Special Edition:
The prison crisis

Intersectionality and the prison crisis:

What is it as a concept and why does it matter today in understanding current problems in prison?

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Introduction

This paper addresses the fundamental questions of the special issue through the lens of prisoner diversity, personhood and identity: 'What does the current response to diversity, personhood and identity reveal about whether prisons are in crisis?'; 'What insights can be gained by positioning prisoners, prison and partnership agency staff as experts — people whose lived experience of the response to diversity, personhood and identity can inform creative interventions and improvements?'; 'How can inclusive, generative and solution focussed approaches to knowledge creation, change and development help us gain a deeper insight into prison life and create the ideas, appetite and energy to address the crisis?'

The observations offered in relation to these questions are informed by a research project whereby Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology creatively disrupted the conventional expectations of prisoners, prison staff and researchers.[1,2] Consistent with the underlying principles of AI, prisoners, researchers and prison and partnership agency staff drew on their experience to co-create the research methodology and co-design some methods of data collection. This inclusive approach promoted a deeper engagement with and insight into the challenges and possibilities for managing and responding to difference, promoting equality and the implications of diversity, personhood and identity for creating cohesive penal communities.

The research findings revealed an important relationship between the singularising way diversity, personhood and identity are currently conceptualised and responded to and prisoners experience of the humanity of custody and its implications for rehabilitation and desistance. This paper offers the concept of Intersectionality as an alternative to the singularising view. It considers how the development of an intersectional approach could inform practices which can respond to the whole person and thereby mitigate against a crisis of personhood and identity in prisons[3]

The effect of prison on personhood and identity in prisons.

Ethnographic studies have characterised the prison as a micro society—reflecting many of the social structures of wider society and constituted by an increasingly diverse prisoner population.[4] They are however, very different from free society in terms of the social roles, power structures, freedom and agency they offer for maintaining personhood and fully expressing identity.[5] Personhood is concerned with the fundamental position of being a human being with value, intelligence, a past, present and a future[6] and is closely associated with concepts like self[7] and identity.[8] A wide field of research studies have explored inherent and interpersonal personhood, the implications of incapacity and embodiment for personhood and the impact of definitions and practices of exclusion which render someone a 'non-person'.[9] Consideration of

1. Lavis, V.J., Cowburn, M. and Elliott, C. (2017) 'Appreciative Inquiry for Research:Exploring the response to diversity and equality in English prisons', in J.Brooks and N.King (eds), Applied Qualitative Research in Psychology, London: Palgrave.
2. Funded through the Economic and Social Research Council with acknowledgements to Dr Emily Turner, Rebecca Baylis, Dr Matt Merefield and Prof. Charles Elliott.
3. Walby, S. (2007), 'Complexity Theory, Systems Theory and Multiple Intersecting Social Inequalities'. *Philosophy of the Social Science,* 37/4: 449-470.
4. Phillips, C. (2012) 'The Multicultural Prison: Ethnicity, Masculinity and Social Relations among Prisoners. Oxford, Oxford University Press
5. Crewe, B. (2009), *The Prisoner Society: Power, Adaption, and Social Life in an English Prison.* Oxford University Press: Oxford.
6. Lawrence, RM (2007), 'Dementia. A personal legacy beyond words', *Mental Health, Religion & Culture,* 19/6: 553-562.
7. Sabat, S. R. (2001) *The Experience of Alzheimer's Disease: Life Through a Tangled Veil.* Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell
8. Kitwood, T. (1997) *Dementia reconsidered: the person comes first.* Buckingham: Open University Press.
9. Baldwin, C., & Capstick, A. (2007) *Tom Kitwood on dementia: a reader and critical commentary.* Buckingham. Open University Press.

personhood in prisons is important because on entry to prison many of the characteristics of personhood; sex, race, ethnicity, class, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, relationship status and faith, are reformulated as predominantly singular functional categories through which the person is classified and recorded. The social roles and understandings formulated and maintained in the external social world become secondary to the role and behaviours expected of a prisoner and the opportunities to be one's self in the way possible in the free world is curtailed and constrained.[10] Moreover, the social world of the prison re-shapes imported identities[11] and infuses them with alternate shared social meanings.[12] This dilution of personhood, self and identity is in tension with research which is simultaneously demonstrating the importance of maintaining and enacting identity in prison. For example, in negotiating and surviving prison,[13] enabling and supporting rehabilitation[14] and for desistance during custody and on release.[15] The tension is reflected in the consistency of requests to be treated like a human being found in HMIP and MQPL reports. It is also evident in findings that the enactment of identity in prison life is dynamic, involving compromise, conflict and negotiation.[16]

