

MY LIFE

MY story

READY STEADY GO!

— WINTER 2015

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

beautiful

IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON

forgive yourself

BECOME STRONGER

BORN TO FIGHT... & WIN

TAKE IT ALL

balance

The New Me

happier,
healthier

better **the best**

BEST news

Grace

life

Live Happy!

HOPE

for you

So much to love X

live

NOW

mySelf

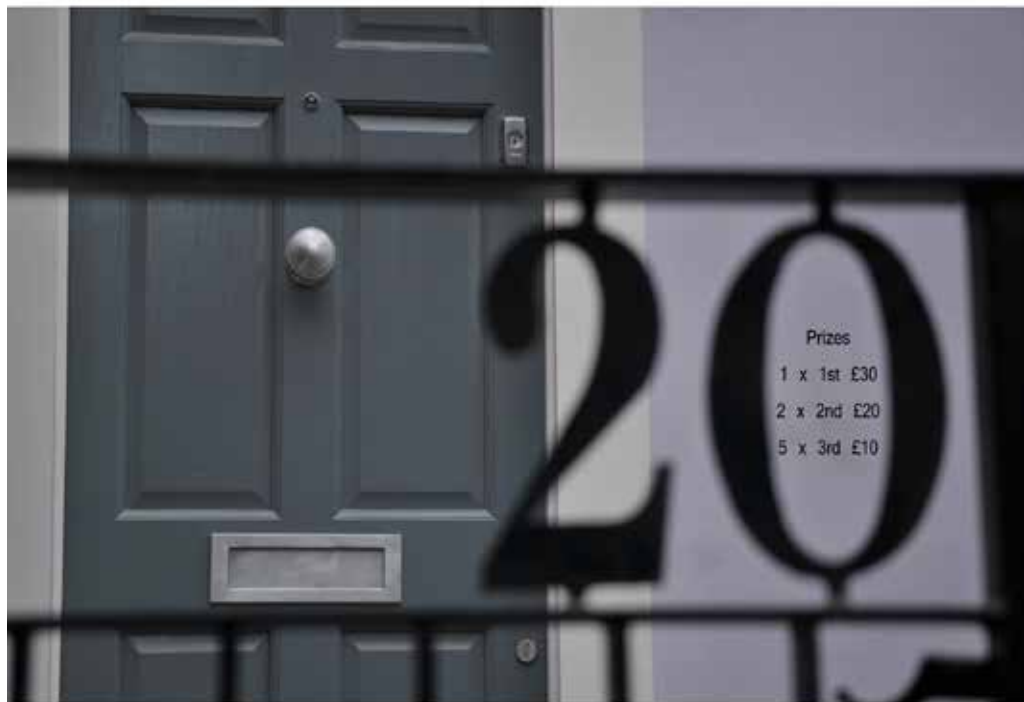
Today

naia

WIP Writing Competition 2016

Write a story, poem or article starting with:

“When I opened the door.....”



Photograph ©iHam Heritage

Closing Date: 30th March 2016

For more details and an entry form write (NO STAMP REQUIRED) to Perri at

WIP

FREEPOST RSLB-UABE-TYRT

Unit 10 The Ivories

6 Northampton Street

London N1 2HY

About Women in Prison

Women in Prison supports and campaigns for women affected by the criminal justice system.

We help with housing, education, mental health, legal rights, work, benefits, debt, domestic violence, finding a solicitor, immigration, and more.

Prison does not work. We believe more women affected by the criminal justice system should be offered community sentences and, if needed, support to address any challenges they face.

Women in Prison is a charity working in England. We were set up in 1983 by a former prisoner. We have offices in London, Woking and Manchester.

Our service is by, and for, women. We offer the following advice and support to women affected by the criminal justice system:

- A freephone advice line on 0800 953 0125. We also give advice by mail.
- Visiting all 12 women's prisons in England, offering one-to-one support at advice and information sessions.
- Support for women being released from prison.

- **Education:** finding courses and colleges at the right level for you; funding towards course fees for distance learning or at college; money for course materials, including books and stationery.

- **Housing:** finding and keeping a home; applications to councils for housing; advice on housing benefit; referrals to hostels.

- **Work:** help applying for jobs, including CV writing; advice on disclosing a criminal record to employers; finding voluntary work.

- Counselling for women in London affected by the criminal justice system.

- Specialist support for women with a diagnosed mental health condition who are leaving prison.

- Specialist support for black and ethnic minority women.

- Specialist support for women under 25.

- Support for mums, including advice on your rights as a mum.

- A free quarterly magazine – the one you are reading now.

Got something to say?

If you need help, please contact us. We can visit you in prison or write to you, or meet up if you are released.

Write or call free:

Women in Prison

FREEPOST RSLB-UABE-TYRT

Unit 10, The Ivories

6 Northampton Street

London N1 2HY

National freephone advice line

0800 953 0125

info@womeninprison.org.uk

Women in Prison's services are open to all women affected by the criminal justice system in England. Women can choose to attend, leave, or return to our services. None are compulsory.

CONFIDENTIAL

Our service is confidential. Any information given by a service user to Women in Prison will not be shared with anyone else without the woman's permission, unless required by law.

COMPLAINTS

If you are not happy with the service we have provided and wish to make a complaint, you are welcome to do so. Just ask for a copy of our complaints procedure.

WIP Art Competition 2016

Design an Album cover



Photograph © Perri Morhage

Closing Date: 30th March 2016

For more details and an entry form write (NO STAMP REQUIRED) to Perri at

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INSIDE

Winter 2015 • Issue 6

MAIN FEATURES:

- 20 **The Black Madonna** A campaigning DJ
- 24 **TechKnow** Guide to everyday technology
- 32 **Chief Executive Q&A** Meet WIP's new head
- 34 **Feeling Good** Hair care tips
- 38 **CARE** The tools to change your life
- 52 **ROTL** Making the most of temporary release
- 56 **Life Behind Bars: Japan**
- 58 *Women Moving Forward*
- 60 **'Legal' Highs** And dangerous lows

REGULARS:

- 6 **Letter From Kate**
- 8 **Str8 Up!** The news that matters to you
- 30 **Gimmie5!** Five friends chat
- 64 **All Yours: Art & Stories**
- 90 *A Day In The Life*
- 92 **Stir It Up!** A 'cheesecake' recipe to try
- 94 **The Agony Aunts**
- 108 **Knitting** Make a mini-heart
- 110 **Jokes** Skinny's collection
- 112 *Wordsearch*

WELCOME

H

ello. This is my first letter to you as Chief Executive of Women in Prison. It's a bumper issue including information on CARE, a programme designed to help women better cope with their emotions; lovely illustrations from a book cover competition that attracted lots of entries – many from women who said they weren't any good at art; recipes from inside prison and a quick guide to getting the most out of ROTL; plus an interview with an international female DJ who cares passionately about penal reform.

My personal thanks go to all the women who have given their time, inspiration and energy to produce such brilliant content – especially the magazine group in Holloway. Meeting the women in the group was one of the highlights of my first month in my new job. We hope to see a magazine group in all the women's prisons. If you are interested, please contact a WIP worker in your prison or write to us at the free address at the back of this magazine.



This issue will be with you over Christmas and January. All of us at Women in Prison, staff and volunteers, appreciate that Christmas may be a difficult time and wish you a peaceful 2016.

Take good care of yourselves!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate'.

Kate

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF WOMEN IN PRISON

How to find Ready Steady Go! magazine

Freepost RSLB-UABE-TYRT, Unit 10, The Ivories Northampton St, London N1 2HY

The magazine you are reading is free for all women affected by the criminal justice system in England. We send copies each quarter to all women's prisons and you should be able to find the magazine easily. If you can't, write to tell us. If you are a woman affected by the criminal justice system and would like to be added to our mailing list for free, please contact us. Everyone else may subscribe, get in touch for prices.

Advertising To advertise in our magazine, call the office. 020 7359 6674

Ready Steady Go! Unit 10, The Ivories, Northampton St, London N1 2HY

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Ministry of
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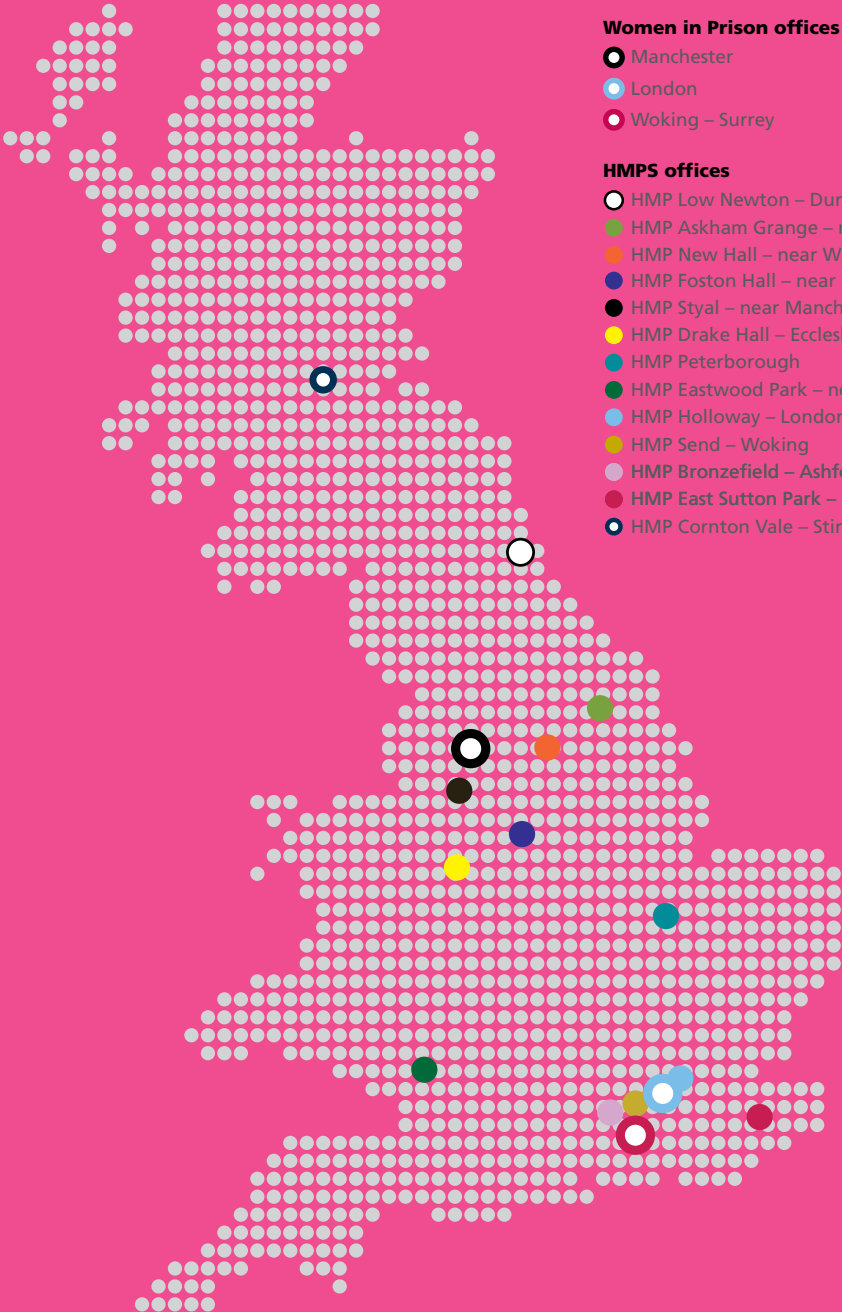
WHERE TO FIND OUR OFFICES

Women in Prison offices

- Manchester
- London
- Woking – Surrey

HMPS offices

- HMP Low Newton – Durham
- HMP Askham Grange – near York
- HMP New Hall – near Wakefield
- HMP Foston Hall – near Derby
- HMP Styal – near Manchester
- HMP Drake Hall – Eccleshall, Staffordshire
- HMP Peterborough
- HMP Eastwood Park – near Bristol
- HMP Holloway – London
- HMP Send – Woking
- HMP Bronzefield – Ashford, Surrey
- HMP East Sutton Park – Maidstone
- HMP Cornton Vale – Stirling, Scotland



STROB UP!

NEWS AND VIEWS

THIS ISSUE

- KATE VISITS SEND
- HOLLOWAY CLOSED
- MICHAEL GOVE
- WOMENMATTA

THE DUCHESS
OF CAMBRIDGE
VISITING RAPT AT
HMP SEND





Kate's first time inside prison

Women in HMP Send had a surprise guest earlier this year when HRH the Duchess of Cambridge dropped in for her first visit to a UK prison.

Kate came to see the work of the charity RAPt (Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Trust) and their dedicated addiction treatment centre in action. During the visit, she heard from some of the women in Send about how they had become addicts and, eventually, prisoners. They told her how the RAPt programme was helping them to overcome their drug and alcohol addictions.

The Duchess said: "I was reminded today how addictions lie at the heart of so many social issues and how substance misuse can play such a destructive role in vulnerable people's lives. I saw again today that a failure to intervene early in life to tackle mental health problems and other challenges can have profound consequences for people throughout their lives.

"I am grateful to the women I met for sharing their difficult personal stories with me. It is encouraging to learn how organisations like RAPt are offering specialist support to help people break the cycle of addiction and look forward to a positive and crime-free life."

Kate met Kirsty Lacey (known as Lacey), 36, who was a prisoner at HMP Send and took part in the RAPt programme in 2008. She moved to an open prison in 2012 and was released in 2014.

Lacey told Kate about the part RAPt played in helping her overcome her addiction. She is now a Programme Manager for User Voice, a charity that works with men and women affected by the criminal justice system to bring about positive change.

Lacey, who has since got married and is expecting a baby, said: "If it wasn't for the RAPt programme and the support they have given me since, I would not be living this life I am now - one that is beyond my wildest dreams."

**H. M. Prison
Holloway**

Closure of HMP Holloway – a breakthrough?



After 164 years, HMP Holloway, the closed-category women's prison in Islington, north London, will close because it is no longer considered fit for purpose.

In his Autumn spending review, Chancellor George Osborne announced that the prison, which opened in 1852, would be sold off and turned into luxury flats.

Campaigning organisations such as Women in Prison will be lobbying to ensure that the prison is replaced with small custodial units and women's centres in London so that London-based women will not be sent to jails further away from their families once Holloway is closed next summer.

HMP Holloway, where some of the suffragettes were imprisoned for fighting for women's right to vote, can hold up to 501 women. An inspection of the prison in 2010 noted that while there had been improvements, most prisoners said they felt unsafe and there were 35 incidents a week of self-harming.

Kate Paradine, the Chief Executive of WIP, said: "Women in Prison cautiously welcomes the news of the closure, providing that the now very real opportunity is seized for a bold new approach for women affected by the criminal justice system.

"Holloway's closure must mark the start of a significant reduction in the number of women in prison alongside the establishment of effective - and cheaper - community alternatives to custody. Most imprisoned women are serving short sentences for non-violent offences and are among the most excluded women in our society.

"Most women in prison have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence and face ill health and/or substance misuse issues. WIP will fight to ensure that proper investment is made in women's centres and the establishment of small custodial units in London. This could be a chance for positive change."

ORIGINAL
HOLLOWAY
PRISON,
1852



State of the Estate

What WIP found is going on in women's prisons

Women are on average being held in prisons further away from their homes, the latest State of the Estate by Women in Prison has found.

The report, the second one produced by WIP, provides detailed information about each of the 12 women's prisons in England, Cornton Vale in Scotland and Ash House, which is the women's house within the young male prison in Northern Ireland. It also looks at how the criminal justice system impacts on women.

Produced every two years, the report is intended as a useful tool for



researchers, campaigners and policy-makers and presents a snapshot of the women's prison estate in the ever-changing landscape that is criminal justice reform. It provides a profile of each women's prison, covering its population, services and operations. It also includes essays that cover current developments such as the introduction of "transforming rehabilitation" and the women themselves help complete the "picture" by giving accounts of their experiences of education and working in prison. WIP send copies of the report to academics, politicians and other organisations working with, or within, the prison system.

Copies are also sent to each prison library - although there is no guarantee it will make it onto the shelves! Take a look next time you are there.

Key findings in the new State of the Estate:

■ The average distance that women are held from home has increased to 64 miles

9.1%

Employment rates upon release continue to be low among the female prison population





(from 60 miles in 2011/2012) and reaches a high of 97 miles for women at in HMP Askham Grange.

■ The number of Childcare Resettlement Licences granted was almost halved - with a decrease of 55.5% over the period 2013-2014.

■ The number of women granted ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) also declined by 19% between July and September 2013 and the same period in 2014.

■ Employment rates upon release continue to be low among the female prison population - an average rate of 9.1% compared to 23.8% in the male estate (this figure does not include the two open prisons which have significantly better outcomes).

■ The majority of convictions for women - 81.1% between October 2013 and September 2014 - were for non-violent offences.

■ The number of babies in prison has increased by around a third - from 46 in 2012 to 61 in 2014.

STR8 UP!

WOMEN IN PRISON'S FIRST PATRON

■ **Baroness Jean Corston**, who has been at the forefront of the campaign to reduce the number of women being imprisoned in the UK, has agreed to become the first patron of Women in Prison since the charity was founded in 1983.

The appointment was announced by Claire Cain, WIP's Policy and Campaigns Manager.

Baroness Corston headed a landmark review in 2007 into how women were affected by the criminal justice system. Her findings were published as the Corston Report, which made 43 recommendations to drive improvement on the women's criminal justice agenda and was instrumental in highlighting the urgent need for a gender-specific, holistic approach to support women.

The report recognised the damage and violence that is inflicted on many women long before they are jailed and advocated for the kind of help that can make a difference and stop the revolving door of re-offending. The immediate impact of the report was welcome investment and the expansion of a network of women's centres across the UK, including WIP's WomenMATTa in Manchester and the Beth Centre in Lambeth, London.

Baroness Corston continues to campaign because many of the gains made now risk going into reverse.

She was Labour MP for Bristol East for 13 years before entering the Lords in 2005. She currently serves as co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Women in the Penal System.

