRS is an organisation that promotes penal reform through cultural change and works in prisons, schools, and the community, sparking social action with a dedicated focus on relationships. The PRS team comprises people with lived experience of the Criminal Justice System, as well as academics and correctional practitioners, who work collaboratively to provide consultancy, training and growth-centred work to reduce social harm and promote social good.

In 2021, PRS carried out this engagement work at HMP Hewell, as part of the Growth Project. The Growth Project is a cultural change initiative based on the key principles of growth, which were co-produced with staff and residents, following a research project in three Norwegian prisons, examining which aspects of prison practice support personal and professional growth in prison staff and residents (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Principles of Growth



1. HM Prison and Probation Service (2018). *Rehabilitative Culture Handbook: Preventing Victims by Changing Lives*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications> (Accessed: 30 May 2022)

The Growth Project is an evidence-based initiative which takes a whole-systems approach, including all members of prison community, including residents, families and staff. This article will present the work that was collaboratively created by the Growth Team following group discussions with residents and staff at HMP Hewell, in collaboration with the HMPPS Service User Involvement team in 2021. This article will introduce the evolving Integrated Model of Prison Engagement, using HMP Hewell as a case study to provide real examples of the Model in action.

Relational Practice and Engagement

Relationships are the key to cultural change and genuine relational connection can drive positive

engagement strategies and delivery. To fully understand the theoretical framework that underpins this work, the Dynamic Model of Therapeutic Correctional Relationships will be outlined. The Dynamic Model of Therapeutic Correctional Relationships remains central to the work of PRS and this project.² This model acknowledges the continuous flow of relationships and how two people in prison (e.g. the resident and practitioner) negotiate between the desire to relate, and the desire for agency. These two people are identified here as two circles that sit on a line, which represents the degree to which two people bond.

This Model (see Figure 2) is a visual representation of how, when a bond between two people is ‘close enough’, a space emerges that can facilitate personal

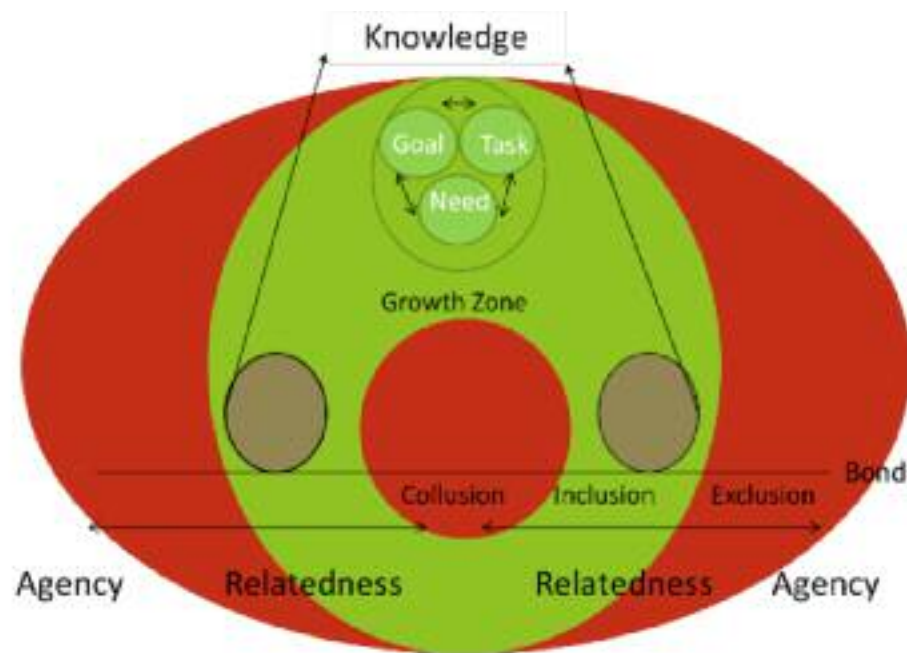


Figure 2: The Dynamic Model of Therapeutic Correctional Relationships

growth and honest conversations. To secure this relationship, there needs to be appreciation of a shared goal, the tasks required to achieve the goal and an acknowledgement of the needs of each person. This safe space is identified as a ‘green’ space, stated in Figure 2 as the Growth Zone. When this position is achieved, greater knowledge is realised between those that are active in the working relationship. This Model also acknowledges that a bond between a practitioner and person in prison can be ‘distant-far.’ In this position, exclusion is more likely, and an environment takes hold which is not conducive to positive change. Similarly, if a bond is ‘distant-near’, collusive relationships move the attention away from a shared goal associated with desistance and towards a goal that meets individual needs only. To achieve an inclusive and engaged

community, creating ‘green’ relationships rather than ‘red’ relationships provides the right conditions for cultural, personal and professional growth. This Model proposes that both staff and people in prison need to be in an engaged, respect-driven, mutual space for relationships to be viewed in an authentic and deep way.

Introducing the Integrated Model of Prison Engagement

The Integrated Model for Prison Engagement will be incrementally developed within this article, to support correctional environments in building a progressive road map to support engagement. Invariably with engagement work, subcultures are

2. Lewis, S. (2019). *Therapeutic Correctional Relationships*. London: Routledge.

present in prisons due to an erosion of trust, creating a fragmented 'them and us' culture between multiple groups (e.g., residents and staff, frontline staff and management, people within departments and between departments). Engagement work focuses upon mechanisms and processes that level the playing field and create a more cohesive culture. However, a prison culture can darken the voices of all members of a prison community, leaving them silenced and inactive. This work illuminated that when staff are 'in the red', they do not have resources to embrace resident engagement, since they perceive their voice to be unheard. Actively listening to all voices enhances a sense of value, meaning and community and challenges the notion that both staff and residents are a

commodity and undeserving. In summary, it states that everyone matters and has something to offer and actively demonstrating this brings change.

This process requires openness, courage and a relentless effort to re-imagine engagement. It means involving the 'difficult' people in the same way as one might involve those who sit on councils or committees. This takes time and patience, a commitment to the process and relinquishment of power and ego, to achieve something greater than anticipated.

The process of engagement was originally established at HMP Hewell and is shown here in Figure 3. This articulates the key processes that were focused upon at HMP Hewell to use engagement and relationships as a vehicle to drive cultural change.



Figure 3: The Process of Engagement

The Model of Prison Engagement focuses on the process of change,³ rather than the outcome, which will emerge in time, over the course of engagement work. It adopts a whole-systems approach, which centres around inclusion, rather than creating a divide between service users and practitioners, which typically encourages a 'them and us' culture. The prison is

represented here as a sphere, with its key elements labelled below (see Figure 4). The focus here is to consider how prison can reach its potential by fully occupying the entire space of the green sphere through deep, wide, inclusive action that grows a positive growth-centred culture.

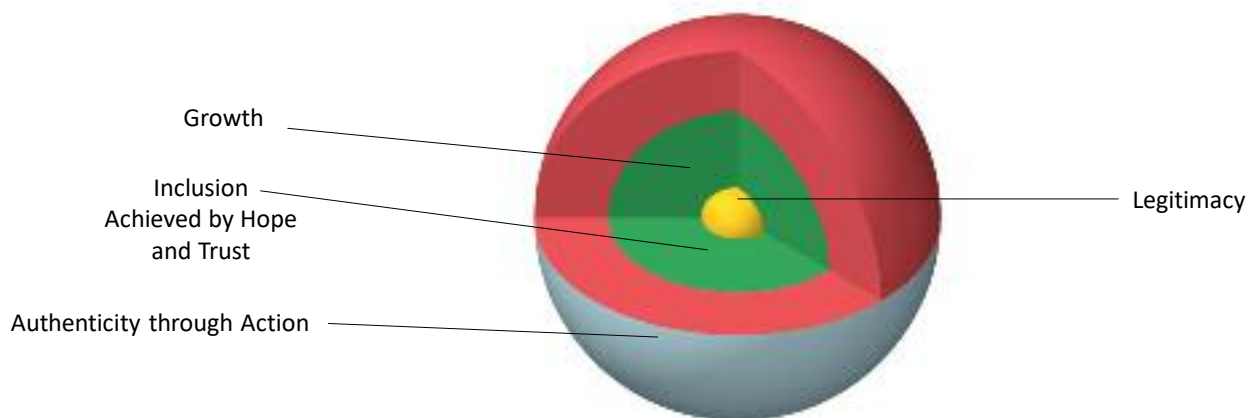


Figure 4: The Integrated Model of Prison Engagement

3. Prison Reform Trust (2019). *What do you need to make the best use of your time in prison?* Available at: http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/PPN/What_do_you_need_to_make_best_use_of_your_time_in_prisonlo.pdf (Accessed: 30 May 2022).

To examine this process in greater depth, the following steps were co-created with the Growth Team at HMP Hewell.

Step 1: Build legitimacy

Do people believe that engaging staff and residents in prison is the right thing to do?

Legitimacy (Figure 5) was defined here as the degree to which staff and residents understand engagement, its importance and its benefits.



Figure 5: Legitimacy

Legitimacy is the core to any change process. It focuses on people believing that something is worthwhile and important. A healthy prison depends on the stability and acceptability of the prison environment and legitimacy of the prison regime in the eyes of the residents.⁴ If this is absent, it is clear in the actions and plans around engagement, and all efforts will appear disingenuous and superficial, even if they are not. This can be difficult at present, as COVID has depleted the energy of those who work and live in prison. People may be increasingly willing to engage, share and speak honestly about the problems (and solutions) associated with culture, if it comes from a place of credibility. Legitimacy is not built through words, but through experiences of legitimate action:⁵ actions that are aligned to robust values, which are culturally embedded through the walk, rather than the talk.

A high level of legitimacy is conducted through visible person-centred action, that has been actively embedded within a culture.⁶ An establishment that has successfully embedded legitimacy tends to be positively perceived, in relation to the extent to which individuals are willingly to comply, to accept authority and to support the decisions made by prison authorities.

To build legitimacy at HMP Hewell, digital work was co-produced by the Growth Team. A digital film

was produced by PRS and residents and staff at the prison, to communicate the importance of engagement. This work created a talking point for the community and highlighted the benefits of engagement for both staff and residents, as well as the benefits for residents following release. This encouraged the community to see the bigger impact of engagement and magnifying the voice of residents (this video can be accessed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRNiztnXd_k). The Team also focused on small changes that had the biggest impact, and these changes were discussed with the wider community, to involve people informally. This phase focused on regular conversations that were somewhat new to the prison, to disrupt the current culture and explore new cultural options.

Step 2: Nurture trust consistently

To what extent do people demonstrate their trust in others, consistently within their practice?

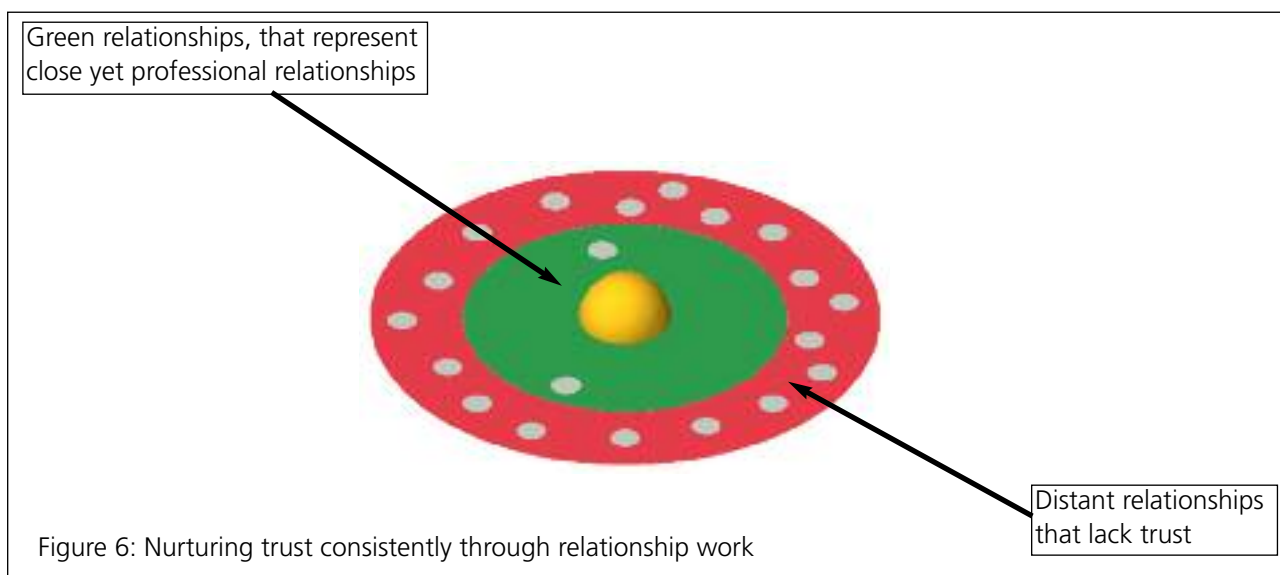
Trust was defined as the degree to which the prison community is close enough to trust one another, to develop a community together. This can be broken down to the closeness people experience within the prison community and the degree to which relationships are 'green' (positive) rather than 'red' (negative). Within this diagram (featured in Figure 6) trust is the inner green circle that connects legitimacy with a trusting environment, where people feel they have a voice.⁷ In general, staff and residents sit in this outside space, exhibiting distant relationships, owing to feelings of burnout, pessimism, desensitisation, and stress. As mutual respect is built, they move closer towards the centre, occupying this trusting space, through a collective mission. This process focuses on the need for people to feel listened to, and therefore speak.