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Increasing prisoner diversity and the framework for response

The last decade has seen a trend towards increasing diversity within the prison population.[17] This has augmented the challenge for prisons and their staff to understand and respond respectfully and decently to the diversity of personhood and identity imported into prisons. The challenge has been amplified by the wider legal requirement imposed by the Equality Act[18] which identified and prioritised nine characteristics of personhood and imposed a Public Sector Equality Duty. This duty mandates organisations to manage and respond to difference, encourage good relations between different people, eliminate discrimination and ensure equality of opportunity. The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) response to the Act combined the previously separate prison service orders and instructions for protected characteristics like race, disability and faith to create a Single Equalities Policy (PSO32/2011). The recording of all protected characteristics at reception/induction aimed to ensure protected characteristics were identified on entry. The reporting and investigation mechanisms for racial discrimination (RIRF) were widened to cover all protected characteristics (DIRF) and the establishment of prisoner diversity representatives to raise prisoner awareness of and access to support became widespread. These developments advanced progress in recognising the importance of responding to personhood. Prison and partnership agency staff became more sensitised to characteristics of personhood that were protected in policy and in law;

10. Phillips, C. (2012) 'The Multicultural Prison: Ethnicity, Masculinity and Social Relations among Prisoners. Oxford, Oxford University Press
11. Gergen, K. (2010) The Self as Social Construction. *Psychological Studies.* 56/1:108–116.
    Giddens, A. (1991), *Modernity and self-identity: Self and Society in the late modern age.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press
12. Stets, J.E. and Burke, P.J. (2000), 'Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory'. *Social Psychology Quarterly.* 63/3: 224-237.
13. Ross, J.I. and Richards, S.C. (2002) *Behind Bars: Surviving Prison.* Indianapolis, USA: Alpha Books.
    Crawley, E. and Sparks, R. (2005) 'Older Men in Prison: Surviving, Coping and Identity', in A. Liebling, and S. Maruna (eds.) The Effects of Imprisonment, Abingdon: Willan Publishing, pp. 343 – 365.
14. Ward, T. and Brown, M. (2004), 'The Good Lives Model and Conceptual Issues in Offender Rehabilitation'. *Psychology, Crime and Law,* 10/3: 243-257. Ward, T. and Marshall, B. (2007), 'Narrative Identity and Offender Rehabilitation'. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology,* 51/3: 279-297.
15. Paternoster, R. and Bushway, S. (2009), 'Desistance and the "feared self": Toward an Identity Theory of Criminal Desistance'. The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, 99/4: 1103- 1156. King, S. (2012) 'Transformative agency and desistance from crime'. *Criminology and Criminal Justice,* 13/3: 317-335.
16. Bosworth, M. and Carrabine, E. (2001), 'Reassessing Resistance: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Prison'. *Punishment and Society,* 3/4: 501-515.
17. Ministry of Justice (2018) Offender management statistics. London: Ministry of Justice.
18. Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance#public-sector-equality-duty. Accessed: 19.11.2018.

adjustments to the prison regime and rules to respond to needs of prisoners with protected characteristics became normalised; and prisoners perceiving unfair treatment arising from a protected characteristic were able to request a detailed investigation.

The singularising approach and the creation of a hierarchy of protected characteristics

These developments, whilst a step forward, had the unintended consequences of creating a singularising approach to diversity and identity in prison policy and practice. A singularising approach isolates a single characteristic of personhood enabling it to become a focal point for intervention or adjustment without considering the impact on the wider identity. For example, focussing on faith without considering the relationship between culture and faith. An unfortunate outcome of responses that singularise is that people can experience being forced to choose between or prioritise one aspect of their personhood in order to resist oppression or discrimination or to gain access to fair treatment. This is partly because prisons, like many organisations are set up to address mainstream needs. Their regimes and responses work to accommodate the status quo. Thus, non-mainstream needs which might lead to disadvantage are met primarily through adjustments to the norm. A good example is the provision for Islamic prisoners to take time out of participation in the daily regime to pray.