Women in Prison feels privileged to join forces with Baroness Corston to campaign for alternatives to custody in the community and for the creation of smaller custodial units for the very limited small minority of women for whom incarceration is considered unavoidable.

BARONESS CORSTON



The boss speaks his mind

How the Secretary of State for Justice thinks impacts on what happens in our prisons and moulds the criminal justice system. So, WIP listened carefully when Michael Gove addressed the Conservative Party Conference in October about his vision for criminal justice reform.

Here are some of the key quotes from his speech:

■ “We should not ignore the failures in our criminal justice system. And the biggest failure of all is the failure of our prisons.”

■ “On too many occasions, our prison system fails to rehabilitate, it fails to reform, and it fails to ensure criminals are prevented from offending again - and again - and again.”

■ “Prison should offer individuals a chance to change their lives for the better.”

■ “[When people in prison] broke the law, they crossed the line, and no moral society can tolerate law-breaking without punishment. But we should never define individuals by their worst moments ... Committing an offence should not mean that society always sees you as an offender because that means we deny individuals the chance to improve their lives, provide for their families and give back to their communities.”

■ “We know that many of those in prison have grown up in poverty, in broken homes and fatherless families ... Now, of course, many young people who grow up in tough circumstances go on to lead exemplary lives, but their success is all the more admirable because growing up in a home where love is

absent or fleeting, violence is the norm and stability a dream is a poor preparation for adult life.”

■ “Let us ensure our prisons are places of hard work, rigorous education and high ambition. Let us free our prisons of drugs and violence and make them places of decency and dignity, hope and purpose.”

WIP’s response to the speech:

It is refreshing to hear a Justice Secretary say what we’ve all known for a long time - prisons are failing. We are also encouraged to hear that he has some understanding that many people in prison have had very tough childhoods and continue to face many difficulties in life.

Another positive is the recognition that people in prison have so much to give and contribute to the world, however, WIP was disappointed that there was no specific mention of the needs of women in prison as distinct from those of men.

Where, for instance, was the understanding that many women need to find somewhere to live before they can find employment? They may sometimes need to find refuge for themselves and their children to protect them from an abusive partner.

What we also want to hear from Mr Gove is more positive reference to alternatives to custody so that women are not sent to prison on short sentences and, instead, can gain access to support in the community. WIP believes this to be at the heart of criminal justice reform.

Do you have any comments or criticisms to make regarding Mr Gove’s speech?

Write us a letter. You don’t need a stamp if you use our Freepost address

*by Claire Cain,
WIP Campaigns
& Policy Manager*

Wikipedia

WHO IS MICHAEL GOVE?

■ Conservative MP for Surrey Heath since 2005.

■ After the 2015 General Election, he was made Justice Secretary. He had previously served as the Secretary of State for Education.

■ He was born in Edinburgh in 1967 and was adopted at four months.

■ His first job was as a journalist at the Aberdeen Press and Journal and later the Times in London.

■ He is a Presbyterian and is married with two children.



MICHAEL GOVE MP,
SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR JUSTICE



CAROLINE
DINENAGE MP, RIGHT
AND WOMENMATTAS'
SALLY ETCHELLS



New Justice Minister attends WIP's Women Centre in Manchester

Women need innovative support to avoid re-offending on release, according to Caroline Dinénage, MP, the Conservative Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Women, Equalities and Family Justice, who visited Women-MATTA, WIP's women's centre in Manchester, to learn more about a new scheme aimed at supporting women released from short-term jail sentences.

Under the scheme, called Transforming Rehabilitation, women released in Cheshire and the Greater Manchester area are supervised by the Cheshire & Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company (CGM CRC). The initiative was launched following legislation passed by the coalition Government early in 2015.

The aim is to reduce re-offending by making sure that everyone leaving prison receives probation supervision to support his or her reintegration into society. Previously, prisoners sentenced to jail terms of less than 12 months were released from custody with £46 in their pocket and no additional support.

Ms Dinénage said: "I am determined to see fewer women offending and re-offending but they need the right support to transform their lives and address their often complex needs. [We need] innovative support that can really help women in this region turn their backs on crime for good."

Between 1 February, when the legisla- >>



WHO IS CAROLINE DINÉNAGE MP?

- Conservative MP for Gosport since 2010.
- She was born 28 October 1971.
- The daughter of television presenter and newsreader Fred Dinénage who fronted programmes such as How 2 in the 1990s.
- Studied Politics and English at Swansea University.
- Married to fellow Conservative MP Mark Lancaster, she has two children from a previous marriage.
- Supporter of Portsmouth FC.

STR8 UP!

tion came into effect, and October, there were 109 women across Cheshire and Greater Manchester who had been sentenced.

WIP plays a major role in providing women with the kind of support that helps them to make the best use of their talent and abilities. In every borough of Greater Manchester, there is now a women's centre such as WomenMATTAs which is a safe, women-only space providing support. Some women attend WomenMATTAs as part of a community order; others attend while on licence. The centre tries to open its doors to all women looking for advice and support.

Sally Etchells, a WomenMATTAs project worker, told the minister about other interesting pilot projects in Greater Manchester, including the Problem Solving Court and a programme known as Triage that promotes a different approach to the criminal justice system.

These pilot projects aim to reduce the

What do you think needs to change for women in prison?

Write us a letter. You don't need a stamp if you use our Freepost address

number of women being sent to prison on a short sentence by providing help in the community – a system that WIP advocates.

Why not ask the minister a question about her role in the Ministry of Justice and as Minister for Women and Equalities? MPs often only

respond to letters from their constituents. Send your questions to Women in Prison and we'll gather them together and then ask Caroline Dinenage to reply. We will publish her answers in the next issue of the magazine. So start writing now!

Send your question to:

Women in Prison (Magazine)
Freepost RSLB-UABE-TYRT
Unit 10, The Ivories,
6 Northampton St
London
N1 2HY

WHAT IS A PROBLEM-SOLVING COURT?

A woman – we'll call her Jane – is bailed from court to attend the Problem Solving Court (PSC) at WomenMATTAs. The PSC is made up of a number of organisations offering different types of support. Jane works with the PSC to agree her own sentence plan and to decide which services she will engage,

and work, with. The plan is sent back to the court to be signed off and agreed so that Jane can complete this programme instead of serving a short-term prison sentence. At a later date, Jane will need to return to the court to give an update on her progress.

WHAT IS TRIAGE?

Triage begins at the point of arrest. Jane is arrested for shoplifting and it is her

first offence. She is addicted to drugs which drives her to go shoplifting. Jane admits the offence and asks for help to combat her addiction. An informal assessment is carried out at WomenMATTAs, or possibly the police custody suite. This results in stopping the route to prison. Instead, Jane is referred to a drug treatment service, possibly alongside a conditional caution.

1 in 3

WOMEN ACROSS THE WORLD EXPERIENCE VIOLENCE IN THEIR LIFETIME
(London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

ONLY **6%**

OF THE ENGINEERING WORKFORCE IN THE UK IS FEMALE
(Women's Engineering Society)

WOMEN MAKE UP **51%**

OF THE POPULATION BUT ONLY **30%** OF THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AT WESTMINSTER
(Fawcett Society)

85,000

WOMEN AGED 16-59 ARE RAPED EACH YEAR IN ENGLAND AND WALES
(Home Office)

WOMEN HOLD **0%**

of the highest three ranks in the army, RAF and navy
(Fawcett Society)

WOMEN
MEN

THE HIGHEST NUMBERS OF WOMEN ARE EMPLOYED IN THE LOWEST PAID SECTORS, INCLUDING CARE AND RETAIL
(Fawcett Society)

globally, women invest **90%**

of their earnings in families and communities compared with **30-40%** invested by men
(World Bank)

THE GAP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN'S EARNINGS WAS 17.4% IN 1997 - IN 2014 IT WAS

9.4%

(BBC)

IN A TYPICAL MONTH, **78%**

of newspaper articles are written by men
(Fawcett Society)

THERE ARE **130 million**

children in the world with no access to education - 70% of them are girls
(International Rescue Committee)



DANCING QUEEN

By Tess Reidy

In terms of having a cool job, **Marea Stamper** might just take the biscuit. “I make dance records, DJ and tour the world,” she tells me. She is also the “talent buyer” – the person who finds performers – for Chicago’s Smart Bar, a top club and one of America’s oldest dance music venues. Marea, who works as a DJ under the name “The Black Madonna”, is coming to the UK to perform in Manchester at the Warehouse Project on 19 December.

Although she works in a party environment of late nights, long flights and loud music, her interests extend far beyond the dance floor. She is a vocal feminist, an advocate for the gay community and a strong believer in offender rehabilitation.

I caught up with her in Berlin to find out her views on working in the male-dominated music industry and what she thinks about prison systems in America and the UK.

Marea was born in Kentucky and grew up in Appalachia, a white, rural area with a big coal-mining community, about 400 miles south-west of Washington. She lived with her half-brother, mother and stepfather – who were all musical. “My step-dad is a musician and one of the greatest record collectors of all times. I learned to play the guitar and sing when I was little and I would make music with him,” she says. >>

Marea left school at 16 to work in the music industry and sold mix tapes. She returned to study when she was in her 20s. “Eventually, I went back to college and that’s where I started DJing. I was the general manager of my college radio station. Like a lot of DJs, I moved on to producing music with computers and synthesizers and that’s what I do today.” She eventually landed an assistant’s role at the Smart Bar in Chicago and then became its talent buyer – a job she still has today.

Electronic music is a very male-dominated industry: most of the nightclubs are run by men and the majority of successful DJs are male.

“Dance music is like every other business,” she says.

“Men take it for granted that they have mentors and peers that look like them and they think they just naturally excel over women for some mystical reason.”

Marea thinks that many of the structures in dance music work to exclude not only women, but those from black and minority groups, including transgender people and those without a lot of money.

To help address this imbalance, she ran a series of workshops and parties in celebration of Women’s History Month, held in March every year in the US, to encourage others to get involved in the scene.

“I felt that, if we could engineer some of the systems that benefit men, but invite women and LGBT people to be a part, then

we could begin to change the dominance of men in dance music. We had a month of workshops at the Smart Bar in Chicago and [changed the programme to place] those people at the top of the bill.”

Although the events were a great success, Marea believes much more must be done to make a real change. There is also a wider issue of discrimination in the dance music industry. “Dress codes that prohibit open displays of black culture in the club are a big part of mega clubs. Everyone knows what it

“Men think that they just naturally excel over women for some mystical reason”

means when you say no street wear, baseball caps or Jordan’s in the club.” She adds: “Where do women fit in that world? Are they participating? Are they invited? Are they decoration? Where do people who don’t have any money fit? They don’t often fit at all. I find it concerning.”

Marea lives in Chicago with her husband, their dog and three cats. The city is famous for putting Barack Obama on the road to the White House, as the birthplace of Hillary Clinton and actor Robin Williams, and the hometown of singer Kanye West. However, it’s now becoming better known for its gun crime and high rates of incarceration.

“Statistically the city is getting safer, or so they say, but I still hear gunshots every night,” she says. “My husband has almost been murdered by a stranger with a gun twice. Violence is normalised in Chicago

**DJ MAREA
STAMPER ALSO
KNOWN AS THE
BLACK MADONNA**

and I don't actually believe any of the official numbers that are reported. Apparently, a lot of times people are pressured to report certain crimes as inconclusive, when they're actually assaults or murders. It's really hard to know how bad it is, other than to say what I personally experience."

According to the University of Chicago's Crime Lab, the United States has the highest incarceration rate and the most number of people in prison in the world, having more than quadrupled the incarceration rate over the past three decades. While the increase in the prison population is often attributed to America's so called "war on drugs, incarceration rates for violent, property and other crimes have also increased dramatically.

Marea says: "I do not believe that prisons are an effective ways to treat social problems – from mental illness, to drug abuse and even violence. I think that we should immediately reform the systems we have in place, improve conditions for prisoners, increase access to books and lawyers, and make visits with family and children more accessible. In many cases, we need to replace the prison system entirely with a variety of more effective options," she says. "No one gets better by being treated terribly."

She believes that the US government should re-think jailing people for drug crimes and non-violent crimes, such as sex workers. "We should not wait any longer to begin the process of shutting down this atrocious broken system. Obama is starting to discuss these issues and I hope that truly, with no more elections to win, he is willing to upset the apple cart when it comes to prison reform. Obama, if you're listening, hurry up."



Although she has a serious side, Marea is also funny and self-deprecating. She knows she has a fun job and she's making the most of it. She gets to travel the world, be part of an exciting music scene and do what she loves. "The best thing about my job is connecting with people through music. It doesn't happen at every show. Sometimes something goes wrong or it's more of a struggle to bring the room together. But when the magic is right and everyone is singing and clapping and responding, there's no better feeling. The walls come down. It makes every hard night worth it and every good night even better."

There are some sacrifices, though as her work requires her to spend long periods of time away from home and her family. "It's hard to be away from home. I'm a wife and a daughter. I miss my family. There's no other way to say it," she says.

But right now, she wouldn't swap it for anything. "In 10 years time, what do I want to be doing? I hope I am still doing this but finding ways to better integrate the life I live on the road with the people I love at home. I'm getting better at this part already, but I've still got some way to go."

TECH KNOW

A simple guide to mastering
everyday technology
By **Kate Fraser** and **Anneka Fatania**

Illustration by PPaint



What if you have been kept for years in an environment where technology is scarce – no mobile phones, no computers, no tablets or MP3 players? And then you go back into society and are expected to understand the technology advances that have taken place since you were away! This is a very real problem faced by women leaving prison, particularly for those serving longer sentences – even a 12 month sentence can leave you scratching your head at the new gadgets and technology.

So how can you prepare yourself for all the new gadgets out there? Firstly, embrace the change! The next time you try something new, focus on the positive outcomes that might be achieved and not what might go wrong. Think to yourself:

- How will my life or work be different when I learn how to do this?
- Will this help to solve a problem?
- Will I feel better and more confident if I can use this? “New” doesn’t have to mean “bad”. Jump into this new world, you’ll be surprised by the benefits.

Secondly, ask an expert! If you needed an operation, you wouldn’t do it yourself! You would seek professional advice. The same goes for technology. If you can’t work your mobile phone, go back to the shop where you bought it and the staff should be happy to show you. If you don’t know your way around a computer, seek professional help. Lots of charities and community centres run basic computer classes, which are often free if you are on benefits. As your confidence grows, you might want to tackle some more advanced computing courses.

Here is our guide to the new technology in everyday life that you won’t be able to avoid.

Self Service Checkout

Most supermarkets now have machines that allow you to scan and pay for items yourself. Here’s how it works:



your basket in the designated area.

- Join the self-checkout queue. When it’s your turn, pull your trolley up to the machine or place



- Press the “start” button (in the language you want) on the touch screen.



- Confirm whether you brought your own bags. Large supermarkets now charge 5p a bag, so many people now take their

own bags to save money. The machine will ask you to add your bags to the bagging platform before scanning any items. This allows the machine to adjust for the weight of the bags.



■ Scan your purchases by lining up the bar-code (the small rectangle made up black lines) on the label with the red light of the scanner. An beep sounds when the scan is successful. Place fresh produce such as fruit and vegetables on to the scale, which is usually part of the scanner. Select the “produce” button and follow the prompts.



■ Place scanned items on the “bagging area” after scanning them and leave there until you pay.



■ All done? Now pay. Press “finish and pay” button and select your method of payment. Some self-checkout

machines don't accept cash so you will need to use a credit, debit or gift card.

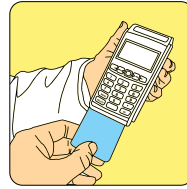


■ Once you have paid remove your items from the bagging platform. If things go wrong during any of the steps,

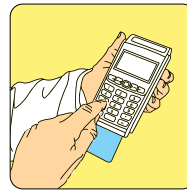
don't worry! There are sales assistants to help customers with self-service checkouts. Another good tip is to try not to swear at the machine if things go wrong – they don't answer back and people will give you strange looks!

Chip and PIN

Chip and PIN is fantastic if you don't like carrying around cash by allowing you use your bank card to make payments.



■ Insert the card into the machine.



■ Follow the prompts on the screen. The terminal will display the purchase amount and request your four-digit PIN.

■ Once your PIN is confirmed and the purchase is approved, a receipt is printed.

Contactless payments



Most shops and public transport use contactless payment. You need a credit or debit card with the contactless symbol and can make payments of up to £30 without having to type in your PIN – which makes life so much easier. You just touch your card on the machine and a payment is authorised! It's as easy as 1, 2, 3.



■ Look for the contactless symbol.



■ Touch your card against the symbol.

■ A beep indicates a successful payment. >>

Bidding for Housing

Some councils have a choice-based letting scheme that lets you select the properties you're interested in. It depends on the council, but once you've been accepted onto the waiting list, the basic steps are:

- Find a property: check in local papers, on council websites, in council offices or in local libraries.

- Check you can apply for it: some properties are only suitable for single people, families or disabled people.

- Apply: this is known as "bidding", but it doesn't involve money. You can bid online, by phone or by text (See guide below) using the user ID and password you were given when you registered to join the waiting list. Each property has a reference number. You will need this to make a bid for that property. This will be in the advert on the website.

- Receive a decision from the council.

To place a bid by text message:

1. Start a new text message.
2. Enter your Unique Reference Number (URN) followed by a space.
3. Enter your memorable date in the correct format – DD/MM/YYYY – followed by a space.
4. Enter the advert reference followed by a space.

5. If you wish to bid for another property, enter the second advert reference. If not, just send the message.

6. You will receive a confirmation by text message that your bid(s) have been made, or if they have not been accepted, it will advise why.

- If you wish to bid for a third property, follow steps 1 – 4 and send the message.

To place a bid by the automated phone line:

1. Choose the correct language using the corresponding number – for example press 1 for English – and then press 1 again to confirm this.

2. Enter your Unique Reference Number (URN) – for example 1234567 – and press #. Press 1 to confirm this.

3. Enter the day of your memorable date and press #

4. Enter the month of your memorable date and press #

5. Enter the full year of your memorable date and press #

6. To make a bid, press 1. If you want to review and/or cancel your bids, press 2. To Exit, press 3

7. Enter the advert reference number for the property – for example 123 and press #. Press 1 to confirm the bid. You can then make further bids (up to the maximum of 3), review your bids or exit the call.