As noted in the Dynamic Model of Therapeutic Correctional Relationships, a shared goal is necessary to fulfil a Growth-orientated environment, with members of the community understanding the vision and what role they play within it. This space is also characterised as a safe space, which allows courageous actions to occur. For example, a security department increasing their appetite to say 'yes, let's try it' rather than 'no' or a community member (staff or resident) being given greater freedom, to drive change culturally.

4. Jackson, J., Tyler, T., Bradford, B., Dominic, T., & Shiner, M. (2010). Legitimacy and procedural justice in prisons. *Prison Service Journal*, 191, 4-10.
5. Deegan, C. (2006). Legitimacy theory. *Methodological issues in accounting research: theories, methods and issues*. (pp. 161-181). London: RMIT University.
6. Archel, P., Husillos, J., Larrinaga, C., & Spence, C. (2009). Social disclosure, legitimacy theory and the role of the state. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 22, 1284-1307
7. Dietz, G. (2004). Partnership and the development of trust in British workplaces. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 14(1), 5-24.

Trust is not only about building credible and reliable relationships, which are close enough to connect, but focuses greatly on the importance of self-orientation.⁸ This can be defined as the extent to which people feel that they are on each other's side. It is the intent of action that is important here, which relies on the premise that actions take place for the betterment of people and not for any personal or corporate gain, or public relations exercise. Building trust requires regular conversations around relationships, gaining the solutions from the community and creating consistent actions that demonstrate trust. The aim of this process is to create a trusting relationship whereby people experience professional, yet close relationships across

the prison. The Dynamic Model of Therapeutic Correctional Relationships highlights that red and green conditions can impact on healthy and unhealthy relationships respectively. With this in mind, Step 2 aims for people to situate themselves in the green zone, which provides a safe space where they can find trust and build genuine rapport. Figure 6 shows the difference between green relationship and distant far relationships, where there is little or no trust. If relationships rupture through inaction or a disregard for an individual's voice, they enter the red zone, which can lead to setbacks and delays in the engagement process and a greater wariness in others overall.



At HMP Hewell, a collective vision was created and communicated to the whole community at the initial stages of the Growth Project. This vision was 'Growing together and taking pride in everything we do'. Three key values were reinforced, to guide those in the prison community to explore how pride was represented at the prison. These were: 'be kind, be fair and be honest'. Residents were empowered to make decisions around issues that could have a positive impact on the prison culture, for example, extending the opportunities for phone calls to families. Actions were set by members of the community rather than staff alone and digital work and training was used to reinforce the vision and the importance of relationships and engagement.

Step 3: Generate fuel AKA hope

To what extent are people energised in your community and where does the energy lie?

Hope is defined here by the degree to which staff and residents are energised, motivated and driven.

Hope is defined as a cognitive and motivational state that involves a mutual interaction between people who share the same goal.⁹

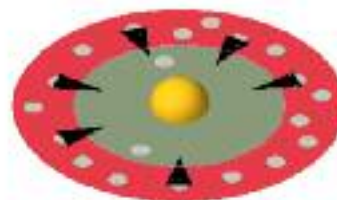


Figure 7: Generating Hope

Hope is the fuel that pushes engagement and culture forward. It is represented here as the black arrows, encouraging the movement of people into a trusting space. Hope creates energy and allows people to consider a brighter future, mobilizing them to act on ideas they have previously had, but not necessarily expressed. Hope is the optimism that expects a positive outcome or product with the belief that individuals are honest and sincere, and actions provide a sense of

8. Tyler, T. R. (1990). Why people obey the law. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
 9. Snyder, C. R. (2000). Hypothesis: There is hope. In C. R. Snyder (Ed), *Handbook of hope: Theory, measures and application* (pp 3-21). New York: Academic Press.

confidence, generating more hope.¹⁰ Through trust, hope is developed and so trust progressively deepens in parallel with other processes to build momentum and a thirst for change.¹¹ Figure 7 highlights how by generating hope, relationships can move from the red zone into the green; generating the fuel that creates optimism to drive forward the development of new practice and work towards developing new positive climates.¹²

Hope was achieved at HMP Hewell through training opportunities, growth supervision for leaders and development sessions with the Growth Team (which included staff and residents). Small achievable tasks were focused upon, with a concentration on communication and celebrating change. Inclusive celebration events took place and individual relationships were built with different departments across the prison, sharing understanding, concerns and most importantly, solutions.

Generating hope requires a whole systems approach,¹³ in which both operational and non-operational staff operate with balanced authority, compassion and respect for residents to create a clear mission, strongly encouraged by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to help achieve a cultural shift.¹⁴ At HMP Hewell, there was a conscious effort to involve all departments and acknowledge the challenges they were facing and how these could support the vision of engagement. Involving staff in celebrations and acknowledging good practice brought with it a new energy and sense of belonging, which only improved the feeling that there was hope in the future.

Step 4: Extend inclusion out

Who has the loudest voice and how can this be balanced out?

Step four can be defined as the degree to which engagement practices are inclusive, far-reaching, and equal throughout the prison community, including prisoners' families. Inclusion is seen as a universal human right and therefore the aim of inclusion is to embrace all voices and perspectives, irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical or other need.¹⁵ This involves active listening and the appreciation that difference brings numerous perspectives, which only enriches the generation of cultural solutions. There was a focus on

providing equal access and opportunities to all and addressing discrimination and intolerance through educational work, to increase awareness.

Inclusion within the prison community contributes to building a sense of belonging and more meaningful relationships throughout the whole establishment. The concept of inclusion brings those within a community together, which helps to maintain sustainability in change as a collective approach is adopted. Inclusion here focuses on getting the prison community into a more trusting space (Figure 8) in order to engage everyone and draw on their experiences and knowledge.

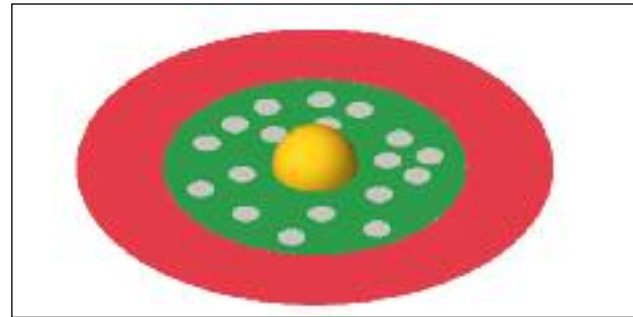


Figure 8: Inclusion

At HMP Hewell, work continues across the prison to understand different perspectives. This encourages members of the community (residents, operational staff and non-operational staff) to have their say and participate in the change process.¹⁶ Growth forums are starting to take shape, whereby residents and staff work together on small achievable tasks that encourage them to attend to the levels of respect, trust, hope and meaning. Digital work continues to be produced around vulnerability, diversity and self-harm and the Growth Team actively involve those who are often neglected, gaining their feedback and collaboratively considering new solutions.

Step 5: Commit to Authenticity through Action

How deep is the level of involvement of people and how might deeper, more genuine efforts be communicated consistently?

This step is defined as the degree to which people are genuinely involved in key stages of service design, development and delivery and the extent to which they

10. Lewis, S. (2019). May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears. The importance of reciprocal hope in prison growth. *Prison Service Journal*, 244, 17-25.
11. Fromm, E. (1968). *Revolution of Hope*. New York: Harper & Row.
12. Prison Fellowship. (2021). *Hope in Prison*. Available at: <https://prisonfellowship.org.uk/get-involved/churches/hope-in-prison-church-resources/> (Accessed: 29 May 2022)
13. Liebling, A., & Arnold, H. (2004). *Prisons and their moral performance: A study of Values, Quality and Prison life*. Clarendon Studies in Criminology. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
14. Liebling, A., Laws, B., Lieber, E., Auty, K., Schmidt, B., Schmidt, E., Crewe, B., Gardom, J., Kant, D., & Morey, M. (2019). Are Hope and Possibility Achievable in Prison? *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 58(1), 104-126.
15. Donnelly, J. (2013). Universal human rights in theory and practice. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*. Cornell University Press.
16. De Leeuw, S. (2017). Medicine Inside: Prisons, participatory research, and practising with hope behind bars. *Canadian Family Physician*, 63, 146-149.

influence service design, development, and delivery. Authenticity is represented here as the depth of our engagement with people (Figure 9). If engagement is only conceptualised through 'tick-box' exercises, the knowledge gained remains shallow and of less worth, than if people can genuinely listen and act on concerns with intent. The aim here is to capture as much knowledge as possible, with depth, to bring about sustainable change and understand the evolving needs of the community.

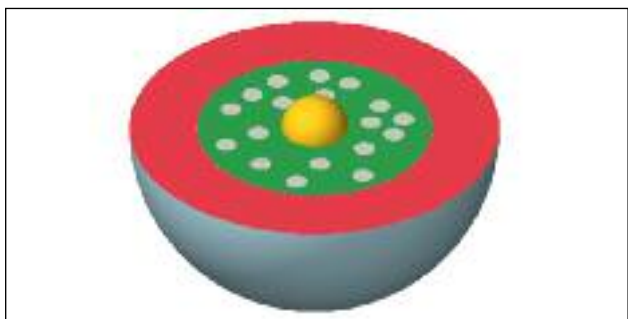


Figure 9: Commit to Authenticity

At HMP Hewell, persistence has helped the community to grow a sense of authenticity. This includes regular meetings, activities and new initiatives that have the same vision attached to them. If issues are raised, there is an increasing appetite to alter and adapt practice, leading to greater engagement and a sense that every voice counts. Focus remains on this step through regular meetings and discussions becoming increasingly reliable and actions being achieved and celebrated. Reinforcing authentic action through celebration has brought heartfelt appreciation, which reinforces the message of a shared collective effort. Challenges remain at the prison to create reliable practice as the regime opens and competing demands are at play. This is managed through patience and understanding, rather than frustration and blame, focusing efforts on the things that can change at that moment in time, rather than delaying change altogether.

Step 6: Activate Growth

Are all the foundations in place to drive change and if so, what tells you this?

This step is defined as the degree to which people are involved in their growth, the growth of the prison community and societal growth more broadly. Growth is created under specific conditions (see Principles of Growth) and having built legitimacy, trust and hope,

personal and professional growth can flourish. Growth is represented here as a new part of the model. A creation of something new, through co-creation and co-innovation. This expands knowledge and leads to deeper insights, which are bespoke to a prison community (Figure 10). Growth focuses on individual identity as well as collective identities, whereby a community can define itself by its achievements as well as the distance travelled.

