

# READY STEADY GO!

## WOMEN ARE DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES

... in business, in offering  
support to each other,  
in making music

Meet  
**Zawe  
Ashton**  
actress,  
writer,  
playwright,  
producer,  
star of  
Fresh Meat  
— what's  
next?

Plus!  
All the regulars  
and YOUR poetry,  
art and writing

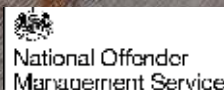


# Funding available NOW!!

Distance learning courses & college fees.  
Additional materials i.e books / dictionaries / equipment.

**Make an appointment to  
see a WIP Advisor or  
write to us now  
NO stamp required**

**Tell me and I forget.  
Teach me and I may remember.  
Involve me and I learn!!**



**Women in Prison  
FREEPOST  
RSLB-UABE-TYRT  
Unit 10 The Ivories  
6 Northampton Street  
London N1 2HY**

# INSIDE

*Winter 2016/2017 • Issue 8*

## MAIN FEATURES:

**18 Council Tax** Who goes to prison and why?

**22 Women Doing It For Themselves...**

*In business, making music, lending a helping hand*

**54 An A to Z of Heavy Metal**

**64 Zawe Ashton** Actress, playwright, activist talks to RSG!

## REGULARS:

**6 Letter From Kate**

**10 Str8 Up!** The news that matters to you

**48 A Day In The Life** WIP worker Donna

**50 Gimmie 5**

**52 Jokes** Skinny's collection

**62 Stir It Up!** Tuna/mackerel pate as made on the inside

**70 The Agony Aunt** On education, employment and training

**78 Useful Contacts**

**82 All Yours** Your writing, poetry and art and a tribute to the late Charlie Nokes

**96 Wordsearch**

**98 What WIP Believes**

---

# 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](mailto: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.

# UK KOESTLER EXHIBITION 2017 AWARDS

## INSIDE IS THE TITLE AND THEME OF THE KOESTLER AWARDS AND EXHIBITION FOR 2017

168A Du Cane Rd  
London  
W12 0TX

T: 020 8740 0333

E: [info@koestlertrust.org.uk](mailto:info@koestlertrust.org.uk)



Antony Gormley, Angel of the North (Gateshead),  
1998. Photograph by Jerry Hardman Jones.  
Copyright the artist

The 2017 UK Koestler Exhibition will be curated by internationally renowned artist **Sir Antony Gormley** and as part of that he has given the 2017 Awards an overall theme, which is detailed below. This theme applies to all categories of the 2017 Koestler Awards, from Painting to Poetry, Matchstick Models to Computer Generated Music and Film. The guidance notes and entry forms will be available in the winter of this year. Thank you to all those establishments and individuals who helped with suggestions for the theme.

I want to celebrate this great resource: the imaginations of the 85,000 prisoners currently in UK prisons and those in secure establishments. Art is a place in which you can do what you like; it need not be for or about anyone else but the artist. In the words of a prisoner, 'in our minds we can always be free'.

The future has always evolved from exploration. Firstly, by those who discovered the remote parts of this planet, then by astronauts who explored the moon and the possibility of human life migrating to other planets. This looks unlikely, so perhaps the 'psychonaut' – or explorer of the mind – is the explorer of the 21st century.

This show gives you the opportunity to communicate passionately expressed inner truth with the outside world.

Please contribute to the exhibition 'INSIDE' and share the thoughts and feelings you have buried deep inside. I am not so interested in works of high technical ability but in the truth, you find when you look inwards. The works can be about your situation now, a cherished dream or a terrible nightmare. Dark or bright, hopeful or despairing, strong or fragile, large or small and in any medium – from a small piece of paper to a sound work, from drawing to model making, film to calligraphic poetry – please help make this exhibition a bold testament to what is happening inside of you.

**Sir Antony Gormley**

---

## WELCOME

# H

ello, the theme for this issue is women doing it for themselves – changing their lives, creating thriving businesses, supporting each other, and making great music and art. Our charity, Women in Prison, started over 30 years ago by Chris Tchaikovsky – a woman who had spent time in HMP Holloway. She and other women who felt passionately about the need for real change decided to make it happen. We hear stories every day about how women have helped lift themselves from adversity, often with the support of inspirational women in their lives. The Radio Soap opera the *Archers* has just covered the story of Helen Titchener's remand in prison and her friendship in the Mother & Baby Unit with Kaz. We would love to hear from you if you've been following Helen's story and what you thought of it. It has never been more important for women to stand together for the social justice needed to make the world better for all and the generations to come. Writer and women's rights activist Margaret Mead said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." So I would like to extend a special thank you to the women in our magazine groups in HMP Downview and HMP Foston Hall who are exactly the kind of groups that we think Margaret Mead had in mind. As 2017 approaches we at WIP wish you all every happiness and good fortune for the year ahead. We know you can do anything you put your minds to.



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

Editor Yvonne Roberts Art direction & production Henry Obasi & Russell Moorcroft @PPaint

Chief sub-editor Martine Lignon Production editor Kathryn Whitfield Deputy Production editor Claire Cain

### Funding



Ministry of  
JUSTICE



LOTTERY FUNDED

Registered charity number 1118727

The publishers, authors and printers cannot accept liability for errors or omissions. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of Women in Prison. Applications should be made directly to Women In Prison.

## WHERE TO FIND OUR OFFICES

### Women Prison Offices

- Manchester
- London
- Woking – Surrey

### HMPs Offices

- HMP Low Newton – near 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 Downview
- HMP Send – Woking
- HMP Bronzefield – Ashford
- HMP East Sutton Park – Maidstone
- HMP Cornton Vale – Scotland



# SOUNDBOX

Write us a letter. You don't need a stamp if you use our freepost address:  
RSG, FREEMPOST RSLB-UABE-TYRT, Unit 10, The Ivories, 6 Northampton Street, London N1 2HY

*Illustrated by Ulla*

Dear RSG!

As campaigns and policy manager for Women in Prison I also support the magazine groups we are building in our women's centres and prisons. HMP Downview is our most recent group given great support by Kathryn, the librarian. We all know that creativity can be hindered by a lack of confidence but once a group is underway all sorts of bright ideas emerge which are the backbone of this magazine. A competition to name a charity shop in Downview, for instance, was won with the suggestion that it should be called "Gladragz", celebrated in the illustration opposite. In 2017, I look forward to seeing and reading a lot more of your contributions in the magazine. All the best for the coming year, Claire

## IT'S YOUR MAGAZINE SO JOIN IN AND HAVE YOUR SAY!

Dear readers,  
With your help, providing wonderful art, poems, jokes, interviews, writing and ideas, and the support of WIP staff and trustees, and Henry and Russell who, with great patience and talent, design and layout RSG! we have been bringing you the magazine in its current format for almost three years.

The new year brings with it lots of fresh ideas and we hope you continue to send us your work and suggestions. In addition, we want to establish a magazine group in as many of the 12 women's prisons as we can and in WIP's three women's centres. This is to give you a voice, find new talent and ensure the magazine is shaped even more strongly by your inspiration.

In the next issue, the theme is Turning the Page - all about the power of the written word, the pleasures and challenges of reading regularly, the magic of the world of fiction and non-fiction and the thrill we know you experience (because you tell

us) when you see your own work published.

A number of organisations do excellent work in prisons and women's centres encouraging women to read regularly. Organisations such as The Reading Agency and the Shannon Trust encourage the pleasure of losing yourself in a good book. If you feel inspired ask your librarian in prison for more information. If you are out of prison ask a WIP worker.

In addition, we would love to hear if you have any ideas about how the magazine groups are run and on the style and content of the magazine. Should, for instance, its title change from Ready, Steady Go!? Who would you like to see interviewed? Would you like more stories about women who have turned their lives around - or fewer? In addition, are there areas we should address that we haven't tackled? We'd love to hear from you at the Freepost address below or talk to a WIP worker who can pass your views on to us or talk to us when we visit.

We look forward to making the magazine even better, brighter, bolder - and definitely all yours!

**Yvonne (Roberts),  
editor and chair of trustees**





# STROOP!

NEWS AND VIEWS

THIS ISSUE

- THE NEW SECRETARY OF JUSTICE
- A BRUSH WITH SUCCESS
- UNFAIR SENTENCES

## BirdWord

A

B

C

D

E

F

R

E

E

D

D

O

M

Dork Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

Don't Judge Me

HMP HOLLOWAY 2012

LIVE DIE

GOD MY LIFE

TOUGH TIMES

HELP ME

FAITH HOPE COURAGE

HELP ME

HELP ME

HELP ME



# Her Majesty's Pleasure Voices from HMP Holloway

**W**IP was delighted to host an exhibition in Parliament of a beautiful and powerful patchwork quilt created in 2012 by women in HMP Holloway, which is now closed. Each patch tells a different story about life in prison. The quilt was made from materials found around Holloway - including a prison officer's trousers!

You discover something new every time you look at it. The words on the borders were a response to the question of what the creators of the quilt were looking forward to upon release: 'Family, Freedom, Respect, Love, Sex, Money and Cake'.

BirdWord, the charity behind the quilt, was formed by three staff in Holloway to give women an opportunity to express themselves creatively. They held workshops over several months with more than 100 women from the prison taking part.

The exhibit in Parliament had a huge impact on MPs and Peers - with many of them tweeting pictures and writing to WIP, offering their support. They included John Bird, now Baron Bird, who along with Gordon Roddick of The Body Shop, founded The Big Issue magazine, which provides homeless people with an income and an outlet for their talent.

WIP hosted this exhibit as part our purpose to provide a platform for women in prison to share their stories and speak "truth to power". The quilt also helped to ensure politicians didn't ignore the impact that the closure of Holloway has had on women.

To build on this success, WIP is hoping to co-ordinate a new quilt created by women across the prison estate. So watch this space! If you would like to get involved with this project or have some ideas about the subjects it should incorporate, please contact WIP at the free address at the back of the magazine.

*By Claire Cain, WIP's Campaigns and Policy Manager*

# The Ministry of Justice is headed by a woman for the first time

Claire Cain takes a look at the new Justice Secretary, **Liz Truss**, while the magazine group in HMP Downview suggest some priorities for her

**B**ritish politics is experiencing an unprecedented level of upheaval and change. Following the Brexit vote, we saw the resignation of the Prime Minister and a Conservative leadership battle worthy of a plot line from 'House of Cards'. Now we have our second female Prime Minister in Theresa May and many ministerial changes, including at the Ministry of Justice – again.

It seems that every time WIP publishes this magazine, we need to introduce a new Justice Secretary. So, who is Mary Elizabeth “Liz” Truss?

She is the first female Lord Chancellor appointed in 1,000 years, holding a senior role in Cabinet and responsible for the independence and functioning of the courts. Truss is also the first woman appointed the Secretary of State for Justice.

## Political background

Originally a supporter of the Liberal Democrats, Truss was elected as Conservative MP for South West Norfolk in 2010. She has since served roles as a junior minister in Education and Childcare and Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. She has written frequently on the need for reform in public services. In October 2016, she promised “the biggest overhaul of our prisons in a generation”.

## Personal Life

A self-described “practical Yorkshire girl”, Truss grew up in Paisley and Leeds. She attended Oxford University studying philosophy, politics and economics. She is married and has two daughters.

## Priorities for the new Justice Secretary

We asked the magazine group in HMP Downview to suggest what Liz Truss should do next, here is what they proposed:

**1** Visit a women’s prison. See what life is like inside and speak to as many women as possible about their lives. The group she talks to should be wider than those hand-picked by staff or the Governor to ensure that she hears the real stories.

**2** Truss should initiate a consultation of all women in prisons to establish their views and priorities on what needs to change to ensure that rehabilitation works and the female prison population is drastically reduced.

**3** More training should be made available for women in prison and on the outside to enable them to become peer mentors and facilitators in Restorative Justice.