The research revealed that diversity related adjustments disrupt the equilibrium of prisoner relationships and power dynamics because the norm is delivered to all prisoners, whilst the adjustments are delivered only to those whose need is known and accepted as valid. This distinction creates tensions and perceptions of unfairness which are typified by the often-expressed view that non-mainstream prisoners '…*get what we get and then more'.* Prisoners who are looking to gain an advantage in an environment of scarce resources begin to look for ways to align themselves with groups perceived as getting more or able to get more. The resulting shift in power dynamics generates a perceived hierarchy between protected characteristic groups. Prison and partnership agency staff, acknowledging their often-limited cultural awareness, experience and competence, report confusion about what adjustments are fair and

reasonable to make which can lead to a reticence to acknowledge and respond to diversity. Staff anxiety about the consequences of getting the response to influential protected characteristics wrong, unwittingly reinforces the power dynamic.

These changes in how diversity and protected characteristics of personhood play out in daily practice are exacerbated and amplified by the restructuring of the wider prison landscape in the last six years. Now well documented these include: changes to the terms and conditions of work for operational staff, attrition of experienced operational staff, the application of the benchmark and associated reductions in funding and staffing, high staff sickness and attrition and reduction in the breadth and depth of entry level training for prison officers. Together with the rise in the availability and use of novel psychoactive substances these conditions are creating an unprecedented challenge to the delivery of core custodial services. Add to this context the re-designation of equalities work as 'flexible' (able to be dropped in response to operational pressures) and being able to respond effectively to prisoner diversity, personhood and identity seems ephemeral.

How does this contribute to the characterisation of prisons in crisis?

The impact of the singularising approach to personhood and its consequences for feeling treated like a person and fully expressing identity are certainly a tension bubbling under the surface of the current context. In a world of stretched resources, it is perhaps not surprising to find the focus of staff in prisons under pressure has gravitated towards what they can deliver in terms of core custodial services. Staff report that there is little time or energy to consider how that gets delivered or what that means in terms of prisoner personhood and identity expression. The prisons participating in the research have made strides towards developing mechanisms to enable recognition of and provide support for diversity. However, many of these support mechanisms still focus resource and attention on single aspects of personhood. The characterisation of crisis arises from the effects of this longstanding singularising response to personhood and identity at this very particular point in time when prisons are experiencing a wide variety of financial, political and staffing pressures. The singularising approach appears to be undermining good relationships between diverse prisoner groups

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and impairing relationships between staff and prisoners both of which are important for maintaining safety and good order. Ultimately, it continues to inhibit achievement of rehabilitative goals which rely on personhood and identity as a resource. Taking an intersectional approach may be one route to off-setting the tensions and potential crisis of personhood and identity.

Intersectionality: — recognising and responding to the whole person

The AI research methodology generated rich stories reflecting the experience of diverse minority prisoners and prison and partnership agency staff. These stories reveal a shared desire for a response that recognises and responds to the 'whole person' rather than single characteristics of personhood. Theories of intersectionality offer insight into why a whole person response is needed and how an intersectional approach in prisons can support the development of policy and practices that are more reflective of the whole person, affirm rather than constrain identity and agency and thereby assist the prison in its wider remit to support offenders to lead non-offending lives during custody and release. In short, offering the potential to mitigate the personhood/identity crisis.

Intersectionality is a theory explaining how the socially constructed categories of personhood (race, ethnicity, gender, faith etc.) overlap and intersect within each individual creating their personhood and the implications this has for their experience of oppression, discrimination and disadvantage. Intersectionality can also be used as an analytic framework for uncovering, critiquing and challenging oppression and discrimination.[19] The term was coined by Crenshaw[20] (1991) to illustrate how discrimination can arise from the intersection of two socially constructed characteristics of personhood;

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being black and being female. Crenshaw illustrated the impact of intersectionality through the legal case of a black woman claiming discrimination after being denied employment. The company denying her employment argued they were not discriminatory because they employed both black people and women. However, the black people they employed worked in the factory and were all male and the white people were all women working in administration. The site of the discrimination lay in the intersection between being black and being a woman, which disqualified her from both roles. Despite this, the court dismissed the claim for discrimination on the grounds that only one personal characteristic could be cited as grounds for the discrimination — either being black or being a woman. There were no grounds to claim discrimination arising from the intersection between two personal characteristics. The singularising approach to personhood in English prisons means that prisoners seeking an investigation of perceived discrimination through the use of the DIRF are placed in the same situation — they must specify one singular protected characteristic that is the root or site of the discrimination.

