

# READY STEADY GO!

## PROCESSIONS

### Make More Noise!

We celebrate  
100 years  
since (some)  
women  
received  
the vote

### Yes You Can!

How improving  
your education  
can change  
your life



### Have Your Say!

Pull out questionnaire

We want to hear from you!

# Got something to say?

We want to hear from you and would love to publish your letters, opinions, articles, poems and artwork in this magazine.

Send your work to us for free, on the envelope write:

freepost **WOMEN IN PRISON**

(In capitals - no need for a stamp)

Don't forget to publish your work we also need you to complete and include a consent form – see page 65

**I**t's been an incredibly hectic few months for us in Women in Prison with so much going on in the prison system and on the issues on which we campaign. The PROCESSIONS event [front cover and P10] in London was one of our proudest moments - marching to Parliament as the Suffragettes did with beautiful banners created by the women of HMP Foston Hall, HMP Downview, Clean Break and women's centres in Birmingham (Anawim Women's Centre) and Lambeth (The Beth Centre). It was a wonderful celebration of the 100-year anniversary of the Suffragettes winning their campaign and so important to us that women in prison were there in spirit and represented by their banners. Now we are working to ensure that the Government implements the long awaited 'Female Offenders Strategy' (published in June) and which we are referring to as the 'Women's Justice Strategy' [P16]. It will only be a strategy for women's justice if your voices are at its heart. Please do respond to the questions at the centre of the magazine [P31] and use our freepost address or give to our staff (there'll be a prize draw for £20 which all respondents will be entered into).



Kate

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF WOMEN IN PRISON

The magazine you are reading is free for all women affected by the criminal justice system in the UK. We send copies 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 at Freepost WOMEN IN PRISON info@womeninprison.org.uk.

Editor Claire Cain Art direction & production Henry Obasi & Russell Moorcroft @PPaint

Chief sub-editor Martine Lignon Production Advisor Yvonne Roberts

#### Funding



Ministry of  
**JUSTICE**



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

Registered charity number 1118727

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# About Women in Prison

Women in Prison (WIP) is a national charity founded by a former prisoner, Chris Tchaikovsky in 1983. Today, we provide support and advice in prisons and run three community women's centres - the Beth Centre in Lambeth, London, the Women's Support Centre in Woking, Surrey and WomenMATTA in Manchester.

WIP campaigns to reduce the number of women in prison and for the greater use of sentencing in the community alongside significant investment in support services for women so they can address issues such as trauma, addiction, mental health, substance misuse, domestic

violence, debt and homelessness. These are factors that are often the reasons why women come into contact with the criminal justice system in the first place.

WIP's services are by and for women. The support available varies from prison to prison and depends on where a woman lives in the community. If WIP can't help because of a constraint on its resources, it endeavours to direct women to other charities and organisations that can. WIP believes that a national network of women's centres, properly funded, that provide holistic support, is the most effective and just way to reduce the numbers of women coming before the courts and re-offending.

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## WIP's services include...

- Visits in women's prisons
- Targeted "through the gate" support for women about to be released from prison
- Support for women in the community via our women's centres in London, Woking and Manchester

- A Freephone line and Freepost address for women who wish to contact Women in Prison

- Magazine groups in several women's prisons, with plans to expand further in order to provide women with a channel for their opinions, a way to exercise their rights as active citizens, and an outlet for their creativity.

- RSG! A quarterly magazine written by and for women affected by the criminal justice system

- 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.

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## Got something to say?

Please contact Women in Prison at the FREEPOST address below. Please also send a consent form turn to P65 for details

### Write or call free:

Freepost WOMEN IN PRISON  
National freephone line  
0800 953 0125  
[info@womeninprison.org.uk](mailto:info@womeninprison.org.uk)

WOMEN IN PRISON  
2ND FLOOR,  
ELMFIELD HOUSE  
5 STOCKWELL MEWS  
LONDON  
SW9 9GX  
TEL: 0207 359 6674.

### 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.

**...so can Health Matters help me?** The Health Matters project works with women in HMP Downview and HMP Bronzefield and in the community in London. Unfortunately we are only a small team, which is why we are not able to work in all prisons or across the country. BUT we thought we would share some information and knowledge with all of you, so we put together this health booklet. That way, we can pass on some information and tips about health and well-being, no matter where you are!

**...anything else?** As an organisation, we do our best to support women with any problems they might have. However, we also know that the system is unfair and needs changing. This is why we make the case for change. We tell politicians and other people in power what needs to change about prisons and society to give women a better chance. Because we work in the prisons, we are able to speak to women directly to hear their views and can pass them on to those who make decisions. This project is no different. We know that healthcare in prisons is not perfect and it can sometimes be difficult to get the appointments you want. We also know that many women don't get all the support they need in the community.