**4** Increase the use of Release On Temporary Licence (ROTL) to work and for family leave, including the opportunity to see children regardless of whether or not a woman is a sole carer. The process for a ROTL application needs to be quicker and less of a battle.

**5** Provide support to find employment once out of prison. Convince more businesses and industries to hire women after prison.

**6** Invest in alternatives to custody. Too many women in prison should never have been incarcerated. The Minister needs to increase support and help available in the community and send women to places such as rehab instead of prison.

---

STRO UP!

LIZ TRUSS MP,  
SECRETARY OF  
STATE FOR JUSTICE



SOME OF THE  
WONDERFUL  
ARTWORKS ON  
DISPLAY IN THE  
EXHIBITION



EAMONN HOLMES  
AND RUTH LANGSFORD  
OPENED THE  
EXHIBITION IN  
SEPTEMBER



# A Brush with Success

**Donna Drummond and Claire Cain describe the background to the New Beginnings Arts Award, now in its sixth year**

**C**elebrity couple Eamonn Holmes and Ruth Langsford, presenters on ITV's "This Morning" among other series, opened the 2016 New Beginnings Arts Awards Exhibition in September. The exhibition was held at The Lightbox Gallery in Woking, and the husband and wife team said they were very impressed and moved by the quality of the work on display.

The exhibition included work from women in the community as well as from artists in HMP Bronzefield and HMP Send. The theme was "In a land far away".

That tied in with the 150th anniversary of the author HG Wells and his arrival in Woking in 1895, at the age of 28. Wells, known as "Bertie", became a world famous writer of science fiction. While living in Woking, he wrote, "The War of the Worlds", thus being the first writer to provide a plot that involves an invasion by aliens from out of space. Woking is celebrating Wells with various events held in the area.

The work on display as part of the arts award included fantastical sculptures and futuristic paintings.

The competition, run by one of WIP's women's centres, is in its sixth year and is a celebration of artistic talent and determination from incredible women based across Surrey.

Participants take part in a series of artistic workshops throughout the year leading to our award show. Eamonn and Ruth, a presenter on ITV's "Loose Women", also showed support for WIP's new fundraising campaign

which asks supporters to donate their last of the old-style £5 notes (which have been replaced with a plastic version) to Women in Prison. This is in honour of the 19th century prison campaigner Elizabeth Fry who was pictured on the old £5 note and has now been replaced with Winston Churchill.

Last year (2015), the New Beginnings Arts Award exhibition included some wonderful work produced by young women (aged 14 to 18), who were originally inspired by an arts day held at WIP's Women's Support Centre in Woking. The girls produced some very personal and powerful work, reflecting their experiences of life, relationships and themselves as young women moving into adulthood. The theme last year was "Heroes and Villains" so, to ensure their anonymity, the girls had fun dressing up as superheroes for their photographs, posing with their art work.

One of the pieces reflected the thoughts of Sam, who had been inspired by a visit to HMP Send's KeepOut Crime Diversion Scheme. She was very moved by the life stories shared by some of the women. Her piece was donated to KeepOut - at the request of women whom Sam had met. It now hangs in the scheme's new offices in HMP Send. The work from this year's exhibition is now on tour in libraries in Surrey until the end of this year.

*\* Donna Drummond is seconded to WIP's Woking Women's Support Centre to work with young girls and their families (see A Day in The Life page 44)*

STR8 UP!

# HAVE YOU RECEIVED AN UNFAIR SENTENCE?

**T**he Centre for Criminal Appeals is a charity law firm. One of our missions is to challenge disproportionate sentences arising out of the courts of England and Wales. We do not charge our clients for legal representation.

Our projects provide legal representation to women who wish to appeal against their sentence, i.e. to ask the court to look again at their sentence. This can be done on a number of grounds e.g. failure to raise or take into proper account child care responsibilities, a mental health condition or learning disability, to name but a few.

**If you are a woman who feels that your sentence was unjust and you are:**

- in prison for a non-violent offence;
- you feel you were given inadequate advice about your right to appeal against the sentence or no explanation as to why an appeal against your sentence would be unsuccessful,

we invite you to write to us at the address below to see whether your case could be included in our Women's Sentencing Project.

We are not going to be able to help everyone who writes to us - but we will look carefully at each letter we receive to see whether we can make a difference on the case, for you and for the sentencing scheme at large.

When writing to us, you can mark the front of the envelope with "Rule 39" to ensure that prison staff do not open the letter.

Please note that, if a solicitor is already representing you in relation to an appeal, we will not be able to assist.

## **WOMEN'S SENTENCING PROJECT**

**Centre For Criminal Appeals  
2 - 10 Princeton Street  
Holborn,  
London  
WC1R 4BH**



**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)*

# IN PRISON FOR NOT PAYING COUNCIL TAX?

Rona Epstein looks at the law on council tax debt

*By Sally Etchells Illustrations by PPaint*

**W**e all have to pay council tax. It funds services, such as emptying the bins and cleaning the roads, that local authorities oversee. If you owe the council some of the tax, it may order you to appear at the magistrates' court because of the debt.

The magistrates must make an enquiry into your financial situation (income, outgoings, dependents). They must then make a decision: are you guilty of "wilful refusal to pay" or "culpable neglect to pay"?

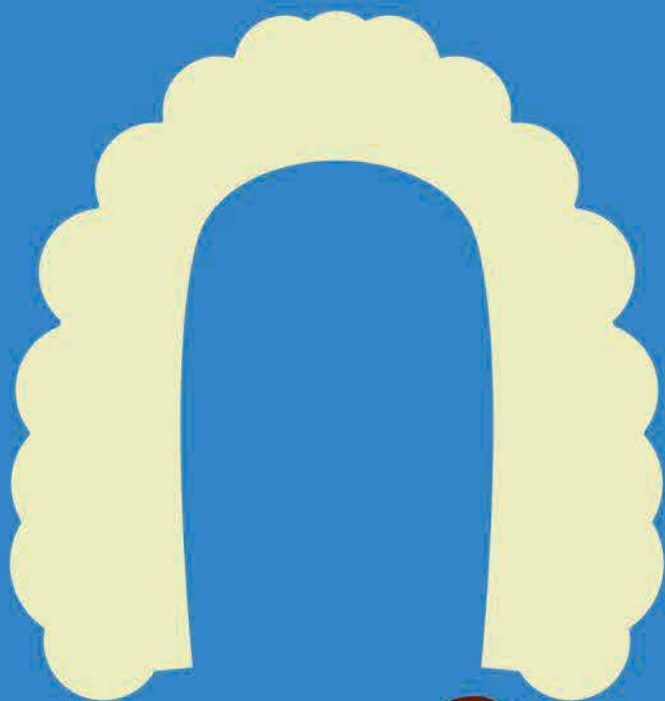
If they find that you are guilty of wilful refusal or culpable neglect to pay your council tax – this means you have the resources but you have refused to use the money to clear your council tax debt. In these circumstances, what should the magistrates order? As explained in a previous edition of this magazine, magistrates have a number of options, including a prison sentence of up to three months. However, and this is why we have come back to

this issue, jail should be a last resort. Imprisonment should not be imposed if there is an alternative way to recover the money that you owe. If there is an alternative, for example, ordering that the money is paid by being automatically taken from benefits, a pay cheque or savings, you should NOT be sent to prison.

If, on the other hand, you genuinely do not (and did not) have any way of paying the council tax, you cannot be found guilty of wilful refusal or culpable neglect, as you would have paid the money if you had been able to. In these circumstances, the court has the power to cancel the debt.

The magistrates have no power to





## IN PRISON FOR NOT PAYING COUNCIL TAX?

punish anyone for not paying council tax. Judges have said this in the High Court again and again. It is not a crime to be in debt. The magistrates cannot use imprisonment for punishment, but they do have the power to order imprisonment as a means of forcing someone to pay council tax if they have the money to pay but refuse to do so.

### ONE WOMAN'S STORY

Amanda A. is a mother of five and a victim of domestic violence. She owed £7,000 in council tax arrears. Her youngest son is disabled (autistic) and she struggled to look after her family. Dartford Magistrates sent her to prison for three months for non-payment of council tax although she offered to pay £20 per week to clear off the debt. After 74 days in prison, she filled in a form given out by Women in Prison asking women about their circumstances.

When I saw the form, I contacted an expert lawyer who specialises in this poorly known field of law. He ensured that she was released on bail. When the case came before the High Court three months later, the Court found that the magistrates had made no fewer than five basic errors and they quashed the magistrates' decision. The Court found that the magistrates had failed to consider her offer to pay £20 per week. They should have tried alternative methods to get the debt repaid, for example ordering a regular

deduction from her husband's earnings. They should have also considered the welfare of the children and their rights to their mother's care, but they had made no enquiries about the children, nor considered them.

### WRONGFUL IMPRISONMENT

I believe that the 40 or so women sent to prison every year for council tax default should not be there. Sending them to prison is an error, a wrongful decision. Magistrates, like everyone else, can and do make mistakes in their understanding of the law.

So, what should you do if you or someone you know is in prison for owing council tax? Please contact me via the Freepost address (see below) at Women in Prison as soon as possible. Expert legal advice is available and could make all the difference.

**"The magistrates have no power to punish anyone for not paying council tax"**

#### Please write to:

Rona Epstein  
Women in Prison  
FREEPOST RSLB-UABE-TYRT  
Unit 10, The Ivories  
6 Northampton Street  
London N1 2 HY.

Rona Epstein is a research assistant in the Law School at Coventry University. She is now doing research with Lucy Baldwin, De Montfort University, on women who have served short periods of imprisonment (less than six months) What were their experiences? What were the effects?  
EMAIL: R.Epstein@coventry.ac.uk



# WOMEN...





**DOING  
IT FOR  
THEM-  
SELVES**

THE

POWER

THAT COMES FROM

WOMEN

»SUPPORTING WOMEN«

By KRISTY O'DOWD & BEVERLEY GILBERT

COHORT 4

AN ORGANISATION THAT  
HELPS SURVIVORS OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE





# KRISTY'S STORY

Leaving an abusive relationship is arguably one of the riskiest and hardest things that any woman can do. Once the immediate physical and emotional harm has been removed, most people would think the worst is over and the survivor can easily move forward with her life. However, the journey through recovery can be long, challenging and painful. Not only does the survivor have to deal with the emotions accumulated by being in an abusive relationship but she also has to deal with a completely new set of emotions after the relationship has ended. These dreadful feelings can actually worsen when criminal justice agencies and other statutory agencies become involved in a survivor's life.

For me, personally, there are emotions and memories that will stay with me for the rest of my life. I was in a relationship with an abusive man for 11 years. As a result of that abuse, I was allowed no friends, no job and had only limited contact with certain members of my family. I had tried unsuccessfully to leave several times and became so desperate that, in the end, I committed a crime.

I spent three years being processed through a criminal justice system that served to ensure that I lost literally everything but my

children, and that was a very close call too. In the years spent within that relationship, and my journey through the criminal justice system, I can count only two people who had a positive impact on my life and made a valued difference. One woman was a teacher at my children's school and the other was a health visitor – both women simply just took the time each week to take me aside to listen to me (this support abruptly ended when I was made homeless and had to move to another area).

---

## » ISOLATION & LACK OF SUPPORT LED ME TO COHORT 4 WOMEN

It was the experience of this almost complete lack of support and isolation that made me decide to help other women who were going through similar situations. I wanted to be that person who makes a significant difference to someone else's life when it seems like there is nothing. After leaving my abuser, I joined a small women-centred organisation called Cohort 4 in North Warwickshire, a wonderful organisation that supports women who are, or have been, affected by domestic/sexual abuse and the criminal justice system.

