

Editorial

Transitions into, within, and out of imprisonment

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This special edition of the Prison Service Journal brings together contributions exploring the concept of transitions into, within, and out of prison. While there is a vast body of research on the experience of spending time in various prison environments, many individuals will move between different prison locations or institutions during the course of their sentence. The vast majority also experience movement into the community to probation supervision and potentially Approved Premises (AP) at some point — a transition that is crucial to the rehabilitative priorities of HMPPS and poses particular challenges for certain groups of prisoners. Additionally, even during time spent in one institution, individuals may experience important transitions in personal identity or role.

The articles in this special issue draw on research from academics, people working within the prison system, and those with lived experience to explore a range of transitions. These contributions consider not only what these transitions look like from a policy perspective, but what they feel like in lived experience. Issues covered include movement between or from different prison environments, change or transition in identities and roles within prison, the challenges of transition from prison to community for particular groups, and interventions for supporting key transitions. The ideas behind these papers were initially presented at a conference hosted by the University of Lancashire's Centre for Criminal Justice Research and Partnerships and funded by the British Society of Criminology Prison Research Network. The success of the conference and resulting discussions demonstrated a need for greater focus on this aspect of the lived realities of people in prison.

This special edition opens with an important article from **Daria Przybylska**, which looks at women's experiences of open prisons in England and Wales, and examines transitions into and through these environments. The article explores the impact of population pressures on the social dynamics and resettlement function of two open establishments, situating discussion within the context of the recent and ongoing government early release strategy. Daria argues that population pressures have led to a dilution of open prisons' resettlement function.

Alex Fishwick's article explores transitions from mainstream prison wings to Substance Use Disorder Therapeutic Communities in England and Wales, using sensory and liminal lenses to do so. Drawing on a combination of personal reflections and literature, the article explores how this transition is more than a physical movement between spaces - it is also a point of potentially significant identity transition, impacted by the sensory codes of prison culture and post-detoxification.

Focusing on individual transitions while within a prison environment, **Abigail Stark** explores how a sense of meaningful citizenship can be subject to transition during time in prison. Taking influence from youth studies literature, and drawing on research with men imprisoned in England and Ireland, the article considers how citizenship identification might fluctuate during imprisonment, maintain continuity with former experiences, or indeed change meaning while inside.

Laura Kelly-Corless and **Dan McCulloch** explore the transition from being a prison officer to being imprisoned, something which has attracted extensive media coverage, but about which little is known academically. They focus on the case of Ashley—a deaf individual who experienced prison from both positions. Throughout, they show how Ashley's deafness and their previous role as a prison officer shaped their time in custody, and how moving between these roles offered insight into the parallels and differences between them.

Jennifer Stickney, Emma Holmes and **Chris Gunderson** detail the background, development and early testing of the HMPPS Settlement Model in two remand prisons. The article explores the potential value of the model, which is focused on structured keywork and personalised regime plans for supporting people at key points of transition in their sentence. Particular attention is given to how the model can support safe settlement into custody, and contribute to work satisfaction for those involved in keywork.

Darren Woodward's accessible article foregrounds the experiences of men convicted of sexual offences as they navigate life in and out of probation service APs. The paper explores the stigma and associated risks of living alongside those convicted of

non-sexual offences, highlighting the loss of identity they experience outside of the 'sex offender' label. The article offers a note of hope, showing how the men celebrate small but concerted efforts to rebuild a meaningful life as they reintegrate into the community.

Finally, **Kirsty Teague, Nicholas Blagden** and **Lynn Saunders** offer a fascinating insight into the transformative impact of the Safer Living Centre (SLC), an initiative of the Safer Living Foundation (SLF), which aimed to support the reintegration and desistance of men convicted of sexual offences. The theme of resilience is explored, illustrating how the basic human right to respect and dignity can be supported by the presence of a 'safe haven' for the men. The SLC is

shown as a place where skills and self-esteem can be developed or rebuilt, and a 'moral community' formed.

Whilst HMPPS policy on transitions has typically focused its attention on supporting the transition between the youth and adult estate, the papers in this special issue illustrate that there are other points in the custodial journey and other aspects of personal identity which require careful consideration, to ensure transitions are safe, well supported and better understood.

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