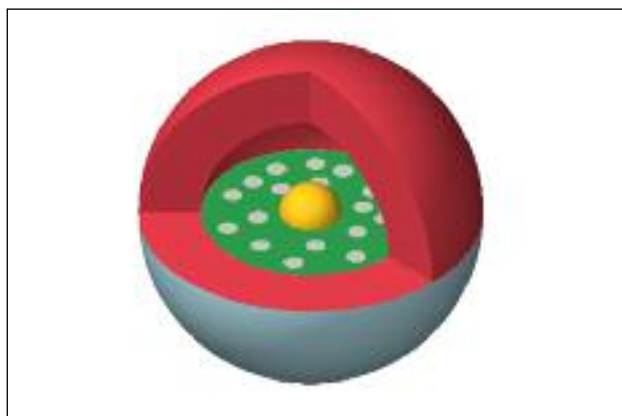


Figure 10: Creating a Growth Environment

The purpose of Growth is to allow individuals to develop on their own, as well as in a group, which will eventually benefit all by building a rehabilitative culture, to ultimately reduce social harm within prisons and the wider community.¹⁷

Challenges

As a result of implementing the Model of Prison Engagement into practice, there have been numerous challenges. Culture challenges have been identified as a threat in some environments where individuals have adopted the notion 'if residents are involved, staff are less important' and this has strengthened the distant-far position and the 'them and us' culture between staff and residents. There was a perception that not all residents were deserving of involvement and working to encourage a range of voices has threatened aspects of legitimacy, due to a perceived lack of fairness. Explaining the value of voices that may initially be judged as undeserving has been essential throughout the project and more work is needed to continue to highlight the importance of all voices, rather than the select few.

Implementing prison engagement takes time and consistent effort, particularly when action is slow, as this can lead to feelings of frustration and impatience. Continuing open conversations has presented as

17. Lewis, S. (2018). Culture Club Assemble! The powerful role of multi-agent relationships in prison habitation In A. Pycroft and D. Gough (Eds). *Multi-Agency Working in Criminal Justice: Theory, Policy and Practice* (2nd Ed). Bristol: Policy Press.

challenging at times, when staff and residents are simply exhausted and frustrated due to barriers associated with finance, resources, and time. Some staff and residents remain dismissive, cynical, and negative towards the idea of change, which has highlighted the need to maintain unconditional positive regard. Acknowledging and accepting that members of the prison community are at different stages in their mindset and journey is needed, removing the temptation to exclude and resort to 'red space mentality'. In essence, returning to the premise that everyone matters needs to remain central.

Conclusion

The aim of the Integrated Model of Prison Engagement was to develop a simple and straightforward approach that enables prison

communities to assess the prison environment and establish the extent to which engagement techniques can be used to develop a positive prison identity and generate a positive climate and culture. The Model focuses on the Principles of Growth, which imply there is a continuous process with no final destination, as each prison adopts a growth mindset and re-writes their own narrative, in a collaborative and inclusive approach. For this Model to achieve the objectives of being co-productive and engaging, staff and residents must share the vision and appreciate the need for a long-term investment in people, to ensure change takes root and is sustainable. A shared, collective vision, pointing a clear pathway to this vision and passion for change, will deepen engagement throughout the prison estate with the ultimate focus on the 'basics', namely relationships.

Just interact with us as human beings

Written by a **young man** from Project Future, **Dr Isabelle Cullis** a Clinical Psychologist and Deputy Project Lead, and **Annaliza Gaber** an Education and Employment Coordinator.¹

Project Future is a community-based holistic mental health and wellbeing service for young people aged 16-25 who have experiences of the criminal justice system and/or are affected by serious youth violence. The project is situated in Haringey, North London, one of the ten most deprived wards in the UK where the community experience multiple health, social and racial inequalities.

Project Future aims to improve young people's wellbeing, access to services, education, employment and training opportunities with the long-term aim of reducing marginalisation and offending. The project has been co-produced alongside young men in the community, underpinned by the ethos that they are experts in their own lives and are best placed to know what would support their community.

The project is staffed by a team of Clinical Psychologists, Specialist Youth Workers, an Education and Employment specialist and local young people employed as Community Consultants. A primary focus of the work is to wrap therapeutic psychological support around all interactions with young people, attending to their emotional and developmental needs, as well as practical issues of self-care and safety. Project Future is primarily a community-based service which also offers support to young people known to the project in custody.

Co-production at Project Future has enabled young people who typically do not seek support to engage in help. It underpins all aspects of the work and is core to the safe and effective delivery of the service.

Co-production happens in a multitude of ways at the Project, from young people designing their own support and 'what help looks like' to co-creating and delivering projects and making decisions about the service together with the team. Youth Employees at Project Future have contributed to local and wider systems change through conducting research, delivering training and taking part in consultations in order to influence legislation and policy change. This work puts young people's voices at the heart of social

action, so they are being heard on what the issues and solutions are.

The project is a partnership between Mind in Haringey, Barnet, Enfield and Haringey NHS Mental Health Trust, and Haringey Council.

The experience of Project Future

We've captured a conversation between a young man in prison (young person) and a Clinical Psychologist (I) and Education and Employment Coordinator (A) working in the Project Future team. The young man shares experiences of his life, being in prison and support he's accessed from the project. They talk about co-production at Project Future, what makes it different from other services and ideas for what other services could learn from this one.

I: What did you think about Project Future the first time you came?

Young Person: We used to have a youth hub in the local area, and it got shut down. I thought the project was basically the next youth hub. I followed my friend there and saw people chilling, playing FIFA and some of my friends were in the kitchen cooking. I didn't know what you were doing and to be honest, I thought you guys were feds. I thought maybe you were trying to keep people off the streets and give people a place to go... but I wasn't sure what your intentions were and whether you were reporting back to the police. When the team came into the room I would stop talking and feel wary around them. I have been like that all my life... only opening up with friends and being wary of my environment.

I: Why do you think you felt wary around the team?

Young Person: It's like we've been moulded to be a certain way... having a lot of trust issues as a young person felt normal to me. Growing up as a young black person in my community we witnessed a lot of unjust things. As a child I saw unarmed black men killed by the police and when I would walk home from school at the

¹ Please direct any questions or comments to Dr Isabelle Cullis (isabelle.cullis1@nhs.net)

age of 12 or 13, I would always get harassed by police officers.

There were times I got arrested for things I had nothing to do with. When I was 14, I was arrested and I had no idea what was going on. In court they said the suspect was 6ft with long hair and at the time I was only 5ft 5 with short hair. I'd been at home with my mum and brother at the time that the crime was committed but I was charged anyway. It felt like my solicitor just didn't seem to care and it was like they were thinking 'we have a young black man here, let's just go and convict him.'

I guess that left me feeling like every professional I came into contact with I couldn't trust.

I: What do you think the impact of experiences like that has been for you and your friends?

Young Person: I think it made us think we didn't have a chance. I think we thought we were always going to be labelled 'wrong' so what's the point? I wasn't committing crime but as a child I remember thinking 'I don't have a chance' so I might as well make money instead of not doing anything and getting the blame anyway. It meant I ended up committing more crime.

In the community we had no one helping us or showing us a different way, even in school. All the teachers seemed to care about was if you turned up to class. No teacher is going to say to a child 'what's troubling you?' or 'come sit down and tell me what's going on'. My friends and I bonded a lot through these bad times and trying to help each other. Losses of friends did bond us together too and we just wanted to see each other do well in life. There were no role models out there showing us the right things so I had to learn as I grew.

I: When did you start to learn about what support was available at the Project?

Young Person: I saw that some of my friends were working at the project and I started speaking to them about it. They told me that the project could help with things, like getting a job, or if you got arrested, or if you were going to prison you could chat to them. I still didn't access any help then, I brushed it off because I wasn't sure. Then I heard that you were helping someone with an immigration case, they told me about what you were doing and that was when I thought maybe I could get some help too. I started speaking to one of the psychologists and she was cool. She kept

what we spoke about close and I respected that privacy and how she handled the situation. I could see that she was serious about helping me. She proper done her thing and I respected her for that. She didn't push me too much either, she let me make the decisions and I had to set the boundaries. If I wanted her to contact my solicitor, it was a decision I had to make... If they came to court, that was a decision I had to make, obviously they put stuff out there as an option but then it was up to me.

I'm one of those people who doesn't trust professionals, I haven't had good experiences of professionals. They talked a good game but then they never actually did much.

I: It sounds like a bit of a risk for you to trust the project team?

Young Person: It was, it was, but I'm glad I did. It's helped me a lot, with lots of different things. Even with my lawyer, you lot helped with the relationship, it helped me have a better understanding of what needed to be done and what was going to happen next.

I recognised the good that you were doing, not just with me but with other people. I saw you helping people with courses and getting things like their CSCS cards and jobs. I saw the good you were doing and that you

actually cared. When you have come to court as well, that has meant a lot. Other professionals would neglect people in those circumstances. I hadn't ever been to any other services for support, not voluntarily anyway. I had my youth offending worker, but I had to go to that so that felt different from what you're doing.

I: I think an essential part of what makes us different is that we work alongside young people and the community.

Young Person: I think that makes you all more approachable, that you have young adults working alongside you and it gives us opportunities too... to be part of the conversation.

I: What was it like being in prison during lockdown?

Young Person: Lockdown was hard for me, the isolation and not being out. Being in a closed confined space for a very long time was difficult. I need to stay active and I couldn't do that.

I feel like being in prison this time has been better than the other time. I've been calmer and focused on

It felt like my solicitor just didn't seem to care and it was like they were thinking 'we have a young black man here, let's just go and convict him.'

things like academics. These regular conversations with Project Future via the video link have really helped me because you're thinking more about what you want to do, making plans and sharing ideas. And also, just chatting to someone and getting things off your chest.

I: Is there anything else that's helped during this time?

Young Person: Reading has helped a lot. It's a kind of positive that's come out of lockdown because when you're in your cell you have a lot of time on your hands and I don't think I get much from watching TV. For me 'knowledge is power'. I want to know things and want to be able to have conversations about things. I don't want to be one of those single-minded people, even certain conversations I have with people in prison help with that. We don't talk about the same things all the time. Obviously, I hear people talk about gang things, road things,² but I don't really like talking about those things... I take myself out of those conversations.

All of this 'I done this'... I don't like that; I like talking and reading, especially about politics and history.

I: What is it that you find helpful about history or politics?

Young Person: You've got to understand the past to know how to change the future. Growing up, I didn't really have a chance. The environment I was in set me up to fail, I think there's so much to change still in our society, especially the area I'm from. A lot of things like school made it hard for us when I was younger. We'd get kicked out and permanently excluded and then you're left with nothing to do. I've seen so many younger men running the street and I'd ask them 'what are you doing?' and they'd say they got kicked out of school. In our area there's only so many places where there are (Pupil Referral) Units and the unit in Haringey is in an area I'm not safe in. So, you've got to give young people like me an alternative. I went to the unit because I knew I wanted to get back into mainstream school and I always saw education as important. I struggled and had a lot of fights there but a lot of people just didn't turn up.

I: How would you describe the support from Project Future since you've been in prison?

I've never had support like this. Project Future are the only actual professionals I've met who care about young people and care what happens to them.

Young Person: I've never had support like this. Project Future are the only actual professionals I've met who care about young people and care what happens to them. You lot visit me every month and it shows me you care about our well-being. You've always asked if we need help... Coming to court, or when we are getting released from prison, speaking to probation or sorting out family visits, you're always willing to help. You've helped my family too and that's been so important.

You can lose your way in here and the video link visits have really helped me a lot. The conversations have made me think more about myself and my future. I thought at the start maybe you would just come and see me once but you kept it going and checking up on me and making sure that I haven't lost my head.

It helps being in here (in a foreign nationals' prison) because it's calmer and a lot of people are really focused on their cases and look out for each other too. We help each other go through this process and there are more people looking out for you. It's very different from other jails.

A: It sounds like you are providing a lot of support for other people

I: It makes me think that you're being the role model for others that you didn't have?

Young Person: Yeah, I didn't really have that growing up and so one of the things that feels important is to be able to do that for other people because I didn't have that.

There was one person in prison who was helpful to me. In my first sentence in 2016, we were doing a bricklaying course and I got close with the instructor. He was teaching me a lot of things and I could tell he was good people. He pushed me, excelled my expectations and I built things I never thought I would... I built a shed! He taught me things I still remember and can still do.

I think what was helpful was the way he spoke to me. He treated me like I wasn't a prisoner; he was teaching me and I felt like I was on an apprenticeship. He believed in me and that made me believe I could do it. I think that did a lot for me and it made me want to come out and work in construction.