When I first reached out to Cohort 4, I was on the cusp of returning to the same abusive relationship. As a direct result of being involved with Cohort 4, and surrounded by the strong support network I needed, I found the strength to finally leave my abuser for good. In fact, my involvement with Cohort 4 has helped me to completely turn my life around. With the right encouragement, time, empathetic understanding and empowerment from women who shared their lived histories, I have been given some amazing opportunities.

I am currently a student at Birmingham City University thanks to the support of

Cohort 4. After a time, I was appointed as Project Manager for several projects, and I am the manager of a micro-business that raises funds for the continuation of Cohort 4's women's projects. After two years at Cohort 4, I am now one of the five women Directors of the organisation.

Don't get me wrong; I still have meltdown moments from the psychological impact of the past – as proven recently during a Cohort 4 confidence-raising weekend – but I am no longer alone. I am part of an amazing organisation of women,

where, as women, we are included in all aspects of the organisation, from the initial planning to organising to then delivering our own projects.

We are “doing” for ourselves, rather than are being “done to”, and this is a powerful approach.

How do I cope now? I am able to pick up the phone and call someone who cares, i.e. my own mentor, who at any time will listen to how I feel and talk me through my emotions. Cohort 4's peer mentoring approach is amazing – my mentor knows herself what I've been through. I know that we make a difference to the lives of women who leave abusive relationships and who choose to leave behind involvement in crime.

Women supporting women, it is a simple concept that works.



**“I found the strength to finally leave my abuser for good. And turn my life around”**

# BEVERLY

## A COHORT 4 DIRECTOR

Cohort 4 is distinctly different in the area in which we operate. We are different because our women decide for themselves what they need to increase the chances of their own survival after abuse and after being affected and further damaged by the criminal justice system. Kristy's story is typical of the women who join Cohort 4. Many of them believe they have been re-victimised by statutory agencies, rather than assisted to turn their lives around.

We are a small, self-supporting, survivor group. Most of the members of our group have mental health issues; most have previous convictions; most have had involvement with social services, and several women have children in the care of the Local Authority. Our women are the experts in their lives and know what they need to find their confidence and self-worth. What they like is that we work to their time scales, not to organisational timeframes that serve merely to "process" the woman or to limit the amount of contact or opportunity she has. Criminal justice organisations – in fact many agencies, organisations and projects – have an expectation that change should happen quickly in the lives of the women with whom they work. We don't.

Cohort 4 is completely independent from other agencies. We find that there is a genuineness connected with women

supporting women, with peer mentoring support and with having a safe women's area in which to meet. Cohort 4 women say that this is important for them, as it assists their survival after abuse and their rehabilitation through an emotional connection and by allowing the timescale requirements of the woman herself. For as long as they need, Cohort 4 women attend workshops and sessions, which include accredited training, craft, work experience in one of our micro-businesses, events and outings.

A decade ago, Baroness Corston, who conducted a report into women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system, called for women to be assisted to develop "resilience, life skills and emotional literacy". That is not only possible; it is essential. However, meeting these needs will require organisational change, far more resources in every area of the UK, and importantly, will take time to deal with the depth of the emotional wounds in many women's lives. Small organisations for women, doing amazing work, exist across the UK – but we need more of them, with better funding so that they can reach out to women in our communities who have the power to turn their lives around, when given the opportunity.

[www.cohort4.org.uk](http://www.cohort4.org.uk)



---

**WOMEN ARE  
DOING IT FOR  
THEMSELVES...  
IN MUSIC &  
SONG & ACTING  
{ LET'S CREATE A }  
{ SHOW IN 5 DAYS! }**

*Luke Bowyer* describes how the Irene Taylor Trust, now celebrating its 21st birthday, operates in prisons





**S**ara Lee was the music coordinator at HMP Wormwood Scrubs in 1995 when she first met Irene Taylor, the wife of the late Lord Chief Justice Peter Taylor, and soon after the charity and its Music in Prisons programme were born. So, how does it work? Most projects are based on a five-day format – an intensive, demanding, but highly rewarding, process that takes place in men’s and women’s prisons.

Three incredibly talented professional musicians arrive in a prison on a Monday with a van-load of instruments. They meet a group of eight to 10 women volunteers, who may have little or no previous musical experience.

Sara Lee, now Artistic Director of the Trust, says: “From the start of every project, we show the group that we are coming in on a high level. If they see us taking pride in what we do, then they too will take pride. They are offered great instruments to play and

great tutors to help them. People instinctively know when they are involved in something of quality and it brings out the best in them.”

Eileen, a former participant and now Advisor to the Board, noticed how the group was made to feel responsible and encouraged to contribute: “I remember everyone reaching for a different piece of equipment and all Sara and the team would say is ‘make sure you look after it’. It’s the sense of trust and responsibility that was immediately given that made me feel so appreciative. I noticed that >>



---

WOMEN ARE DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES...







everyone got equal attention and everyone's opinions and ideas mattered and were taken on board."

By Friday – five days later – the group will have become a band ready to perform to an audience of prisoners, prison staff and outside visitors.

Women are often nervous before the performance, but the audience's applause confirms the phenomenal quality of what they have achieved in such a short time. "Working with women is always a joyful experience," says Sara Lee. "You see the levels of enthusiasm and support from the audience when we do the project performances."

## THE IMPACT OF PROJECTS

The music is recorded and later professionally mixed for a CD, to share with the families of the women who have taken part – a powerful reminder for loved-ones of the women's talent.

"I played it to my dad when he came to pick me up," said one of the performers. "He had to stop the car as we were both crying. My dad still has the CD in his car and makes anyone who gets in listen to it!"

The five-day experience helps to build self-confidence, the motivation to participate in educational activities, and to develop life skills such as teamwork, communication and perseverance.

"The challenges of working together to produce an album in a week and the determination and guts that are required

**"Dad still has the CD in his car and makes anyone who gets in listen to it!"**

to perform in front of an audience will remain with the participants all their future lives," says a prison officer.

## AFTER PRISON

In 2012 the Irene Taylor Trust developed the Sounding Out ex-prisoner programme, offering a further route for previous Music in Prisons participants.

"Having a chance to creatively express myself outside is what it's about for me," says Sharleen. "I see Sounding Out as an opportunity to get on with my life outside prison, but with the music relationships I had inside prison guiding me."

At the end of each Music in Prisons project, women are given the Trust's contact details and encouraged to stay in touch. When a woman is released, if she is interested and circumstances allow, she might be offered a place on the Sounding Out project.

Sounding Out takes the abilities participants have started to discover on Music in Prisons projects – including acting – even further. It links them to other music and training courses, and paid work placements as trainee facilitators on community projects for young people facing challenging circumstances.

Currently the Trust has five Musicians in Residence who run regular sessions but these are all in men's prisons. Hopefully the scheme will expand soon to include women's prisons. Sounding Out is currently only available in the London region but, again, >>



there are plans to open it in other regions.

If you are in prison and would like to take part in a five-day project, find out from the prison education department if a visit from the Trust is planned. If not, encourage the prison to apply.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE IRENE TAYLOR TRUST'S FIRST 21 YEARS.

### BEYOND THE SECRET DOOR SONGBOOK FOR CHILDREN 2003

Following a discussion with women about their children's response to music and how songs and nursery rhymes play a big part in our early years, Music in Prisons developed a project to help women on the inside to connect with their children on the outside by creating a series of songs with them in mind.

Writer Peter Spafford and artist/photographer Lizzie Coombes joined Music in Prisons to work in three women's prisons, spending time with the women to generate ideas for songs, put lyrics down on paper and set them to music. The quality of each song reflects the amount of work each individual put into the project; writing the words, devising the music and creating the illustrations for a wonderfully original and subsequently award-winning (British Composer Awards 2003) songbook.

### TUNED IN 2015

Collaboration between Music in Prisons and Helix Arts to develop a creative tool

that will help staff within criminal justice settings to deliver outcomes related to reducing re-offending. Tuned In was created for women prisoners by women prisoners and offers creative ways to discuss the real issues and causes of offending behaviour using song and spoken word. The final product will be unveiled in the next few months.

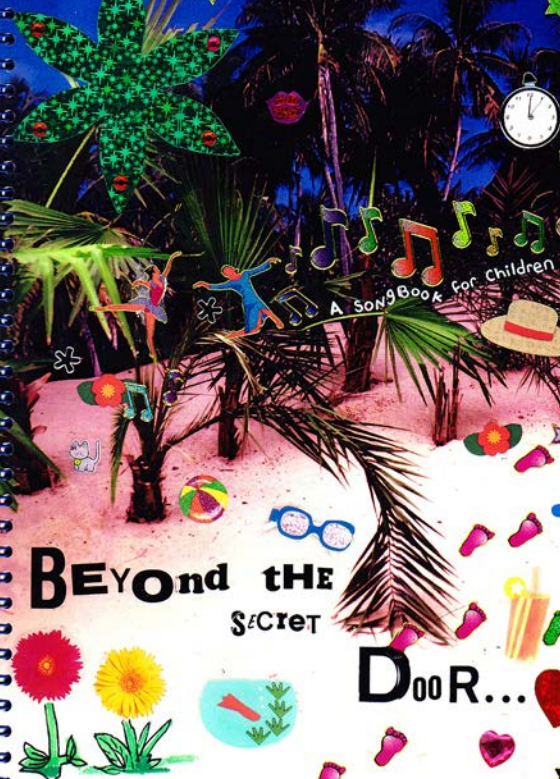
### A PICTURE OF ME SONGBOOK 2006

Music in Prisons worked with women in HMP Holloway to create a beautiful book and CD that contains a powerful mixture of music and spoken word pieces. The team helped the group explore issues surrounding imprisonment for women from their perspective, in their own words.

The women working on the project hoped to create something that might help support other women facing similar difficulties to their own. They wanted to talk honestly about their negative experiences such as self-harm, abuse, rape, separation from family and the loneliness and isolation of being in prison, but they also wanted to share the many positive things that kept them going, as well as their dreams and aspirations for the future.

"I hope this book is going to touch people's hearts; that they can identify with the words; that some of the words might inspire them, put a smile of their face and give them hope in difficult times. Just like a guardian angel," said Angela, A Picture of Me, songbook contributor.

**"Each song reflects the amount of work each individual put into the project"**



# BEYOND THE SECRET DOOR...

## OTHER SIDE

If I could have a wish I'd go back again  
 Go back to a place where I enjoyed freedom  
 I don't understand why God has brought me here  
 He brought me face to face with all my fears  
 But now I am here I have to deal with it all  
 And pick myself up from where I've had a fall  
 And with my strength I will pull myself up  
 Never return, never be corrupt

(CH)

I will be stronger now and never let myself fall  
 I will stand up high and be the person that's tall  
 Because of you I will get through this now  
 The thought of you my son will get me through this somehow  
 And I will come out of the other side

I miss you so much I wish you knew  
 How I will always be here for you  
 You are the best thing that ever happened to me  
 And sometime in life you will see  
 Because you are strong you are just like me  
 A fighter, and proud of you I will always be  
 So stand up tall, remember I am here  
 Never alone with all your fears

We cherish the memories that we share  
 Sun, wind, rain, I don't care  
 You are strong now so don't ever frown  
 Don't ever let anyone get you down  
 You are a fighter, let it be said  
 You'll go on fighting 'til you die in bed  
 You are a soldier and you know it's true  
 Just remember I'll be here for you



## a PICTURE: name

OTHER SIDE

Vibes

(CH)

1	B	C	G	A	B	C	E	D	x2
2	F	C	F	G	A	E	A	G	
3	F	G	D	A	E	G	D	G	



1. ... of part of chord...

2. ...

3. ...

4. ...

5. ...

6. CH

7. ...

8. ...

9. ...

10. ...

11. ...

12. ...

13. ...

14. ...

15. ...