'New' doesn't have to mean 'bad'. Jump into this new world, you'll be surprised by the benefits!

TECH TALK

Hashtag A hashtag is a word, phrase or just a collection of letters added after a hash (#) symbol to create a label, which then allows other people to search for content on social networking sites that has the same label ie #womeninprison.

Megapixel A million pixels - individual coloured dots that make up a digital image. The more pixels an image has, the higher its potential resolution.

Operating System

This is the software that supports a computer or phone's basic functions such as memory, and gives access to devices including hard drives and keyboards. Plus it manages all the other programs on the computer.

Authentication The process of verifying the identity and legitimacy of a person, object or system.

Wi-Fi Allows computers, smart phones or other devices to connect wirelessly to the internet.

Firewall System to protect your home

computers from security risks on the internet such as hackers and computer viruses.

Router Device used to connect computers to the internet.

FaceTime (Mac), Skype

Video calls made via the internet from your phone, tablet or computer to someone else's device.

USB The connection used to plug in devices such as digital cameras, printers, scanners, and external hard drives to your computer.

ATM An automatic teller machine. A self-serve electronic banking outlet that allows customers to complete basic transactions.

Bluetooth Wireless technology for exchanging data over short distances.

Smartphone: A mobile phone that acts like a mini-computer. They usually have touch screens, internet access and an operating system capable of running downloaded apps.

App A self-contained program or piece of software designed to fulfil a particular purpose.

Virus A piece of programming code designed to damage your computer.

WhatsApp Instant messaging app for smartphones that uses the internet.

Android An open-source operating system used for smartphones and tablet computers.

Search Engine

For example, Google. A program used to search the internet.

Screenshot Taking a "picture" of your computer or phone screen.

Sync To synchronise two devices. For example, sending photographs from your phone to your computer.

Blog A website or web page written in an informal or conversational style, usually by an individual.

YouTube A video-sharing website.

GIMMIE



1 What will be your first meal upon release?

MARIA

● Bacon and egg sandwich from a greasy spoon



EMILY

● Ham, egg and homemade chips. Mmm!



2 What support would you like in prison to prepare you for your release?

● A debt course



● Housing is my main concern; I have many worries. Also a guide to which grants I'm eligible for



3 What is the biggest challenge you think you will face going back into society?

● Negative people (negativity)

● Staying clean. I have done very well so far and want to continue



4 If you could have a visit in prison from anyone - living or dead - who would it be, and why?

● Paul Walker from Fast & Furious



● My Deanie. He is everything to me. I miss him dearly



5 Finish the sentence: This time next year I will be...

● Having a more positive relationship with my family

● Back home with my family in Bristol gearing up for celebrations



5!

Five friends in HMP Holloway asked each other the five questions below and recorded their answers.

Try out the questions on five women you know and send us your answers. We'd like Gimme 5 from every one of the women's prisons and women's centres please!



DENISE

● I dunno but it will be in abundance! Roast, Chinese and cold beer

● Nudda! I'm a big woman - got my house, my kids and I'm comfortable when I leave

● Facing certain members of my family. Only God can judge me



● Danny Dyer. He can pull me a few pints and a bag of nuts wouldn't go amiss



● Somewhere exotic dancing, doing what I love, singing

TINA

● McDonalds! No contest, plus it's the nearest to here, mate

● Housing in a stable environment and child-related issues



● My ex - he needs to remain just that.

● Jason Statham. He could teach me a few moves ... and his voice - ahh! Need I say more?



● In the pub after soaking in the tub

LEANNA

● I'm torn between KFC Hot Wings or a juicy kebab ... I really can't choose one honestly!

● Oh, so much! Housing, employment opportunities, childcare support

● Dealing with rush-hour traffic and road noise. Walking may be a bit of an issue

● I'd love a visit from The Notorious BIG - get him to rhyme the whole time

● Settled in my new home, cosy in bed with a DVD having just tucked in the kids

MEET DR KATE PARADINE

WIP'S NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Questions posed by women in HMP Holloway's magazine group

1 Why did you want to become the boss of Women in Prison?

I believe I have the passion, drive and commitment to be a good leader for Women in Prison – and I am really proud to join an organisation with such a strong reputation for campaigning and supporting women to change their lives. My previous roles have convinced me that a concerted effort to change outcomes for women in prison and to reduce the use of prison, throws the spotlight on major social issues – inequality, poverty, abuse in childhood and adulthood, and substance misuse. WIP's combination of direct services for women and campaigning means we are in a good position to really show what needs to change to make a difference.

But it is my personal experience in my own family that has really convinced me to take up this challenge. My uncle was diagnosed with serious mental health issues at a young age and ended up in prison. As a visitor to Pentonville I saw close hand what prison means to individuals and families – and how much needs to change. I want to make sure that the experiences of women who use our services are at the forefront of our case for radical change, combined with hard facts and figures about the harm caused to women by imprisonment – to themselves and their children – and the enormous financial cost to the country.

2 What is wrong with women's prisons and what alternatives should there be to locking up women?

It is deeply wrong that so many women are imprisoned for non-violent offences, which are often committed in the context of acute poverty. A number of women have mental health and substance misuse issues, and grew up in the care system. They enter prison as the sole carers of young children. In women's prisons, self-harm is a major issue and women are not given sufficient opportunity to use time inside for education, training and to prepare for change outside.

Community alternatives to prison give women support to tackle the multiple challenges they may face to get their lives on track. Community sentences are not an easy option. They demand determination, hard work and the difficult challenge of change, but without the disruption and disconnection from communities and families that are required by a prison sentence – and the lasting harm prison causes. Greater use of community sentencing allows women to keep their homes, stay with their children and remain in employment or education while receiving support from women's centres (holistic one-stop shops offering women-specialist expertise across all the complex issues they face). It is for Women in Prison and our partners to continue strengthening

the case for community alternatives by providing real stories about the difference they make to the lives of women and children – and to the public purse.

3 What are your three top priorities?

Our voice: Making sure WIP's voice and the case for change is so strong and compelling that we contribute directly to a dramatic reduction in the number of women in prison and a steep fall in reoffending rates.

Our women: Continuing to provide excellent services to women in prison and in the community and, as a result, help us to prove that services like ours provide women with the best chance of turning their own lives round – and those of their children.

Our sustainability: This is needed to make the first two happen. To make sure that WIP has the resources and staff to deliver over the long term and to be an employer of choice for the best staff in the sector.

4 What experience do you have of working with women?

I have been involved in the women's sector for more than 20 years. My PhD research was based on indepth interviews with women who had experienced domestic abuse to find out how the criminal and legal systems had responded to their situations. I am a trustee for Clean Break, a theatre company that works with women in prison and women at risk of offending and produces award-winning plays. I have also been a trustee for a group of women's refuges in Hampshire.

5 What do you consider are your best assets and your worst habits?

The habit I find most annoying in myself is



that I am really untidy and a bit of a hoarder. I think it is very irritating for other people around me so I keep trying to improve. My best asset is probably my determination – I don't give up easily and when I believe in something I tend to be pretty fearless in speaking up about it. I believe that if you really put your mind to something – with the right support – it can be done.

6 What is your idea of a good time?

I found this question the hardest – which is a bit worrying! I love creating things and the article by Steph in the last edition of Ready Steady Go really “spoke to me” about the way you can lose yourself in creativity – baking, drawing, painting, and even planting bulbs in the garden. So in the day my idea of a good time would be doing some (very messy) baking with my kids. Maybe, later, and on my own, catching up with soaps (*EastEnders*, *Coronation Street* or *The Archers*) with a pile of ironing (odd I know but I find it very therapeutic). In the evening it would be a meal at my house with good friends rounded off in my living room dancing to some 1980s pop. I have absolutely no sense of rhythm but I still love to dance.



FRUITS ROOTS *and* HAIR CARE

*By Virginia Brailsford
WIP/CRC Foston Hall
Illustration by Magenda*

Hair is part of our identity. In prison, there are limits to the haircare products you can access but can you acquire a banana and an egg? It may seem like a strange concoction, but mixed together they have wonderful benefits for your hair! Banana nourishes your hair and prevents the hair from getting frizzy. Egg yolk is naturally moisturising and contains fats and proteins. The white of the egg removes unwanted oils and has enzymes that can remove bacteria.

HERE'S HOW TO DO IT

Take one banana and one egg (or two of each if you have long hair) and mash, mix and blend them well together.

Make sure your hair is DRY before you start. Apply the banana mixture to your hair in

sections, working from your roots to the tips. Concentrate on the tips, massaging the conditioner in. This is where your hair is most likely to be dry and damaged. Leave the banana mix on your hair for about 10 minutes and then rinse your hair well with water. >>

FEELING GOOD



AFRO HAIR

Black people's hair is very fragile, curly and prone to breaking. It needs to be looked after and kept moisturised. The fact that it is very curly, makes it difficult for the ends to benefit from the sebum naturally produced by the scalp which means it can become dry quickly and needs additional help.

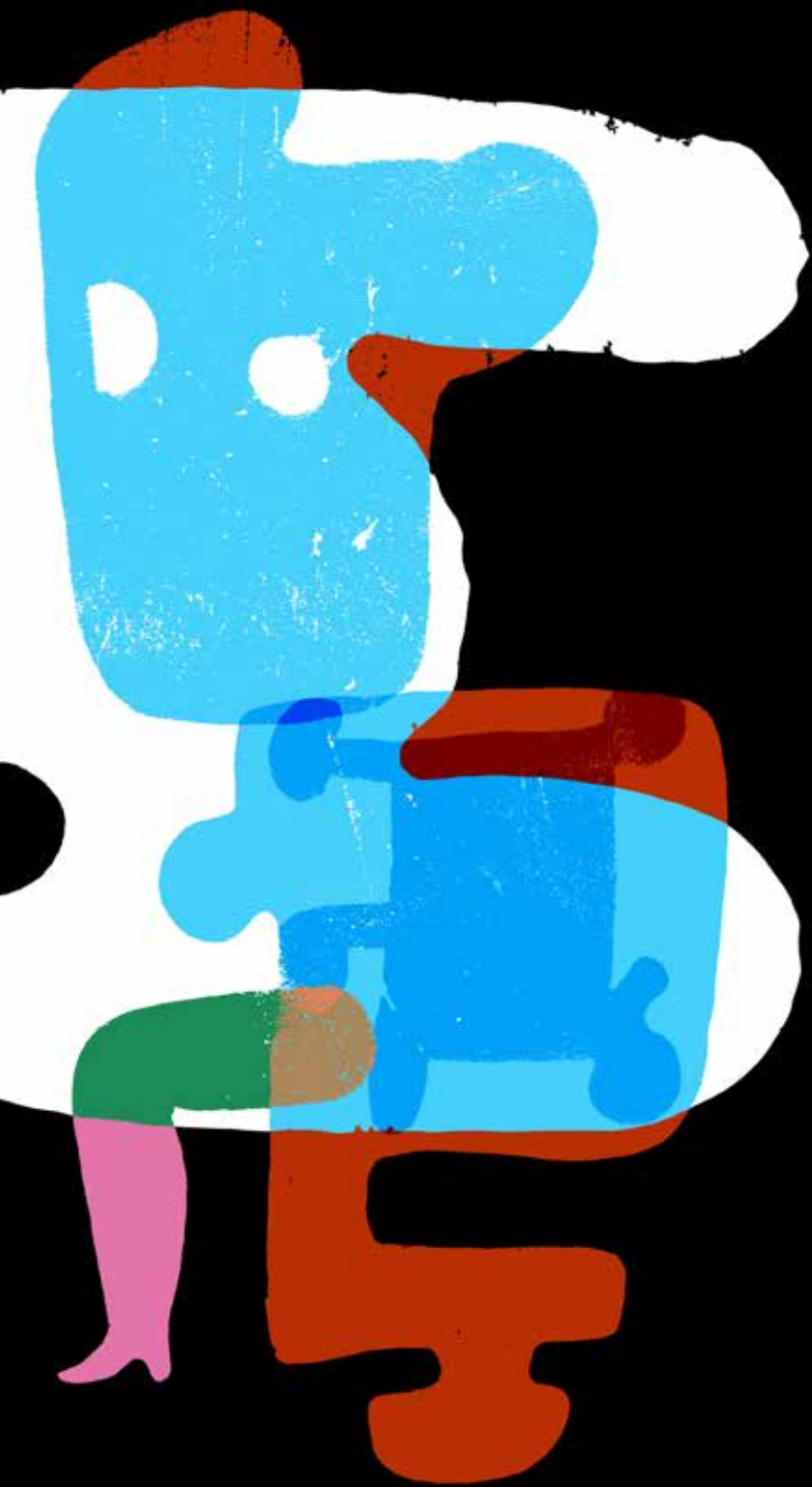
Tips to make Afro hair more healthy and manageable

- Cut down the amount of times you shampoo your hair as this can dry it out. Consider using conditioner instead of shampoo.
- Do not grease your scalp with conditioner – moisture needs to be applied at the ends of your hair as this is the oldest part of the hair strand.
- Steer away from products that have petroleum in them as it will just make your hair greasy.
- Moisturise, moisturise, moisturise the ends of your hair! Coconut oil is a wonderful, natural product that would help seal any split ends, helping your hair to look shiny and healthy.
- Brush your hair carefully using a wide-tooth comb to help avoid snagging, pulling and snapping your hair. Using your fingers to detangle your hair while it is damp will also be kinder.

Looking good doesn't have to be hard!







»» THE HOW, WHY, WHAT & WHERE OF CARE

»»» THE TOOLS IT PROVIDES TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE, THE WAY YOU SEE YOURSELF, AND YOUR PRESENT AND FUTURE PLANS. IT WORKS – BUT IT'S NOT EASY!

COMPILED BY WOMEN AND WIP STAFF IN HMP FOSTON HALL

Choices, Actions, Relationships, Emotions.

CARE helps to motivate women to believe that change is possible and then to provide them with the tools to achieve their goals.

CARE is for women who find it hard to manage their emotions, who sometimes speak to people harshly, who may have a history of violence, who are considered to have a medium-to-high risk of re-offending and who have experienced challenges such as mental ill health, self harm, attempted suicide and substance misuse.

Often, a candidate for **CARE** will have already tried a number of other courses and interventions in prison that haven't been successful.

CARE was piloted in 2006 and there have now been over 90 courses. It is available in HMP Foston Hall and New Hall and women can access it by transferring from any prison. WIP would like to see something similar to **CARE** established in every women's prison as part of early intervention.

HOW CAN CARE HELP?

- It motivates a woman to believe that change is possible.
- It increases her understanding of her thoughts and behaviour and gives her insight into how her behaviour is linked to the risks she may take.
- It encourages positive ways to see the world, based on how the woman now wants to live her life.
- It increases understanding of her different emotional states – anger, fear, joy – and develops skills to manage feelings better.
- It develops assertiveness skills to deal better with conflict.
- It helps a woman to develop realistic and achievable plans for the future and build supportive networks for herself.

WHAT DOES CARE INVOLVE?

The course is split into four stages.

Stage 1 Is a series of interviews that enable the team to start to know you better and understand how you would like your life to change.

Stage 2 Consists of three individual sessions with a personal CARE facilitator, exploring in more detail the challenges in your life and what is important to you.

Stage 3 Requires your participation in 30

group sessions with seven other women, learning new skills to manage your emotions and relationships. Activities include group discussions, mindfulness exercises using breathing and relaxation and yoga to find an inner-calm, as well as identifying and describing your feelings in a very gradual way and without pressure, keeping a diary that records how you use your new techniques and skills in daily life outside of CARE. You share your findings with the group to gain support and encouragement and work with your

mentor/advocate, who is independent from the prison and probation service and may, for instance, be a Women in Prison worker. She helps with practical problems e.g. housing, education, family issues, and gives you emotional support.

Stage 4 Your advocate continues to work with you for two years in prison, and outside if the period covers your release. You also have three sessions with your personal CARE facilitator to top up and refresh all you have learned.

TOOLS TO ENCOURAGE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Aggressive Alice – she is a character designed to demonstrate how an aggressive person behaves. She says: “I’m OK, you’re not OK.” She thinks: “I don’t matter enough to get my needs met by any other way than becoming angry – and you don’t matter anyway.”

“Women develop their preferred story of what they want their lives to be.”

Assertive Sandra – a character that demonstrates how an assertive person thinks and behaves. She says: “I’m OK and you are ok. I matter and so do you.”

Behind Your Back Brenda – she shows how an indirectly aggressive person behaves. She talks behind people’s backs and is spiteful. “I’m OK. You’re not OK and you don’t matter enough for me to be straight with you.”

Judge Judy – the character reminds us that we all tend to make unnecessary judgments.

Sarah K – her name stands for:

- Small
- Achievable
- Reasonable
- Acceptable
- Helpful
- Kind to me

The toughest challenge for many women is to be kind to themselves, to see themselves in a positive light and to take enjoyment in showing care for others – which can be hard if you have been told you are worth little.

THE TESTIMONY OF SHANA

“The CARE programme is about being broken and slowly putting yourself back together, gaining self respect and learning from one another.

“I was a horrible person and I thought that’s what I wanted to be. I’ve taken a step back now. It’s a scared and vulnerable girl I now see. Lots of questions race through my mind like: ‘What have I become?’ and ‘What do I leave behind?’

“I have to live with myself, knowing the things that I’ve done. The game is now over as

it’s no longer any fun. I will put my all into everything to change the person I became. I want to live up to the expectations of others because I am ready to be me.”

GOVERNOR

“Behaviour programmes are an essential service designed to challenge people’s attitudes, thinking and behaviour. The additional benefit of having an advocate in place ensures that the learning people achieve on CARE isn’t lost. It enables women to achieve more long-term goals. In the past, I have seen prisoners really benefit from behaviour change programmes, then their sentence progresses and they transfer on and eventually, for some, learning is lost over time. By having the consistent advocate in place, women completing CARE are encouraged to revisit their learning.