If there is anything about health that you think those in power should know, please let us know by writing to us. We hope that we can help you directly through our work but also that we can help make the entire system a little better by sharing what we learn from you.

Warm wishes,

THE HEALTH MATTERS TEAM

Charmaine Williams,

Frederika Lorie,

Julia Henman,

Sofia Gullberg

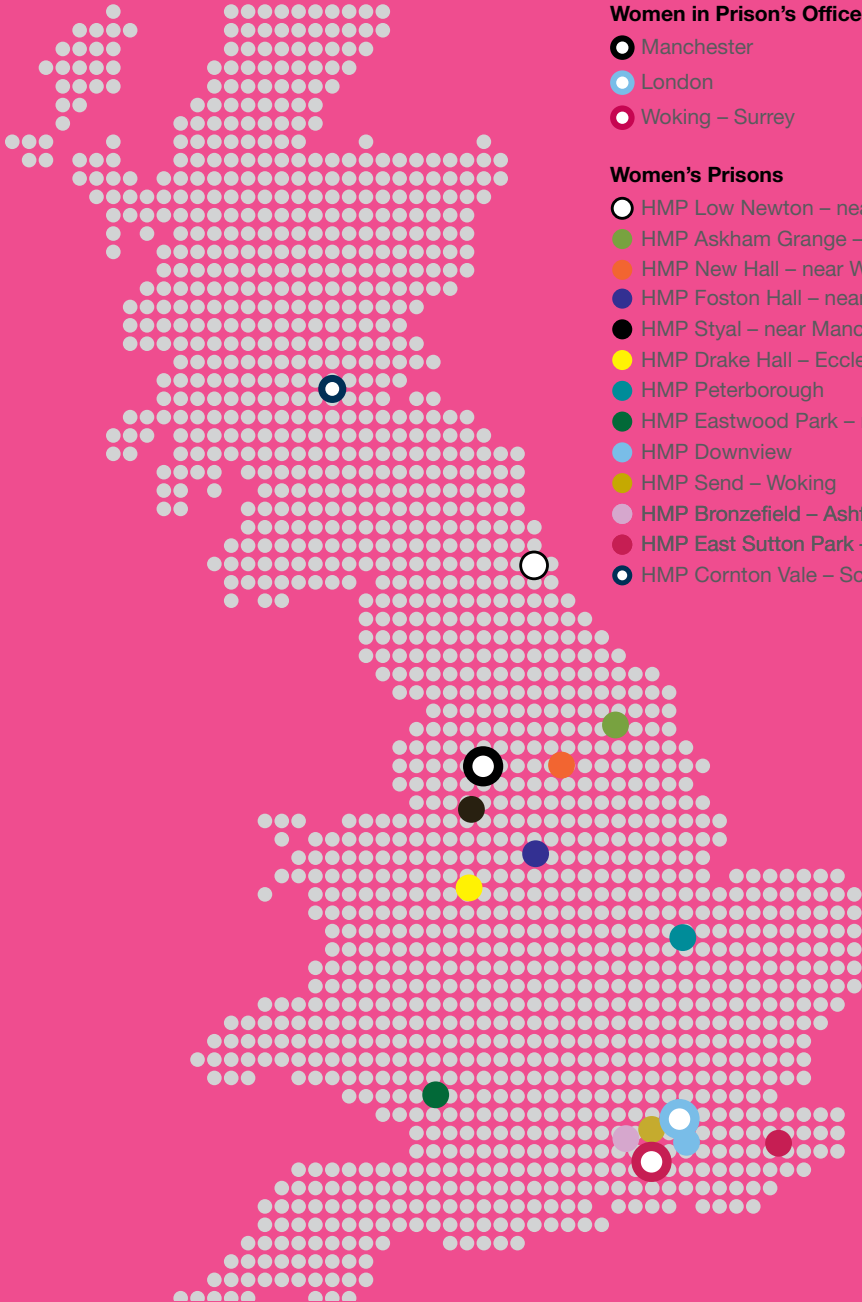
Art direction & production Henry Obasi & Russell Moorcroft @PPaint

Disclaimer: This health booklet is designed to give information, advice, and support around different health conditions and we hope that you find it useful. We are not trained medical professionals. The information presented in the booklet is accurate to the best of our knowledge but please consult with a trained medical member of staff for more extensive information and advice if you have any concerns about your health. Any suggestions in this booklet are purely suggestions and should not be taken as anything more than that.

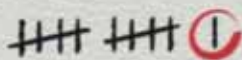
Registered charity number 1118727 Company number 5581944



**LOTTERY FUNDED**







# CENTRE *for* CRIMINAL APPEALS

## WOMEN'S JUSTICE INITIATIVE

HAVE YOU BEEN WRONGFULLY CONVICTED OR  
SENTENCED?

We are a charity law practice. We challenge miscarriages of justice arising out of the courts of England and Wales. We do not charge our clients for legal representation.