A close-up photograph of a woman's hands kneading a ball of dough on a dark surface. The background is blurred, showing kitchen items like a bottle and a bowl. The text is overlaid on the image.

**WOMEN ARE  
DOING IT FOR  
THEMSELVES...  
COOKIES,  
BROWNIES &  
FLAPJACKS**  
{COOK UP A BETTER LIFE}

Tess Reidy *on the  
bakery giving women  
a chance to rise* »





**S**ince *The Great British Bake Off* first hit our screens in 2010, watching contestants make extravagant and complicated cakes in the red-hot heat of a marquee has become a must do. The show has repopularised a skill once associated with housewives and the Women's Institute and made it appealing to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Far from the TV cameras and watchful eyes of Paul Hollywood and Mary Berry, another baking project is taking place in a warehouse in East London – but this one, The Luminary Bakery, is designed to help women affected by issues such as homelessness, poverty, prostitution and domestic violence to turn their lives around.

Alice Williams, 27, set up bakery in East London in 2012. She had previously worked at a cafe on Brick Lane, also in the

east end of London, where she had been encouraged by her boss to find ways that the cafe could help local women who were facing huge challenges – such as a lack of money, addiction and homelessness. This work gave her the idea for the Luminary Bakery. The definition of “luminary” is, “a person of brilliance”.

The bakery teaches women how to bake to a professional standard and sells the products they make to cafes across London. “We wanted to support women who had been disadvantaged,” Alice says. “There are lots of local women with these issues so we wanted to do something to help. We got to know some of the women to try to find out what their needs were and we realised that employment is so important in helping them to build a life for themselves and not to be reliant on benefits.”

With the aim of helping these women move forward with their lives, a formal curriculum was established in 2014. So far four groups of up to seven women have been through the training.

Agencies and charities refer women for the courses and then “we interview the women and see if they are right for the course and if it would be right for them,” says Alice.

Perhaps surprisingly, Alice isn’t much of a baker herself. “I can make some all right





salted caramel brownies but usually I leave it to the experts,” she says.

Luminary trainees don't need any previous baking experience. The course starts with basic bakes such as cookies, brownies and flapjacks. Over the weeks, the women progress to cupcakes, bread and pastry. By the end of the programme they are confident in a range of skills.


Two years on, the scheme has been a huge success. In addition to baking, the women achieve food hygiene qualifications and are taught important business and personal development skills. Former

“The definiton of 'luminary' is, a person of brilliance”

students are also given the opportunity to work as apprentices for six months in the bakery.

The owners are now opening up a new cafe where the women will also be able to work in front-of-house roles such as coffee baristas. The course always begins with

a brainstorming session about what an employable baker might be like. Becoming a good baker takes dedication. You can't just wing it with the measurements and you've got to be prepared to learn from your mistakes. "Characteristics like patience and teamwork are vital," Alice says. "A lot of people who are good at cooking aren't >>>



WE COACH THE WOMEN  
TO BECOME MORE  
CONSCIOUS OF SELLING  
THE PRODUCT





necessarily good at baking; it's more of a science, and you have to be precise."

At first, she says, a lot of the women don't like these aspects. "They don't always get why we measure or why everything has to look so uniform. We coach the women to become more conscious of selling the product and what it should be like to please the customer. These are skills that can always be learned; you don't have to be a natural cook to get good at it."

So far, the drop-out rates have been low and the women who have been on the scheme have used the opportunity to gain experience, learn new skills and find employment or education prospects at the end of it.

"There have been a few things like childcare issues and people have started and then got offered a job elsewhere. Sometimes things get in the way or there are better options, so people have dropped out but usually not," says Alice.

"It's really significant for confidence and self-worth for the women to know that they can create something. We've seen a lot of women learning that they can produce something brilliant. That's uplifting – plus it makes you desirable in the work force if you have a skill such as baking to offer.

"Women can't believe they make such amazing stuff," she adds. "Creativity can be helpful for the soul."

# WANTED

## WOMEN WITH EXPERIENCE OF THE POLICE, PRISON OR PROBATION TO LEND A HAND TO OTHERS

*By Ella Pollock, co-ordinator of EPIC*

*Illustrations by PPaint*

**A**t the Beth Centre – a women’s centre in Lambeth, south London, run by Women in Prison – women have been trained to give support to others who have been to prison and/or had contact with probation, the police and the courts or are at risk of doing so

Like Cohort 4 (page 24), this is about the power of peers, women working to help one another.

At the Beth Centre, the scheme is called the EPIC peer mentoring project – EPIC stands for Enabling Positive Individual Change.

EPIC peer mentors are a diverse range of women who are passionate about supporting others. Many of them say that what drives them on is knowing how helpful it would have been for them to have a peer mentor. They are committed to ensuring that women don't have to face these issues alone.

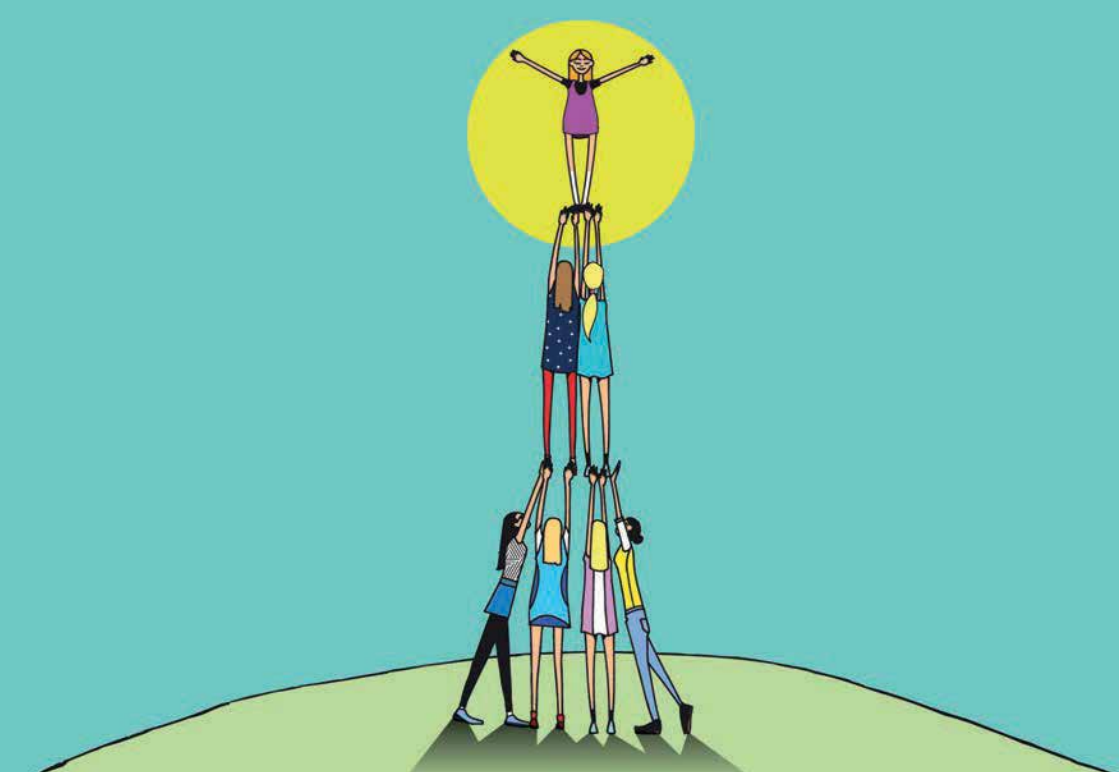
All EPIC peer mentors have completed a 12-week training programme and achieved a Level 1 qualification in mentoring or in information, advice and guidance. They keep up-to-date with regular training and

supervision at the Beth Centre and many also volunteer at other charities.

### MESSAGE FROM A MENTORING COORDINATOR

“I am lucky enough to work with the truly inspiring women who give their time as EPIC peer mentors. They come from different backgrounds but what unites them is their passion for social justice.

EPIC mentors understand the system and the way it impacts upon women because they have experienced it themselves. They are an incredibly valuable resource to the Beth Centre. EPIC peer mentors are also proof that there is valuable life to be lived after serving a prison sentence.”



## A PEER MENTOR

"I wanted to become a peer mentor because I wanted to develop a better understanding of how to support vulnerable people. In the past, I've been supported myself and admired how people helped me. I feel I am a person who can offer the same support to others in need. The facilitators on the course were very informative, clear and helpful.

## "ANGEL" DESCRIBES HOW SHE WAS RECRUITED AS AN EPIC PEER MENTOR...

"I lay down in my bed, tears welling up and thoughts of dread, flashing through my mind, I wondered, why life was so hard! Why couldn't anyone see that my life had changed? After a while, I dusted myself down and went for a long walk just to clear my head. I passed an internet café and

decided to check my emails. One caught my attention. Could this be a joke or was it for real? Women who have had some kind of involvement with the criminal justice system are required to become peer mentors.

"I quickly emailed back and before long, I was sitting in the Beth Centre office telling my whole life story. "Perfect! You're just the kind of person we're looking for."

"So here I am, ready to show the world as a peer mentor that my life has changed for the better. Ready to prove to all the doubters that I can make a positive change and empower other women, just as I've learnt to empower myself!

"To all you strong women out there who do not yet believe in yourselves, or who have been beaten down so often that you feel worthless, let's stand up, unite and make a difference in society. Let's show the world that we are strong women. Women of substance, helping one another!"

# Donna

## A day in the life

of WIP worker with young women in WIP's Woking  
Women's Support Centre

Illustration by Ulla

I usually wake up around 7am with a very grumpy and hungry cat on my head - no need for alarm clocks in my house! A quick shower wakes me up and after breakfast (usually porridge), I battle the school traffic between home, in Guildford, and the office.

I moved to the UK with my family 15 years ago and love life here. One of my passions is travel and - with three adult children who live in London, Cape Town and Madrid, and family in Botswana and Australia - I indulge myself with trips abroad as often as I can afford.

I am grateful that I live in a lovely part of Surrey and I spend lots of time at the weekend walking in the Surrey Hills. Having grown up in beautiful Cape Town, I love spending time outdoors and go walking whenever I can.

The image of an affluent and "leafy" Surrey can be deceptive, however, and there are many areas of deprivation with many families living in poverty and high rates of substance misuse and domestic abuse.

If I don't have an initial appointment, early time in the office is spent catching up on emails and dealing with anything urgent, as well as liaising with our lovely team. I am so grateful to be working with a supportive and diverse team of women who are all passionate about

the work we do at the Centre.

I am seconded to the Centre from Surrey Youth Support Service and have been in the post for about two years. My remit is to work with young women and families. The bulk of my work is with young women, aged 14 to 18, who are at risk of sexual exploitation. I work with them either one-to-one or in groups. I also work with vulnerable young women aged 18 to 30 who are referred via the Probation Service.

We also run a group called Sliding Doors from our centre in Woking. The group was developed by the Youth Support Service for young women who are at risk of, or who have experienced sexual abuse, and referrals come via Youth Support Service, Children's Service and other agencies. Last year we ran three successful groups, each for 10 weeks.

As facilitators, we make sure we meet each of the girls before the group comes together so that we can get to know them and answer any questions they may have about the group. The average age of the girls who are referred is 16. They often have a lot of anxiety about attending a group of this kind so we do our best to reassure them - and meeting the facilitators in advance reduces some of their apprehension. It is also important to assess their



suitability for groups, as some are more suited to one-to-one support.

Many of the young women do not see themselves as victims and, instead, have a deep sense of shame. We work hard to support them to come to terms with what has happened and empower them with skills and knowledge to recognise the grooming process - when an individual strips the focus of his or her attention of all confidence and self-esteem and increasingly isolates her from friends and family.