OFFENDER SUPERVISOR IN THE FEMALE PRISON ESTATE

“I consider the advocacy service as invaluable. The programme is future-focused and women are encouraged to develop their preferred story of what they want their lives to be. The advocate helps in that process.

“The advocates are extremely proactive and encourage women to think creatively about how they can achieve their goals. There is evidence to support the fact that individuals who are actively engaged in sentence planning and settling their future goals are much less likely to reoffend in future. The advocates play such an important role in encouraging the women to take responsibility for their own futures and in building the motivation to change.”

AMI'S STORY

I made a jumper dress when I knew I was going on the CARE course. The dress shows my emotions and how I saw them at the time. I could only express my emotions in colours because I didn't really understand my feelings or why I was experiencing them. I have just finished my CARE course and now I understand why the colours were so important to me.

Starting at the bottom:

Black – The bottomless pit. This is me when I'm in deep depression. The colours running through are my heartbeats. Along with each heartbeat is a small indicator of my other emotions and hopes and dreams. It takes a lot of strength to reach up and take hold of one of these hopes or dreams. At each flexing of a small amount of strength, my optimism grows that, I will soon leave the black behind.

Grey – I'm halfway there now, still in the bottomless pit, but moving further away.

Royal blue – I'm now at what feels to me is the top of the mountain. I am becoming more stable. My emotions are levelling out.

Yellow – I'm slowly coming back down the mountain. I'm still fighting to suppress my negative emotions. But the heartbeats are still there.

Bright pink – I'm at the bottom now; all my emotions have been suppressed.

This is where the CARE course comes in. When I began my 10-week course, I was a very passive person. Ten weeks seemed a long time. If I was asked how I was feeling, I would always reply: "I'm fine." But inside I was hurting.

I was suppressing all my feelings and emotions. It didn't do much for my mental health or explain my outbursts every now and again. In truth, I was a timebomb waiting to go off. I was trying to deceive people into thinking I was OK.

The CARE course helped me to identify my emotions and name them accurately. Instead of suppressing feelings, I was shown how to work through them and let them go. As a result, I became stronger.

I learned how to be assertive without becoming critical, judgmental or aggressive. The emotional first aid skills offered by the course are the best I know. I use them on a daily basis.

I'm not there yet but, with my new skills and practices, I have the tools with which to build on. One day I will be "the flower" that I want to be and my stormy days will have gone.

I know I will still have days or weeks when things will go wrong – we all have our bad days. But now I have the skills to step back and deal with the negative emotions.

Time out and distraction will help me – as will calm breathing – when I need to relax. You can be sure this flower will bloom.

Perhaps one day you will feel the need to tackle your emotions and feelings. Let the CARE course help.



Illustration by Robin



Illustration by **Robin**

MARTY'S STORY

When I first met my CARE advocate, I shied away. I wouldn't look at her directly, I had the curtains shut in my room and I told her to go away. I didn't think she'd understand me or what I'd been through. But as the months went by, I slowly opened up to her.

I shared with her a poem I'd written about my intrusive voices. I felt that was the first step of saying to her, "Okay, this is me". Since then – for the past year – she has been there through many difficult times and some glad occasions.

My curtains are now open and I look at her directly. We even share a laugh and a joke. When I first met my Women in Prison CARE advocate, I was a very quiet member of the group. I struggled to be in a group, never mind participate. I'm now on a new course and I participate in group activities. I also write on the flip chart at times and can be quite assertive.

I have my quirky moments, which make people laugh. I have grown in confidence and my self-esteem has improved to the point that, this year, I wrote a story and read it to peers and staff in the association room. I would never have believed that I'd be able to do anything like that.

People taking an interest in me and seeing my potential means that I can learn and grow as a person and I can understand myself so much better. I still have times of doubt and when I self-harm, but they are becoming fewer.

As long as I have people like my CARE advocate helping me, guiding me and looking out for me, I am becoming stronger and learning to accept me for me.



ELIZABETH'S STORY

I didn't want to do the course. I got into a mood at the thought of doing the kind of group work that is a part of CARE – I didn't trust anyone; I had no confidence. But once I began the course, it wasn't so bad.

I was quiet at first and I let the others in my group talk. Halfway through the course I began to join in the activities. I also really enjoyed my one-to-one sessions with one of the facilitators. I had a few ups and downs, but they were mostly ups.

After the course I found I was more assertive and I was learning to trust people.

I will leave jail in 12 months, after completing three years of my six years and two months sentence. My goal now is to move away from my previous home to a new area to make a fresh start with the help of my mentor.

I would like to work with textiles, as I have qualifications. My dream when I first came to jail in August 2012, was to become a car mechanic but that was only a dream. In prison, I have gained a number of certificates on different courses.

Best of all is that I am back in touch with my son – I broke off contact two years ago because I was a mess and I didn't want him to see me. So that makes me feel stronger inside.

I've also changed as a person. Jail has saved me – I would be dead otherwise.

I have grown up. I show people respect and I respect myself. I am not the same person who came to prison. I am a changed woman.





Illustration by Robin



Illustration by Robin

SASHA'S STORY

I was on one of the first CARE courses at Foston Hall. The course consists of 30 group sessions and six one-to-one sessions with your facilitators. On the course, I learned techniques – ways to distract myself. At first it was a bit of a rocky road but once I put my heart into it, I really enjoyed it.

For me to totally trust someone is a huge step. Still, the facilitators and my Women in Prison advocate somehow did gain my trust. For the first time in my life, I let down my guard and opened up. I learned I could trust those in authority. My self-harming was reduced and I came out of my shell.

I thank the CARE team and the WIP advocate for the person I am today. It's two years since I completed the course. I'm still visited by my advocate. She has been a huge help to me – she listens, she cares. I trust her. Mistrusting people, especially in authority, stems from my childhood, so it has been tough to change that attitude.

I would recommend the course – it's helped me more than anything else ever has.

MY ROTL EXPERIENCE

Tips for making the most of a work placement

By Sally Etchells Illustrations by PPaint

In prison, I decided that on Release on Temporary License (ROTL), I would like to work in the voluntary sector to support women who had been affected by the criminal justice system. I approached the Achieve and the Resettlement Team at HMP Styal and they helped me to secure one day a week at a local Women's Centre – the WomenMATTA Project in Manchester. It provides holistic support for women at risk of offending, women at risk of receiving custodial sentences and women released from custody who have served less than 12 months. It is a women-only service.

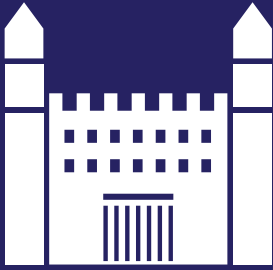
So having had the experience, here are my tips for making the most of ROTL.

First, make sure that you understand the whole process and ask yourself questions like: Who will you go to if there are issues around income tax? Do you have a bank account? If not, who is responsible for helping you to set one up? Who can help you with travel arrangements (buses, trains and taxis, routes and costs)? If you need a uniform or work

wear, who will help you access funding?

It helps if you have a clear description in advance of the job you are going to do. I had a lot of support in prison filling in the application forms and completing my disclosure forms, which proved an unexpectedly emotional task.

On my first day, I was so nervous. Would they look down on me? How would the service users treat me? My manager said >>



Prison

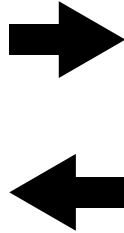


Paid Work

Release On Temporary License
For Employment



On Release



it was up to me whether or not I said I was from prison, so that put me at ease straight away. I had a choice – something that had been missing for a long time.

My main job at first was to assist with the weekly drop-in session. Soon I was asked why I was helping and where had I come from. I decided that honesty was the best policy and said I was on day release from prison.

This declaration was really nerve-racking for me but the women were amazing and really supportive. From then on, time flew every Monday. Soon I was asked if I wanted to volunteer for two days a week, then three, and I moved into an admin role (my background is office work).

Other women in HMP Styal, however, didn't have the same positive experience as I did of ROTL. Some women who worked for a local charity shop, for instance, said they had felt that the paid staff were a little wary of them and that they had often been excluded from simple activities, such as having a brew together at the end of the day.

I did find it strange working on the

outside full-time during the day and then returning to the prison each night. I was licensed out from 7am to 7pm, with 90 minutes of travel time at either end of the day. I used my time on the train to adjust my head to work in the morning and a return to prison in the evening.

It's as if you become two different people: one who goes to work in the "real world" who has an opinion and is an equal to her colleagues and treated as an individual; and then every night, the prison gate locks behind you and, once again, you are a prisoner, with no opinion, a regime and orders to follow.

I never forgot that, first and foremost, I was a prisoner. It was important to me to remember that and not get "carried away" with my working day life.

It can be very confusing at times to keep your head straight and focused when dealing with all these different situations. I don't think enough emphasis is placed on this when sending people out into the work place. I felt I couldn't express my worries about the confusion that ROTL

Release On Temporary License
For Employment



On Release

may cause in case I was deemed unsuitable and my ROTL was revoked. It would be better if a woman could voice her anxieties and concern as psychologically they can be a strain. The system needs to offer more support to women to help them adjust to a very different routine.

Some of the jobs on ROTL brought up emotions that the women hadn't considered before going out. One woman, for example, cleaned vacant flats for a local housing association and she would often find discarded drug paraphernalia in the properties. This made her feel really vulnerable, as she had had a history of substance misuse and had worked hard to overcome this in custody. She was worried about voicing her anxieties in case there were any repercussions.

Some of the jobs brought up emotions that the women hadn't considered before going out.

In my case, much to my delight, WomenMATTAs offered me full-time paid work. My emotions on hearing this were something I hadn't experienced in a long time – I felt valued, worthwhile and useful. I had an existence again. My self-esteem, which had fallen rock bottom, was restored. I was not employed as a statistic or as a box-ticking exercise – I was employed (as my boss frequently said) on my own merit and my ability to do my job. That was priceless and I was able to support my family once again.

Unfortunately, the funding for my paid role with WomenMATTAs ended a month after I was released from custody. While I was gutted, the time that I spent there was really beneficial and prepared me for job hunting. Because my self-confidence and self-esteem were higher than when I was in custody (before I went out on ROTL) I didn't take the knocks quite so badly when I was turned down for jobs.

I stuck to what I wanted to do – to work in the voluntary sector. It took time and a lot of knock-backs. It would have been very easy to say "forget it", but I didn't. I'm now employed again, doing a job I love and still able to work at WomenMATTAs on a voluntary basis. The help and support I received from my ROTL placement was so useful when it came to being back in the "real world" again.

“HELL ON EARTH”

No talking and severe punishment – a woman who served time in Japan talks about her experience.

By Leanna Illustration by Henry Obasi

Irene came to HMP Holloway after spending almost four years in Japan’s Tochigi women’s prison, which she describes as “Hell on Earth”. Here, she tells us about the harsh regime at the prison, which is around 50 miles north of Tokyo.

In Tochigi, wake-up call is at 6.30am. Prisoners stand outside their cell doors and shout out their prison number – in Japanese! This is the only part of the language I managed. Three and a half years and all I learned were my five numbers – terrible!

Breakfast is served in the cell around 7.10am – rice and a small bowl of watery soup. Work is hard labour in a hot and sweaty factory making a range of goods for export across the world.

Our only exercise period takes place mid-morning. It was recently increased by 15 minutes to half an hour. This is the only time that it is permitted to converse with other inmates. Talking is strictly forbidden at any other time of day, with heavy consequences for breaking the rule.

Lunch is another bowl of rice and watery soup with some unidentifiable meat and vegetables. The portion is very small but nobody complains although the taste is horrific.

In Japan, re-offending rates are lower, there are very few illicit materials changing hands and drugs and violence are rarer than in women’s prisons in the UK.

In Tochigi prison, even the slightest eye contact with a guard might lead to an “investigation”. I was investigated for calling another inmate “stupid” in banter, which an officer overheard.

In HMP Holloway, removing a television from the cell punishes misconduct, as does a reduction in spends account and a loss of association time. When I was in Tochigi, officers removed all writing materials, books, magazines ... even units storing belongings.

Inmates on investigation in Tochigi are confined to their bare cell and ordered to sit on their knees facing the door from 8am to 5pm. When the punishment inflicts physical pain, you realise that you have few human rights within the establishment.

Irene has since been transferred to an open prison



BE AN EXPERT!

Help shape the services provided by Women in Prison

By **Katie Fraser**

Women Moving Forward in Manchester now has a life of its own! WMF is a dedicated Service User Group set up by Women in Prison in Manchester. It is based on the model group first started by WIP in London

Some of you might be asking yourself: “What is a dedicated Service User Group?” Some of you may already have been active in Service User Involvement Groups with Women in Prison or other agencies, such as drug services or in housing. But what does it all mean? At Women in Prison, service user involvement is the active participation of women who have had experience of the criminal justice system. They shape the design, commission, delivery and evaluation of all of our services based on their knowledge of what would work best for them. That means that we value the expertise of any women who have accessed our services. You are the experts!

So, how do we do this and how can you get involved? In our Manchester office, we run regular introductory courses on how to get involved with Women Moving Forward. These courses are usually run across six different sessions, for about four hours per session, and they cover the following topics:

- How to organise a meeting
- How to take minutes for a meeting

- What is a consensus vote and how to reach one
- Service user involvement with WIP
- How to campaign
- Different types of campaigns

It’s really an introduction to how to ensure Women in Prison hears your voices, so that we can ensure that any services we deliver are relevant to your needs. When you have completed the course, you can attend regular meetings and get involved in different tasks for Women in Prison. Some of these include sitting on recruitment panels for new Women in Prison staff and reviewing our paperwork (such as support plans and risk assessments) and our organisational policies and procedures.

Women Moving Forward in Manchester also looks at issues that are happening, both locally and regionally, and decide what it wants to campaign on, as well as working on campaign issues developed by our Campaign Manager, Claire, in the London office. One example of this is when WMF joined a large demonstration to campaign for the

**WMF MEMBERS
MEETING WITH LABOUR MP
KATE GREEN (FAR LEFT,
FRONT ROW)**



closure of the Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre after hearing about allegations of abuse from women who were detained there. WMF joined a larger demonstration in Manchester and met other campaign groups who were involved. Not only was it a great day for a good cause, but WMF members were able to meet other groups and individuals who were actively involved in different campaigns and were able to highlight some of the issues that affect women who have had contact with the criminal justice system.

WMF has also invited local Labour MP Kate Green to visit the WomenMATTAs project. Questions were planned in advance and although some members were a little shy to put their questions forward, the majority used their time to enter into really meaningful debates and discussions about the issues facing women in custody and on release.

At Women in Prison we like to say that we are "service user led" and we can only do this by listening to you, actively engaging you in service user involvement activities and letting you know about changes we want to make as a direct result of your involvement.

If you are in the community in the

Greater Manchester area, get in touch with the WomenMATTAs project to see how you can get involved with Women Moving Forward and attend one of our introductory courses. This isn't just for women in the community – if you are in prison, we want to hear from you, too. Get in touch with

a Women in Prison staff member who comes to your prison.

We often want to ask women what they think about certain issues and regularly send out questionnaires or hold focus groups to consult with you.

So, come on! We're waiting to hear. You are the experts!

We value the expertise of any women who have accessed our services. You are the experts!



HIGH

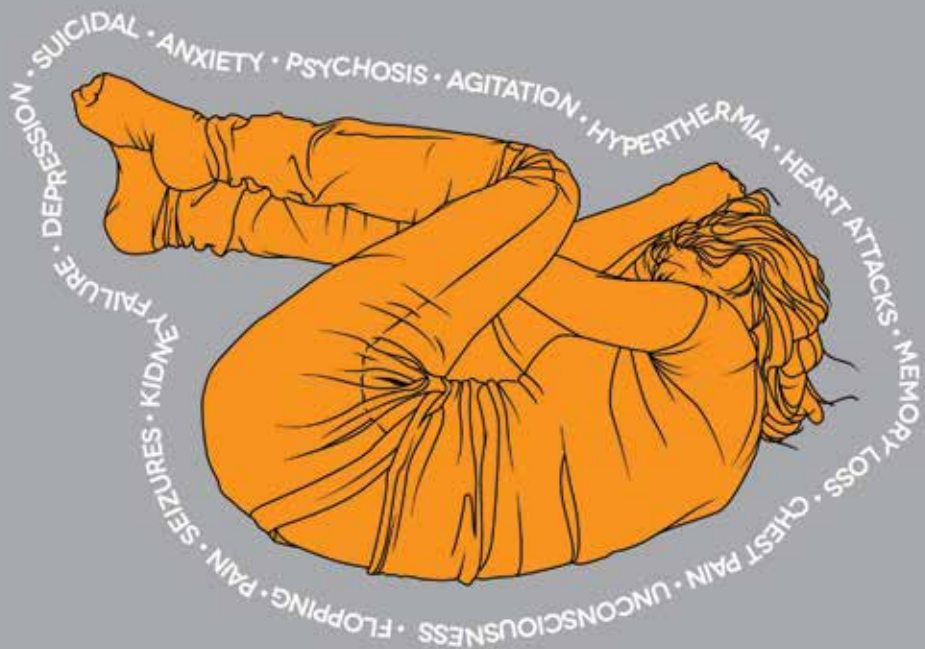
LIFE

The 'high'
that will
take you
dangerously
low

*By Rehabilitation
for Addicted
Prisoners Trust
(RAPt)*

*Illustration by
Chenna*

Spice, Khat and ketamine are all part of a group of drugs, some of which were once “legal highs”, that are called New (or Novel) Psychoactive Substance (NPS). These drugs can contain illegal substances, legal substances, or a mixture of both. The physical and psychological effects of a NPS range from kidney failure to psychosis and using NPSs can even result in death.



What are the effects of NPS?

People using NPSs may initially feel relaxed or a buzz, or experience an altered perception. However, as the exact ingredients of NPSs are often unknown, a person may experience negative effects, which are dramatically different from what she anticipated.