2. Referring to being on the road/streets a lot and all the things that come with that.

I: What has the support from Project Future helped you to do in your life?

Young Person: It's helped me to grow, I've grown a lot, especially in the past year. It's helped me to think about my future a lot and where I want to be and what I want to do when I come out.

I'm a bit older now, more mature and I feel like I'm in a different place in my life now to previous years. Getting older now and seeing my son getting older helps me realise I need to sort out my life. I want to set a good example to my son and I want to be someone he can look up to. I've got so tired of the cycle and I don't want to get stuck or have that mindset so I've got to break out of this. This is my life now.

A: What's helped break that mindset?

Young person: Talking to family definitely and talking to you. It's been helpful having friends in here as well. I think the way we communicate with each other and motivate each other helps me. I have friends from my country here and we have the same kind of background and share the same values. We talk to each other and encourage each other saying 'we need to be better, do better'.

I can talk to you lot about anything, you've made this comfortable space for me. Helping me to open up in times when I've been struggling, I know you lot have been there for me. Engaging with me so casually and being interested in what I want in life. You lot do things differently.

I: There are key evidence-based psychological theories and approaches that we draw on at Project Future, but for me a lot of it is just being genuine and human in the work that you do. I've noticed a lot of change in you in the last two years, has anything surprised you?

Young Person: I wasn't expecting us to get so close. You know me properly and personally, my family too. I've always been guarded, but I've let you lot in. Before that I had only opened up to my friends and like I said I've always been wary of my environment and who I would speak around.

I: What do you think has enabled you to do that?

Young Person: You lot never forced me to do anything. You let me go at my own pace and I

appreciate that. It took time to get to this point. It took me at least a year or more to trust the team and now we are here five years on. Properly having engaged with you all for five years.

I: What do you think other services could learn from Project Future?

Young Person: I want prison staff to learn from how you approach and talk to us. You don't always have to have a business or professional hat on... just interact with us as human beings. In jail, we're not talked to by staff as people, that makes us not want to interact with staff or ask for help.

Prison staff need to learn that the prison population is not made up of bad people, just people who made bad choices and all those people have a story. The other day I saw a governor having an argument with one of my friends, the things he was saying got me mad. He was saying 'you're a criminal so I don't have to say anything to you' and 'you're stuck in here but I'm going home'. We don't need staff to come and judge us... we have already been judged. When you hear people saying all these things it just makes me think 'what do you expect to happen'? It makes me want to stay away from them and not interact with them, it goes back to (the

question of) — who can I turn to?

It's probably why people in here help each other so much. If the staff aren't helping us, who's going to help us?

A: What would you change/improve about prisons if you could?

Young Person: I would improve education and make sure that people get access to proper courses. Not just English, Science and Maths, but give people a proper education like you get at university. This is a foreign national jail and there aren't a lot of courses available for people, so there isn't much productive stuff that you can do or educational options for people.

I: How do you think co-production could be used to improve things in prisons?

Young Person: They could have more council meetings and opportunities for people to speak and share ideas. They could appoint some prisoners who can speak for the wing and meet every week or fortnight to raise concerns.

Prison staff need to learn that the prison population is not made up of bad people, just people who made bad choices and all those people have a story.

The way people get spoken to here... People are getting talked down to and there is a lack of help. This is one of them prisons where everyone is going through immigration stuff so how come there isn't much help about immigration stuff? A lot of the prisoners are asking for help but the guards don't know much... The Home Office are supposed to be around to help but they only come once in the week and it's the same time we go to the gym. Everyone else is banged up and when we're going out, the immigration lady comes. She only sees a few people in their cells and she sneaks onto the wing. If you're banged up you wouldn't know she was there...

Foreign national prisons need to have a room where the home office representative sits in and anyone can access them and ask for help... Rather than waiting three or four weeks, you need that interaction early. That's what they've got in detention centres, they have a few of them offices where you can seek advice.

I: If those things were done in prisons, what do you think that would enable?

Young Person: It would better people's lives and give people some control. Letting people think, plan and decide where they want to go in their lives helps them feel like an adult. Whether or not you have made mistakes, people want to be in control of their own lives and not be told which path they have to go down. To be respected as a human is important. Not being respected brings down your self-esteem and that stops you from thinking you can fulfil anything.

Young person: Why do you think co-production is so important?

I: The young people we work with are often labelled 'hard to reach' and aren't being seen in other mainstream, statutory services. Young people struggle to access those services, often being labelled as too complex or being positioned as dangerous. Their vulnerabilities are commonly not seen or acknowledged meaning they miss out on help and the risks for these young people remain high. Having countless experiences of being disempowered by services and systems doesn't leave young people with much trust in professionals as you described earlier... Many of the young people we work with have also had contact with the criminal justice system and spent time in prison which can sometimes offer opportunities for things like wellbeing support or access to education. However, young people have told us that there have been many barriers to this or that the help that was offered wasn't right for them. From the outset, Project Future has employed young people seeking to shift the balance from power historically being held by a service, to giving young people a voice and agency. We've learnt so much from young people, like the importance of being genuine, patient and delivering support in a flexible and accessible way.

A: What has this enabled?

I: Co-production and centring young people's voices and experiences has enabled us as professionals to learn a different way of doing things and has been essential for the safe delivery of the service. Alongside principles from Narrative therapy and Community Psychology we have adapted the service approach so that it better meets young people's needs. For example, letting young people have autonomy over their own help-seeking, being flexible and offering holistic support for young people with wellbeing and psychological ideas wrapped around that help. You might be helping a young person with their CV or even just playing table tennis but within that interaction you could also be discussing their strengths, skills and resources and/or discussing ways of managing stress. You may also just be chatting and hanging out enabling young people to build enough trust with you to ask for help. Employing young people has also been key to supporting other young people to engage and build trust in the team.

Young people often want to contribute to their community and create change in the systems surrounding them. Social action work is a central part of our work and aims to address how societal inequalities affect young people's wellbeing and can lead to them getting caught in cycles of offending. Working alongside young people who bring so much creativity alongside the experience of living through these challenges has led to young people curating exhibitions of their artwork (reflecting their experiences), training teams and contributing to policy change at a local and national level.

I: What do you think some of the challenges can be in this way of working?

A: Challenges have often related to issues that young people continue to face. Young people in the community we work within experience significant stressors that include navigating work whilst homeless or managing debt, physical and mental health. These need to take priority and may require the young person to attend appointments, which can be additional barriers to working. Youth employees in our project continue to be able to access holistic support and keyworkers as service users.

I: I think for me the other thing is finding ways to genuinely co-produce can be a struggle for services. Co-production takes trust and time and we've been able to build co-production into all levels of the service, however often statutory services can be restricted by funding, capacity or predetermined models of working. Genuine co-production requires a lot of trust from the community and funders too as often you don't know what a service will end up looking like! Drawing on an evidence base is essential, but the work can also allow for creation of practice-based evidence that can then be shared with wider systems.

Involving People with Lived Experience in Prison and Probation: Some Milestones in the Journey so far

Ruth Walters is the Lived Experience Engagement Lead in Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service's Insights Group

The value of lived experience engagement and involvement is recognised by an increasing number of organisations and sectors. The Prison and Probation service in England and Wales has what could be described as a unique challenge in this, based on the potential view that our primary role is to punish people convicted of crime and protect the public, and that people with experience of our services have lost the right to be heard or involved in our work, by virtue of their offending. This is a significant and ongoing challenge. Additionally, engaging and involving those who have experience of our services is not straightforward — it requires new processes, norms and practices that take time to learn, develop and embed in a very large and complex organisation — essentially it requires a culture change. However, the efforts of a growing number of lived experience engagement 'champions' in the Prison and Probation Service, along with the unstinting generosity of our partner organisations in sharing their knowledge and expertise, has helped build a commitment to a lived experience engagement culture which is now stronger than ever.

The journey to engaging and involving people in prison and on probation in our wider work is both challenging and exciting in equal measure. In the last four years we have achieved some key milestones in this journey. This article seeks to share some of these, including the creation of national lived experience engagement standards and products, delivery of lived experience engagement events, and the creation of a national lived experience engagement network. The article also covers some of the growing areas of good practice in prisons and probation settings, focussing more fully on prisons though, along with some of our future plans to build on and strengthen this. This article is written from the viewpoint of the Insights Lived Experience Engagement Team, and is by no means exhaustive, as it would be impossible to reflect all of

the wealth and breadth of lived experience engagement and involvement work currently taking place across our prisons and probation areas.

The lived experience engagement and involvement landscape in prisons and probation is varied and evolving, driven and shaped by a range of policy initiatives and operational needs; it is linked to diversity, equality, respect and rehabilitation, and also captured in our HMPPS Strategy Commitments to enabling people to be their best, building an open and learning culture and transforming through partnership.¹ In practice, it covers a range of consultation and involvement opportunities, including individual and group consultations, lived experience panels and forums, peer-led activities, and lived experience involvement in decision-making, such as service design, reviews, and staff recruitment and development.

Striving for excellence

In the last four years a growing number of people have helped to build on and share the many engagement and involvement successes in our prisons and in the community. Translating these individual successes into a wider culture of engagement and involvement across all of probation and prisons, remains one of our key challenges. An important milestone in making progress with this was developing and agreeing the HMPPS Standards of Excellence for our lived experience engagement work. These standards are the first step in articulating a corporate commitment to excellence across the main settings and contexts in which lived experience engagement can take place (see Table 1).

As a given, the design and development of these standards needed to be led by those with experience of our services. To help with this, the Lived Experience Engagement Lead in the Insights Group, convened an advisory group comprising individuals with experience of our services as well as user-led organisations working in the criminal justice sector; the Service User Advisory

1. HMPPS Business Strategy. (2019). Shaping our future. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hmppps-business-strategy-shaping-our-future>

Group (SUAG) was formed,² later becoming the Lived Experience Engagement Network (LEEN).³ It grew rapidly into a hugely energetic and supportive network of individuals and organisations committed to lived experience involvement in criminal justice services, and the Standards of Excellence became the first of many elements of our work which the LEEN continues to help us design, develop and deliver. Along with our partners, a good range of prison and probation colleagues and representatives from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation are also part of the network. The collaboration and partnership working the network engenders remains instrumental to progressing our lived experience engagement work in prisons and probation — with over 30 different organisations regularly represented, and over 200 individuals participating in the last year alone.

During August and September 2018, members of the newly formed SUAG facilitated service user consultation in both prisons and the community, to help inform what was then called a ‘proposed national framework for engagement and involvement work’. Nearly 250 people with lived experience of our services were consulted with, and one of the clearest messages we received was to strive for excellence, with the SUAG strongly encouraging us in a similar vein. Drawing on the UK Customer Service Excellence Standard and the European Foundation for Quality Management Excellence Model a set of seven standards were

developed, which were also shaped by the expectations of the prison and probation Inspectorates.^{4 5} The standards were designed to apply in one-to-one settings, group-based engagement, and work to involve people who use our services across the whole organisation, including those who are less likely to engage.

From their inception, the standards have been offered as a helpful starting point, or a tool, for colleagues to consider where they are currently, and where they might like to go, in terms of engaging with people using our services. We have deliberately held off from mandating use of the standards, seeking always to use them as part of a ‘hearts and minds’ approach which encourages colleagues to see the benefits of engaging with people who use our services, and perhaps more importantly, helping colleagues to understand the importance of doing this work well. Piloting the standards with a small number of prisons and all our regional probation colleagues saw them welcomed as a framework on which to build a more coherent approach to engaging and involving people using our services in our wider work, and this is primarily how they have been used ever since. For example, some prisons have used them to shape how they respond to HMI Prisons’ expectations of lived experience engagement, and every probation region has used them as a framework for their Regional Engaging with People on Probation Action Plans.

Table 1: HMPPS Lived Experience Engagement Standards of Excellence

Ensuring people on probation and in prison actively contribute to the planning and review of their progress and wider progress:	
1	All staff are skilled and competent in involving people on probation and in prison in planning and reviewing their activities, sentence planning and wider rehabilitation activities.
2	People on probation and in prison have been actively involved in the development of their activities, sentence planning and wider rehabilitation activities.
Securing feedback from people on probation and in prison on which interventions most help them, and how these could be improved at a wider level:	
3	Robust methods for securing good insight into the needs of people on probation and in prison are in place and used regularly.
4	Opportunities for input are provided to enable people on probation and in prison to influence which interventions work best for them and others.