We support **women** who:

Want to appeal a sentence  
for a **minor, non-**  
**violent** crime.

Have been convicted of  
harming or killing  
someone who **abused** them.

Maintain that they are  
**innocent**.

Didn't have their **mental**  
**health** properly considered  
when sentenced.

We are a small charity with limited resources, so will not be able to take on every case. However, we will read and respond to every letter that comes to us.



**contact us**

2-10 Princeton  
St, London,  
WC1R 4BH



**include**

crime and sentence,  
outline of your case,  
a **copy** of  
any documents you  
have relating to your  
case



**remember**

mark the envelope  
with "Rule 39" so it  
remains  
confidential

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**“She  
believed  
she could,  
so she  
did.”**

**“Don’t  
aim to break  
the glass  
ceiling; aim to  
shatter it.”**



88%

OF PEOPLE IN PRISON WHO TAKE UP OPEN UNIVERSITY COURSES COMPLETE THEIR COURSES AND

PASS!

MORE THAN

95 employers

INCLUDING BOOTS, VIRGIN TRAINS AND THE CIVIL SERVICE, HAVE SIGNED UP TO 'BAN THE BOX' - REMOVING THE NEED FOR PEOPLE LEAVING PRISON TO DISCLOSE THEIR CONVICTIONS AT THE INITIAL APPLICATION STAGE.

IN 2017 WOMEN REPRESENTED JUST UNDER HALF OF THE TOTAL UK LABOUR FORCE

>>

46.5%

MORE WOMEN ARE WORKING THAN EVER BEFORE.

TODAY, OVER

70%

OF WOMEN AGED 16 - 64 ARE EMPLOYED.

WOMEN

THERE ARE MORE WOMEN ON UK BOARDS THAN EVER BEFORE!

OVER

100

PRISONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES HAVE INSTALLED VIRTUAL CAMPUS, AN IT PLATFORM WHICH PROVIDES EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES.

2500

PRISONERS' EDUCATION TRUST FUNDED NEARLY 2,500 DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES ACROSS 200 COURSES - FROM HORTICULTURE TO ANIMAL CARE - IN 2017.

1,500

THE RELEASE ON TEMPORARY LICENCE (ROTL) SCHEME ALLOWS PEOPLE IN PRISON TO WORK OR VOLUNTEER ON DAY-RELEASE. LAST YEAR, THERE WERE OVER 1,500 PEOPLE WORKING OUTSIDE PRISON ON LICENCE.

# STR8 UP!

NEWS AND VIEWS

THIS ISSUE

- PROCESSIONS
- AFTER HOLLOWAY
- WOMEN'S JUSTICE
- #PRIDEMATTERS





# Processions: Make More Noise!

**W**omen and girls from across the UK join together for a once-in-a-lifetime mass participation artwork to celebrate one hundred years of votes for women.

One hundred years ago the women's activist group the Suffragettes won British women, for the first time, the right to vote and stand as an MP in Parliament. To celebrate this victory for women's rights Women in Prison took part in the project PROCESSIONS where women and girls from across the country gathered together and recreated the first march of the Suffragettes through London. We were asked to create one of 100 specially designed banners to mark the occasion. Women in HMP Foston Hall, the Beth Centre in London and Anawim Women's Centre in Birmingham worked together to stitch, craft and design a beautiful and striking banner which we named FREEDOM. Led by the artist Lucy Tamnam, we were inspired by the branding and colours used by the Suffragettes as well as symbols to represent the fights and struggle for women who are affected by the criminal justice system today.

The theatre company Clean Break also took part in PROCESSIONS by creating a banner led by the artist and theatre designer Miriam Nabarro. Using a piece of 100-year-old linen, their banner featured 'voteless not voiceless' women, inspired by a slogan used in 1918. The banner explores barriers that women today still face in having their voices heard, and raises awareness of the fact that, in the UK, those in prison are still not entitled to vote, as well as many survivors of domestic and sexual violence who are concerned that being on the electoral register (which is necessary to vote) would place them at risk.

Led by the artist Lucy Orta and commissioned by Historic England, women in HMP Downview also participated in PROCESSIONS by creating several banners with the London College of Fashion and the Making For Change vocational fashion education project located in the prison. Women in HMP Downview created banners to connect with the legacy of the now closed HMP Holloway where many of the Suffragettes were imprisoned during their campaign. The women in HMP Downview won a Gold Koestler Award for their work - a fantastic achievement!

*All the banners are now going on a year-long exhibition tour. See [www.processions.co.uk](http://www.processions.co.uk) for details.*









# After Holloway

BY CLAIRE CAIN, POLICY & CAMPAIGNS MANAGER AT WOMEN IN PRISON

**T**hank you to all of you who responded to our questionnaire about the closure of HMP Holloway. WIP wanted to understand whether and how the closure had had an impact on women affected by the criminal justice system. We also wanted to hear your ideas for what could be built now on the empty prison site.