These may include:

- Seizures
- Kidney failure
- Depression
- Feeling suicidal or attempting suicide
- Anxiety
- Psychosis
- Agitation
- Hyperthermia (over heating)
- Fluid on the lungs
- Heart problems, including heart attacks
- Memory loss
- Chest pain
- Unconsciousness
- “Flopping”
- “Blue-lighting” (needing to have an ambulance called.)

The effects can also be long term. One woman says: “I did Spice a couple of times two years ago and I am still experiencing the long-term side-effects today of dissociation and psychosis. I’ve seen people coming in: they’re alright, healthy. And then I see them a year later: they’re drawn in, they don’t want to talk, they can’t be bothered, they’re losing their words, memory’s gone.”

Spice (also known as Black Mamba,

Annihilation and Blue Cheese) is a dangerous “synthetic cannabinoid” – and a common NPS used in UK prisons. It is made up of man-made chemicals which are bonded to plant leaves using acetone (nail-varnish remover). Other chemicals found in Spice are also used in cement, anti-slip agents and plastic.

Spice is not, however, related to cannabis and was never designed to be smoked. Spice users are more likely to overdose than other users of NPSs and also to suffer severe psychotic episodes.

Spice is not, however, related to cannabis and was never designed to be smoked.

Risks and effects of Spice include:

- “White out”
- Skin rashes
- Kidney problems
- Dependency
- Breathing difficulties
- Panic and anxiety
- Drug-induced psychosis
- Increased heart rate, heart palpitations, heart attacks
- Dry mouth
- Unconsciousness
- Altered mood
- Altered perception
- Asthma attacks
- Fitting
- Paralysis
- Paranoia
- Hallucinations
- Vomiting
- Confusion
- Uncontrollable body movements
- Suicidal thoughts/Homicidal thoughts

"My heart was beating so fast I thought I was going to die"

"Insane hallucinations, walls and opening spaces blacking out to complete nothingness... I literally thought I had gone insane"

"Spice even affected my kidneys. I wet my pants more than I can remember"

"It's like a crack addiction"

"I went to hospital"

"Spice can feel like being told to meditate at knifepoint"

"I can't breathe. I cough constantly"

"I passed out for 6 hours"

"I ended up in a psych ward for a month after smoking Spice"

"People flopping on the floor"

"I felt like I wanted to vomit all night"

"I've seen someone bury a knife in someone's neck 'cause they were paranoid"

Quotes from Spice users

Spice (also known as Black Mamba, Annihilation, Blue Cheese, Doob) is a dangerous and common NPS used in UK prisons. Spice is made up of man-made chemicals that are bonded to plant leaves using acetone (nail varnish remover). Other chemicals found in Spice are also used in cement, anti-slip agents and plastic.

www.rapt.org.uk

ALL YOURS!

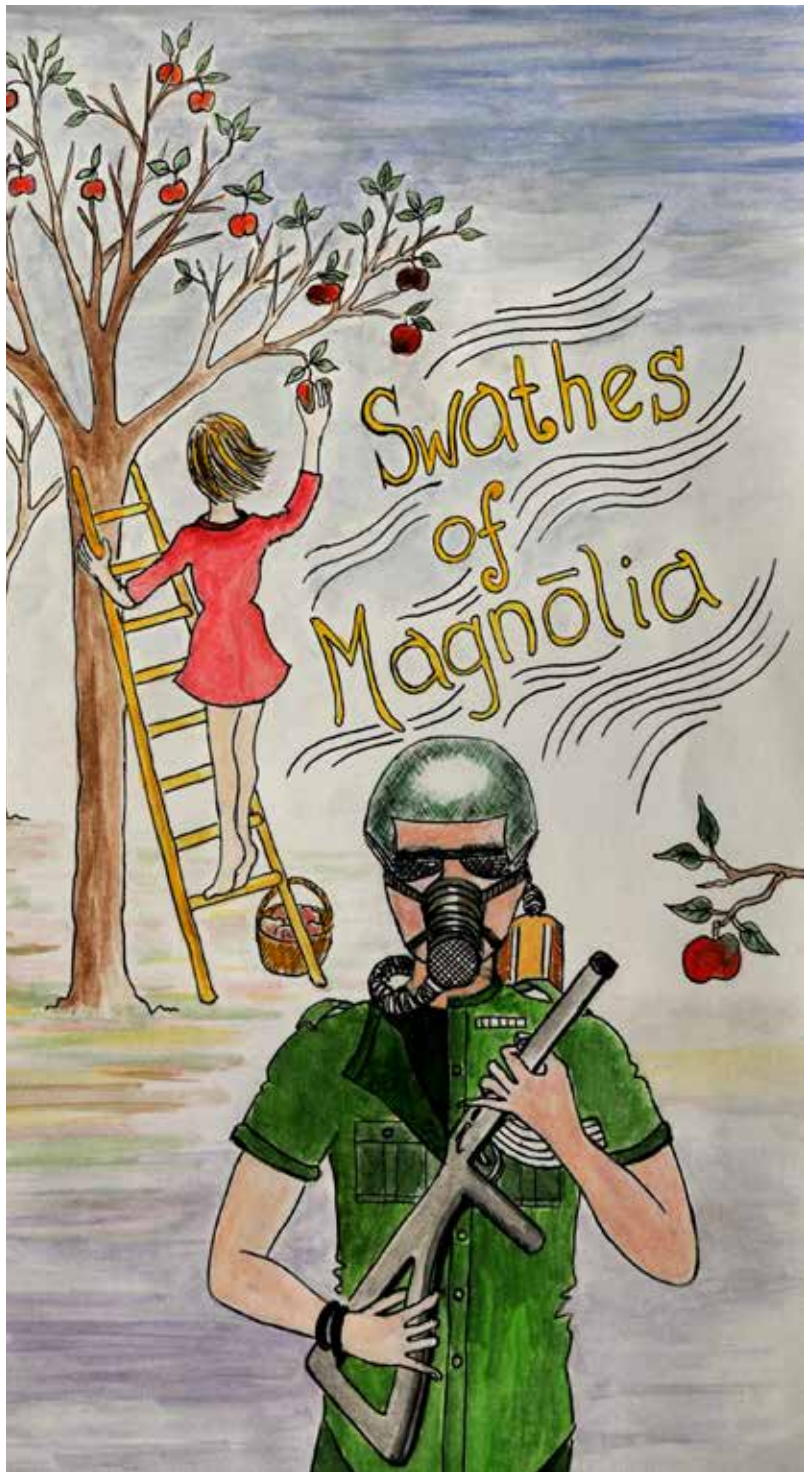
PAINTINGS, POEMS,
STORIES & MORE
— ALL BY YOU

“My Life... My Story”

was the theme for a competition organised by Perri Northage, a Women in Prison worker whom many of you may have met as she works in a number of prisons, persuading women that they really do have a talent for drawing, poetry, writing and the capability of returning to education.

The competition asked women to design a book cover to illustrate part, or all, of their lives. All the entries showed real imagination and skill. WIP staff voted to chose the overall winners – but as there was so much diversity and range, in truth, each book cover was in a class of its own. Here is a selection.

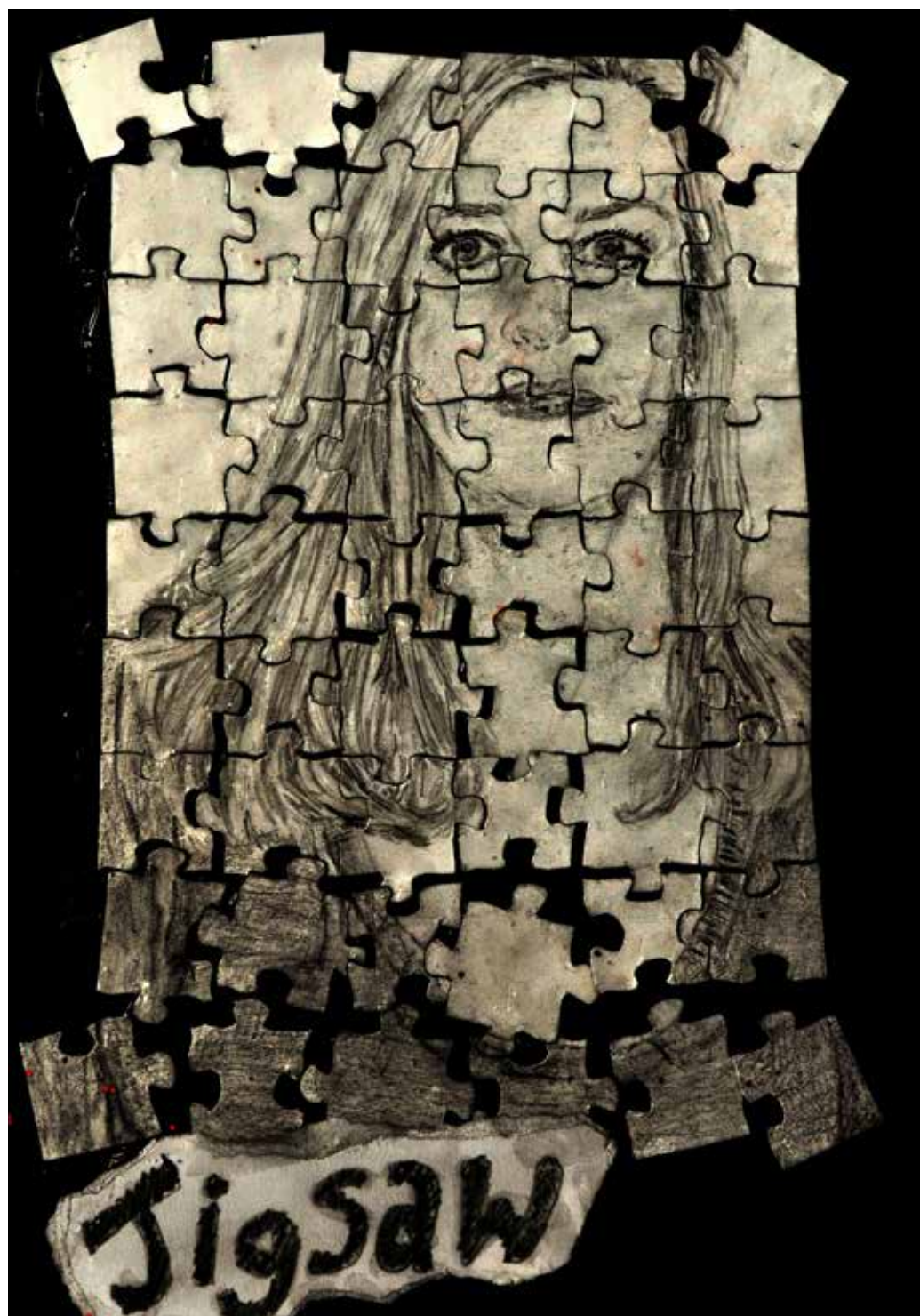
Look out for details of Perri's next competition



STEPPING OUT OF THE
DARKNESS

EXIT







MILK

R.I.P.

R.I.P.
BROTHER 2001
SISTER 2002
MOTHER 2003
FATHER 2004
DAUGHTER 1996

EVIAN

H.M.P HOLLOWAY

JUST MARRIED

DONT TELL ME THE SKY'S THE LIMIT WHEN THERE ARE FOOTPRINTS ON THE MOON



"A tough life from the start, innocent and behind bars a woman's fight for justice"

THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

Surviving behind the MASK



THE **CRAZY**

THINGS I DID

TO STAY **sane**

WHEN MY MAN

GOT **MAD**



**TIME TO
SPEAK OUT!**

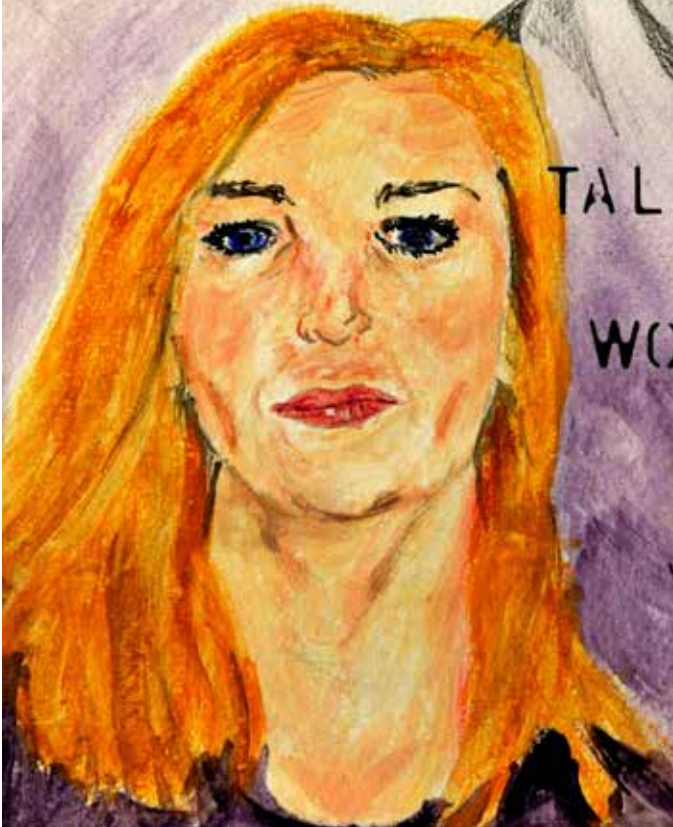


Talented or Worthless?
What do you see?
A little girl
Unloved, Bruised,
Worthless,
Surely that's me!

Talented or Worthless?
What do you see?
Maybe with a bit of help,
A little love,
Give her a chance
What could she be?



TALENTED
OR
WORTHLESS ?



Talented or Worthless?
What do you see?
A Woman now,
A writer,
An Artist.
Talented?
Could that be me?

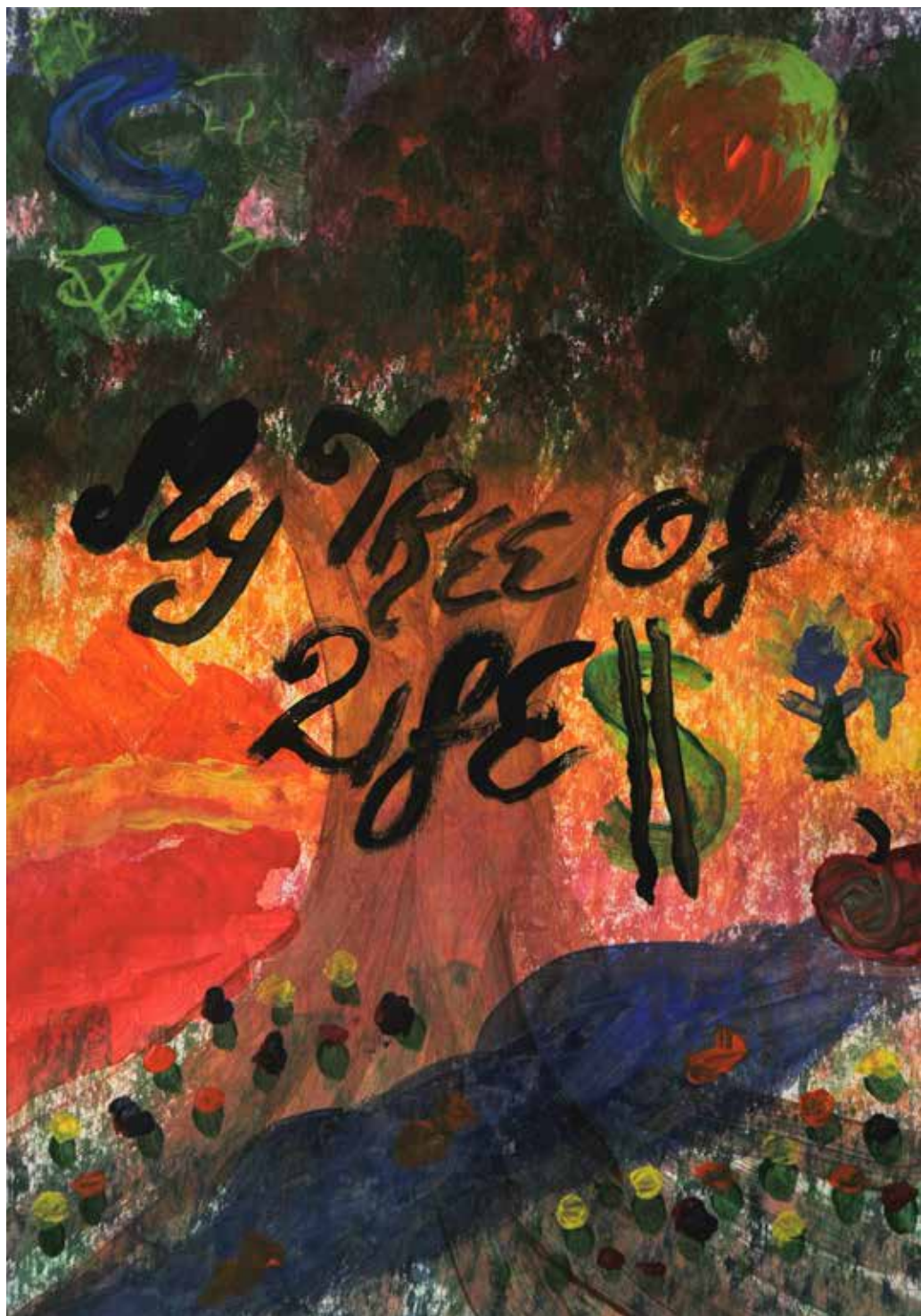


Butterfly Effect

A man, a woman, a child, each created, in perfect form, by the heavens, to change the course of their destiny. Bringing these soulmates together was the easy part. This is MY story, the story of the.....