We encourage our young women to build healthy relationships and develop a stronger sense of themselves. It is hugely rewarding to see their progress during the course of the group's work. For instance, two young women from a previous group will be attending the next one, taking on the role of mentors and using their experiences to support others - an intervention I hope will be rewarding for them all.

Most of the young women referred to the group have experienced sexual abuse or face circumstances that put them at risk of sexual abuse. Many of the girls have been groomed online and it's frightening to see how social media has become so much of a tool in the sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

Last year one of our groups became involved in our New Beginnings Art scheme and their work was exhibited at The Lightbox gallery in Woking, along with work from women at HMP Bronzefield and other women in the community. One of the pictures produced by a young woman at that session is now gracing the walls of HMP Send.

While I love facilitating the groups, I don't enjoy all the admin that goes with setting up a group - unfortunately a big part of the job! Because of issues around child protection, we keep close contact with the girls' social networks and youth workers, and strong inter-agency relationships are important to keep the girls safe and supported.

We have found that there is very little support for the parents of vulnerable young women - in particular those affected by child sexual abuse. At the moment, we are developing a pilot project to set up a group that will educate and support parents. We hope to get it up and running within the next few months - another exciting new project for the Woking Support Centre.

Work with young women referred via Probation can include addressing welfare needs such as housing, benefits, accessing education, finding employment and access to other specialist services, as well as providing emotional support. The centre hosts a counselling service and many of the younger women have accessed it. Most of this work is done in the community and a lot of my time is spent in coffee shops - I am an expert on the best hot chocolate on offer in Guildford and Woking!

For me, winding down at the end of the day could involve a walk, meeting friends, swimming at my local gym and crocheting. I became hooked (sorry!) on this a few years ago and find it a great antidote for stress - and it feeds my need to do something creative.



# GIMMIE



**1** If you had a day release, where would you go?

## DENNY

● Home. With my family and and a cooked meal.



## FAY

● Home to spend some time with my son.



**2** What has been your best prison-coping strategy?

● Thinking of home and my family.

● Forgetting about the outside world. Living in a bubble. Keeping to myself.



**3** What's the one thing you miss most?

● My family and our dog Coco.



● My independence - and family.



**4** If you could have one person, dead or alive, to visit you, who would it be?

● My mum. God rest her soul. I miss her so much!

● Alan Carr - he makes me laugh.



**5** If you could have one take away delivered to the prison, what would it be?

● KFC! With a load of corn on the cob and chicken on the bone.



● Indian. Chicken pakoras with an ice-cold orange Oasis.

# 5!

Produced by women in HMP Low Newton on a creative writing and art course called Low Newton Creative Industries. 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!

## ALYSON

- Home to spend time with my daughter.

- Keeping occupied and busy. Often by courses and education.

- Freedom and family.



- Comedian Paddy McGuinness to take me to Fernando's!

- Crispy shredded beef or duck.

## AMANDA

- I'd see my son.

- I'm still on remand, so I don't really know. Maybe writing letters.



- My freedom.

- The Queen Mother - so she knows what it's like in here!



- Chinese.



## KATRINA

- I'd collect my mum from another wing and see my brother for a nice meal and drink.



- I miss my brother and the dogs.

- My brother, or anyone else.

- KFC or a Chinese.



# SKINNY'S TUMBLEWED JOKE WALL



What do you  
call cheese that's  
not yours.  
Nacho-Cheese

CAN A KANGAROO JUMP  
HIGHER THAN A HOUSE?  
OF COURSE, A HOUSE  
DOESN'T JUMP AT ALL

MY CELLMATE THINKS  
I'M WELL NOSEY.  
WELL THAT'S WHAT IT  
SAYS IN HER DIARY.



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

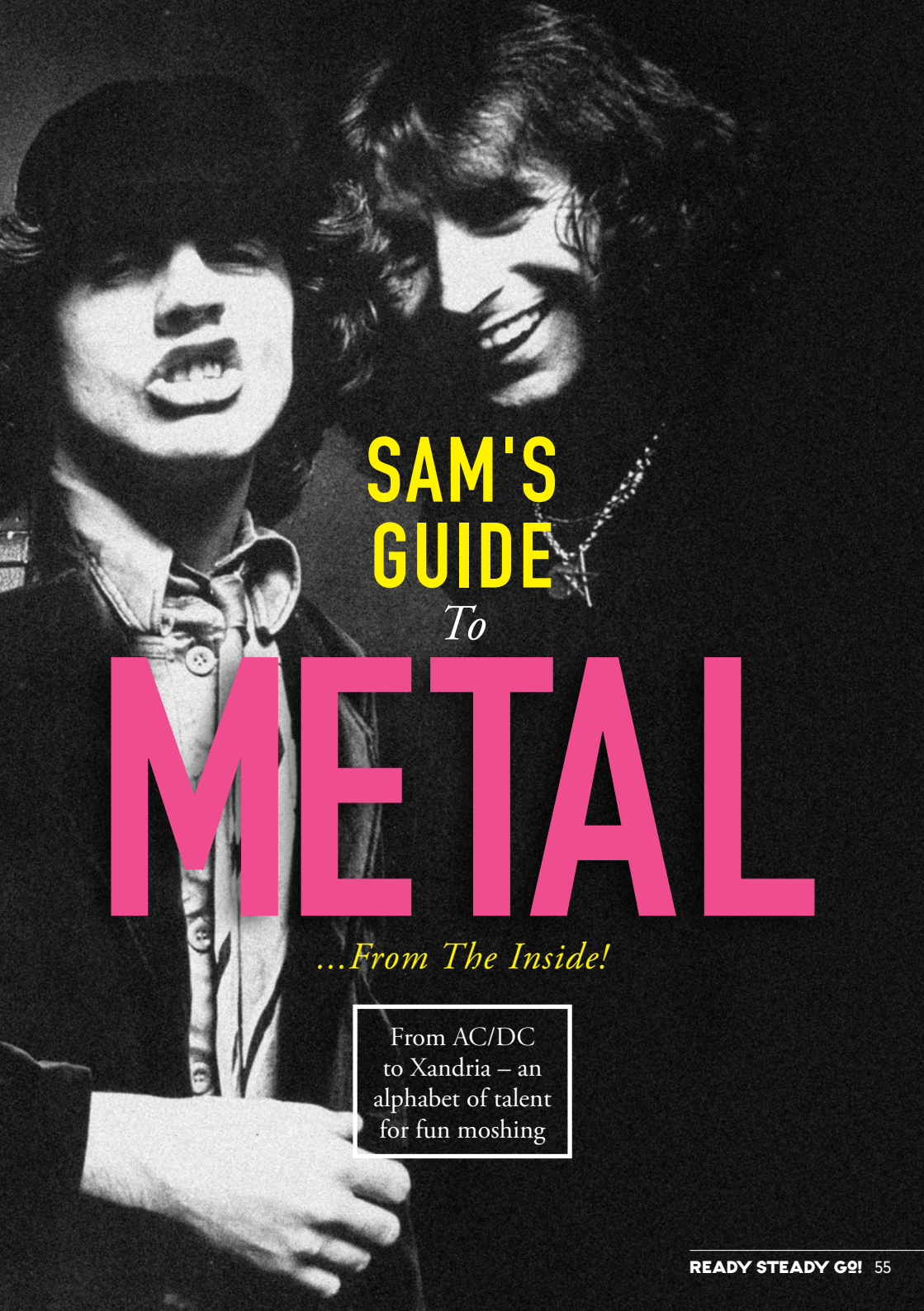
# MY DOG ON A BIKE!



"MY DOG USED TO CHASE PEOPLE  
ON A BIKE A LOT. IT GOT SO BAD,  
FINALLY I HAD TO TAKE HIS BIKE AWAY."

A is for  
AC/DC





**SAM'S  
GUIDE**

*To*

# METAL

*...From The Inside!*

From AC/DC  
to Xandria – an  
alphabet of talent  
for fun moshing

---

G is for  
Green Day







**I**n prison, you may feel isolated and a bit lost but, as all metal heads know, our music can bond us with others and forge friendships we would have never imagined. When you come into prison, if you are like me, you would have been worried that you would lose touch with your metal roots. But fear not! I am here to take you through the ways and means to mosh and head-bang to your heart's content.

There are fewer metal outlets than those for other genres but my favourite is the Rock Show on National Prison Radio every Friday at 9am-11am and repeated every Saturday at 7pm-9pm. The Rock Show has a very friendly vibe and the presenter, James (who will be leaving prison shortly), makes you feel like part of the rock family. He plays requests from people in prisons up and down the country, so please write in and join our rock family in the prison system.

You can also buy CDs from Gemma Records and magazines such as Kerrang! and Metal Hammer to keep up to date with what's going on in the metal world as well as radio stations like XFM and Kerrang! Radio. But no matter what route you choose, stay true to who you are, keep strong and keep on rocking!

■ See the A-Z (more or less) Guide to some of the many amazing bands that make up the wonderful sounds of ROCK.  
 ■ If you haven't heard of any of these bands before and would like to sample the new bands or you just want to rock out to some well-loved old songs, then write in to: **The Rock Show, National Prison Radio, HMP Brixton, London, SW2 5XF**

## SAM'S GUIDE TO METAL

**A** for AC/DC, Abbath, Aiden, Amorphis, Anthrax, Asking Alexandria.

**B** for Baroness, Behemoth, Black Stone Cherry, Breaking Benjamin, Blackwülf.

**C** for Cancer Bats, Cannibal Corpse, Children of Bodom, Cradle of Filth, Cryptopsy, Culture Killer, Curezum, Def Leppard.

**D** for Dismember, Disturbed, Dying Fetus.

**E** for EODM, Escape the Fate.

**F** for Fear Factory, Fields of the Nephilim.

**G** for Ghost, Gojira, Green Day, Guns 'N' Roses.

**H** for Heart of a Coward, HIM, Hatebreed, Hatesphere.

**I** for Iron Maiden.

**J** for Jind, Jess and the Ancient Ones.

**K** for Kampfar, King 810, Korn, Killswitch Engage.

**L** for Lamb of God.

**M** for Machine Head, Manowar, Megadeth, Motionless in White, Mötley Crüe.



**F** is for  
Fields  
of the  
Nephilim





J is for  
Jess and  
the Ancient  
Ones

## SAM'S GUIDE TO METAL

**N** for Napalm Death, Necromancer, Neck Deep, Nirvana.

**O** for One Machine, Opeth, Pantera.

**P** for Paradise Lost, Phantasma.

**Q** for Queensrÿche.

**R** for Rammstein, Razor, Rob Zombie.

**S** for Saxon, Seigmen, Sepultura, Skillet, Skindred, Skunk Anansie, Slayer, Slipknot, Soulfly, Suicide Silence, Sylosis.

**T** for Tribulation, The Filth Alliance, Throneless, TAOS, Tool.

**U** for The Used.

**V** for Vreid, Venomous Concept.

**W** for War, While She Sleeps, Wicked Inquisition, Wednesday 13, The Wounded Kings.

**X** for Xandria.

**Can you find a band beginning with Y and Z? Write to the magazine with your suggestion, please (Freepost address at the back). Happy moshing!**

**S** is for Skunk Anansie



N is for  
Nirvana





# SURF'S UP!

## TUNA/MACKEREL PÂTÉ

The magazine group in HMP Downview tells us what's cooking.

*By Emily Illustrated by Lucy*

### Ingredients

● Serves 4

Tinned mackerel (tomato base) (£1.90)

Fresh tomato (£1)

Sweet chilli sauce (£1.59 for bottle)

Salt and pepper seasoning (79p)

Can of tuna

Ryvita pack (£1.00)

Diced kiwi, lemon or apple to serve (30p)

**Total cost: £6.58**



### Method

- 1 Mash together the tuna, mackerel and a small amount of chilli sauce.
- 2 Mix in fresh tomato and add the seasoning.
- 3 Spread on to Ryvita.
- 4 Serve with sliced lemon or fruit.