2. Partnership members of the SUAG: Clinks; Criminal Justice Alliance Interserve; Nacro; Prison Reform Trust; Probation institute; Revolving Doors Agency; Seetec; St Giles Trust; User Voice.
 3. Partnership Member of the LEEN: Beyond Recovery; Breakthrough; BTEG; BtheChange; Care Leavers Association (MOJ); Clinks; Criminal Justice Alliance; DWRM Consultants CIC; EP:IC; HMI Probation; Interventions Alliance; Ingeus; Intuitive Thinking Skills; Leaders Unlocked; Nacro; People Power Partnership; Prison Reform Trust; Prisoner Learning Alliance; Probation Institute; Revolving Doors Agency; Standout; St Giles Trust; Switchback; Traveller Movement; Thezmt; Unlocking Potential; User Voice; The Wise Group; Working Chance; ZMT.
 4. Customer Service Excellence Standard. (2008). <https://www.customerserviceexcellence.uk.com/about-the-standard/customer-service-excellence-standard/>
 5. The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model. (1992). <https://www.efqm.org/the-efqm-model/>

Involving people on probation and in prison in key stages of service design, development and delivery:	
5	There is clear evidence of the influence and impact of involving people on probation and in prison in service design, development and delivery at a strategic / organisational level.
6	Opportunities for people on probation and in prison to assist with service review and development, as well as opportunities to co-deliver services, are actively sought and realised where possible.
7	A system-wide effort is made to engage with a diversity of people on probation and in prison, including those from specific and under-represented groups, with evidence of a tailored response to their needs (consistent with the Equality Act 2010).

As we developed and piloted the standards, the need for a Toolkit to help colleagues turn these standards into operational reality emerged pretty swiftly, and the same SUAG operational group which had developed the standards, undertook an enormous piece of work to pull together a Lived Experience Engagement Toolkit. The Toolkit includes nearly 40 checklists, guides, templates and examples of good practice, as well as links to further support. It covers topics such as writing an engagement strategy, ethics and governance, working in groups, reward and recognition, and measuring impact and evaluation. The Toolkit was finalised in March 2019, just as the UK went into the first Covid-19 related lockdown, which limited its initial take up and use, and it is currently being refreshed as part of ongoing work to strengthen lived experience engagement in both prison and probation settings.

Promoting the voice of people who use our services: Insights in Action

The Insights Lived Experience Engagement Team has facilitated a considerable amount of the work to improve and strengthen how we consult with and hear from people who use our services, to help make the routes we use to gather lived experience insights as robust and representative as possible. As this improvement journey continues, a range of ongoing opportunities are being developed across prisons and probation settings, to secure more immediate lived experience insights and help us maintain this perspective in our work.

In the last four years we have undertaken over 50 of what we have called 'Insights in Action' events and initiatives created, in most instances, through work with our partners in the LEEN, and delivered as lived experience events in the HMPPS Insights Festival.⁶ These events and initiatives enable us and colleagues across the Service to access some real-time perspectives and insights of people with lived experience, and use these

to shape and influence our ongoing work, and strengthen our engagement and involvement routes and mechanisms.

As part of the first Insights Festival in 2019, the Insights Lived Experience Engagement Team co-hosted a joint research symposium with the Probation Institute, which brought together practitioners, policy makers and people with lived experience of our services, to share inspiring examples of joint work, and to consider how we can do more of this. The event was attended by 60 people from across the criminal justice system, many of whom had lived experience of our services, and the wide-ranging discussion and debate on the day provided inspiration and challenge to us all. Key messages included the paramount importance of building trust, treating people in procedurally just ways, and taking a diversity of approaches. This first Insights Festival offered opportunities for people to join lived experience consultation groups taking place throughout the country, as well as a chance to meet with some key champions of lived experience engagement work in prisons. Since that first Festival, lived experience events have become a valued and every-growing part of the programme. In 2022 Insights Festival offered 30 events with a lived experience engagement focus. Just under 1,000 people signed up to these events, which provided opportunities to hear lived experience perspectives on a range of issues, including county lines and gangs, gambling, and the experience of leaving care. Attendees heard about life-changing journeys such as 'From Probation to Peer Mentor', as well participating in events which considered thorny, yet compelling issues, such as whether all marginalised voices deserve to be heard.

Since its inception in early 2018, members of the LEEN network have also actively considered and shaped a range of wider work. For example, the LEEN helped us develop aspects of our Probation Reform Programme; our National Drug and Alcohol Strategy; a post-unification Resettlement Pack; and the national Plan for Engaging with People on Probation. The LEEN has also

6. See: www.hmppsinsights.co.uk/insights-festival/

helped us consider complex issues, such as the language and terminology we use, leading us to more consistently adopt the terms 'people on probation', 'people in prison' and 'people with lived experience'.

While we continue to build our lived experience engagement and involvement routes within Prisons and Probation, the Insights Lived Experience Engagement Team has developed a compendium of the most recent lived experience reports and consultations, to help us wherever possible to take account of this work in our ongoing service design, development, delivery, and review. The compendium currently comprises 39 reports undertaken by 16 different organisations,⁷ who have spoken to a total 6,732 people in prison or on probation. Whilst the compendium is mostly used by the Insights Group to ensure our work takes good account of the lived experience perspective, other parts of HMPPS are starting to access it, and we hope to build on this and encourage wider use of the compendium over the next year.

There is still considerable room for further development of the ways we hear the voice of people who use our services, however, the last four years has undoubtedly seen some good progress made, and work will continue to build on the promising achievements made so far.

National and local work to engage and include people in prison

In addition to the aforementioned work and progress, there are longer-standing local and central initiatives in the Prison Service which aim to engage and involve people in custody in how prisons operate.

There is a requirement for all prisons to have Prison Councils; some prisons also have Health Councils with prison resident representatives. Well-run Councils can be opportunities for people in prison to raise and work to address day-to-day concerns and frustrations, as well as influence and lead on longer-term work. Prison Councils can deliver considerable 'quick wins', often related to relatively basic but crucial elements of prison life, such as facilities, canteen, and family visits. In some

instances, consultation on more strategic and longer-term issues has resulted in people in prison identifying new and highly valued initiatives. For example, prison farms, gardens and wildlife projects (e.g. bee-keeping), often led by people in prisons themselves, can have a transformational effect on those involved, providing a sense of pride and purpose whilst developing a whole range of new skills and experiences.⁸

People in prison have also led initiatives to celebrate success and recognise the efforts and achievements of individuals or groups — both staff and people in prison. Initiatives such as 'shout outs' and in-house awards schemes have enabled people to highlight what they value and want to recognise, and how this should be done. This may be one way to help to begin breaking down the 'them and us' divide between staff and those living in custody.

A number of prisons have community hubs set up and run by people in prison which provide information and informal support on a whole range of aspects of prison life. The informal support offered by these hubs, as well as from peer-led befriending and listening services, can make an important contribution to the overall health and well-being of the wider prison population. In other instances, more practical challenges have been tackled, with people in prison assisting

with issues such as maintaining health and safety, helping to refresh prison policies and procedures, or ensuring HM Inspectorate requirements are being met (e.g. in relation to noticeboard content and signage).

Charitable work and fundraisers provide people in prison with opportunities to develop and lead on initiatives and activities that aim to help others. During Covid-19, people in prison undertook exercise challenges to raise funds for Care Homes and the NHS, with fundraisers running distances to/up landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, Niagara Falls, and Mount Everest. More generally, Remembrance Day Displays have been created to raise funds for the British Legion, and people in prison have organised tuck boxes to be sent to serving members of the armed forces. People in prison have also used their time in industry workshops

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in prison.

7. Organisations with publications in the Insights Compendium: Advance; Clinks - RR3 Group; Criminal Justice Alliance; EP:IC; HMI Probation; IAPDC & Prison Radio; KSS CRC; Merseyside CRC; Oxford University; People Power Partnership; Prison Reform Solutions; Prison Reform Trust; Prisoner Learning Alliance; Revolving Doors Agency; User Voice; ZMT.
8. Farrier, A., Baybutt, M., & Dooris, M. (2019). Mental Health and Wellbeing Benefits from a Prisons Horticultural Programme. *International Journal of Prisoner Health*, 15(1), 91-104.

to do good, making PPE for health workers during Covid-19, and in one instance, providing refurbished bikes to a local school after learning that more than 20 of theirs had been stolen.

People in prison have proven invaluable in supporting communication across the prison, with prison representative roles providing a two-way route between staff and people in prisons, sharing updates and feedback on a wide range of issues. During Covid-19, this proved vital. Where it worked well, this assistance with communication helped to keep people on the wings updated, informed and where possible, re-assured. At a national level, during the pandemic the lived experience consultation groups and representatives played a role in shaping our response to the ongoing crises and our work to build back better. We were able to use this insight to highlight key issues in briefings to senior leaders, in particular about how communicating clearly and in a timely and procedurally just manner was critical.

Also centrally, prisoner forums are run by the national HMPPS Change Delivery and Central Services Group to shape and inform national change programmes in prisons. This consultation has helped HMPPS to evaluate how effectively change is being rolled out and embedded across the estate. In recent months, the forums have supported work to develop Offender Management in Custody, in-cell telephony, in-cell technology, and the work of the Race Action Programme.

Our national assurance programme includes routine use of the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) survey, a rolling programme since 2003 that periodically surveys each prison's quality of life. The MQPL was designed and constructed by the Prisons Research Centre to measure relatively stable latent constructs that cannot otherwise be observed; for example, respect, fairness, bureaucratic legitimacy and personal autonomy.⁹ Prisoners' responses are made meaningful by

comparing them to what we might typically expect from other establishments of the same functional type. To further understand the reasons behind responses provided, and give prisoners further voice about aspects of their experience that are the most important to them, survey participants are invited to join focus groups, or to submit individual written comments. As well as providing each prison with this management information about their own establishment, the HMPPS MQPL Team analyses and reports trends from across the estate and over time. To help make prisons accountable, MQPL scores contribute to the national Prison Performance Tool.

This range of multi-faceted engagement with people in prison will continue to evolve and grow as our commitment to engaging with people in prison builds, and we take opportunities to share and learn from examples of good practice.

The way forward for Lived Experience Engagement in Prisons

There are many excellent examples of how and when engagement and consultation takes place with people in prisons, but practice nationally remains varied. Our ambition is to build on the good practice already in place, growing this across all of our prisons, and maximising its impact and reach wherever we can.

National work led by the culture team in the Transforming Delivery in Prisons Programme is playing a key role in this, with the voice of people in prison identified as a central component of developing positive prison cultures. In the last six months we have spoken with 120 people in custody about their experience and perspectives of prison culture. In the word cloud below (Figure 1), diversity, equality, community, respect, and relationships emerged as most important to the respondents — which we believe further strengthens the case for involving and engaging people in prisons wherever we can.

National work led by the culture team in the Transforming Delivery in Prisons Programme is playing a key role in this, with the voice of people in prison identified as a central component of developing positive prison cultures.

9. Liebling, A., & Arnold, H. (2002). *Measuring the Quality of Prison Life*. Research Findings 174. London: Home Office.

Figure 1: What matters in Prison Culture: The Perspective of People in Prison



Work in the culture programme to promote the voice of people in prisons will initially focus on 12 pilot sites, and it will:

- Support prisons to develop a range of engagement and involvement work which meets the needs of their establishment, drawing on and sharing current good practice, including trialling a reverse mentoring scheme.
- Create a bank of examples of good practice and share this more widely across the estate.
- Build on the existing lived experience engagement toolkit to offer a range of tools and learning products, piloting these initially with a view to then offering them out to other prisons.
- Capture and share a range of stories told by people in prisons, which offer personal and compelling accounts of hope and transformation.
- Work with colleagues in other parts of HMPPS to develop opportunities for people with lived experience to be directly employed in paid roles in prisons.