WIP published a report on this questionnaire in partnership with the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. Your responses told us that:

- The closure of Holloway had, and continues to have, a significant negative impact on women affected by the criminal justice system.
- The redevelopment of the Holloway site should include specialist housing for women affected by the criminal justice system.
- Support services for mental health and domestic violence were identified as a key need to be met on the site.
- The Holloway site should be used to support and empower women.
- The redevelopment should acknowledge

that the site was a prison of historical significance.

The majority of responses to the questionnaire called for the site to be used for Council Housing, Supported Housing and a Women's Centre. Other ideas for the site included a centre offering arts and crafts and an on-site café; an environmental centre to grow fruit and vegetables; Animal Rescue Centre; Eco-Housing Community.

*After Holloway* was reported on in the Huffington Post and the i newspaper.

Women in Prison is campaigning for a Women's Building to be built on the site - a place for lots of organisations supporting women to be based, a central hub for art, social enterprise, and campaigning for the rights of women. This idea has strong support from the Local Planning Authority which is Islington Council. At the time of writing, the site is still up for sale with no buyer confirmed.

*Find a copy of After Holloway in your prison library or go to [www.womeninprison.org.uk/research/reports.php](http://www.womeninprison.org.uk/research/reports.php)*







# Women's Justice Strategy

BY CLAIRE CAIN POLICY & CAMPAIGNS MANAGER AT WOMEN IN PRISON

The Ministry of Justice has published the Female Offender Strategy (which we refer to as the Women's Justice Strategy), a report which sets out the direction for women and the criminal justice system for the next 5-10 years.

#### The key points are:

- Greater focus on community solutions and support to prevent or divert women away from prison this includes Women's Centres and police-led diversion programmes.
- New pilots for five residential women's centres across England and Wales.
- An end to plans to build five community prisons for women.
- An in-depth review into keeping in contact with family, especially children, for women in prison.

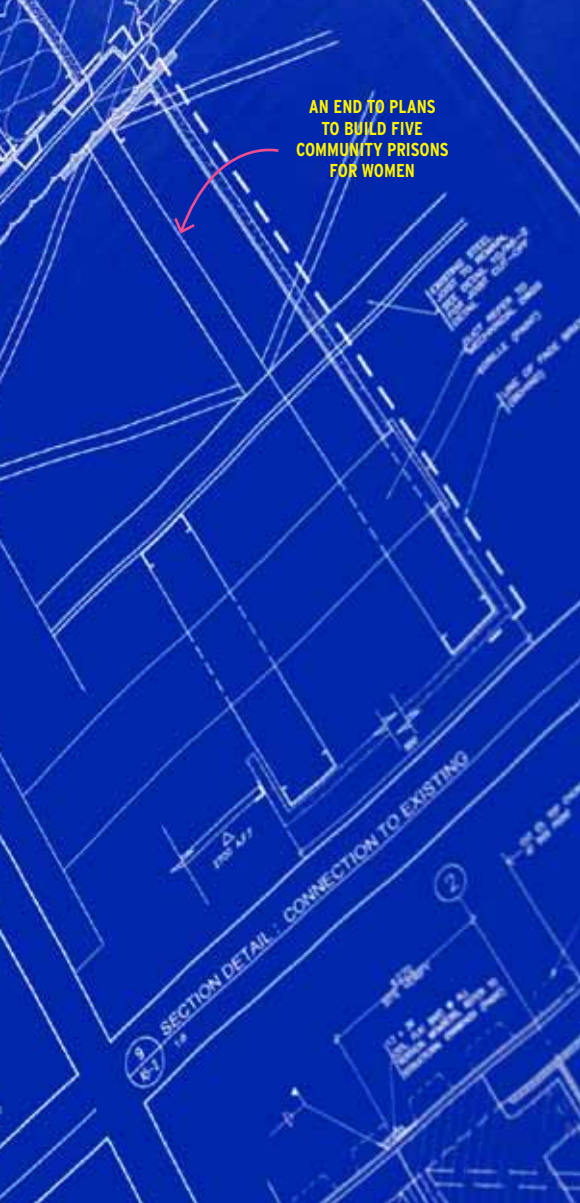
Women in Prison has stood firm over the last couple of years against the building of more prisons for women. Instead we have called for investment in community support to prevent women coming into contact

## Tell us your thoughts on the Strategy

you can read the report at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-offender-strategy](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-offender-strategy) or ask your prison library for a copy.

Turn to P65 for details on how to write to us.

with the criminal justice system in the first place and as an alternative to custody. We are therefore delighted that the plan to build five prisons has been scrapped. We also agree with the Strategy's emphasis



AN END TO PLANS TO BUILD FIVE COMMUNITY PRISONS FOR WOMEN

SECTION DETAIL: CONNECTION TO EXISTING

on community support and diversion programmes. However in order to achieve the vision set out in the Strategy which we believe could lead to a reduction in women's prison population there needs to be funding, which at present is completely insufficient. The next stage in the campaign is to call for this funding particularly for community-based Women's Centres.