Bon appétit!

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

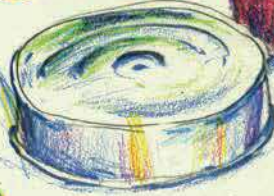
Apple



Tomato



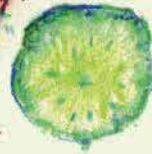
Tuna



Mackerel



Lemon



Kiwi



Chilli Paste





# A WOMAN OF MANY TALENTS

Tess Reidy meets actor, playwright  
and author, Zawe Ashton

**Z**awe Ashton, 32, has much to be proud of: she's written a play, a film and a book; she won the London Poetry Slam Championship in 2000, a Verity Bargate award nomination in 2007 for her debut play, *Harm's Way*, and received a Raindance film festival nomination in 2014 for best British short for *Happy Toys*, which she directed.

You may recognise her from *Holby City*, *The Bill*, *Casualty* and *Misfits* and for her 2011 role as Vod in the Channel 4 comedy *Fresh Meat*. She's also worked on films with Hollywood stars such as Jason Statham in *Blitz*. But, above all this, she says she's most proud of her work with Clean Break, a charity that uses drama therapy to change women's lives in prison and after release.

Zawe grew up in Stoke Newington, north London. Her mother, Victoria, arrived in

England in her teens from Uganda, where Zawe's grandfather, Paulo Muwanga, had served as both president and prime minister. Her parents were schoolteachers – her mother taught design and technology, and her father English – though he later worked for Channel 4 commissioning education programmes for schools. Her brother is a musician and her sister works in animation.

"It was rough. It's not the Stoke Newington that people know today – the >>

place where mothers with four-wheel buggies try to run me off the road.”

Half the houses on the street where her family lived were “squats” – empty buildings that were occupied by people who didn’t pay rent. Zawe says it was filled with lots of different characters. “It was a great place to grow up. It was always extremely creative. We had these rules in place with regards to the main high street – you had to be an independent shop or restaurant. I think that kept the artistic spirit alive,” she says.

Zawe got into acting at a very early age, at about five or six, at the Anna Scher Theatre School in Islington. “There wasn’t any sort of audition process. The classes were really affordable – about £2.50 per lesson – and so it encouraged lots of local kids to get involved.”

Anna Scher’s theatre school wasn’t like your average drama class. She taught the children about the likes of Martin Luther King, Anne Frank and Nelson Mandela and promoted ideas of love, peace and understanding. “She was an activist. We weren’t allowed to use the words ‘star’ or ‘fame’ – they were banned,” explains Zawe. “She wasn’t someone encouraging us to be a flash in the pan. She was really instilling extremely strong ethics into us. She would say: ‘Know why you’re acting, know why you’re taking a certain job.’”

Zawe isn’t the only star to have gone to Anna Scher’s, other former students include half the cast of *EastEnders* (Patsy Palmer, Joe Swash, Tameka Empson, Sid Owen, Gillian Taylforth and Natalie Cassidy – to name but a few) plus Gary and Martin Kemp, Linda Robson and Kathy Burke.

Since getting involved with Clean Break, Zawe has taken a different approach to her work. In 2006, she played 38-year-old Joyce Vincent, a woman who lay dead and forgotten in her flat in Wood Green for more

“Whenever I work with women inside I always think: this could be me ... or any one of us”

than two years, in the film *Dreams of a Life*. Zawe says: “My work with Clean Break completely impacted on the way I approached that role because of the women I had met and the notion that there are truly women that fall through the cracks of society, who we aren’t necessarily taken care of.”

Since then, Zawe has performed plays in prisons across the UK and was the writer in residence for Clean Break for almost two years, encouraging female prisoners to see the benefits of drama therapy for rehabilitation. The time also influenced the kind of work Zawe now chooses to do. One of her plays, *All The Women Who Thought They Were Mad*, is about the over-medication of women, particularly black women, in the UK and focuses on how dangerous that can be. “Prisons are full of women who committed non-violent acts

ZAWE ASHTON  
WAS WRITER IN  
RESIDENCE FOR  
CLEAN BREAK

and mental institutions are full of women who weren't that ill before they took the medication," she says.

Zawe says she wants to continue both writing and acting. "The two inform each other really well," she says. "Lots of people assume that because you're writing you don't want to act but I think there are so many women in this industry who want to be in something they care about. They want more agency in the work they're committing to."

Zawe says she experiences sexism and racism in her career. "I recently pitched a piece about an older woman leaving prison after a sentence for a white-collar crime but they said: 'Oh, okay but could it be about a man?' This everyday sexism, the everyday racism that you face is happening and you don't even realise it. It's hurting you deeply without you even knowing because it's so institutionalised. It's certainly something I'm involved in on a day-to-day basis, for sure."

Zawe feels strongly that women, and particularly female prisoners, need support. She thinks the focus should be on helping people not to offend when they come out of prison and the government shouldn't be making cuts to probation services. "The whole point of prison is to stop reoffending and create healthier societies and yet they won't spend money on it," she says. "There's a lot of anxiety and complexity around leaving prison. It's certainly not a case of you throw a bag over your shoulder and go off humming down the street."

Women leaving prison need "as much individual care as possible", says Zawe. "If the government truly does want better societies, then it needs to spend money to do that. The thing that frustrates me most is



the way probation officers, for example, have to struggle to help people not reoffend and there is hardly any focus or money going to creative therapies in prisons."

Zawe says that anyone who feels that prisons are too soft should go to one, or start writing to someone locked up in one "because holiday camp, it ain't". Some of the women she's met and worked with have not seen their children grow up, some are in there for defending themselves against a violent partner and some have mental health problems and are not getting the rehabilitation that they actually need.

Her experiences have made her realise how one decision can impact on a lifetime. "The thing that astounds me most whenever I work with women inside, is that I always think: 'This could be me; this could be any one of us.' Few people wake up one day and say: 'Hey, I'm going to commit a crime.' There's an individual story for each and every woman and that, we have to respect."

# 5 OF THE BEST

## A GLIMPSE AT WHAT WOMEN IN PRISON DID IN 2016...

**1** Our 26 projects delivered services to 3,600 women, offering expert help on issues such as domestic abuse and sexual violence, housing, substance misuse, parenting, child sexual exploitation and mental health advocacy.

**2** WIP's three women's centres in Woking, Manchester and Lambeth continued to thrive and help women to build a positive future for themselves and their children.

**3** We campaigned for support tailored to the needs of individual women and the creation of small custodial units for the small minority of women in prison who are a danger to themselves and others.

**4** Ready, Steady, Go! The Women in Prison magazine, written for and by women affected by the criminal justice system and at risk of offending, reached 6,000 people.

**5** The Reclaim Holloway campaign kept the focus on HMP Holloway's closure and the potential opportunity to invest in good quality women's services and social housing on the 40 acres of land released by the sale. This would, for instance, address homelessness that impacts on too many women leaving prison.





Tell me and I forget  
teach me and I may remember  
involve me and I learn!!

Change is the  
end result  
of all true  
learning!

Funding Available NOW!!

Distance learning courses & college fees.  
Additional materials i.e books / dictionaries / equipment.

Make an appointment to see Perri or write to her now NO stamp required... use your time to learn!!



Women in Prison  
FREEPOST RSLB-UABE-TYRT  
Unit 10 The Ivories, 6 Northampton Street  
London N1 2HY