The benefits of lived experience engagement, for both organisations and individuals, have been well summarised by members of the HMPPS Evidence-Based Practice Team.¹⁰ In their evidence summary on Engagement and Co-production with People with Lived

Experience of Prison and Probation the benefits of such activities include:

- enabling voice and enhancing a sense of fairness
- improving relationships amongst peer groups and with professionals
- influencing culture change
- role-modelling and reinforcing citizenship
- giving hope and autonomy
- creating opportunities to support processes of desistance
- demonstrating an inclusive and responsive approach in using different methods, channels and media for different groups

While there is a growing recognition of these benefits across our prison and probation service, our lived experience engagement and involvement work will continue to be shaped by the changing needs of the people who use our services, as well as the priorities of our stakeholders at every level, including ministerial. As Martin Luther King famously said 'the time is always right to do what is right', and I am increasingly confident that in the coming years more and more colleagues and people with lived experience of our services will help us to build our understanding and appreciation of the importance of lived experience engagement and involvement, and support us to actively embrace this at every level in our organisation.

10. This summary is published in this same edition of the Prison Service Journal.

A different approach to community working: The 3Cs initiative at HMP Guys Marsh

Based at HMP Guys Marsh, Ian Walters is the Governing Governor, Beccy Archer is the Treatment Manager and lead for the 3Cs, and Carl and Dion are two of the current 3Cs Champions. They are interviewed by Flora Fitzalan Howard, Evidence Lead in HM Prison and Probation Service and co-editor of the Prison Service Journal.

FFH: What is the 3Cs? What was the idea behind establishing this group?

BA: 3Cs stands for Culture, Change and Community. It is our process for embedding a rehabilitative culture and improving active citizenship.¹ We try to make this collaborative by having prisoner Champions who lead on this, and work alongside me and other staff to recognise themes of good practice and issues or areas where we can improve. We have had other initiatives over the years; the 3Cs takes our collaborative approach a step further.

IW: We are really driven to develop how we engage with our prisoners here. The Prison Service is rightly focused on getting its culture right, and to do this we need to actively show that we are looking for and making positive changes. We can only do this as a community, by engaging with the prisoners, our staff and our key stakeholders. By putting people's lived experience of Guys Marsh at the heart of how we work everyone is involved and it is 'done with' rather than 'done to'.

FFH: How long has the group been going? How does it operate?

BA: Since September 2021. We started by advertising and recruiting champions. I try to meet with the champions as regularly as possible, ideally weekly, and there is a monthly meeting with a particular 'theme'; the champions obtain feedback/promote information linked to this theme throughout the month and then we review and set any actions with relevant department leads at the end of the month. It is helpful for us to meet beforehand, throughout the month, so that staff can come to the meeting with answers to reduce delays. We had a difficult spate with COVID-19, which got in the way of getting some actions

completed, and the Champions being able to get around the site and speak to people. But we are hopeful that we are moving out of that now, and that Summer and Autumn will be better times for our group.

IW: It is helpful to have senior managers involved in an initiative like this, but I also believed strongly that it should not be me (as the Governing Governor) directing what was happening. Instead, it is about getting the right people for the issues involved. For example, for a given issue it could be the Head of Operations, or the CM² in visits, or colleagues from our Business Hub who are the right people to be in those discussions and doing the problem-solving. My role then is to encourage and to enable that to happen.

FFH: What attracted you to be a 3Cs Champion?

D: I have previous experience in rehabilitative culture roles such as Enabling Environments and Events Management as well as being a Listener. I think I can help people to change, and more so in this environment where there are short-term prisoners. As someone who has served 17 years in custody, I've witnessed a lot of change and gained a lot of experience. This means I can try to steer others to learn from my mistakes and lead a legal, pro-social, acceptable way of life. The 3Cs helps us do this for people in a big way; we can touch so many people. That has been really beneficial for all of us. The dream is to make a real difference, a true impact to change futures for the better.

C: I am a people person, and I like to see the best in people. The first time I was in prison, the experience was hard. No one came up to me and explained things, like general apps, or where to get your canteen. So for me to be able to speak to so many people and share

1. For more on the topic of Rehabilitative Culture see PSJ editions 235 and 244.
2. Custodial Manager.

information with them, it makes them feel better and they more able to be positive while they are in jail. It makes me feel better in myself too. The role attracted me because I like helping my fellow peers.

FFH: How is this initiative different from what was done before, or from the usual ways that forums in prisons might run?

D: I was a wing rep and a Listener in another establishment, and it was mainly wing-based. Here it isn't wing-based, it is everywhere and involves everyone. We get to speak to everyone as a whole, and get ideas from them all, and share our own ideas across a community.

BA: Historically, we have had prison councils and the like; we found they became an opportunity where every month the same people were there and often talking about the same issues, and this could be repeated the following month. We wanted to move away from this to be more action-orientated, focussing on a theme each month, focussing on what was working and what was not, and then looking at solutions.

FFH: When I attended your meeting on the theme of families many months ago, I was really struck by the amount of decision-making and planning that happened in that hour. It was not just talking about problems, it was about actively solving them and making a difference. It was so productive and constructive.

BA: That's something we want to get back to, as I feel we have drifted a little. We [the 3Cs] would meet weekly, and then feed the issues into the different departments, so those colleagues then came to the monthly meetings with solutions ready and ideas in mind, rather than hearing about the problems for the first time in the meeting and having to go away to think about actions.

IW: That is one of the unique differences between the 3Cs and perhaps more traditional councils or consultation groups. We are getting feedback all the time through our Champions, and this shapes what the topic of the next meeting is, and who specifically is invited to help work through related problems. The more traditional forums are quite hierarchical and usually involve an SO³, CM or SPO⁴ speaking to prisoners. But, by involving people who are directly

involved in the processes being discussed, even if they don't traditionally work with prisoners face-to-face, can be really effective. We got some fantastic insight when the Business Administrator from our Business Hub attended the meeting to discuss problems with complaints and apps. They may not have usually been invited to a traditional forum, but they were very happy to, and this enabled great work to be done.

Our 3Cs groups is flexible in its focus too. Before the pandemic some of the issues in focus were about everyday life at Guys Marsh; for example, in the meeting you came to Flora, one of the issues we resolved was about the men being able to keep hold of pictures their children had drawn during visits. During the pandemic, and then as life has started to return to normal, we have had to adapt to dealing with larger pressing priorities. For example, currently we are concerned with getting men into work and reinitiating the regime, after two years of operating in such a restricted way. And, as the regime began to be unlocked, we started seeing an increase in violence and bullying, so we turned our attention to better understanding that so we can try to get ahead of it.

FFH: What has been your experience so far about the way the group works, what makes it succeed and what challenges you face?

D: I have only been part of the group for a few months. Beccy is one of the reasons I

joined, because I heard great things about her, and about how she leads this; her positivity and outlook and how she brings all the staff together as one, like from Healthcare, Education etc. She contacts them and invites them to be part of the meetings and gets people involved.

C: Over the months I have been involved, Beccy has helped me through a lot. She showed me that I can overcome my own problems and help with other peoples'. She encouraged me to speak to people, to take on a leadership role (which I didn't really want to a certain extent!). It gave me a sense of responsibility where I can feel a part of something, and the group listen to me, and I get something from this personally too. It has been a good experience working with my peers; we have lost a few people over the last few weeks, but we have managed to keep it together.

During the pandemic, and then as life has started to return to normal, we have had to adapt to dealing with larger pressing priorities.

3. Senior Officer
4. Senior Probation Officer

IW: We have also worked hard to help staff (especially our middle and senior leaders) to understand what the 3Cs is trying to achieve by connecting national and local priorities 'the what' with our 'big 6' pillars⁵ that represent 'the how' focussing our work at Guys Marsh to achieve those priorities. Making it clear to all how the 3Cs supports so much of our work has helped people to see its value and buy into it.

FFH: COVID-19 must have been really difficult for the group. Were you able to meet at all? How did you manage to operate?

BA: We did a couple of meetings by telephone conference, where the guys would dial in from their in-cell phones, so we could keep that going. But for the men to access their peers, and getting actions done, when people needed to prioritise things related to the pandemic, although understandable, was a problem for us. We kept it going as much as possible but also were able to be realistic and reflect on what was possible in that moment; focusing more on what we could do than what we couldn't.

IW: In-cell telephony was a good means of keeping in touch with the Champions. However, this meant Beccy needed to repeat conversations many times, rather than coming together to collectively discuss issues. This made streamlined and effective working much more difficult.

FFH: What have been some of the 3Cs successes? What are you really proud of?

C: We raised £320 for Ukraine. We went round to the men, making them aware of the war, and how we could help, and then had forms ready to take money from their accounts (not me personally, obviously!) and give it to a good cause.

Also, lots of the men know more about the 3Cs now than they used to. It's been word of mouth, and we go to the units often. I am a positive person, and I know a lot of the people here. When people see a little change, or you talk about what can be done, people gravitate to you and ask questions, and I can then help. People see that help and they see results from the 3Cs. I'm not saying everything gets done in the 3Cs; but some things we do get results from and people see

that. And a lot of the men feel more comfortable speaking to and feeding information to [the Champions], and trust that we will pass this on during meetings, and try to make the situation better.

BA: The filtering process that the Champions do really helps. They can highlight where the same things or issues or messages are coming up, including across different units, and so in the meeting it helps us to streamline and prioritise issues to focus on.

IW: Since the 3Cs began we have started producing a newsletter that keeps people better informed of what the group have been doing. Some other examples of activities done since its inception include a really worthwhile survey of our residents to understand how procedurally just a whole host of

processes feel to them (such as use of force, the incentives scheme, the DIRF process⁶). The 3Cs group helped to write our rehabilitative culture strategy this year too, which we had not done as collaboratively before. And more recently there has been work done with staff and prisoners across Guys Marsh to explore why people might bully others and what this behaviour looks like, which then fed into our strategy to tackle bullying, debt, drugs and violence. Over time the 3Cs has worked on issues or topics that range from improving insight into issues, addressing long standing issues that affect all of the community,

shape policies and processes, and tweak and refine 'business as usual' type work.

FFH: Has there been anything, since the formation of the 3Cs, that has not worked so well, or you felt you needed to change direction?

BA: There have been lots of teething issues, and some are ongoing. I think this will always be a working in progress. As your population changes, as your staffing group changes, Governors change and so on, it will always be something that develops. At the beginning we didn't have a theme each month like we do now. We started with focussing on the seven pillars of rehabilitative culture, but we found that was too broad and difficult to narrow down to actions we could take. So, we switched to areas or themes, some of which have included equalities, Business Hub, and families. This has made more sense to people and has

We kept it going as much as possible but also were able to be realistic and reflect on what was possible in that moment; focusing more on what we could do than what we couldn't.

5. Leadership; Rehabilitative Culture; Procedural Justice; Decency; Diversity & Inclusion; Our Team.

6. The process for reporting discrimination (DIRF: Discrimination Incident Report Form).

worked better. We are now thinking about the structure of our Champions too. Initially we had someone from every unit, but that can be difficult to keep people working together as it is a big group, so instead we are questioning if we are better off having a smaller group of Champions who work more collaboratively together, rather than people working individually on their individual units. It is trial and error, and an adaptive, flexible and fluid approach.

IW: We had a clear understanding of what we were trying to achieve from the start, and that the 3Cs was not to be a traditional prison council or forum for the day-to-day issues that are covered in other meetings. But we realised quickly that the rehabilitative culture pillars were too theoretical and abstract as we were not identifying tangible ideas for action that could make a difference. When we started being more concrete but simpler in our focus it became easier for staff and prisoners to work together to decide what changes would help.

FFH: How have staff responded to the 3Cs group? Do they see the value in it like the residents do?

D: For sure. Yes, they have bought in. The SO here earlier, I invited him to come yesterday. The staff come to meetings, they are on board, and they like it. I ask them questions too, about what they want to be different on the wing. And they are honest with me which is good. Advertisement and good communication within the prison is key; the more we promote this work and their input, the more people will come to be invested in us as 3Cs. We have good attendance from Governors which shows that the SMT are invested in what we are trying to achieve.

C: When we first started, staff possibly didn't understand what the group was or take it seriously. But now, when [Champions] go on the units they recognise who we are. Sometimes they say to other prisoners that they should speak to us as well, knowing that we know what's going on.

BA: We have started thinking recently about having staff 3Cs Champions to represent their groups too. These people can be another voice for the 3Cs group, offer support to each other, and be a resource for the men in addition to me. There is work to be done getting more people on board. There is always a fear

with prison initiatives that it will create more work. What we have really tried to communicate is that this is not about creating more work, but instead making the work that is already being done easier and more enjoyable, and contributing to a better and more rehabilitative culture.