Children of the Universe



The World



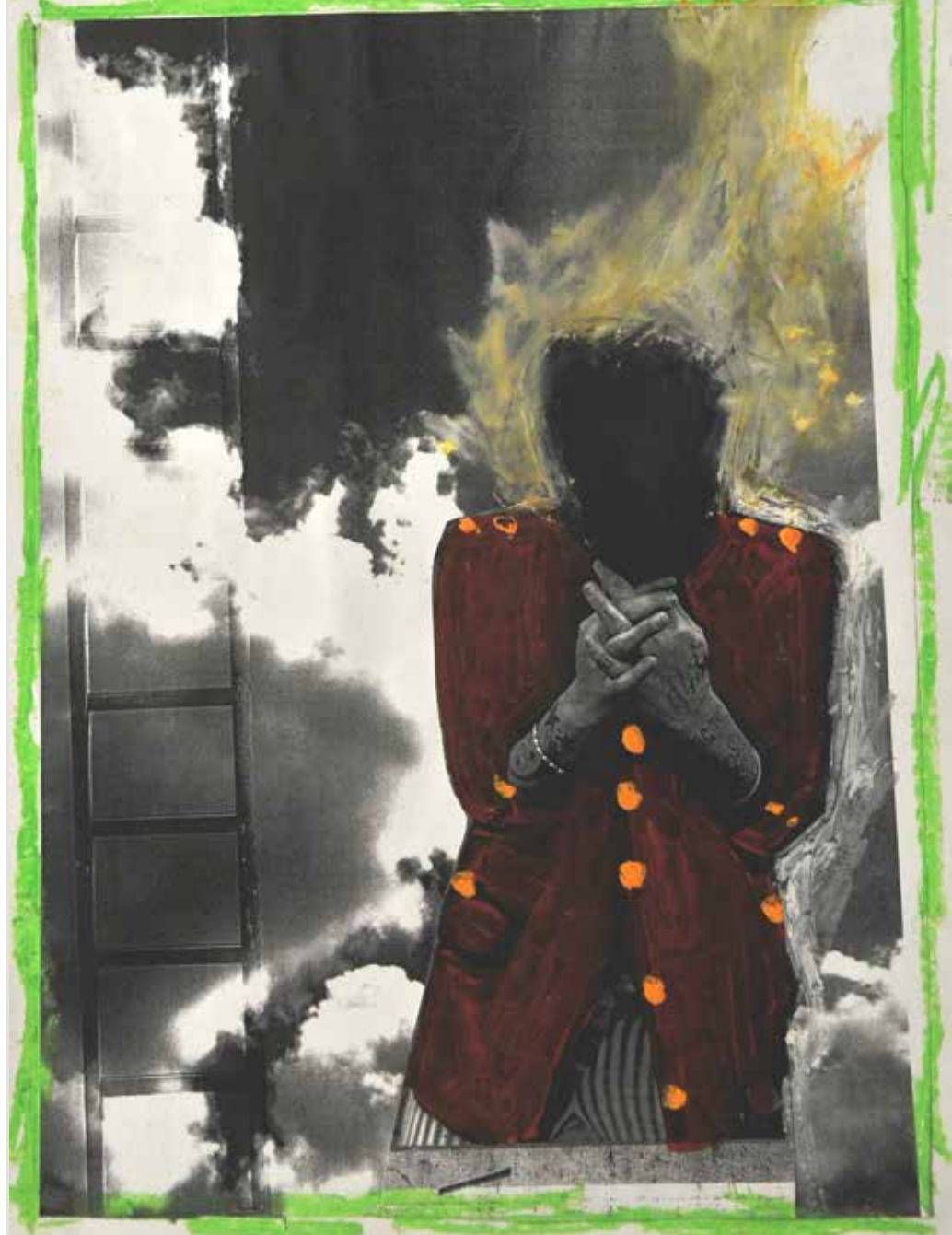
See

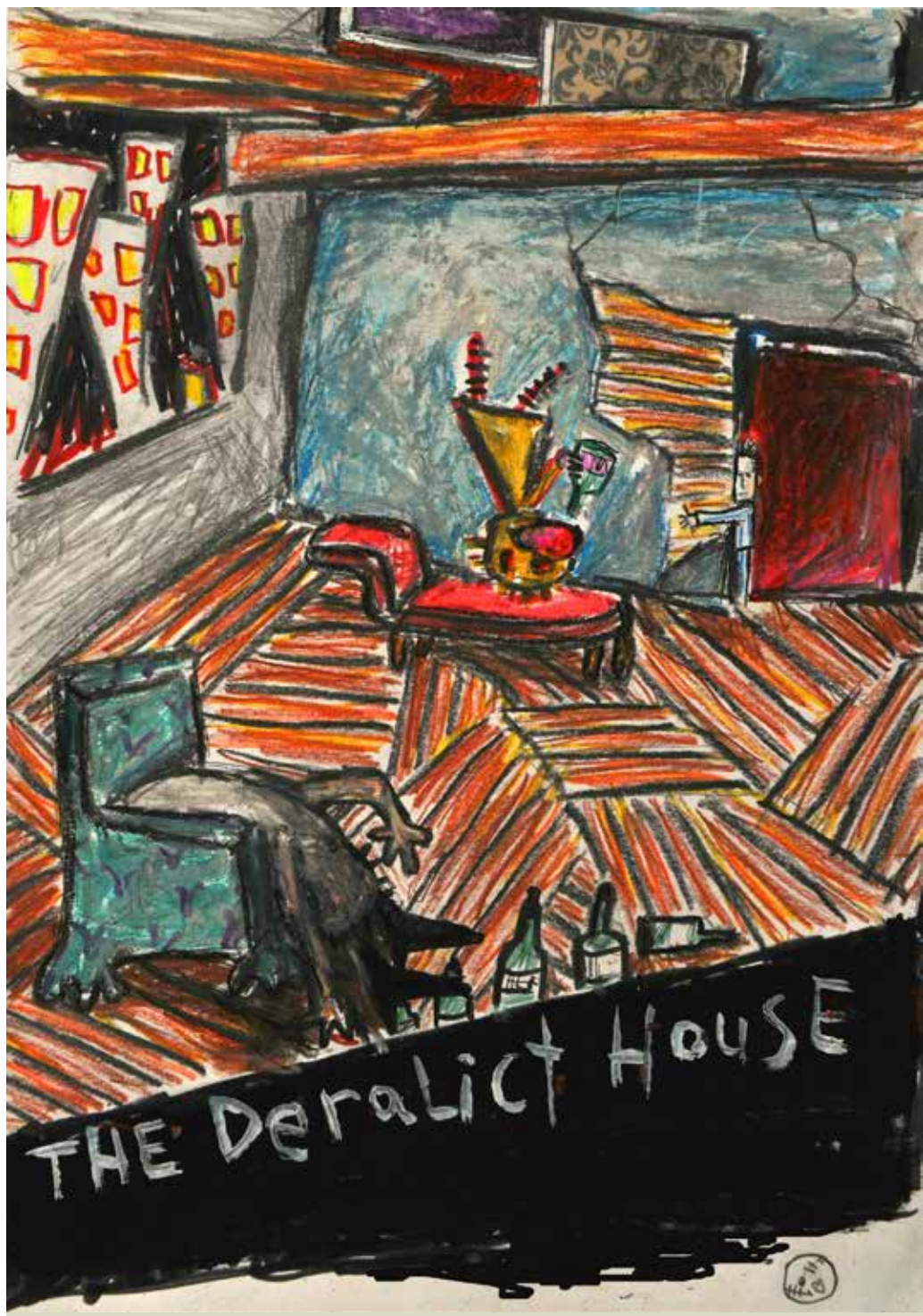
My life the start

Where's the
Sunshine?



The RED COAT,





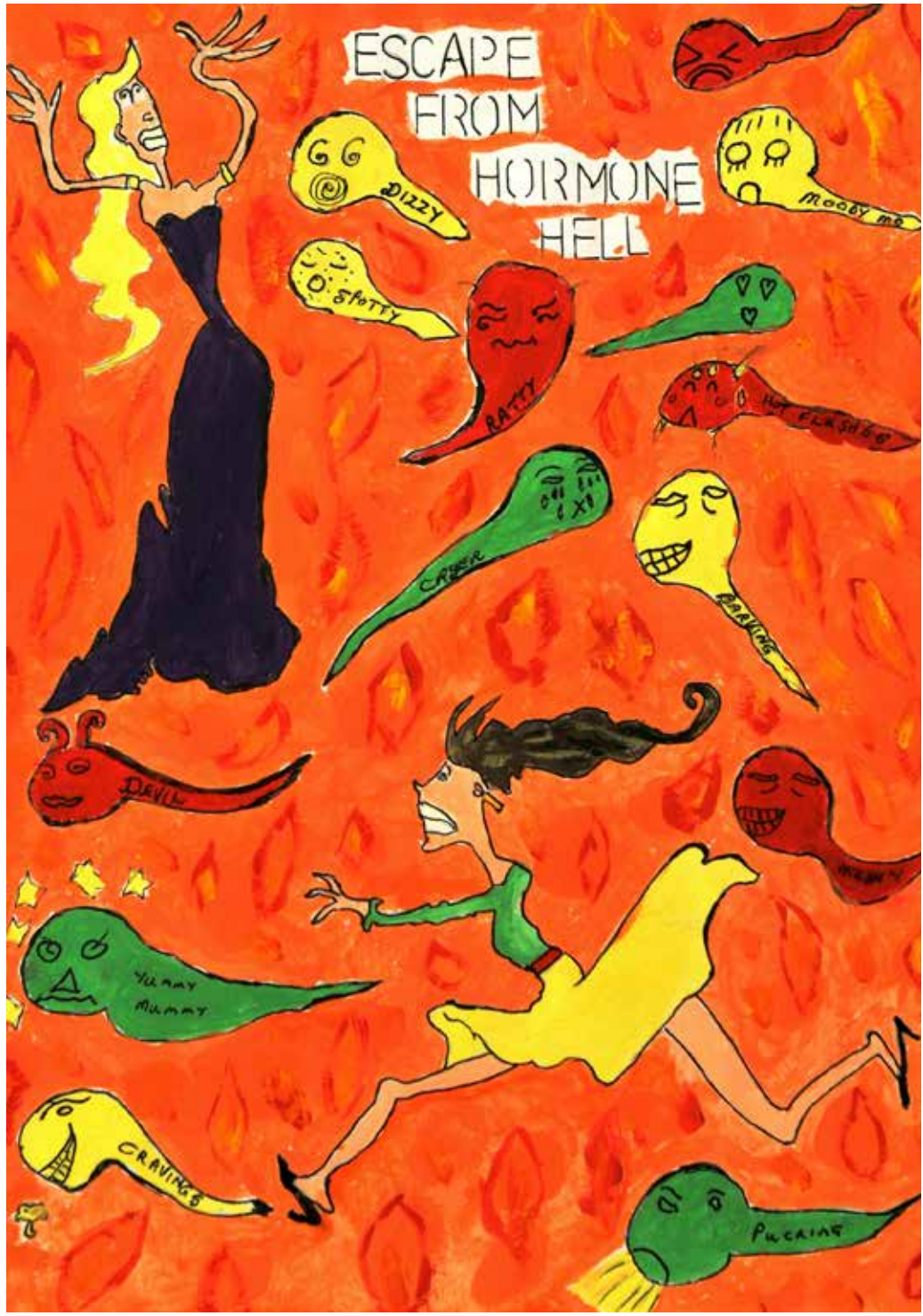
THE DERALICT HOUSE



Ladder to the stars



ESCAPE FROM HORMONE HELL



The Unsuspecting Housewife



HOW I MET CHRIS...

Lyn Barlow sat on a steering group at Women in Prison in the 1980s and knew the charity's founder, Chris Tchaikovsky well. Here are some of her memories about the early years of the charity.

I first met Chris in 1984 because I was regularly sent to prison for short periods as a resident campaigner at Greenham Common in Berkshire. In 1981, women set up a peace camp at Greenham Common to protest against the presence of American cruise missiles at the former RAF base. The peace camp remained there for 19 years.

I came into contact with WIP because I was smuggling out letters and stories from fellow women prisoners. They were desperate to have the conditions they were experiencing brought to the attention of the media and campaign groups and Chris knew how to get the stories into the media.

After a few short sentences in prisons including Holloway, Bullwood Hall, Styal, Pucklechurch and later East Sutton Park, I felt I related more to other women prisoners than to my Greenham "compatriots". I had spent most of my childhood in care and realised that, if I had trodden a different path other than Greenham, I would have probably ended up in prison anyway. In 1988, in East Sutton Park, I scrubbed floors beside a girl with whom I'd been in care in Sheffield.

I told Chris that the Greenham women

saw themselves as "political" prisoners and were often patronising towards other women. We were sometimes referred to as "bed and breakfasts" as we usually served short sentences – though, later, I incurred longer sentences. I always remember Chris for her amazingly sharp mind and intellect; she was sometimes painfully incisive and she challenged me, and my beliefs, in many ways.

After leaving Greenham, I became a mature student at Hillcroft, a college for mature women with few or no qualifications. It opened up a new world for me. Chris gave a talk as part of my presentation on women and prison. I was surprised that Chris was almost as nervous as I was. I'd always regarded her as so confident and unflappable but seeing her vulnerable side made me respect her even more.

After two years at Hillcroft, I gained a place at a women's college at Cambridge where I read Political Science, but it was criminology that really interested me. The academic side of doing a degree was really stimulating and challenging, but the culture shock was immense.

After only a year, my mental health seriously deteriorated. I'd suffered mental health problems since childhood. I subsequently spent long periods in hospital and had to give up my degree. Chris visited me a number of times and we stayed in contact but I became increasingly institutionalised and that, in turn, frustrated Chris.

I spent time with Chris when she came to Cambridge and produced her study of 100 women prisoners – we met regularly. I got to read her initial drafts and we used to have a game of Scrabble and a Chinese takeaway. Unfortunately, I relapsed and returned to



HMP Holloway. I subsequently lost touch with Chris altogether – something I deeply regretted.

The last time I spoke to Chris was when I used my statutory phone call from Cambridge police station on the night I'd been arrested and I remember the strong feeling that I had let her down. That last experience in prison left me angry and embittered at the treatment and experience of women with psychiatric problems – I wish I'd channelled that into something productive later but never did.

I made a new start and moved to Taunton, Somerset, where I still live. It took some time to settle but I've never been as happy as I have been in the past 12 years. I

GREENHAM COMMON WOMEN'S PEACE CAMP

was an all-female protest movement against the decision to site 96 nuclear missiles at Royal Air Force base in Berkshire. Hundreds of women camped outside the base. Their camp gained international recognition and created powerful campaign moments, such as the Embrace the Base event when 30,000 women joined hands to surround the base, pictured above. Although it was a peaceful protest, many women were arrested and given prison sentences for their involvement. The camp and protest lasted for 19 years and until 2000.

have a great network of friends and a strength I never thought I'd experience again. Since settling in Taunton, I've done quite a lot of campaigning for the mental health charity MIND, completed a City and Guilds certificate in Community Mental Health Care and studied for four years with the Open University.

I phoned WIP in 2002. I finally felt I'd sorted myself out and longed to be back in touch with Chris, who had been such a mentor to me for so long. It came as a great shock to hear that

she had died and I miss her terribly. But it is good to hear that WIP is still going strong and continuing Chris's great legacy of campaigning to achieve real justice for women.

ALL YOURS

GREENHAM TIMES

Hand in hand, nine miles around
weaving the web of life between the wires
Singing, clapping, whooping, dancing
Painted faces, beads and woolly hats
Just one day, one day of many
The fire spits and crackles into life
numb fingertips and toes surround
Will it come out tonight?
Those roaring vehicles with their lethal tubes
On their way to 'nowhere'

Midnight, near a copse of trees
Nearing the target, slowly
And then a light, people running
Firm hands bundling figures into vans
Maybe next time

Cutting a hole into another world
Women, one by one, stepping through, then walking bravely
This once common land now made ill
We will regain it given time

Men in uniform, with dogs
US soldiers with their guns
Scream to stand still
But it is too late to halt
Keep going, pushing, and one step nearer
Closer to the centre of the disease
The concrete silos
Phallic symbols of men's weakness

We all lie down, as if dead
One by one we are removed
But they cannot blot the memory
Our spirits soar, like doves
Flying high above those concrete tombs
We will not die

Lyn Barlow





PROTESTERS
AT GREENHAM
COMMON IN
THE 80S



RAINDROPS

I cup my hands to catch the falling raindrops
Somewhere a new life begins
I caress a stone found on some endless beach
As if it were alive

The storytellers tell of spirits
Of mountain, lake and tree
Each having its rightful place

How quick we are to forget

The stone in my hand has
Travelled well
It sits gently in my palm

If only we listened to the
Wise ones
Who treat all living things
With respect

How quick we are to forget

Lyn Barlow



A Strong Black Woman

I'm a strong black woman that's who I am,
Don't have a need to depend on no man.
Independent that is me.

I speak my own mind that's the best way to be.
Don't try & be me, find your own style & grace.
Don't mistake my kindness for weakness &
don't take me for no fool.

I'll just sit back & make you think
everything is cool, ain't got no time
for silly games especially liars,
I'm all about conquering my dream,
aspirations & desires.
There is no need be hating on me
unless you can explain why.
If not, in the words of Anne Robinson,
"You are the Weakest Link. Goodbye".

Llatoya-Jade



Illustration by Michala

Diagnosis

Why is mental health
so perverse?

“Personality disorder”
you say, that’s a first.
You threaten me with
solitude & tell me I’m
strange.

Self-harm cause that’s
what gets me through
& you expect me to
change.

Psychiatrist, doctors
& social workers are all
the same,

You assess for a bit, look
in your text books for a
diagnosis & Wow! You
come up with a name!