Since Crenshaw's early conceptualisation of intersectionality the theory has been extended and developed to consider the implications of multiple intersecting personal characteristics, the implications of social structures, ways of talking and associated practices that position and oppress people. It has also been applied to identifying the ways in which these are negotiated and resisted in fields as diverse as politics, education and healthcare. Whilst there has been some application of intersectionality as a way of understanding how people experience prison life this work has been in countries outside the UK[21] and only with female prisoner populations.[22] Henne and Troshynski[23] and Potter[24] have both called for criminologists to take an intersectional approach to

19. Walby, S., Armstrong, J. and Strid, S. (2012), 'Intersectionality: Multiple Inequalities in Social Theory'. *Sociology,* 46: 1-17.
20. Crenshaw, K. (1991), 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity, Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color'. *Stanford Law Review,* 43/6: 1241-1299.
21. Gray, P. (2006) 'Women's experiences of Incarceration in Hong Kong: Doing time, Doing choice, Doing class-gender-culture'. *International Journal of the Sociology of Law.* 34: 89-104.
22. Cherukuri, S., Britton, D.M. and Subramaniam, M. (2009) 'Between Life and Death: Women in an Indian State Prison'. *Feminist Criminology.* 4/3: 252-274.
23. Henne, K. and Troshynski, E. (2013), 'Mapping the Margins of Intersectionality: Criminological Possibilities in a Transnational World'. *Theoretical Criminology*, 0/0: 1-19.
24. Potter, H. (2013), 'Intersectional Criminology: Interrogating Identity and Power in Criminological Research and Theory'. *Critical Criminology,* 21: 305-318.

exploring the identity of offenders, prisoners and victims to take into account the impact of power dynamics within the criminal justice system and the social construction of identity.

Relevant to the present discussions about the relationship between diversity, personhood and prisons in crisis, theories of intersectionality also offer insight into identity. An intersectional reading of personhood sees identity as multiplicative[25] — that is — constituted by many intersecting and interwoven aspects of personhood; for example, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender and class.[26] In simple terms, who we are, our ways of being and behaving in the world derive from interwoven and indivisible aspects of personhood and it does not make sense to respond to them singularly. This marks an important departure from the singularising approach currently informing the response to diversity and personhood in prisons.

Research led insight

The research suggests that an intersectional reading of identity could have far reaching value for prisons assisting them with; maintaining good order and discipline, fostering good relations between different people, promoting prisoners resilience to survive prison, developing effective staff and prisoner relationship through respectful basic daily interactions and through the keyworker system promoting the maintenance of aspects of personhood which can form the basis for developing a non-offending identity. The key component of these outcomes lies in being seen as a *whole person* as opposed to a collection of characteristics some of which are more valued in law and prison policy than others.

The appreciative inquiry approach developed for the research marked a departure from more traditional problem-based methodologies. Using questions which prompted prisoners and staff to reflect on past successes in responding to diversity of personhood and identity the approach revealed not only challenges but opportunities, resources and possibilities for improvement. The approach enabled staff to explore what underlies the difficulties they face and explore the

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possibilities for responding differently. This approach takes the focus away from judging and blaming staff and situates it on exploring how the desired outcomes can be achieved. In this way the research process creates both an appetite for and an energy to generate change in sites of combined challenge/opportunity.[27]

Two sites of challenge/opportunity have relevance for mitigating the crisis of personhood and identity under discussion. Firstly, the challenge/opportunity of recording, analysing and reporting the intersectionality of the national and individual prisoner populations and thereby promoting awareness and engagement with the intersectionality of personhood and identity. Secondly, the challenge/opportunity of increasing the confidence and competence of prison and partnership agency staff to recognise and respond effectively to the whole person. Achieving this outcome will involve overcoming anxieties about accusations of bias and inequality which impair responsiveness and increased clarity about what constitutes an effective and appropriate adjustment to support characteristics of personhood which are protected in law and policy.

Challenge/Opportunity: establishing and utilising data about the prevalence of intersectionality in prison populations

Consistent with the singularising conceptualisation of diversity and personhood already discussed, prison population figures are produced for only four of the nine protected characteristics of personhood; sex, age, ethnicity and religion.[28] Whilst quarterly statistics are produced to show the make-up of the national population in terms of gender, offence and sentence type, ethnicity and faith, statistics which reveal protected characteristic groups are only produced annually in arrears. This presents several challenges; i) it makes the monitoring of protected characteristics and the localised needs they create difficult for the service as a whole and for individual prisons and ii) the way the data is presented makes it difficult to establish the extent of intersectionality and more importantly which

25. Chigwada-Bailey, R. (2003) *Black Women's Experience of Criminal Justice: Race, Gender and Class, a Discourse on Disadvantage.* Waterside: Winchester, England.