IW: We have needed to break down some barriers in how we work, to enable the Champions to do their work effectively. For example, making sure they have the freedom to access different units which isn't what always happens in traditional operations of a prison. We need to do more to engage staff with the 3Cs, but we recognise that in the last couple of years people have been consumed by COVID-19. But the fact that more staff are coming to the meetings is telling, and that experience can be positive and eye-opening for them.

FFH: Who is the ideal 3Cs Champion? What kind of person makes this work?

C: I think to be a 3Cs Champion you need to have some dedication to what you do, be a people person as you have to speak to lots of people, obviously you have to be of good behaviour, have knowledge of what is going on in the prison, have a bit of confidence, and you need to be a good listener. You need to be able to understand what people mean, especially when they might not find it easy

to communicate that.

D: I think also people who conduct themselves in the best way, who are inspiring and role models for our peers. People who are well respected by staff and prisoners alike; charismatic, dedicated, motivated and trustworthy, wanting the best for our community.

IW: Often in prisons the representative roles are given to the same people; the people who are better behaved, are probably on Enhanced,⁷ and already have better relationships with staff. We want the 3Cs to be an opportunity too for those who do not necessarily fit that mould. It is really important to us that everyone has the chance to contribute, including those who might usually feel overlooked. We have had some success and struggles with this; for example, we had a Champion who was excellent but then lost his position due to challenges with substance misuse. We are not giving up though, and want him to re-join the group when he can.

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in us as 3Cs.

7. The highest level of the Incentives Scheme.

FFH: Looking to the future, I understand you are going to be focussing on health, wellbeing and decency next. What are the other priorities or themes you have in mind to tackle?

BA: In July we are going to focus on resettlement and we are organising a fair on this; quite a lot of our population have quite short sentences so there are often a lot of questions about resettlement. In September we are going to take time to review ourselves. We want to evaluate what has worked and what has not, get feedback through forums, and then think about how the 3Cs wants to adapt and go forward.

D: Mental health is a big issue that we need to look at too.

C: And OMU;⁸ everyone in our community wants to have more engagement with OMU.

IW: As mentioned before, getting us all back into a different regime, getting used to working in larger groups, and the prisoners going back to work, is a priority for us. One of the things I am keen the 3Cs helps with in the next few months is understanding the blockers to achieving this, and how we get past those.

FFH: What advice would you give to another prison who were thinking about setting up a similar group to the 3Cs?

BA: If I could go back, I would have done more consultation with staff and the men about what they wanted initially, as I think this would have helped us manage some of the teething issues we had. More consultation about where the gaps were, and what people really wanted, could have made it more streamlined from the beginning.

C: Try to get the community involved in what is going on. The more people have a say, the more they feel they are involved, and that they are doing something. I try to encourage people to participate as it helps get you through your sentence a bit easier. My job is to make people realise they can do it. Once you start sharing your experience, it opens people up to realise they can do it too, and it encourages people. A while ago I didn't think I could do something like this, but now I know that I can, and it has boosted my confidence.

IW: Don't be afraid to be agile, or to fail; just fail fast and get on with it! My prior experience in project management work has helped me to feel comfortable with the fact that some things we try might fail, but that's ok and we learn from this. You will get some small wins, and some big wins, and also some failures, but that's not something to be afraid of. In the Prison Service we tend to have a pattern of working: we pilot something in a couple of prisons, and then roll the initiative out everywhere and mark that as an achievement. But the landscape has changed, especially after COVID-19, and is changing rapidly with competing priorities being faced too. So, I think not being afraid to try new things, and to change focus and direction when needed; something might have been important two months ago, but now something else needs more attention, so switch and focus on that. And also, I'd advise others to break from the hierarchical traditional approach to consultation, by including people from all parts of the establishment; it might surprise you to see how willing people really are to get involved and make things better.

8. Offender Management Unit

Service User Engagement and Participation in HM Inspectorate of Probation

Karen Kendall is the Participation Lead in HM Inspectorate of Probation. She is interviewed by Dr Marcia Morgan, Health and Social Care Services Senior Lead in HM Prison and Probation Service, and co-editor of the Prison Service Journal.

Karen Kendall has been in post since December 2020. This is the dedicated role for participation activity that focuses on service user engagement. Her role involves supporting participation activity that takes part across all of probation inspections — adult core inspections, youth inspections and thematic inspections.

This interview took place May 2022.

MM: What made you decide to apply for this role?

I have a long history of working in third sector organisations in and around the criminal justice system and working with individuals who are living with and experiencing challenging circumstances.

My experience was that third sector organisations have a good history around service user engagement activity. Third sector organisations are ahead of the curve in comparison to statutory agencies when it came to service user engagement. I think this is in part due to the need to demonstrate service user engagement activity when they are tendering for contracts. Prior to my current role I worked for a national social housing provider in a tenant engagement role.

Here at HM Inspectorate of Probation we want to hear the voice of people on probation because they are experts in their own experiences, and they need to be an active participant in the identification of what works for them and what is beneficial for them. Therefore, when we are thinking about delivering targeted and effective services, I would strongly advocate for service users to be involved.

MM: Can you define engagement and co-production?

At HM Inspectorate of Probation, we use the principles of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation in our service user engagement strategy.^{1,2} Using Arnstein's Ladder of Participation to measure our progress at present, I believe we are at the information and consultation stage, as we are consulting with people on probation, people in prison and others who have had direct experience of the criminal justice system.

I feel that at our current position — consultation shown on the Arnstein's Ladder of Participation is being delivered well. We understand the power barrier that our role brings with it and have acted accordingly. We recruit external organisations who are run by people with lived experience of the criminal justice system, who act as consultants, to facilitate the interviewing and to do our surveying with participants. This approach I feel underlines not only the organisation's commitment but also our understanding of the potential barriers to engagement, we bring with us to the inspection process. We are very committed to finding ways to overcome the numerous barriers to effective engagement.

Co-production on the other hand is the next level of participation, as well as engaging in the strategic planning of the services. Here at HM Inspectorate of Probation, for example, we are driven by our standards, we have a set of published standards that we inspect against. For me, co-production would involve people on probation being involved in developing some of those standards.

MM: Is there a crossover between engagement and co-production?

Yes, there is a crossover. We have a service user engagement strategy that was implemented in 2019. This strategy provided an overview of the organisation's approach to service user engagement. In relation to what we want to be; how we want to engage; and

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1. Arnstein, S. (1969). A Ladder Of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216-224.
 2. HM Inspectorate of Probation (2019). Service User Engagement Strategy 2019 – 2022 [Online]. Available at: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2019/09/Service-User-Engagement-Strategy.pdf>

what that would entail. We are however, at the start of our co-production journey.

The co-production aspect is a challenge for all statutory organisations in general, but perhaps especially so within the criminal justice system. There are a lot of issues around power sharing within the criminal justice system. A major challenge is how we can build co-production at the very top layer of strategic thinking within statutory organisations, and ensure it carries the necessary weight to impact the policy change that might be required.

MM: As you have touched on the issue of power relations, how do you envisage this approach alleviating the dynamics that are caused by the power relations that exist between people with lived experience and those who are managing them in the community?

It can be a real challenge; it is probably one of the biggest barriers for us. It has a significant impact on both the quantity and quality of feedback we have been able to gather in the past. Before commissioning the services of lived experience organisations, internal inspection staff carried out the interviews. Our staff are a highly professional and capable team who are incredibly motivated to capture feedback. Unfortunately, the title of Inspector of Probation is very formal and potentially created barriers. Evidenced by some feedback we received that highlighted suspicion of who the caller was, whether we were working for probation, or would the views be 'fed back' to the Probation Service?

Furthermore, during our youth inspections, we speak to children and their parents and carers. I am aware of instances where we have been mistaken for the police, or Inspectors for the Police Service.

Inspections by their nature are a very formal process and we work within the Ministry of Justice. A common concern raised by participants is the fear about speaking to staff within the Inspectorate, or from any criminal justice based formal statutory organisation. There is also the fear of saying the wrong thing, and the fear they could be sent to prison, or have their licence revoked. This is understandably a very real and significant issue. This was one of the drivers that really forced us to work hard to find ways to overcome these barriers and reassure participants.

The co-production aspect is a challenge for all statutory organisations in general, but perhaps especially so within the criminal justice system.

At the start of this year, we commissioned an organisation to facilitate service user interviews, as part of the core inspection on our behalf. User Voice was the successful organisation, and they will be conducting the interviews for us in our future inspection programme.

MM: Considering the challenges that exist when building trust between people with lived experience and the HM Inspectorate of Probation. How do you maintain the integrity of having a diverse representation of people you are co-producing/engaging with to ensure the views are representative of the diversity of people with lived experience?

We have a real commitment to providing opportunities for service users to share their opinion and feedback in a variety of different ways. We understand that one size fits all approach does not work in terms of obtaining feedback.

During the pandemic we paused our adult core inspection activity, although we were quickly able to adapt to remote inspections for our Youth Inspections and Thematic inspections. We commenced remote adult core inspections in Wales in the Autumn of 2021.

I anticipate that the first onsite inspection will provide us with better engagement opportunities, to be able to speak to people face to face. This will provide people with a variety of opportunities to have their say, either in person, over the phone, or via an online survey. We plan to work closely with the probation delivery units and those who have lead responsibility for engagement and participation.

User Voice have identified opportunities to meet participants in locations away from probation offices and approved premises. Meetings will take place in drop-in centres, or with unpaid work groups, to identify people who would perhaps usually be less visible to us on inspection.

We will endeavour to make the inspection process more accessible, flexible, adaptable, and provide multiple opportunities as we are committed to seeking a more diverse range of voices. Notwithstanding, we are constantly reviewing the approach taken.

We have developed an excellent relationship with the Lived Experience Engagement Network (LEEN) within the Insight's team at HMPPS. Being part of the network means we can be part of a wider and

continually evolving conversation, about how we can ensure that the views we are gathering, reflect the diverse nature of those whose feedback we are seeking.

MM: This leads me onto the next question. What does success look like and how will success be measured?

From an individual perspective success will look like people seeing their feedback in our reports. In Autumn 2021, we started our new cycle of inspections in Wales. We held online focus groups. We also received feedback from service users who completed surveys by text or telephone. We then met with the focus group participants after the report was published and talked through the results and the report.

One participant was excited to see his comment in the report. He stated, "I can see that you've quoted me, I remember saying that because they are my actual words." This is success because this participant was able to see their feedback, word for word in a published report.

A measurement of success will be when we can identify voices that traditionally tend to be missing from the inspection process. When we start to see a diverse range of feedback coming through from those with neurodiverse conditions, or people living with a language disorder for example, alongside participants who we might generally expect to respond to surveys, this will also be a measurement of success.

There is also a quantitative aspect to measuring success as we aim to meet our target figures, for example, aiming for 15 per cent survey responses. Although naturally limiting, quantitative responses can be useful too when data can be gathered in larger numbers.

MM: You have spoken passionately about engagement and co-production and how it stems from your previous role. Can you describe the emotional labour that was involved in starting the engagement process, during the pandemic?

It has been really challenging especially as I started my role during the pandemic, which was not an ideal start. I also found working from home quite isolating, especially when you are trying to build new

relationships, network and establish stakeholder relationships, which was quite challenging.

A big part of our working life often involves being around people in a shared space, where you can hear what is going on around you, while having people around you to bounce ideas off. One of the positives to come from the pandemic was the improvement of IT capabilities. I was able to have lots of meetings in close succession with different people on Teams.

The impact of pausing core inspection activity was a challenge for me in my new role. There was a lot of planning during the procurement contract period that would have really been helped by some first-hand experience of the inspection process. It felt like it was a long process and at times somewhat frustrating, as I was new to procurement.

I appreciate however the importance of establishing a clear specification for what we are looking for. This will ensure that the appointed organisation is able to deliver this important piece of work on our behalf. We wanted to develop a collaborative working relationship with the appointed organisation where we could join lived and learned experience, to deliver the best opportunity to hear the voices of people on probation.