# STR8 UP!



## #PRIDEMATTERS

Women from the Beth Centre, a London-based Women's Centre run by Women in Prison, attended this year's Pride in London. We joined the annual Parade through the heart of London to celebrate, and be part of the platform giving a voice and visibility to the LGBTQ+ community. Pride in London is a real chance to showcase your creative side, take inspiration from the rainbow flag and wear lots of colour. To prepare for the Parade we ran workshops to

create really bright and striking tie-dyed t-shirts. Our banner read "Let your light shine so brightly that others can see their way out of the dark". Throughout the world and in the UK men and women are still imprisoned both directly or indirectly as a result of their sexuality or gender identity and as with every march, parade or celebration that WIP attends we joined to show solidarity with those in prison and to raise awareness of the road to justice and equality that still needs to be walked down.

## IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, READ OR SPEAK ENGLISH LIFE IN PRISON CAN BE VERY ISOLATING AND FRUSTRATING.

All prisons should provide support, translation services and information in different languages but they should also provide the opportunity for women in prison to learn or improve their English language skills. ESOL classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages) should be available in the prison's education department. ESOL specialist **Jenny Roden** tells us about a class at HMP Downview and a new pilot workshop programme from **The Reading Agency** to make learning English more fun, creative and effective.

**A** year ago I came to HMP Downview to talk with women in the English Language (ESOL) class about what they like reading. It was part of a project for The Reading Agency. Its aim was to produce a booklist of titles that would be interesting for people with ESOL needs in prison. This year, in the project's second year, we wanted ESOL prisoners themselves to write the texts. Instead of reading books by other people they could read work by other women in prison whose first language is not English. Turn to page 20 for a selection of pieces they produced, illustrated by writers. Thank you to everyone who took part. We have developed a pack of materials and guidance for other prisons wishing to run their own workshops.

The following pieces and artwork over the page were created by women in the ESOL class in HMP Downview. The workshops involved bringing in items to stimulate the senses and get the creative juices flowing. They included a cinnamon teabag, some chocolate, a beeswax candle, pebbles, shells, and a model boat. At the end of the course we held an art session to

illustrate the pieces the class had written.

ESOL class participant Patricia said: "I enjoyed the ESOL creative session because I had to create stories using my imagination. I love writing and I had the chance to do it in these workshops, I created beautiful poems. These sessions were helpful because they helped me to improve my English writing and I enjoyed all the objects remembering special moments in my childhood and my life outside"

ESOL class participant Zaretti said: "In ESOL class I have learned so much. In the beginning I couldn't speak and understand the language. I am glad that now I can speak, understand and write English. Today I can speak five different languages. The workshop motivated me to progress in my writing and also speaking, but I can use it for the future. I enjoyed writing the poems because it was nice memories to think back to when I was young. I started to read books from the library and go to ESOL class that helps me a lot and I keep watching TV."

*For more information go to [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)*





Here are some Quick Reads that have been chosen for English language learners. *The library should have books like these and other much shorter books for people just starting to learn English.*

### ONE FALSE MOVE

by Dreda Say Mitchell

A gritty novel set on the Devil's Estate in London, the same setting as the author's *Flesh and Blood* trilogy. How can Hayley stay out of prison and save her baby?

### I AM MALALA

by Malala Yousafzai

The true story of how a young girl was shot by the Taliban for speaking out in support of education. It will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world.

### FEEL THE FEAR AND DO IT ANYWAY

by Susan Jeffers

Everyone has worries that can stop them reaching for the things that they really want in life. Try this self-help guide on how to increase your confidence.

### Cadbury by Zaretti

When I was eight I had  
my first taste

Of Cadbury's chocolate  
and it was great

It took me straight to  
the moon

I never wanted to come back soon

My grandmother said  
'not too much sweet'

Because it's bad for  
your teeth.

After I came back from  
the moon

I had to brush my teeth

Wanneer ik was acht had  
ik mijn eerste smaak

Van Cadbury's chocolate  
en het was heerlijk

Op dat moment ik was in  
de zevende hemel

En ik wilde nooit terug komen

Mijn grootmoeder zeg,  
niet veel van eten

Omdat het is niet goed  
voor je tanden.

Nadat ik terug was gekomen van  
de zevende hemel

Moest ik me tanden gaan poetsen

### The Beach by Zaretti

I remember when I was first  
in Germany. I stayed in an  
apartment in the middle of  
the mountains. I felt so  
peaceful and I wanted to stay  
there forever.