**MEET  
THE  
AGONY  
AUNT**

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

**MARTINE** ON  
EDUCATION,  
TRAINING &  
EMPLOYMENT  
~~~~~



# EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

*By Martine Lignon, Women In Prison trustee Illustrations by Ulla*

## Letter from "A"

**I know I would not be a good employee as I don't like to take orders, but I am sure I could run my own business. My skills are in computing, hardware and software. Could I be self-employed?**

Dear "A",

Thank you, for your letter. You are starting from a very strong position, as you are self-aware (you know you don't like to take orders and therefore would not like to be "line managed") and you are clear about where your skills lie. Both routes should lead to success!

As a self-employed person running your own business you will develop a great range of skills and talents, such as marketing, accounting, negotiating and organising. You will also enjoy having the freedom to plan your working life as you think fit.

You must realise, however, that self-employment, i.e. working as a sole trader, requires a high level of self discipline and organisation, e.g. making sure you keep and file invoices of all your work-related purchases, apportioning your utilities cost, logging all your working hours, etc. Also, as you probably know, self-employment means that you do not get paid annual leave or sick leave and must therefore budget and plan for both. Finally, the benefits system, particularly in relation to working tax

credit, does not operate in favour of self-employed people.

I would recommend that, when you are able to, you visit the website of one of the companies that - for a small sum (around £50-£60) - will take you through all the steps you need to take to set yourself up as a sole trader. For instance [http://www.duport.co.uk/company-formation/sole\\_traders.php](http://www.duport.co.uk/company-formation/sole_traders.php) (Needless to say, WIP has no share in this or any other such company!)

You will also need to market your knowledge (and, I assume experience) of computing hardware and software.

As a woman, you are well placed to access a growing clientele as many women who live on their own would prefer a woman to come to their home to sort out their IT issues. Make sure your website, LinkedIn page and the flyers you place in letter boxes emphasise that you are female and demand will be high!

Of course, you will need to prove you are suitably qualified. Decide whether you wish to support software end-users as a Desktop Support Professional or mend hardware infrastructure. Get the relevant Microsoft qualification - for more information visit [www.ukmicrosoft.com/microsoft-courses](http://www.ukmicrosoft.com/microsoft-courses) or <http://microsoft.certified-training.co.uk> and start drafting your price list. I feel sure you will soon run a successful sole-trader business!





I AM  
THE  
BOSS

IT, Robotics, Qualification - Marketing, Vt,  
E-commerce, Business Hardware

### Letter from "B"

I am a History graduate and I hear that there are a lot of opportunities for interns. Could you tell me how internships work?

Dear "B"

Thank you for your letter. Internship opportunities for graduates are huge indeed, but you need to be discerning, which means well informed.

An internship is a way to get paid or unpaid work experience in a professional field. If you want advice on your rights as an intern, here is a link to short guide on what to expect from a high-quality internship - and what interns' rights are with regard to pay. [www.internwise.co.uk](http://www.internwise.co.uk)

You could ask the Careers Service or the Education Department to look it up for you as well as the following website, if they are not accessible through the Virtual Campus. [www.internships.com](http://www.internships.com). A source for reliable information on pay and employment rights is to be found at: [www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns](http://www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns)

Internships will provide you with opportunities for networking, exploring your sector of choice, boosting your CV and improving your chances of getting the job you really want. Most internships are unpaid although there is a growing move to ensure interns receive some payment. However, you would get your travel expenses reimbursed and some funding towards your lunch (often around £5) per working day.

Some internships are paid, though. They usually offer a short period of employment aimed at providing you with professional skills and experience. These are often offered by higher education institutions/ universities, but there is strong competition for the places, which are generally reserved for former students.

Your two main questions are probably:

1) Shall I be entitled to the National Minimum Wage?

If you have a list of duties you must fulfill and fixed times when you have to work, you are likely to be a worker and entitled to be paid. To discuss anonymously whether you qualify for the National Minimum Wage, phone the **Pay and Work Rights Helpline** for advice on **0800 917 2368**.

2) How do I know I am embarking on a good internship?

A successful internship is a high-quality learning experience and should, ideally, include the following:

**A contract:** explaining details of your pay, responsibilities and what else you can expect to get out of the internship.

**Induction:** you should expect to be given an introduction to the organisation and relevant staff members, and an explanation on how the workplace functions and which resources will help you in your role.

**Support:** interns are valuable members of staff who should be treated in the same professional way and with the same duty of care as regular employees.

**Challenge:** the work must offer a challenge, an appropriate learning experience and an opportunity for development.

**Supervision and mentoring:** as a new member of the team, you can expect to be given guidance to help you carry out your role effectively.

**Feedback:** regular feedback that can help your development and may be informal or formal.

To start with, you need a well designed CV. This website can help <http://www.rise-to.com> but your WIP advisor, the Education Department or the Careers Service will help you to write a good CV.

All the best for your career development!

HERE  
ME

The image features the words "HERE" and "ME" constructed from yellow pencils. Each pencil has a pink eraser at the top and a sharpened lead tip at the bottom. The word "HERE" is positioned above "ME". The letter 'H' is formed by three pencils: two vertical ones and one horizontal one connecting them. The letter 'E' is formed by four pencils: two vertical ones and two horizontal ones. The letter 'M' is formed by four pencils: two vertical ones and two diagonal ones crossing in the middle. The second 'E' in "ME" is formed by three pencils, with the bottom-right corner being a broken pencil tip. The entire composition is set against a plain, light yellow background.

### Letter from "C"

**Throughout my youth and childhood, I have lived with dogs and do love them. Are there any jobs that involve working with dogs please?**

Dear "C",

What an interesting question! I can hardly think of more rewarding employment than working day-in, day-out with animals you really like and with whom you have learned to live.

There are various sorts of jobs with different levels of responsibility that may suit - from dog walker to dog groomer to kennel worker and guide dog trainer.

**Dog walkers:** You will not need any qualification but sound references will be a must. Of course, you need to enjoy the outdoors!

**Dog groomers:** They keep dogs' coats in good condition. They give their owners advice on care, grooming and diet. If you love dogs and want a skilled job, this job could be ideal for you. To be a dog groomer, you should be able to handle dogs firmly but gently, to calm and control nervous dogs, to show patience and attention to detail. You could train as a dog groomer by finding work with a qualified groomer and training on the job. Another option is to do a course at a private training centre or college before you look for work. See <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/DogGroomer>

**Kennel workers:** They care for dogs in kennels. If you are confident in handling animals and can work well in a team, this job could suit you. You will need to be alert to spot changes in animals' behaviour, and be physically fit to walk the dogs and clean

out the kennels. There are no set qualifications for becoming a kennel worker. Practical experience is highly valued and will usually be needed for entry into this job. Studying an animal-related college course would also improve your chances of finding kennel work. See <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobprofiles/Pages/kennelworker.aspx#sthash.Q8jedCL9.dpuf>

**Guide-dogs trainer:** One of the most rewarding jobs dealing with dogs is certainly that of a guide-dog trainer, as you will not only develop dogs' skills and qualities and see them valued but, most importantly, you will enable people with disabilities to lead a more independent life. Most widely spread is the training of dogs that will help people with visual impairment (blind people) but you could also train dogs to support deaf adults. Guide-dogs for visually impaired people are most often Labradors, known for their kindness as well as ability. You will need patience, both with the dogs and their owners and good training skills. But imagine the satisfaction you will gain when you see the Labrador you trained enabling a blind person to get about and manage their lives! Ask the Career Service or Education department in your establishment to help you to visit the website for more information. <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/>

Whether required or not, you may consider gaining a qualification. If so, ask your WIP advisor to look up the British College of Canine Studies. [www.britishcollegeofcaninestudies.com](http://www.britishcollegeofcaninestudies.com)

All the best in your future enjoyment of working with dogs!



## 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

**Phoenix 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/](http://www.womensbreakout.org.uk/projects/)

### FAMILY SUPPORT

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



*Illustration by Chenna*







# ALL YOURS!

PAINTINGS, POEMS,  
STORIES & MORE  
— ALL BY YOU



---

# 'WHAT

BY CHARLIE NOKES HMP SEND  
WRITTEN FOR THE KOESTLER AWARDS IN 2013

# ART

Art has always been present in my life, the more I look back the more I realise this.

As a child I would often play alone and draw. I would draw my dolls and copy characters from the Beano and later from graphic novels until I could draw faces from memory.

At school my confidence in art was shaken. I got a "D" in Art and I had worked so hard. I was a disruptive, loud nuisance in classes, often getting thrown out to work in the corridors alone, where I would sit and just draw. Artists such as Hieronymus Bosch, Edvard Munch, Salvador Dali absolutely fascinated me.

# MEAN

Upon leaving school I managed (by the skin of my teeth) to get to college to study Art/Design. I felt way out of my depth, having zero confidence in my ability. Well having no confidence ... full stop.

Having been reprimanded repeatedly about my lack of commitment (getting stoned in the common room all day!) soon it came to a head. All three tutors confronted me, my heart sank. I felt humiliated and defeated. I walked from the college and refused to draw again ... until I came to prison. I lasted only three months at college.

# TO ME

I began to paint and draw prolifically staying up all night doing so and for the first time was getting real positivity. People noticed I was good and encouraged me.

My confidence soared. Art to me is like an elixir, I hunger to learn more and more. I contemplate, read and watch films. I adore such artists such as Otto Dix, George Grosz, Max Beckmann, Egon Schiele and of course Francis Bacon. To feed my imagination I read literature by Franz Kafka, William Burroughs, Samuel Beckett and Dante.

I like the idea that we all belong to a greater collective consciousness which I feel my work entails, some sort of archaic remnants, where every now and then subliminal blips of truth are unveiled to us, a time long ago yet still imprinted in the fabric of our sub-conscious that once belonged to our conscious minds. I pull at these and play with them. To some, my work may seem dark and disturbing but what it is, is honest and if viewers are honest with themselves they can relate with the emotions even if they don't know why, like it triggers that "collective" memory in us all.