You section me off
because you say I do
things that’s not normal
behaviour,

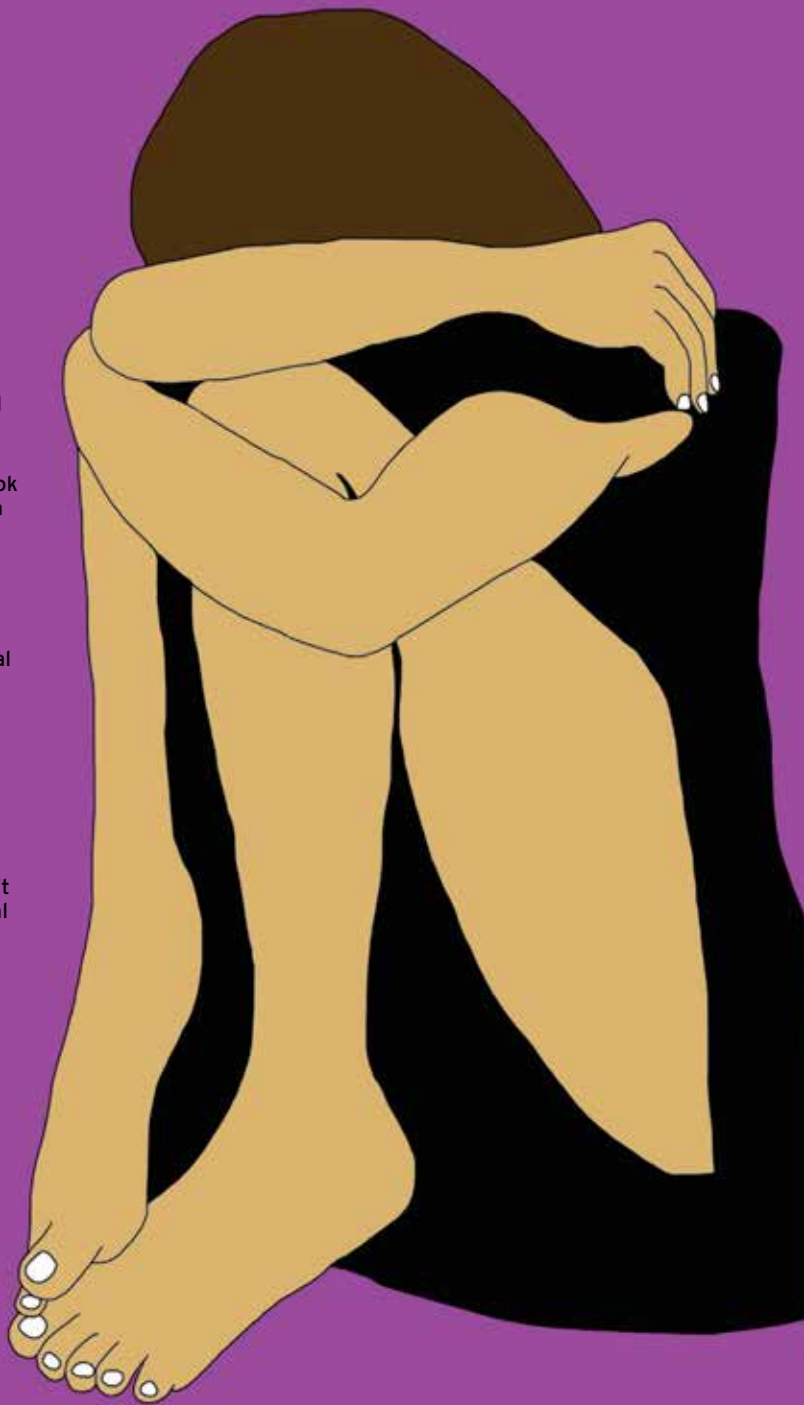
And then pump me
up with your lethal
injections so people in
the medical profession
think you’re now a
saviour.

I’m a human being don’t
forget, not some animal
you can test your shit
out on.

If I do or say anything
that doesn’t meet
certain expectations,
you tell me I’m wrong.

So just because my
appearance looks good
from the outside,
doesn’t mean to say
I’m not hurting inside.

Llatoya-Jade



Karen

A day in the life

of a former prisoner who has gone on to become a case manager for Women in Prison at HMP East Sutton Park

Illustration by Ulla

One thing I love about my work is that no two days are the same. I have two great passions - my daughter and my job - and between them they take up most, if not all, of my time! I am an earlybird and wake up around 5.30 - normally with a cat sitting on my head like one of those huge fluffy Cossack hats, letting me know it's time for breakfast. I have a bowl of porridge (my mother would be proud!), put on a load of washing and read any emails that may have come in overnight.

My daughter emerges around 7am and I make sure she has a cooked breakfast, if possible. By 7.45am she is on the school bus and I start my working day. To be honest, I never switch off from work and my phone is always on. I help women who are some of the most vulnerable in our society and a nine to five schedule would not be fair. I often have late calls from people who have just been released and are suffering from all the stresses and fears - not to mention practical problems - that come with emerging from a prison environment.

I have worked at Women in Prison since May this year. I am contracted on a self-employed basis as a case manager at HMP East Sutton Park, a resettlement prison for women that is situated in Kent.

My role is to support women, primarily by helping with training, education and

employment, but it goes much deeper than that. Women in custody have complex needs and seek a lot of support. I should know - as a former resident of East Sutton Park myself, I have been through the process of a custodial sentence and know what impact this has on self-esteem, family relationships and the ability to function independently.

I consider myself a strong woman, able to support my daughter, aged 11, and myself. Educated as an archaeologist, I began my working life in a male-dominated field, but moved to a career in recruitment and real estate when I immigrated to the States. I returned to England after the death of my mother and opened my letting agency. It began a chain of events that culminated in my custodial sentence, initially at New Hall and ending in East Sutton Park.

I was told repeatedly that I would receive a suspended sentence, primarily because I was the sole carer for my young daughter. I remember the complete shock at hearing my sentence and the total lack of control I had over my own and, more importantly, my daughter's future.

The first few weeks were spent without any support at all, coming to terms with what had happened and trying to negotiate care for my daughter with my family. I remember the utter despair of realising that I was

A REGULAR FEATURE THAT INTRODUCES A STAFF MEMBER FROM WOMEN IN PRISON

helpless and unable to protect her. I was fortunate as I was transferred to an open prison - East Sutton Park - within a few weeks. This proved to be the turning point in my life. I became a peer worker and, using my background in recruitment, began to develop relationships with local and national employers, persuading them to recruit women from the prison.

So many women started work, both as volunteers and in paid employment, that the prison ran out of transport! Having a job is crucial to empowering a woman. It helps self-awareness, self-confidence and the ability to take control. I have seen women who had never worked before, become managers, able to provide for themselves and their families.

Upon release I was asked to continue my work and I returned to East Sutton Park the day after being discharged; the first time that a prisoner had been allowed to return in this capacity.

I have worked since that time helping the residents find employment, providing support wherever it is needed. In May I was offered a contract with Women in Prison to continue my work at East Sutton Park. I knew WIP from my time as a peer worker and was aware of the huge impact it has made by supporting the residents, in a non-judgmental and "real" way. By which I mean I believe the residents see WIP workers as non-pretentious and empathetic. They focus on support rather than being target driven. WIP workers come from diverse backgrounds, which means it is much easier for women inside to relate to them - they are not establishment and they are easier to trust

and confide in. My experience of WIP as a prisoner and as an employee is that the staff will always listen and help in a practical and supportive way, but will also be honest even if it's not what the client wants to hear. There is nothing worse than setting people up to fail or encouraging them to have unrealistic expectations.

Depending on my schedule, I may be working in the prison where I can see the women one-on-one, discussing their needs and aspirations for the future. I look at how I can support the residents effectively, as it is very much a bespoke service that I offer. This could mean help with finding work or sourcing training or educational opportunities. It

could also mean emotional support or sign-posting to other agencies. If I am in the prison, I rarely have time for lunch, as I am normally trying to maximise the time I spend with the women. I usually get home around 5.30pm to coincide with my daughter's school bus. We sit down to a cooked meal around 6.30pm when we can spend some time together discussing her day and I support her with any homework she may have. During the week I will finish around 9pm but am always around for that late phone call.

In my free time I spend every minute I can with my daughter, supporting her in her many activities in and out of school. I love travelling, visiting museums and art galleries. And, as I've got older, I have started to bake - a sign I think that I am starting to turn into my mother!





HOLLOWAY CHEESECAKE

Here's a recipe for a super-easy, but tasty, dessert. Enjoy!

By Emily Illustrated by Magenda

● Serves 4

Ingredients

Chocolate Cookies (59p)

2x squares of butter

2x sachets of coffee whitener

Tub of Yoghurt (43p)

Banana or other fruit (39p)

Method

1 Mix together the crushed up cookies with the butter and coffee whitener.

2 Leave the mixture to set to create a biscuit base for the "cheesecake".

3 Pour the yoghurt over the biscuit base and add in chopped fruit such as a banana.

Enjoy!



Please
send us your
favourite recipe

We would love to publish your recipes. Please send yours in to the Freepost address at the back of the magazine

A PRISON
CHEESECAKE
MADE BY PIPER
KERMAN (AUTHOR
OF ORANGE IS THE
NEW BLACK)



**MEET
THE
AGONY
AUNTS**

~~~~~  
MEET THE AGONY  
AUNTS, WHO  
CAN GIVE YOU  
INFORMATION  
AND ADVICE ON  
THE ISSUES THAT  
MATTER TO YOU  
~~~~~

