

PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

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Using this guidance

This guidance is for authors wishing to submit a **research/research-related article** for consideration for publication. There is separate guidance for authors wishing to submit an interview or a book review for consideration.

This guidance must be read in conjunction with *About the PSJ, procedures, ethics, and publication*, which can be accessed via our website, and which has important information on the following:

- **About the PSJ:** the journal’s purpose, aims, and values, Editorial Board, and correspondence
- **Editorial management and publication procedures:** editorial oversight, journal access, publication disclaimer, licensing and copyright terms, ISSNs, and publication process (fees, manuscript preparation, and peer review)
- **Publication ethics and publication malpractice:** duties of authors, editors, and reviewers, publisher responsibilities, and generative AI policy,

Preparing your manuscript

Please read and closely adhere to all of the following manuscript preparation instructions.

Word count

Approximately 4000 words (excluding references).

Page setup

Text style: all in 'normal' text (i.e., no use of different Word auto 'styles' for different heading levels).

Headers or footers: none, all should be removed (including page numbers).

Margins: set as 'normal'.

Text alignment: left-aligned (unless otherwise specified in later parts of this guidance, e.g., for some headings, pen portraits, etc).

Pen portraits

Include author name and affiliation, all text in italics, author name(s) also in bold, central alignment.

- Example: ***Dr Rachel Gibson*** is a Forensic Psychologist and Evidence-Based Practice Specialist at His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

Headings

Punctuation: no full stop at end of each heading.

Heading not required immediately after pen portrait / prior to first paragraph, e.g., 'Introduction'.

Heading level style:

- *Level 1/article title:* Bold, central alignment, first word capitalised (and first word after a colon capitalised if applicable).
 - Example: **Prison education: Impact on reoffending**
- *Level 2/section heading:* Bold, central alignment, first word capitalised (and first word after a colon capitalised if applicable).
 - Example: **Aims and objectives**
- *Level 3/subsection heading:* Bold, left alignment, first word capitalised (and first word after a colon capitalised if applicable).
 - Example: **Theme 1: The importance of hope**

- *Level 4/subsubsection heading*: Bold, left alignment, italicised, first word capitalised (and first word after a colon capitalised if applicable).
 - Example: ***Staff needs***

Tables and figures

Headings: brief but descriptive, appear above the table/figure, word ‘table’ or ‘figure’ and corresponding number in bold and followed by full stop, title of table/figure in italics.

- Example: **Figure 1.** *Principles of neuroresponsive practice*

Table formatting: Table column headings should be included. In general, centre information in all cells of the table. However, left-align the information if doing so would improve readability, particularly when cells contain lots of text.

Table borders: Limit the use of borders or lines in a table to those needed for clarity. In general, use a border at the top and bottom of the table and beneath column headings. Do not use vertical borders to separate data, and do not use borders around every cell in a table.

Example:

Table 2. *Sample location and sentence types*

Location	Remand		Convicted and awaiting sentencing		Convicted	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
A wing	10	12	30	35	45	53
B wing	4	5	26	31	55	65
C wing	25	41	32	52	4	7

Referencing

Number of references: these should generally be kept to a minimum.

Setting: references should be placed as footnotes rather than in text. *Note*: the only exception to this relates to page numbers for *direct* quotes; in these cases, the page number should appear in the text, in brackets after the quote, and then the reference footnote set after the full stop as usual.

- Example: As early as 1815, reasons for juvenile delinquency were identified as “want of education”, “improper conduct of parents” and “want of suitable employment” (p. 53).^[footnote to main citation]

Footnote location: superscripted footnote numbers should appear after punctuation.

Style: APA, but *without* DOIs (see [Reference examples](#)).

Cross referencing: cross referencing used for repeated citations rather than repeating in full, include signposting to earlier footnote number, author surname (max two, otherwise use et al.) and publication year.

- Examples:
 - See footnote 1: Gibson (2014).
 - See footnote 5: Morgan & Gibson (2020).
 - See footnote 27: Fitzalan Howard et al. (2025).

Specific sections

Acknowledgements: if an acknowledgements section is included, this should be placed at end of article (but before licensing statement), or as an early footnote.

Funding: if a funding section is included, this should be placed at end of article (but before licensing statement), or as an early footnote.

Licensing statement: at the end of every article, a few lines after the final text, the following should be included:

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY – Attribution) License which permits use and distribution in any medium provided the original work is properly cited. For more details please visit:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Use of AI: if an author has used generative AI, they must include a statement outlining this as either a footnote or at the end of their article. This must include whether generative AI was used, which tools were used (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot), what the tools were used for, and the extent of use. For example:

- Example 1: The author(s) used [tool name] to assist with language editing. All outputs were reviewed and edited by the author(s), who take full responsibility for the content.
- Example 2: Generative AI (ChatGPT, OpenAI) was used to assist in drafting early sections of the manuscript and improving clarity of language. No AI tools were used to generate data or research findings. All content has been reviewed and verified by the author(s).

Full details of our generative AI policy can be found at: [About the PSJ procedures ethics and publication. June 2026.pdf](#)

Images

Quality: all images should be high resolution at least 300 dpi.

Type: most formats are acceptable, including JPEG, Tiff, EPS or PSD (photoshop images) PNG, BMP, high quality PDFs etc.

Image copyright: all copyrights must be respected.

Other

Spelling: UK English

First paragraph: set in bold text

Language: no stigmatising language used (e.g., replace 'offender' with 'person with a conviction' or appropriately similar).

Commas: both Oxford and non-Oxford styles are permitted, but style use should be consistent throughout the articles.

Hyperlinks: webpages should be written in full and placed in footnotes rather than hyperlinked in the main text.

Numbers (use of words or numerals): use numerals to express numbers 10 and above and use words to express numbers zero through nine. Exceptions include (always use numerals in these cases): numbers that immediately precede a unit of measurement, statistical or mathematical functions, fractions or decimals, percentages, ratios, percentiles and quartiles, times and dates, ages, scores and points on a scale, and exact sums of money.

Quotes from research participants: quotations in normal text, not italics, in quotation marks. Can be within text or in a block quotation indented below the text.

Submitting your manuscript

Please submit your manuscript via email to prisonservicejournal@crimeandjustice.org.uk.

Peer review process

Submitted manuscripts undergo several stages of review and amendments. The process is as follows:

Stage 1 review: peer review conducted by at least one independent reviewer who is an expert in the field (chosen by the PSJ Editors).

Resubmission: author refines their manuscript in line with the stage 1 review and resubmits to the PSJ.

Stage 2 review: peer review conducted by a PSJ Editor.

Resubmission: author refines their manuscript in line with the stage 2 review and resubmits to the PSJ.

Final review and decision: conducted by a PSJ editor.

Note that all articles may be subject to small alterations by the Editors in accordance with house style.

Requirements following article acceptance

If your article is accepted for publication, you will then be required to provide some additional information and documentation to facilitate the publication process. This information must be supplied before your article can be published.

Once an article has been formally accepted for publication, the PSJ Editors will contact authors requesting information including: an abstract for the website, 'pull out' phrases for article production, key words, author social media handles, and a license agreement for completion/signing.

Once the edition that your manuscript will be published in has been compiled (approximately 1 month before online publication), the proof copy will be sent to you for final proofing checks.