26. Staunæs, D. (2003): Where have all the subjects gone? Bringing together the concepts of intersectionality and subjectification. *NORA—Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research,* 11/2: 101-110.

27. Elliott, C. (1999), *Locating the Energy for Change: An Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry.* Winnipeg, Manitoba: International Institute for Sustainable Development.

28. Other protected characteristics like sexuality and disability are not reported because this information is difficult for prisons to access unless disclosed voluntarily.

characteristics of personhood are intersecting in any given population. Table 1 shows the prisoner population in June 2018[29] and the figures published for the four protected characteristics in the male estate.[30]

Prison Population	82,773	
Gender (Male)	78,790	95 per cent
Protected groups		
Age (Under 25 or 50+)	33,137	40 per cent
Ethnicity (excl. White)*	22,001	27 per cent
Religion**	57,369	69 per cent
In any of the four **Protected Groups***		136 per cent

 * White ethnicity is not a protected characteristic
 ** of which 48 per cent are Christian.

Table 1. Protected Characteristics in the national prisoner population

Despite only being able to consider the impact of four protected characteristics a rough appreciation of the extent of intersectionality in the population can be seen. The figures indicate a 36 per cent overlap in protected characteristics, even without considering the impact of the other five unrecorded protected characteristics. Gaining a more sophisticated view of the extent of intersectionality in the national prisoner population would greatly assist prison governors to exercise the local autonomy envisaged in PSI32/2011 to respond to the needs of their localised populations. However, achieving this would require the collection, analysis and reporting of data on a single case by case basis.
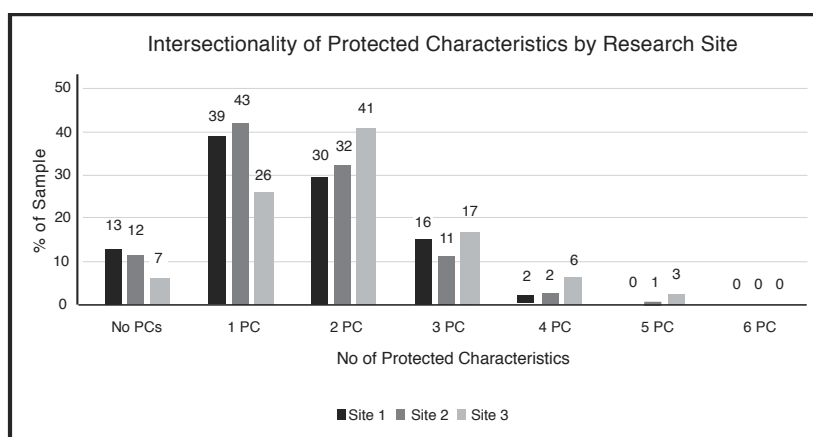
A more detailed assessment of intersectionality can be achieved by using the data from the research study. Whilst not a census, prisoners self-selecting to participate in the survey component of the research

provided information about 7 of the 9 protected characteristics.[31] Analysis of the overlap between protected characteristics, shown in figure 1, shows the extent of intersectionality between 6 of the 7 protected characteristics recorded in each research site.

Figure 1. Intersectionality of protected characteristics across the three research sites

Even a cursory examination of intersectionality like this one provokes interesting questions and new ways of thinking. For example, it provokes questions about which are the most common or frequently occurring intersections of protected characteristics and how these relate to the informal awareness of staff about their population. When asked informally which intersections they thought would occur most commonly, the tendency in responses from prison and partnership agency staff was to highlight faith and ethnicity. However, the most commonly occurring combination of protected characteristics across all three sites were age and disability (although this varied across the individual prison sites).

An intersectional analysis brings other interesting questions into view, for example-what does an intersectional analysis reveal about the norm and about who the statistical minority and majority groups are? The basic analysis here indicates that there is likely to be a very small population (a statistical minority in every prison) of white, middle aged, heterosexual, non-religious, able bodied prisoners who do not identify with any protected characteristic and who do not receive any adjustment to the prison regime or practices. This small minority are an important feature in considering the experience of staff when responding to diversity and how this relates to the anxieties they report about accusations of bias and inequality.

Intersectionality of Protected Characteristics by Research Site

*based on 682 surveys from a population of 2,867 (23.8 per cent return rate)

The challenge/opportunity of establishing intersectional practices of responding to the whole person.