A lot of my work is also from dreams/nightmares so straight from the roots of my sub-conscious. I often paint, crumbling, deteriorating houses, a metaphor for my own anxiety and mental illness, imprisoned with my own body.

**"With art  
I am re-born...  
I see the world  
anew with the  
eyes of an  
artist"**

Most of my art is to do with my own exhausting "non-ability" to control my emotions and mind leading me to feel emotionally crippled. It seems the only paintings that have any "peace" are of my partner.

Getting my work shown at the Royal Festival Hall Koestler Exhibition is the best feeling ever. My family get to see my work and are proud, and for the first time I am proud of myself. My confidence flies, re-affirming the fact that I am good, giving me

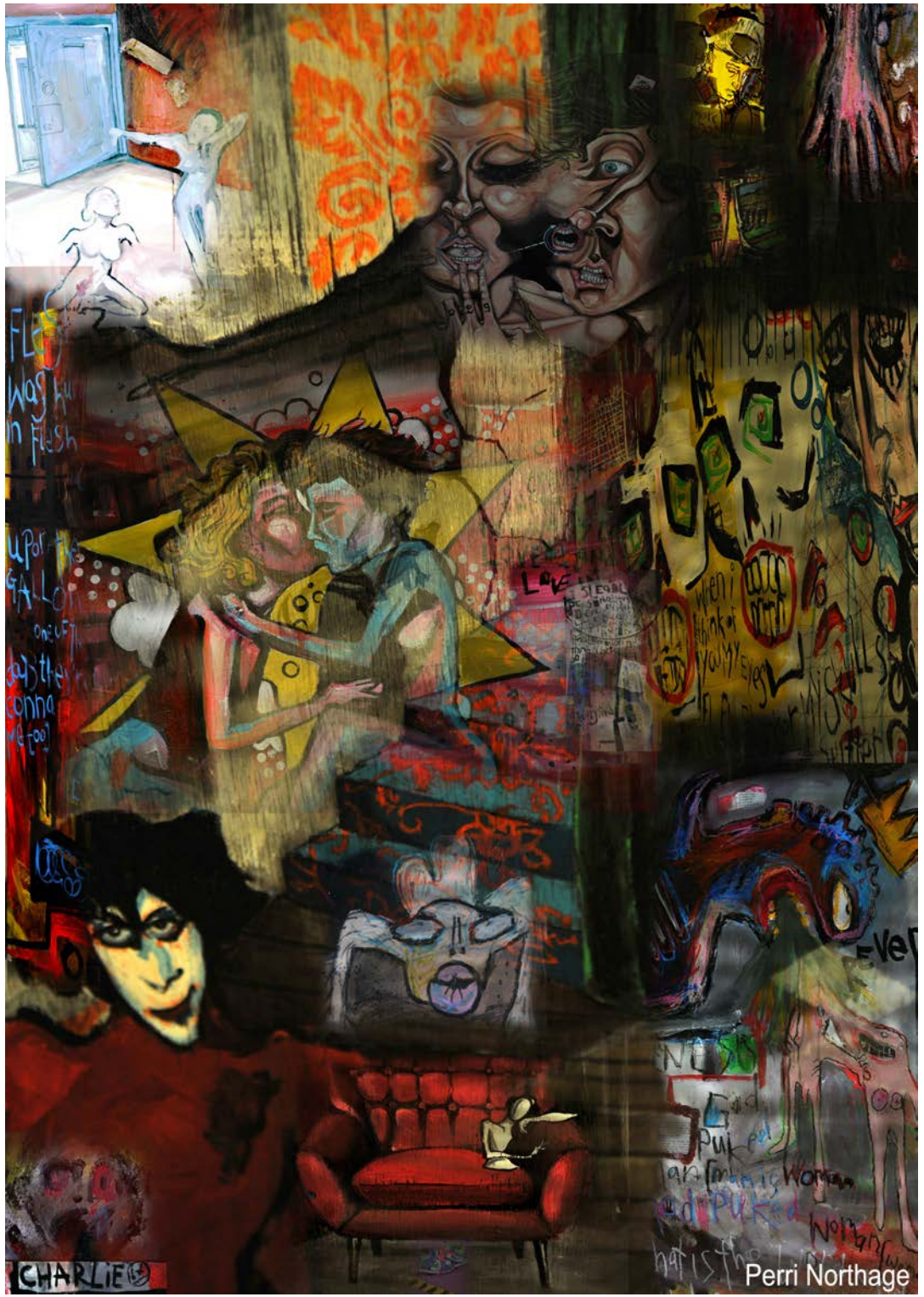
the encouragement to pursue a career in art.

I work all year round for the Koestler, it's such a brilliant scheme, not just for prisoners but also their families. It helps to alter perceptions reaching to the wider public and give me a voice "beyond the wall".

The feedback I receive puts me on a high, winning awards, judges comments and

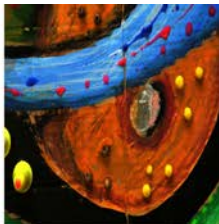
I just can't wait to see the public's comments. It's all so valuable to me. Without Koestler there would be a massive void in my life.

With art I am re-born ... I see the world anew with the eyes of an artist. Art is my heroin, I am filled up always pushing myself on further in pursuit of some cryptic enigma that I must unscramble and understand.



CHARLIE

Perri Northage



Charlie Nokes  
27.10.77 - 23.07.16

A bright star struggling in a dark sky  
Aching to be heard and not to cry

Struggling with demons of the mind  
But searching endlessly waiting to find

The path, the orbit, the way to exist  
Life is unkind at times, a bitter twist

Passion, commitment and talent pure  
Always hoping there would be a cure

The chaos became sheer raw magic  
It's why this feels even more tragic

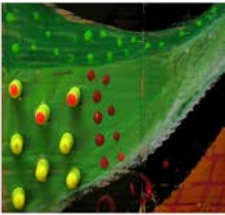
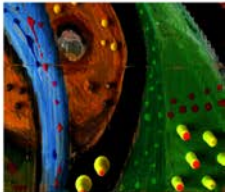
But in true Charlie's style, let's loudly shout  
Let's get the voices and hidden words out

Don't let Art be forgotten or taken away  
It's one thing in prisons that has to stay

Fight if we must, create a vision  
Art must be kept, it's just not a decision

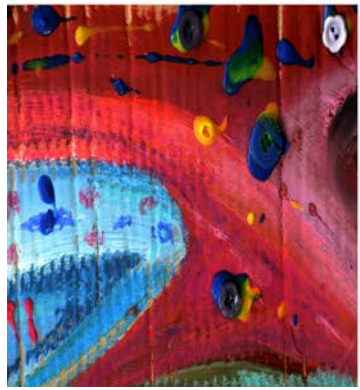
For a star that touched so many souls  
It will also now leave such huge holes

Pick up that brush, paint what you dream  
It's yours, it's not only what it seems



Take belief from someone who started with none  
Now she is painting with the best, now she is one  
Perri Northgate

CHARLIE







# FORMER IPP WENDY SHARES... 10 THINGS THAT MAKE YOU REALISE YOU ARE FINALLY FREE

It is hard for \*IPP's to picture the future and it's so easy to give up hope. A couple of years ago, I never dreamt I'd be doing the things that I'm doing now – and I've only been out of jail for 11 weeks! You know you're finally free when you can...

1. WEAR RIDICULOUSLY HIGH HEELS AGAIN (THE BLISTERS WERE WORTH IT!)
  2. DANCE IN THE RAIN AT PRIDE (AND NOT CARE ABOUT LOOKING LIKE A DROWNED RAT)
  3. HIDE A BOTTLE OF WINE IN YOUR HANDBAG AT THE THEATRE AND TRY NOT TO GET CAUGHT DRINKING IT!
  4. BUY A PINK HAIR DYE (JUST BECAUSE IT CATCHES YOUR EYE) AND PUT PINK STREAKS IN YOUR HAIR.
  5. SIT IN BED AND WATCH BACK-TO-BACK EPISODES OF "LIP SERVICE" (THEN REMEMBER YOU'VE GOT TO BE UP FOR WORK IN SIX HOURS).
  6. DRINK COFFEE IN THE GARDEN WEARING A BAMBI ONESIE.
  7. HAVE A SQUIRREL SIT ON YOUR LEG AND EAT OUT OF YOUR HAND.
  8. CLIMB 60FT ABOVE THE PIER, STEP OUT INTO THIN AIR, THEN ZIP WIRE 250FT BACK TO THE BEACH.
  9. SPEND A WHOLE WEEK'S WAGES ON A NEW TATTOO (THANK GOD FOR OVERTIME)!
  10. BOOK A TANDEM SKYDIVE (ITS ONLY 2½ MILES IN THE AIR!)
- THAT'S WHAT FREEDOM FEELS LIKE!!!!!!!**  
(EITHER THAT OR I'M HAVING MID-LIFE CRISIS!)

*\*IPP - Indeterminate Prison Sentence for Public Protection*

# THE PEN POISED

JH on the debt to herself and others.

*Illustration by Kee*

**T**he pen was poised in my hand, the knuckles scarred from years of scrubbing. A hand not afraid of – or unknown to – hard work. The pen was just what one expected: elegant in style, long and thin, containing ink the colour of the sea. I'd had this pen a long time, unused, given to me by a friend – now departed along with her memory.

The pen doesn't just symbolise the past; the ink reflects the future. With every single drop of ink I would be able to free myself from the torture of my soul. I'd dreamt of this moment for years.

In my cell alone at night I'd cry; my body wracked with guilt for what I'd done, as I think of the pain I'd inflicted. Tears course from my eyes. I'd often dream of what I'd do when "out for good". For now, I shall attempt to hold on to memories of better times of my life before it changed on that summer's night.

Since then, the days have melted into weeks then fused into months and finally years. The seasons continued changing but my inner turmoil never seemed to lessen.

As the heat of the season subsided and

the leaves turned golden, I went along my daily routine, all I could do to pass the time that seemed to slow the nearer I came to release. As I scrubbed at the tiles on the floor, my back ached but my hands continued working regardless.

My mind did its utmost to focus on the future that I'd like – a future that, one day, will be here. Although I will be older in body and mind, I know that what I want to do is right not only for my inner demons but for the other women who have shared their stories with me. Stories of heartbreak, of guilt, of misled families, of children growing up without parents, their young faces fading into the abyss, time slipping by but still trusting that one day, all will be different. >>



Sorry



Now the time is here, the pen poised in my hand. I'm terrified of starting to write, of letting the ink touch the paper, letting go of all the emotions I've held inside, hidden for so long in the dark cave of my soul.

Am I able to cope with that? The outpouring of the emotions that I have bottled up so well over the years, only crying alone in my cell at night, so no one saw the real me...

The frightened infant just wanting a mother's hug that it couldn't have. Everyone around saw me as the hard-working, all-consuming type of person that put their best into everything, 110%. The one who could

be relied on, no matter how dirty the job or delicate the subject. I never appeared fazed outwardly; I was the one who could stand on the edge of a crowd, not joining in with the jeering or cheering but observing, reaching for the dangled threads of knowledge. I knew every strand would help me in my future decisions.

Now that day is upon me. I am out for good – my licence conditions now expired for almost three weeks. My life stretches ahead of me full of promise. The sun is illuminating this bright July day; the breeze gently fluttering the paper I hold like a butterfly preparing to fly.

That's how I feel. I have emerged from my cocoon and I am ready, finally, to be me and fly free – but first I must write.

So with the pen poised in my hand, I bring myself back to the here and now. My hand trembles; my heart pounds; I must begin and let the first word escape – the first word I always knew would be the hardest. The first word written not only for me but for everyone's story I've heard and every tear shed.

The first word, "sorry", emerges from the pen poised in my hand. The ink flowing freely now like the years of tears outpouring like a dam that has burst, all debris moved swiftly out of the way by the swirling whirlpool of my emotions. I feel as if I'm finally out for good, not only physically but emotionally. My tortured soul is healing from the pen poised in my hand.

# SWIMMING

BY LYN BARLOW - IN CARE AS A CHILD;  
IMPRISONED MANY TIMES AS A GREENHAM  
COMMON ACTIVIST. SHE WENT ON TO GAIN A  
PLACE AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY AND BECOME  
A POET. SWIMMING IS FROM HER 2000 PUBLISHED  
COLLECTION OF POEMS, "JARRED MEMORIES".

My mother paid for the lessons  
three times a week at the local pool  
My instructor, Mr Siever  
worked us hard.  
He said I was good  
could go all they way.  
At the end of each session  
he'd make us race a length  
he gave the others a start.  
I, being his best, would catch  
them up and win.

He taught us how to dive  
lined us up, five at a time,  
perched on the edge of the deep end  
he would then proceed to hit  
the front of our ankles  
with a long wooden pole  
teaching us how to flip.

I was too young to realise  
just how good I was and,  
lacking the commitment,  
I dropped out.  
Now, much older, I contemplate  
how my life would have been  
if I'd swum to stardom.  
Now, I swim for pleasure  
slowly making my way up  
and down the pool  
no longer special.

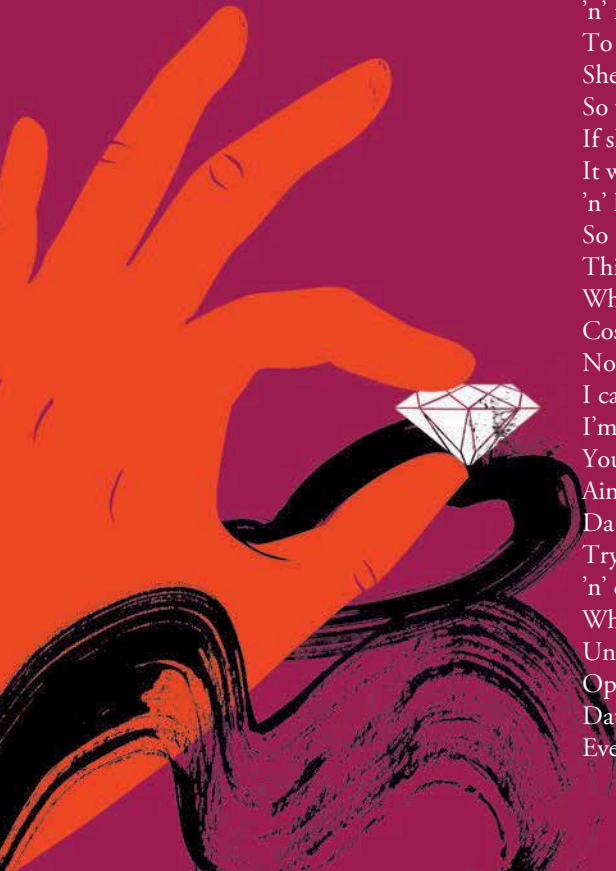


# DIAMOND IN DA ROUGH

RAP LYRICS BY NATALIE

I'm back in the jail, dis ain't a game  
3 years 6 months down da gavel came  
It's hard for my family  
But I didn't care  
Now I'm staring at the bars,  
Ain't going nowhere  
Dis shit jars, so I'm writing bars  
To try get me through da trouble  
I've brewed  
But I'm here now, though I ain't proud  
I'm turning it round  
Hand brake turn  
360 burn, smoking and smoking  
Until I learn  
Jail ain't da answer  
I'll always be a grafter

But it's knowledge and support  
I'm really after  
Now Holloway ain't cutting  
So der shutting it  
Shutting it down, knocking it down  
All for the government to earn more pounds  
They don't care but if they only knew  
I'm a diamond in da rough  
Tryin' to shine thru  
So why I'm tryin' to shine  
I'm making da most of  
To be a better person  
Surely dis shit can't worsen  
Maybe I'll just shut da curtains  
And stop all my hurting  
I just wanna be happy  
'n' meet some 1 dat'll attract me  
To more than just der batty  
She needs some personality  
So we can be compatibly happy  
If she ain't got dat  
It won't last, it'll just be a fast  
'n' like every other gal in my past  
So I ain't wasting no more time  
Thinking its all fine  
When really it's a big joke  
Cos she end up fucking some bloke  
No more waste gal for me  
I can't deal wiv da fuckeree  
I'm in a good place now  
Young free and single  
Ain't getting dragged down  
Da only way is up from here  
Tryin' to remember da taste of beer  
'n' da stars at night  
When it's nice and clear  
Until then I'm sitting here  
Optimistic and wiv no fear  
Dat my future can be good  
Even if I am a gal from da hood!!



# INNER STRENGTH

BY LLATOYA-JADE

I am a woman I must stand tall,  
To be strong within myself and pick myself up when I fall  
I'm somebody's Daughter, Auntie, Sister or Mother  
There's a lot about ourselves we still need to discover  
Have faith and believe in yourself and fight to the bitter end  
Broken relationships past and present it's not too late to mend  
For every hurdle and obstacle that comes your way,  
Just think I'll get through this, come what may  
Come hell or high water  
I refuse to be the lamb to a slaughter  
Break me down with your words of insults  
I will not crumble  
If it's an argument you're looking for you won't get it,  
Cos I'll remain humble  
Being a woman ain't easy one little bit,  
God knows we have to put up with a lot of shit  
So remember, women, you're beautiful  
and shine like the brightest star in the night sky  
Grab life's pleasures and opportunities and never let it pass you by





# WORDSEARCH

Find the words – time yourself!



BOSS

CAMPAIGNER

QUILT

STRENGTH

BUSINESS

CREATE

VOICE





## 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.**

# 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](mailto:info@womeninprison.org.uk)



Meet the Minister – Liz Truss

Actress Zawe Ashton talks to RSG!

Holloway quilt in Parliament

Luminary Bakery -  
cupcakes post-prison

Heavy Metal A-Z

Jokes

Wordsearch

Young Women's Art Awards  
& daytime TV stars

All Yours: art & stories

Agony Aunts

### 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

Turning the page

reading, writing and the power  
of finding your own voice

+

Interviews, advice,  
recipes, jokes

and we'd love to  
hear from you