In the morning, when I woke  
up, I opened my windows and I  
could smell the air and hear  
the birds, and I could see  
people going to milk the cows.  
Sometimes I went for a walk  
and stood by the river. I  
would even drink water out  
of the river. It was very cold  
water, as if I had taken it out  
of the fridge.

### The Beach by Patricia

I love the beach  
I love the sensation in my  
body when I go in and the  
water hugs me.

When I was a child I used to  
collect all kinds of pebbles  
and that made me feel  
happy.

Now I'm older and I enjoy  
going there with my son. I  
watch him swimming and  
playing with the sand.

I love the beach. It makes me  
feel at peace.





## Pho by Thi

When I smelled the bag of cinnamon tea, it reminded me of when I was outside here. I cooked pho. When I cook a pot of pho, I need to add these ingredients:

Cinnamon  
Star food  
Spring onion  
Bean sprouts  
Vermicelli  
Sliced beef,  
with the beef bone  
Sliced chicken -  
4 whole chickens  
Coriander  
Mint  
Lemon

Fresh chilli or chilli sauce  
Fresh sliced onion with sugar vinegar  
When I write this list of ingredients it reminds me that I miss my family very much. I can't wait until the day I cook pho again for my family and friends. After we finished eating pho I would make a cup of iced coffee and drink it. It was very delicious.



## Memories by Patricia

The smell of oranges always reminds me of my best friend Leonor and her 'morir sonando' juice. She always prepared this delicious juice for me.

The smell of soap always reminds me of my childhood, when my mum showered me. We enjoyed these moments. The candle reminds me of my house in Spain. I used to burn candles to feel the essence of its perfume.

## The Sea by Aleksandra

I don't like the sea  
I prefer the mountains and forest

I feel fresh and free  
I love the big trees, the green grass and peacefulness around me  
The fresh air allows me to breathe.

Little wind is like a song

**ALL  
YOURS!**

**PAINTINGS, POEMS,  
STORIES & MORE  
— ALL BY YOU**



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# WALK IN MY SHOES

Thank you for taking part in our national writing and art competition for women held in prison. This year the theme was Walk in My Shoes and we received a wonderful variety of pieces, some sad, funny, powerful and thought provoking which really showcased an enormous amount of talent.

Over the next few pages please find a small selection from the hundreds of entries we received. This includes the 1st place winner from the art and writing categories as well as the recipient of this year's Charlie Award.

## What is the Charlie Award?

The Charlie Award is in tribute to a highly talented and inspirational artist who lived with mental health issues and found the best way of expressing her emotions was through her artwork. By creating art on a daily basis she found a therapeutic outlet to support her life in prison. Charlie initially had no belief in her talent but she sought advice and was given encouragement and she refused to give up. Gradually, she was recognised as an artist, winning many prizes in the annual Koestler Awards. Mental ill health impacts on many people either directly or indirectly because a friend or member of a family is affected. Being creative, either by writing or drawing, has been known to significantly improve and support good mental health.

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5 FREEDOM FEATHERS  
BY FIWILLOLL,  
HMP SEND



## LONELY NIGHTS

*by Tracey, HMP New Hall*

Being in care was lonely from a very young age  
 I was on my own  
 People that came into my life would come and go  
 No one to turn to!  
 No one to care about my day events!  
 No one to wipe my tears!  
 No one to care what I really wanted!  
 No one to love me and hug me!  
 No one to listen to me!  
 I'm a true survivor and a true fighter  
 But I have no medals - just scars!  
 In time I have learnt that all these problems  
 were piled upon me  
 And none of them were mine  
 I never stood a chance in life with  
 everyone else's luggage  
 Piled on me at such a young age  
 It was like wearing everybody else's clothes  
 As I grew I lifted them off  
 Layer by layer - and found me!

## MAYFLY'S IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

*by Heather, HMP Bronzefield*

Mayfly's impossible dream  
 Of different flying  
 Left him no time for coupling  
 Yet his dream of love, for one day  
 Was still undying  
 Today, you can be me, and I  
 Shall be a Mayfly, dreaming  
 Today, for as long as you can make it last  
 You can have my life, and I, with your  
 Wings, flying, shall dream of love  
 And not of early dying  
 Today, you may walk my floor and  
 Read my books; drink my coffee  
 Stir my thoughts around your head  
 Take my shower, eat my food  
 Read my mail, sleep in  
 My bed  
 For Mayfly's impossible dream  
 Of different flying, left him no time  
 For coupling, yes his dream of love  
 For one day, was still  
 Undying

## ALL YOURS

1ST PLACE WINNER

## IT'S ALL ABOUT SHOES

by Diana, HMP Drake Hall

My first pair were black patent, I used to help Mum shine them. She said I looked beautiful.

My favourite pair were red, perfect to match my St David's Day outfit. I was seven. Mum said I looked beautiful. So, did Grandad, he really liked them.

I got my first pair of platform shoes at fifteen, from my first boyfriend. He said I looked beautiful. Even after he beat me and marked my face, I was still beautiful.