DONES
PERSONAL
ADVICE

ANNEKA ON
LEGAL RIGHTS

SHANA ON
EDUCATION,
TRAINING &
EMPLOYMENT

FREDI ON
HOUSING
~~~~~



# DEAR DONESS

Feeling stressed? First time in prison?  
Do you feel alone and don't know where to turn?

Write to **Doness**, our agony aunt who, having experienced prison herself, delivers personal advice on the problems you may be facing

*Illustration by Chioma*

Dear Doness,  
I find myself struggling to motivate myself to undertake any educational courses offered here at Holloway. I am embarrassed about my lack of academic ability.

I left school at 14 and found myself drawn to a life of dismal choices. I have been arrested and charged with various offences. I have acquired most of my knowledge from being street savvy but I could channel this knowledge into something that allows me to lead a legitimate life. I have an opportunity in prison but I don't feel prepared mentally and I shy away from intelligent and lively discussions in case I say something silly. I really want to obtain a qualification while I'm here but my anxiety seems to be winning the battle. What can I do to change this feeling?

Becky

Dear Becky,  
It's fantastic that you have a willingness to learn despite leaving education early. Try dismantling the anxiety you are experiencing in stages. Have you told an officer or member

of the prison education team about your concerns? This would be your first step, as the prison may offer a course, or have a specialist external advisor, to help get you to move beyond your fear at the mere thought of a class or lesson.

Once you overcome that initial fear, any qualification you achieve will enable you to take part in a range of other activities. This will do wonders for your confidence and hold you in good stead throughout your sentence. Take that first step!

You can write to one of our agony aunts by addressing a letter to them and sending it to WIP's Freepost address, for example...

Agony Aunt Doness,  
Women in Prison (Magazine),  
FREEPOST  
RSLB-UABE-TYRT,  
Unit 10,  
The Ivories,  
6 Northampton Street,  
London, N1 2HY





# LEGAL RIGHTS

*By* **Anneka Fatania**, WIP/CRC Resettlement case worker *Illustration by* **Kee**

**Dear Anneka, I have been released from custody and have been trying to insure my car but I keep getting rejected because I have to disclose my criminal conviction. What can I do? Is there a solution?**

All those who have a criminal conviction face this problem as you have to disclose all unspent convictions. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act from 1974 guarantees you certain rights to help you get insured. Guidelines created by the Association of British Insurers and the National Association of Reformed Offenders in 2011 state that insurance companies should give clear details about how they set policy prices for an individual with past convictions. Insurance companies also have a responsibility to offer home insurance to people, regardless of their conviction history when possible, and furthermore, if they decide they cannot offer insurance, they should make efforts to help an applicant find an alternative insurance provider. One of the best places to start is with an insurance broker. Brokers can seek out the right insurance for your circumstances - and they provide quotes without cost. A charity called UNLOCK ([www.unlock.org.uk](http://www.unlock.org.uk)) offers a list of specialist insurance brokers for people with criminal convictions and can offer you advice and support when applying for insurance.

Can I get insurance?



**X**  
*No chance!!!*

?



# EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

*By Shana Campbell Illustrations by FP and Kee*

**Dear Shana, I have heard that one can earn money while studying by doing an apprenticeship. I would like to do one in business administration. What should I do?**

Dear Reader

Thank you for your letter. This is an excellent idea as an apprenticeship puts you in a very good position to secure a job on completion. This is because apprenticeships combine study with practical training in a real job and provide you with the work experience that employers require.

**As an apprentice you will:**

- work alongside experienced staff;
- gain job-specific skills;
- earn a wage and get holiday pay, instead of having to get a loan to cover course fees;
- study towards a related qualification (usually one day a week).

You'll be paid the national minimum wage during your whole apprenticeship. The current minimum wage rate for an apprentice is £3.30 per hour. This rate applies to apprentices aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year of apprenticeship. You will be paid for your normal working hours (minimum 30 hours per week) and for the training that is part of your apprenticeship (usually one day per week).

You'll get at least 20 days paid holiday per year, plus bank holidays. Apprenticeships take one to four years to complete, depending on their level.

**Apprenticeship have equivalent education levels and can be:**

- Intermediate - equivalent to five GCSE passes;
- Advanced - equivalent to two A level passes;
- Higher - can lead to NVQ Level 4 and above, or a foundation degree.

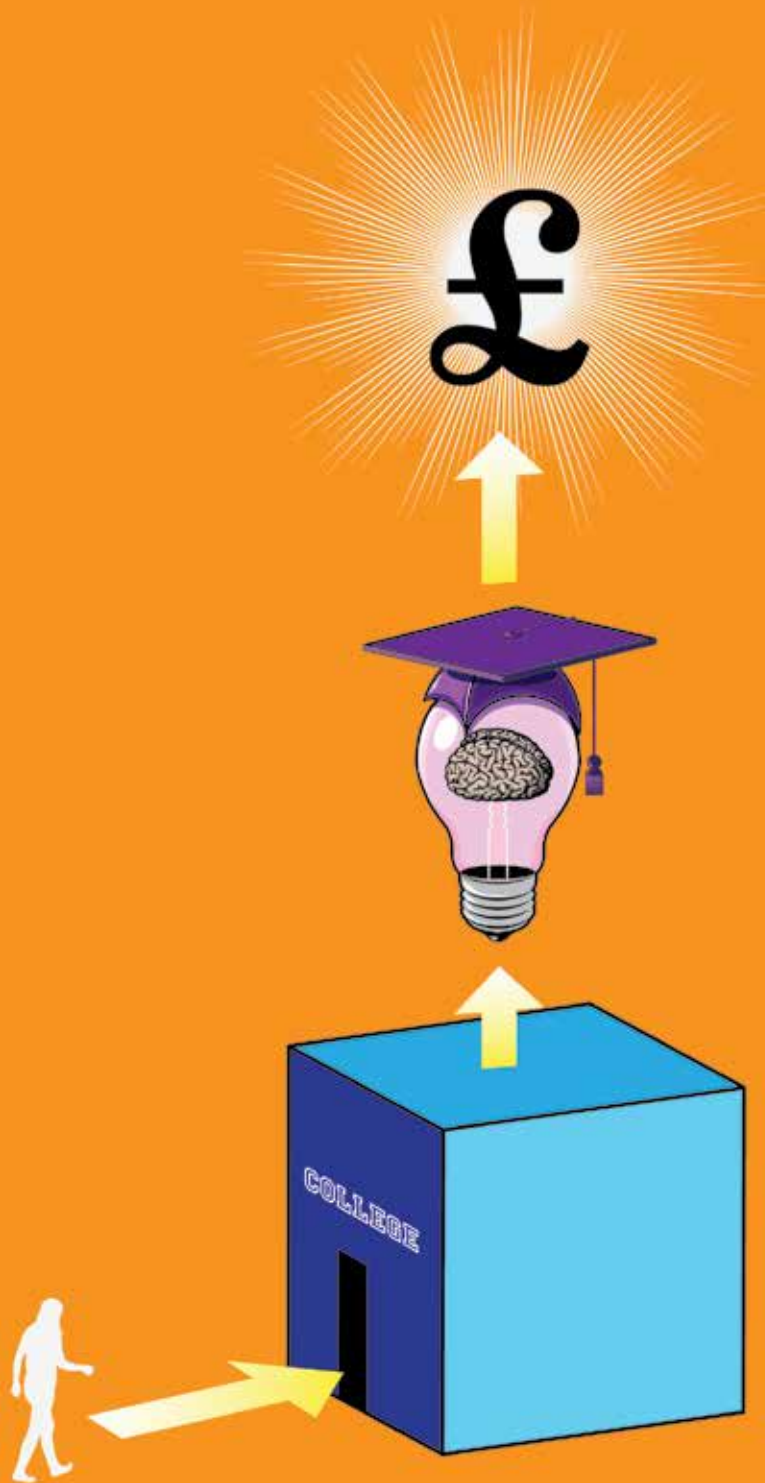
**To qualify for an apprenticeship, you will need to be:**

- aged 16 or over;
- living in England;
- not in full-time education.

I understand that you already meet all these requirements and, therefore, will have no problem in applying.

**There are three steps to apply for an apprenticeship:**

- Search for an apprenticeship.
  - Create an account.
  - Complete and submit your application.
- Ask the National Careers Service in your establishment or the Education Department or a Women in Prison advisor to help you



search for a business administration apprenticeship. They can look up [www.gov.uk/guidance/business-and-administration-apprenticeships](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/business-and-administration-apprenticeships)

The National Careers Service will offer you advice on writing applications and what to do at interviews.

Choose an employer close enough to the place where you will live on release (if already known) and in a sector that is of interest to you. For example, you could do your intermediate apprenticeship with a busy estate agent, a charity, solicitors, an IT firm or an education provider. The choice is huge! Best of luck! You have certainly made a good choice!

.....  
**Dear Shana, when I am released, I would like to train and work as a nurse. Shall I be barred because of my criminal conviction?**

Dear Reader

Thank you for your letter. Your question is frequently asked but cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” as there are no set rules on whether a “spent” conviction would prevent someone from training as a nurse.

Becoming a nurse is very long process. First you must successfully pass a nursing course at a university - the studies will be 50% theoretical and 50% practical. Then you must register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council before you can start work ([www.nmc.org.uk](http://www.nmc.org.uk)).

Having a criminal record does not prevent an individual from entering a nursing course, but there are various contributing factors as to whether or not a person is accepted onto a course.

Universities are required by law to carry out a DBS (formerly CRB), i.e. a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service, on

students applying for nursing training. This is because it is considered likely that nurses will, at some point, work with either children or vulnerable adults. The Nursing and Midwifery Council produces its guidance on the matter for universities and colleges but this fails to give one, definitive policy.

The application form for a nursing course on the UCAS (University and Colleges Admissions Services) website indicates that you need to declare all criminal convictions (even spent) but also states that having a conviction won't necessarily be held against you and it won't bar you from having an interview.

Of course it all depends on the nature of the offence and the circumstances.

Generally, if it was a “crime against the person”, such as assault or kidnap, you may be considered as unfit to work with vulnerable people, while non-violent crimes may not bar you from access. Theft, however, may disqualify an applicant in some cases, because nurses may have access to a patient's possessions in a hospital or care home.

**The best sources of information on the matter are:**

[www.nursingtimes.net/should-past-crimes-stop-you-nursing/1795400.article](http://www.nursingtimes.net/should-past-crimes-stop-you-nursing/1795400.article) and [www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=2166717](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=2166717)

**Becoming a nurse with a criminal record**

Do consult the National Careers Service or the Education department in your establishment to get more specific information.

Remain positive! There are a number of nurses “with criminal convictions” who have been very successful in their careers and much valued by their patients, colleagues and employers!





APPLICATION

NURSING RECRUITMENT



# HOUSING

*By Fredi*

*Illustration by Robin*

**Dear Fredi,  
I was released from prison two months ago. I am 54 years old and I now find myself homeless, living on the streets of London. I have been to the council but they are unable to help me and won't house me as I am not considered in "priority need". It's freezing cold and I have nowhere to sleep tonight. What can I do?  
Kathy**

Hi Kathy,  
I am sorry to hear of your situation, which is one that impacts on too many women leaving prison. If you have no family or friends who could offer you a bed, please call the No Second Night Out project from StreetLink on 0300 500 0914. It can help you find emergency accommodation, food and assistance to try to find housing.

During the cold months of winter there are also a number of emergency shelters that open. The StreetLink team will be able to connect you with one of them. Also, if you can access the internet in a library, contact an organisation called Homeless Link ([www.homeless.org.uk](http://www.homeless.org.uk)), which has a list of agencies working with homeless people and further information about where you can find support.

A long-term solution to your problem may be to either find supported housing or rent in the private sector. Please call Women in Prison on our freephone number - 0800 953 0125 - so that we can explain your options and help you secure housing.

Finally, we realise that living on the streets can be very hard and draining. If you need someone to talk to, please call the Samaritans any time of day or night on 08457 909090.

.....  
**Dear Fredi,  
I am due to be released from prison in a few weeks and have nowhere to live. I have been advised that renting a flat in the private sector may be the best option for me but I don't have the money to pay for the deposit in advance. Is there anyone who can help?  
Ayesha**

Dear Ayesha,  
All is not lost! There are different support services which are run by your local council, housing association or some charities. The support service pays the deposit for you and you pay it back over time out of your wages or benefits. Once the deposit is paid, if there are no problems you will receive the deposit back as a lump sum when you leave the property. Another option is that the council, a housing association or charity will give a written guarantee to your landlord to agree to cover any costs. Any money they then have to pay out, you would be expected to pay back over time.

For support and more information with this please contact Women in Prison on 0800 953 0125, or if you are in prison put in an App to see us.



## Useful contacts

### WOMEN IN PRISON

FREEPOST RSLB-UABE-TYRT  
Unit 10, The Ivories  
6 Northampton Street  
London  
N1 2HY  
Freephone: 0800 953 0125  
info@womeninprison.org.uk

### HOUSING

**Shelter Helpline:**  
0808 800 4444

**NACRO Helpline:**  
0300 123 1999

### LEGAL & GENERAL ADVICE

#### Prisoners' Advice Service (PAS):

Prisoners' Advice Service,  
PO Box 46199, London,  
EC1M 4XA  
0845 430 8923

**PACT (Prison Advice & Care  
Trust) Helpline:**  
0808 808 3444

**Prison Reform Trust Advice  
and Information Service  
Advice Line:**  
0808 802 0060

### SOMEONE TO TALK TO

**Samaritans Freephone:**  
Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK,  
PO Box 9090, STIRLING,  
FK8 2SA  
Freephone: 116 123

### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

#### MIND:

Mind Infoline, Unit 9,  
Cefn Coed Parc, Nantgarw,  
Cardiff, CF15 7QQ  
0300 123 3393

### SUBSTANCE MISUSE SUPPORT

**Frank Helpline:**  
0300 123 6600

**Pheonix Futures Advice  
Line:** 0845 600 7227

**Action on Addiction  
Helpline:** 0300 330 0659

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Women's Aid Helpline:**  
0808 2000 247

**Rape & Sexual Abuse  
Support Centre (Rape Crisis)  
Helpline:** 0808 802 9999

### WOMEN'S CENTRES

#### Women's Breakout:

Upon release please go to  
the online directory run by  
Women's Breakout to find  
the nearest specialist  
women's centre to where  
you are based.  
www.womensbreakout.org.  
uk/projects/

### FAMILY SUPPORT

**National Offenders' Families  
Helpline:** 0808 808 2003



*Illustration by Chenna*

# CARE

Choices  
Relationships

Actions  
Emotions

## Am I Suitable?

- Do you have a history of violence?
- Have you experienced a range of problems in areas such as:
  - Mental health
  - Substance misuse
  - Personality disorder
  - Self harm
  - Difficulties with previous treatment/services?

## What are the Benefits?

- ✓ **Highly supportive** – you will be able to see a mentor advocate weekly for two years. She will give you support / advice on things such as accommodation, education, employment etc.
- ✓ **Future focused** – CARE is all about looking at how you want your future to be and working towards making it happen.

## What is Involved?

- Eight women in each group and each person will have a personal facilitator
- 30 group sessions – three sessions a week
- Nine one-to-one sessions with your personal facilitator for individual support
- Two years support with a Women in Prison Mentor (through the gate if release date within this time)



# HEART KNITTING PATTERN

*Adapted by Sofia Gullberg, WIP Policy officer*

**H**ere is an easy pattern for a knitted heart. Fill it with something soft like cotton or scrap yarn to turn it into a mini cushion or stress ball. Or, if you have nice-smelling filling like lavender instead, you can put the heart between your clothes or under your pillow to make them smell great. You can also make mini hearts and attach strings to make Christmas tree decorations. Or just knit one side and glue it onto a piece of hard paper to make a card for a loved one. The uses are endless!

## You will need:

**Yarn** – any colour, type or size

**Straight knitting needles** – sized to your yarn (e.g. size 4 needles to DK yarn, size 5 needles to Worsted weight yarn or size 7 needles to chunky yarn)

**Tapestry needle** – to sew the pieces together

**Filling** – Cotton, scrap yarn, polyfil or lavender for filling

## Skills needed:

You will need to be able to cast on, knit, purl, increase, decrease and bind off as well as stitch pieces together. If you need to learn the basics, try a book from the library or, even better, ask a friend who knows how to knit!

## Abbreviations:

**CO** = cast on

**BO** = bind off

**st** = stitch

**k** = knit

**p** = purl

**kfb** = knit into front and back of stitch (to increase)

**k2tog** = knit 2 stitches together (to decrease)

**p2tog** = purl 2 stitches together (to decrease)

**rep** = repeat

## Instructions:

CO 2 st

row 1: kfb, k to last st, kfb

row 2: p 1 row



rep these 2 rows 6 times, total (14 st)  
row 3: k2 tog, k5 and turn, leaving remaining 7 st on the needle  
row 4: p2tog, p2, p2tog  
BO 4 st, cut a long piece of yarn (about 10" or 25cm) and weave through back of piece to reattach to other side (where you left off when turning)  
row 5: k5, k2tog  
row 6: p2tog, p2, p2tog  
BO 4 st  
Weave in loose ends.

Repeat the above pattern for opposite side of heart.

With wrong sides facing each other, sew up the two heart pieces using mattress stitch (or any other stitch) and stuff before making the last few stitches.

Done! If you want to, you can decorate your heart using glitter, embroidery or stickers – set your imagination free!

1ST EDITION

# SKINNY'S TUMBLEWEED JOKE WALL



WHAT DO YOU CALL POSTMAN PAT WHEN HE RETIRES? PAT

WHAT DID THE NUMBER 0 SAY TO THE NUMBER 8. NICE BELT

MR. COOPER FELT GREAT WAKING UP WITH NO HANGOVER FROM SATURDAY NIGHT DRINKING, ALTHOUGH HE DIDNT REALISE IT WAS TUESDAY!! 😊

WOT BEES PRODUCE MILK? BOO-BEES

A PENGUIN WALKS INTO A BAR AND SAYS TO THE BARMAN "AV U SEEN MY BROTHER??" BARMAN "NAH. WATS HE LOOK LIKE?"

HOW DID THE BLOKE FEEL WHEN HE WOKE UP WITH A TEA BAG ON HIS HEAD LIKE A MUG

What goes 'oooooo'?  
A cow with no lips



Skinny says, "If you think these jokes are seriously lame and you can do better, then let's hear them!" Send your jokes in to:

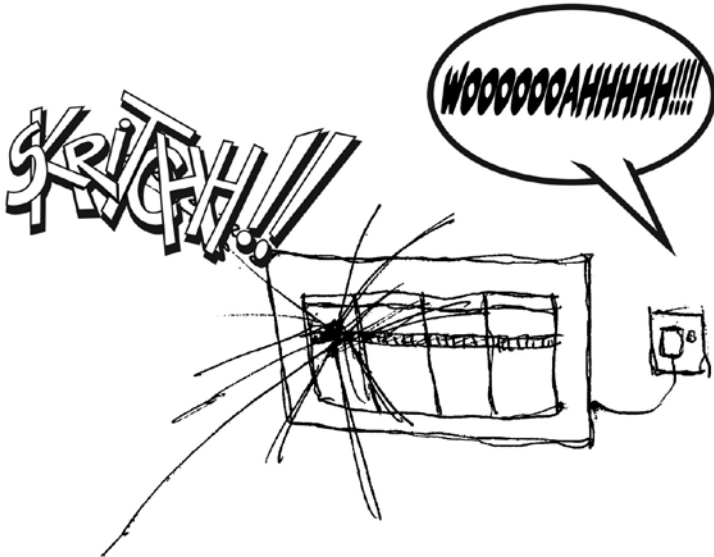
WOMEN IN PRISON (magazine)  
FREEPOST RSLB-UABE-TYRT  
Unit 10, The Ivories  
6 Northampton Street  
London N1 2HY

2 COWS IN A FIELD 1 SAYS TO THE OTHER "WHAT DO U MAKE OUT OF ALL THIS MAD COW D SEASE?" "DON T AFFECT ME" THE OTHER ONE SAYS "I'M A HELICOPTER!!"



# Skinnys Insect Jackass.

MEANWHILE IN....

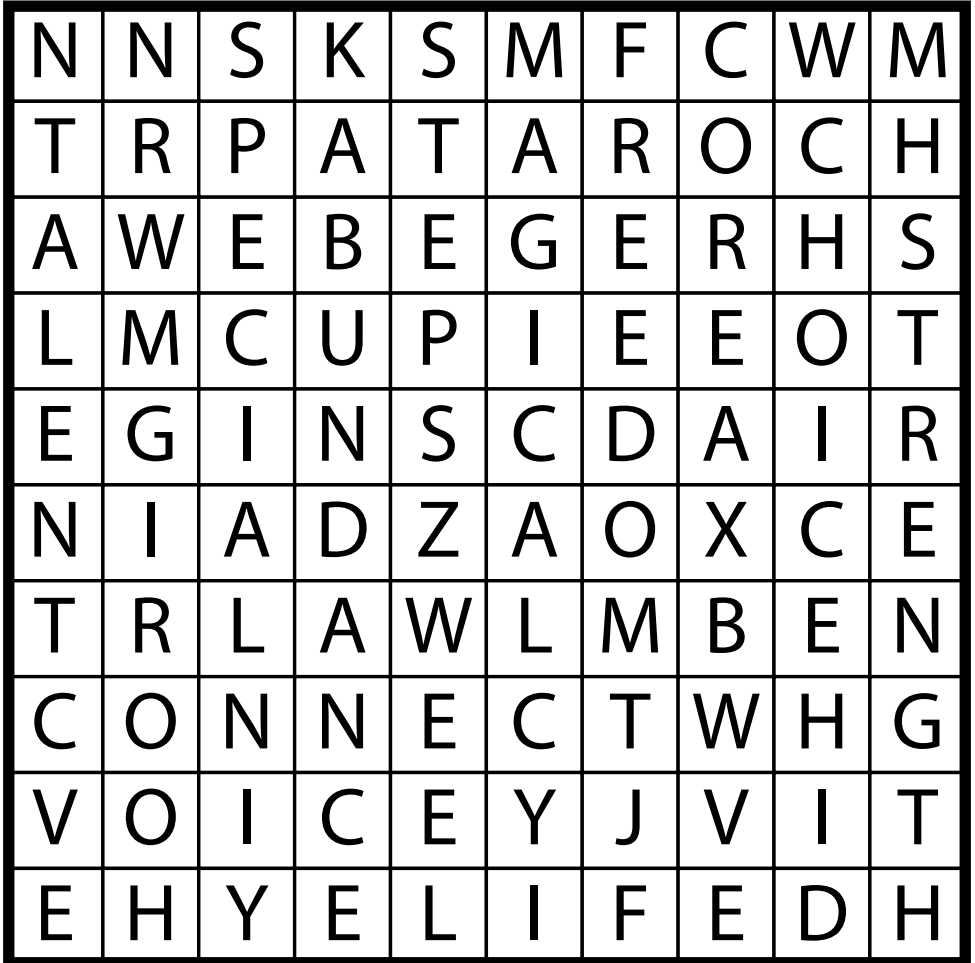


NO INSECTS WERE INJURED IN THE MAKING OF THIS JOKE.



# WORDSEARCH

Find the words – time yourself!



CORE

CHOICE

SPECIAL

MAGICAL

LIFE

ABUNDANCE

STEPS

TALENT

CONNECT

VOICE

FREEDOM

LAW





## Have you been moved or transferred?

We know women are often moved or transferred from prison to prison without any warning. You might have been working with Women in Prison in one prison and then are moved to another.

It is important for you to let us know if you have been transferred, so we can continue to give you support. We are not given information about where you are or whether you have been moved, and we don't have access to this information because we are independent from the CJS/Prison.

Please use this sheet to let us know if you have been moved and that you want to keep working with us. Tear it out and post it to:  
Women in Prison Freepost RSLB-UABE-TYRT  
Unit 10, The Ivories, 6 Northampton Street, London N1 2HY

Name:

Prison No:

Where you were:

Where you are now:

Your worker:

What we were supporting you with, if anything:

# WHAT DOES WOMEN IN PRISON BELIEVE?

# HOW DOES THAT INFLUENCE HOW WE WORK?

**Chris Tchaikovsky set up Women in Prison (WIP) over 30 years ago, after she had served a sentence in HMP Holloway. She lobbied tirelessly to improve conditions inside prison, to widen the knowledge and understanding of the judiciary about women affected by the criminal justice system, and to end the use of prison for all but a tiny minority of women.**

Chris said: “Taking the most hurt people out of society and punishing them in order to teach them how to live within society is, at best, futile. Whatever else a prisoner knows, she knows everything there is to know about punishment – because that is exactly what she has grown up with. Childhood sexual abuse, indifference, neglect – punishment is most familiar to her.”

■ **Women in Prison** continues to campaign for a radical overhaul of female imprisonment. WIP aims to convince and demonstrate to policymakers that the majority of convicted women should serve sentences not behind bars, but in the community. They should remain close to home where their, often complex, needs can be properly addressed; recidivism ended and the connection with their children maintained.

■ **Women in Prison** recognises that every woman has her own assets and capabilities. These are valuable tools in making real and lasting changes to their lives, but they are too often undermined by the experience of prison.

■ **Women in Prison** is a women-only

organisation. It believes that the male and female experience of the criminal justice system has some similarities, but many more differences. Too often these differences, such as being a single parent and primary carer, fail to be properly acknowledged and understood, which adds to the punishment already exacted.

■ **Women in Prison** workers, inside and outside prison, endeavour to offer individual women a consistently professional relationship based on trust and mutual respect and kept within appropriate boundaries. Their aim is to work with women affected by the criminal justice system, so they can achieve the change they choose to make.

■ **Women in Prison** believes that most women pose no risk to the public and should not be incarcerated. For the very few who do, the design, location and regimes of our prisons are totally inadequate.

■ **Women in Prison** knows, from both research and experience, that prison is expensive and ineffective in breaking the cycle of crime.

■ **Women in Prison** believes that the most effective way to reduce women’s offending is to deal with its root causes – which generally rest with gender inequalities and social injustice – in community alternatives.

**Women who come to WIP do so voluntarily. WIP is not part of the punitive system.**



CHRIS TCHAIKOVSKY  
FOUNDER OF  
WOMEN IN PRISON

*Illustration by* **Camille Walcott Burton**



The Black Madonna

Feeling Good

CARE

ROTL

Life Behind Bars: Japan

'Legal' Highs

All Yours: Art & Stories

Stir It Up!

The Agony Aunts

Knitting

Jokes

Wordsearch

### WHAT YOU TELL US COUNTS!

YOUR SAY IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL US ABOUT WHAT YOU LIKE OR WHAT YOU DON'T LIKE; SUBJECTS, INTERVIEWS AND IDEAS YOU WANT TO SUGGEST; OR IF YOU'D LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MAGAZINE, PLEASE WRITE TO:

**WOMEN IN PRISON**  
FREEPOST RSLB-UABE-TYRT  
UNIT 10, THE IVORIES,  
6 NORTHAMPTON ST,  
LONDON N1 2HY

### Coming in the next issue

#### ■ A Roof Over My Head

Why is a home of your own so important?  
Memories of places that stole your heart.  
How do find safe housing that you can afford?

Why is housing such a mess and what  
can we do to tackle it?

+  
Interviews, Advice,  
Recipes, Jokes

and all your own work