The focus of AI on asking questions which provoke a reflection on past successes as a means of uncovering improvements and solutions enabled staff to appreciatively share their knowledge and experiences of responding to diversity of personhood and identity. The approach uncovered commonly

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29. Ministry of Justice (2018) Annual Prison Population Statistics June.
30. The male estate is used as an example because the national figures are compared with the research figures and the research was only conducted in the male estate.
31. Biological sex and Pregnancy and maternity were not included as the research took place only in the male estate.

held vulnerabilities and anxieties, practical challenges and ideas and opportunities for improvement.

The stories of staff revealed widely shared concerns about the extent of their cultural awareness and its impact on their cultural competence which contributed to anxieties about accusations of positive bias (the appearance of favouritism through adjustments for diversity) as well as fears about accusations of discrimination (failure to provide adjustments for diversity). Stories also illustrated how discrimination, poor responsiveness and neglectfulness can arise from kind of diversity blindness contributing to misattribution and misrecognition. For example, it was not uncommon to hear stories about Hindu or Sikh prisoners being unlocked on Friday lunchtimes to attend Jummah prayers because staff had conflated being of Asian ethnicity with being of Muslim faith. Neither was it unusual to encounter stories which illustrated that difference was overlooked because staff mis-understood equality as the need to treat everyone the same, as this quote from a prison officer illustrates:—'I try not to see that he is Black or Asian, it shouldn't make a difference, I should treat them all the same.' Such understandings often co-existed with a strong desire to be fair to all prisoners and reflected the tension created by the singularising approach to diversity of personhood. Less commonly, stories revealed a more intersectional approach that attempts to see and respond to the whole person, as this quote also from a prison officer demonstrates:—'You can't treat them all the same—they are different—you have to look at what each person needs'.

The perception that treating everyone the same would promote fairness also underlay confusion and concern amongst staff about what adjustments were fair to make and how the effectiveness of adjustments should be defined and measured. The singularising approach was again dominant here. For example, when diversity and personhood are looked at through a singular lens it is not surprising to find that prisoners attending chapel are all unlocked at the same time — giving prisoners whose mobility is affected by an impairment or by age the same amount of time to get off the wing and across the yard to chapel as those who are fit and able bodied. In contrast, when looked at through an intersectional lens, unlock for chapel might be staggered, enabling less mobile prisoners to have a more equitable chance of getting to chapel on time. The difference here is that the singular approach focuses attention on adjustment in terms of the input of the prison. In contrast, the intersectional approach focuses attention on the outcome of the adjustment for the whole person taking account of the intersection of mobility, age and faith needs. In summary, the experiences of prison staff reveal a strong desire to adopt an intersectional approach—to respond to the needs of the person standing in front of them, rather than a singularising approach—attempting to identify whether the person's needs arise from a characteristic that warrants protection in policy and law. Assisting them to achieve this will require further consideration of how staff and managers can overcome fears about accusations of bias in equity enabling them to focus on equality of outcome, rather than measurement of input.

Concluding thoughts

The article has explored and critiqued the notion of a crisis of personhood and identity in prisons, exploring the implications for prisoners, prison and partnership agency staff and the wider aims and purposes of prison to rehabilitate. Critiquing the longstanding singularising approach to conceptualising and responding to personhood, it has offered intersectionality as one possible means of generating an approach to custody and rehabilitation which responds to the whole person. The insights offered have been drawn from a uniquely inclusive research project which re-envisaged the roles prisoners and prison staff usually play in research. Inspired by and adopting the principles of appreciative inquiry the research methodology repositioned these stakeholders' experience as expert insight. Adopting the AI principles of drawing forward past strengths to generate future solutions, the research has enabled staff to move beyond participation in research which subsequently points the finger and finds them lacking. Rather they are invited into a dialogue where solutions and suggestions arising from their experience have immediate day to day value.

Moving forwards, the AI methodology has wider applicability to generate alternate perspectives, insights and engagement with other issues impacting prisons in this uniquely challenging time. As for intersectionality, whilst not a panacea or a magic wand, a concerted exploration of the benefits of adopting an intersectional approach is recommended on the grounds that it offers the potential to develop policies and practices which are more reflective of the person and which affirm rather than constrain identity and agency. This whole person approach would enable prisoners to maintain and express more fully aspects of their personhood which can form the building clocks of a non-offending self. Thus, recognising and valuing the intersectional nature of personhood would appear to be a vital component of the creation of a healthy, humane, safe and decent prison.