I bought my own shoes after that.

The gold stilettos, the leather bondage boots to stamp on them. The punters said I looked beautiful.

My granddaughter bought me my first pair of trainers, ever, to come to prison with. I love them! I think they are beautiful.

I think I know myself now after nearly two years in these shoes.

All the years I spent thinking I was beautiful because all the men in my life told me so.

That was an ugly life spent in the wrong shoes.

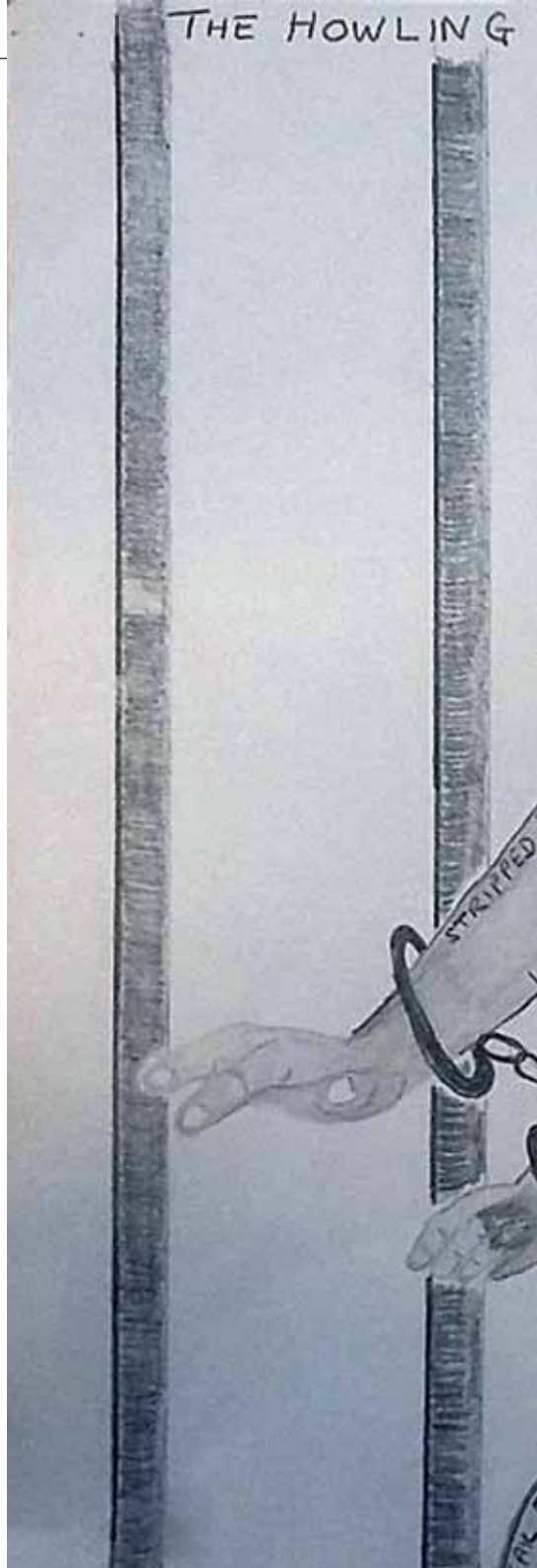
At 55, I am no longer beautiful to men, but my real beauty, I know is still inside me.