The procurement exercise would not have been my first choice of activity to lead on. However, seeing the final product, the specification, and to see the work that we put into the thinking around what we were looking for, and how that really enabled us to be able to commission an organisation that

really aligned with our values, was very powerful and satisfying.

Quality is the golden thread through all of this. We want to provide quality opportunities for people to be able to provide quality feedback that will inform our reports, which will in turn provide opportunities for feedback to drive improvements. I am determined that we are not tokenistic and that we are not just in it for the quick wins, or to get 15 per cent survey responses. We want it to be about quality as well as quantity.

MM: You mentioned wanting to avoid the perceived tokenistic gesture that participants may feel when involved in the consultation process. A thought came to mind in relation to Audrey

We wanted to develop a collaborative working relationship with the appointed organisation where we could join lived and learned experience, to deliver the best opportunity to hear the voices of people on probation.

Lorde's famous quote 'The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.' Will HMPPS get to a point where people with lived experience could be an active member of the Executive Board, where they could be part of the decision-making process and we would see co-production at the highest level in the organisation?

I would hope that we would. I'm a great believer in the benefits of shadow management boards as this has the potential to add real co-production value. It's certainly something that I have had experience of before in a previous role. I think it is going to be a challenge for us as an organisation in terms of being HM Inspectorate of Probation and how we might be able to overcome some of the perceived barriers and adopt such an approach. What I will say is that we are very committed to explore the opportunities for what co-production could look like within the Inspectorate.

We are currently working in partnership with the University of Nottingham to host a PhD student, who will be exploring service user involvement within probation inspections. This study will explore what co-production could look like at HM Inspectorate of Probation and no doubt highlight potential challenges and barriers, as well as provide a rich source of learning for the Inspectorate.

In the past, service user engagement activity often felt like you were knocking on a closed door, or an add-on piece of work at the end of a project, or worse a tick box exercise. There is now a real appetite for exploring co-production, especially now that participation activity is an embedded part of the inspection process. There is an aligned vision between Ministry of Justice, HMPPS, and the HM Inspectorate of probation in terms of understanding the value of the voice of lived experience and the benefits that co-production could bring. This is a golden opportunity moment.

MM: Can you describe how you will get by-in from your partners, stakeholders, the leadership team, and the community into the concept of engagement and co-production?

It is important that we can demonstrate what happens to the feedback that we gather and what happens to the data. We must be really clear that we are not just collecting data or recording statistical information to feed into our reports, and then nothing happens to it, or it does not have any impact.

An important part of my work moving forward will be to focus on how we provide feedback, what happens to the information gathered not only in our reports but what happens next. We are planning to do a piece of work around this that will provide feedback to participants about the reports they contributed to, the results of the inspection, and details about any action plans following on from the inspection.

MM: You have a lot of partners, who may have different priorities, and standpoints in relation to the co-production and engagement agenda. How do you manage conflict if they occur?

We are a statutory organisation, and we inspect against published standards. To maintain a consistent approach to inspection it is important that we are transparent in our process and reporting. Therefore, good communication and negotiation are vital. We are always clear about our methodology and expectations and work hard to ensure that this information is accessible.

We endeavour to ensure that our lived experience partners can translate the standards questions to be engaging and reflective of the experiences of people on probation. We do this through consultation, communicating, reviewing, and constantly evaluating. We check our questions for accessibility and relevance through the LEEN and other Lived Experience panels, as well as consulting about matters such as the language used on the website. We are also able to utilise the expertise of our commissioned service providers and the vast history and experience they bring to the matter of co-production. We are an open and flexible organisation who are always keen to listen to other perspectives, points of view, and the wider conversation.

There is an aligned vision between Ministry of Justice, HMPPS, and the HMI Inspectorate of probation in terms of understanding the value of the voice of lived experience and the benefits that co-production could bring. This is a golden opportunity moment.

MM: With the new directive issued about language by HMPPS, how will this impact on the engagement and co-production agenda?

It will undoubtedly be a challenge. When I first started this role, we called people service users. To align ourselves with the language that was being used by HMPPS, we adapted our language to use the term people on probation and people in prison. With this recent change of language, sadly it feels like a step backwards because language and our use of language is so important in the work that we do. I personally feel strongly that labels such as 'offender' can have a negative impact on a person's internal identity and lead to creating barriers for people to make personal change.

MM: What outcomes can people expect as the HM Inspectorate of Probation Service User Engagement Strategy 2019 — 2022 ends this year?

We will be working on a new service user engagement strategy for 2023 — 2026. We also plan to review our commissioned providers after the first year of the contract, this will provide us with the opportunity to review our approach, adapt, and improve where necessary. All our inspection reports are published on the HM Inspectorate of Probation website

MM: What advice would you give to individuals who are considering applying an engagement and co-production approach to improve service delivery?

I was thinking about this question this morning. A specific phrase comes to my mind when I think about co-production, which is 'nothing about us without us.' This is a very powerful phrase.



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Book Review

Conviviality and Survival: Co-Producing Brazilian Prison Order

By Sacha Darke

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Marcia Morgan is Health and Social Care Senior Lead in HM Prison and Probation Service and Co-editor of the *Prison Service Journal*

As I read the title of the book, I'm intrigued by the contrast between the term conviviality, survival and the image on the front cover. The monograph combines: ethnographic; biographic and personal reflection of the Brazilian prison system. *Conviviality and Survival: Co-Producing Brazilian Prison Order* as titled in this book illuminates the fragility, yet effective, balance of power between prisoners and staff in Brazilian prisons. A concept that may be at odds with the global north and Western view of prison that is premised on order and control that is administered solely by prison officers and prison managers. I am captivated by Sacha Darke's ability to draw on his historical awareness and exploration of Brazilian prison life, to create the reader's curiosity to understand how Brazilian prisons, which despite being underfunded, overcrowded and divergent from the global norms and trends, continue to function and are relatively stable.

Darke has created a book that is compelling and discerning. Emphasising the symbolic importance of the Carandiru

massacre, the book illuminates the complexity of relations between prisoners and prison staff. It goes beyond what general academic and governmental literature portrays, which tends to be concerned with the appalling conditions in which prisoners find themselves, from severe staff shortage and overcrowding to wholly inadequate facilities, legal and medical cover. Darke's research focuses on the means by which Brazilian prison managers, staff and prisoners manage to get by despite such adversity and state neglect.

This impressive book maps the Brazilian prison system that is centred on co-governance and conviviality within its unique historical, political, social, economic and cultural context. Darke draws on data from prison ethnographies, prisoners' biographies, and his own fieldwork to provide a unique and innovative analysis of first-hand accounts, about the daily lives of its prisoners, staff and prison conditions, to illuminate how order is co-produced by prisoners who have to collaborate, organise and self-govern to function within an environment that is overcrowded and understaffed, and within a system that is underfunded by the Brazilian Government.

This book is divided into seven chapters. Darke begins with an introduction to the reality of Brazilian prisons. He emphasises the role of key actors of the conviviality within the prison system, introducing the trusty *faxina* or prisoners who are 'officially employed by prison authorities' (p. 11). Other important actors are the *Comando Vermelho* (CV), a gang that operates both within

and outside prisons, the *Primeiro Comando da Capital* (PCC), a gang that was formed in the aftermath of the Carandiru massacre, 'with the explicit aim to protect prisoners from such a tragedy being repeated' (p. 4), and the *Povo de Israel*, which protects inmates who did not belong, did not want to belong, or could not belong to CV or PCC. It is evident that prisoners play a significant role in which order is co-produced through self-governing communities. This is premised in a historical tradition of co-produced governance that for decades has kept most Brazilian prisons in better order and enabled most prisoners to better survive.

Darke's boldness of applying a political-academic stance that involved him studying Brazilian prisons 'in their own terms' (p. 20) is exemplary. For example, he thoroughly cites Brazilian and other academic works written in Portuguese and by doing so builds on postcolonial voices that critique the homogenisation of the global south. This demonstrates that his research is not shrouded by the Northern America and Western Europe theories about prisons and their order. This standpoint in my opinion is revolutionary and indeed the epitome of decolonising the theoretical assessment of the prisons being researched. This emphasises that the Northern America and Western Europe standpoints are not easily transferable. And while human rights critique 'the failure of authorities to adequately invest in its prison system' (p. 48), emphasising the crowded and unpleasant prison conditions, Darke highlights the quality of prison life, referring to the high

number of prisoners held in open or semi-open units in full time work in comparison to their counterparts in Northern America and Western Europe.

Undoubtably, this book is concerned with realities more than ideals. While chapter 4 — *Surviving through the Convívio* provides a much-needed bridge between the theoretical framework contained in the previous chapters and the following chapters, Darke details the various aspects of prisoner self-governance and collaboration that have pervaded the experience of imprisonment in Brazil. In doing so, he introduces the reader to the culture within prisons in Brazil that sustains co-governance within them through the late twentieth century.

Chapter 5 entitled *Managing without guards* provides a detailed account of Darke's ethnographic fieldwork in the city of Rio de Janeiro in a carceragen or a lock-up; unit of holding cells he calls Polinter. Darke's observations and analysis provides rich accounts of

how prisoner self-governance is ingrained into everyday prison routine that is premised on 'order, authority and legitimacy' (p. 221), that compensates for a critical lack of prison personnel. Darke's meticulous account of the different role prisoners play, for example the *colaboradores* (trusted prisoners), who work in trusted positions that cover administrative functions, such as reception duty, searches on visit days, and allocation of food, while the *comissão* (committee) self-govern the wings illustrate how the negotiation of space plays a pivotal part in co-governance.

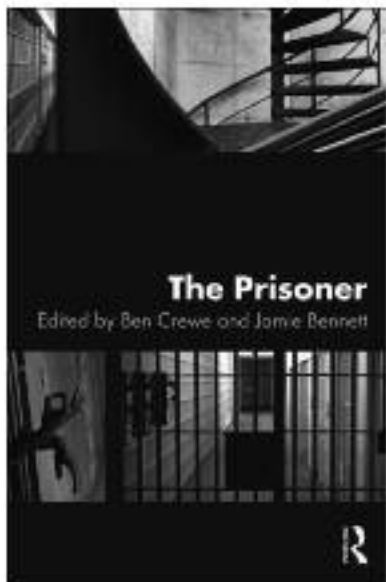
Prison gangs is the title of chapter 6, here, Darke discusses the rise of the two-dominant prison 'gangs', the Comando Vermelho in the Rio de Janeiro and the PCC in São Paulo. He provides a vivid picture of a homogenisation of governance structures, illustrating how the gangs are viewed as 'unspoken allies' (p. 251-253) ergo, through customary practice, codes of conduct and

core principles they have brought some stability to Brazilian prisons, as postulated by Darke when he states: 'it is also true that São Paulo's prisons have become safer and inmate/staff-inmate relations more predictable' (p. 255). The unspoken allyship and his reference to prisoner/staff-prisoner relation illustrate the complex relationship between the State and these gangs.

Chapter 7 — is the final chapter and provides a detailed summary of each chapter and consideration for further research.

The authenticity and courage of the author to rebuttal the preconceived view that prisons in Brazil are repressive institutions, and his disregard of Northern America and Western Europe standpoint of prison order was thought-provoking and challenged my own way of thinking that was influenced by Western Europe theories about prison, their order, and how it is experienced by prisoners and staff. I would highly recommend this book.

New from Routledge Criminology



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Edited by

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*Deputy Director, Prisons Research Centre, Institute of Criminology,
University of Cambridge*

and

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Editor, Prison Service Journal

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PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

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The *Prison Service Journal* is a peer reviewed journal published by HM Prison Service of England and Wales. Its purpose is to promote discussion on issues related to the work of the Prison Service, the wider criminal justice system and associated fields. It aims to present reliable information and a range of views about these issues.

The editors are responsible for the style and content of each edition, and for managing production and the Journal's budget. The editors are supported by an editorial board — a body of volunteers, many of whom have worked for the Prison Service in various capacities, or who are academics in the field of criminal justice. The editorial board considers all articles submitted and decides the outline and composition of each edition, although the editors retains an over-riding discretion in deciding which articles are published and their precise length and language.

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Six editions of the Journal, printed at HMP Leyhill, are published each year with a circulation of approximately 6,500 per edition. The editor welcomes articles which should be up to c.4,000 words and submitted by email to prisonservicejournal@justice.gov.uk.

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