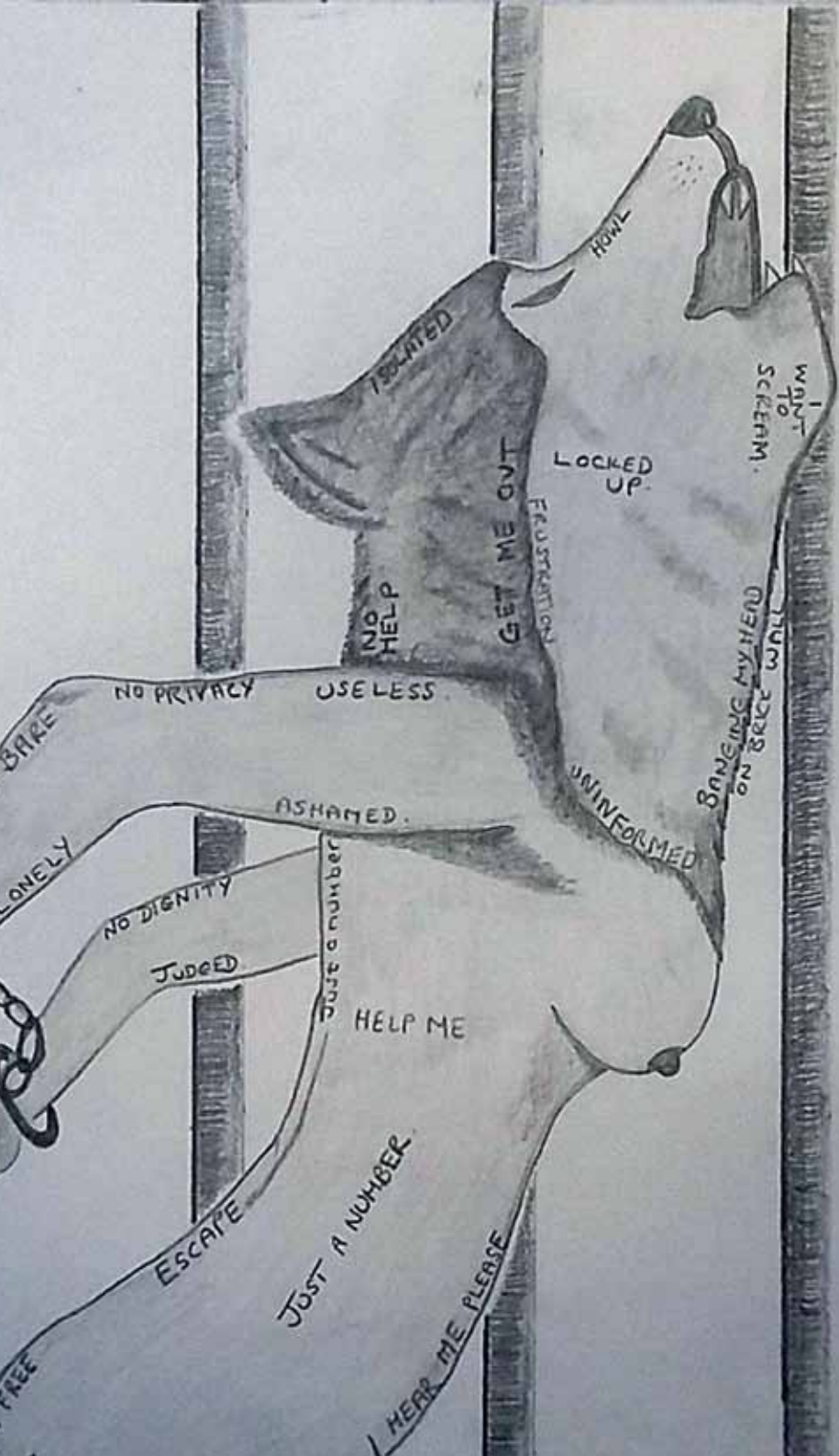
Maybe the Shoe Shop I'll visit when I get out on the road again, will sell the shoes I need to help me change my life.

A punter once said to me 'it's all about the shoes'.

Well it's not anymore for me.

Please don't ever walk in my shoes, they're ugly.





THE CHARLIE  
AWARD WINNER,  
THE HOWLING  
BY C A MOSEY,  
HMP PETERBOROUGH



## ONLY THIRTEEN

*by Miss Otmani, HMP Foston Hall*

If I could turn back time  
To the age of thirteen  
When I contemplated writing  
A letter to our Queen  
Wanting to let her know  
My family life was a lie  
And to remove me from the household  
For I just wanted to die  
Living in a house  
Endless abuse and violence  
Yearning day after day  
For just a few minutes silence  
Would she even have listened?  
Would the Queen have heard my plea?  
I'm only thirteen  
And they're all picking on me  
I said to my Father  
"I'm going to write to the Queen"  
He said "don't be silly girl  
You are only thirteen"  
Living with a no good mother  
Bitter, twisted and sad  
But I wanted John, the funny guy  
The gentle man, my Dad  
My Father passed away in 1984  
My age was just thirteen  
And now I wish I'd written  
That letter to the Queen  
I didn't want her money  
Or to live in her home  
Perhaps a better Mother  
And some time to call my own  
Somewhere I wouldn't be beaten  
Abused or even starved

You think my life's been easy  
Hell no! It's been hard  
Whilst the Queen was eating Caviar  
I was raiding the neighbour's bins  
Only now I've been convicted  
Of one of the 7 deadly sins  
Now the boot is on the other foot  
The Queen has given me a home  
With 300 other women  
But I want to be alone  
Here in this living space  
Provided by our Queen  
But I'd like to go back  
To the age of thirteen  
These walls I have to live within  
For 17 plus years  
They listen to my nightmares  
My dreams and my fears  
If only I'd sent my letter to the Queen  
She may have just replied  
I could've had a better life  
And my Dad need not have died  
This was my thinking  
At thirteen years young  
When I should have been happy  
Playing and having lots of fun  
If I knew then  
What I know now  
I would've gotten my letter  
To the Queen somehow  
Trying to battle through  
Amidst this chaos and strife  
I'm just a distance Mother  
In this lonely hopeless life

CALM UNDER SABOTAGE  
BY ANN-MARIE,  
HMP BRONZEFIELD

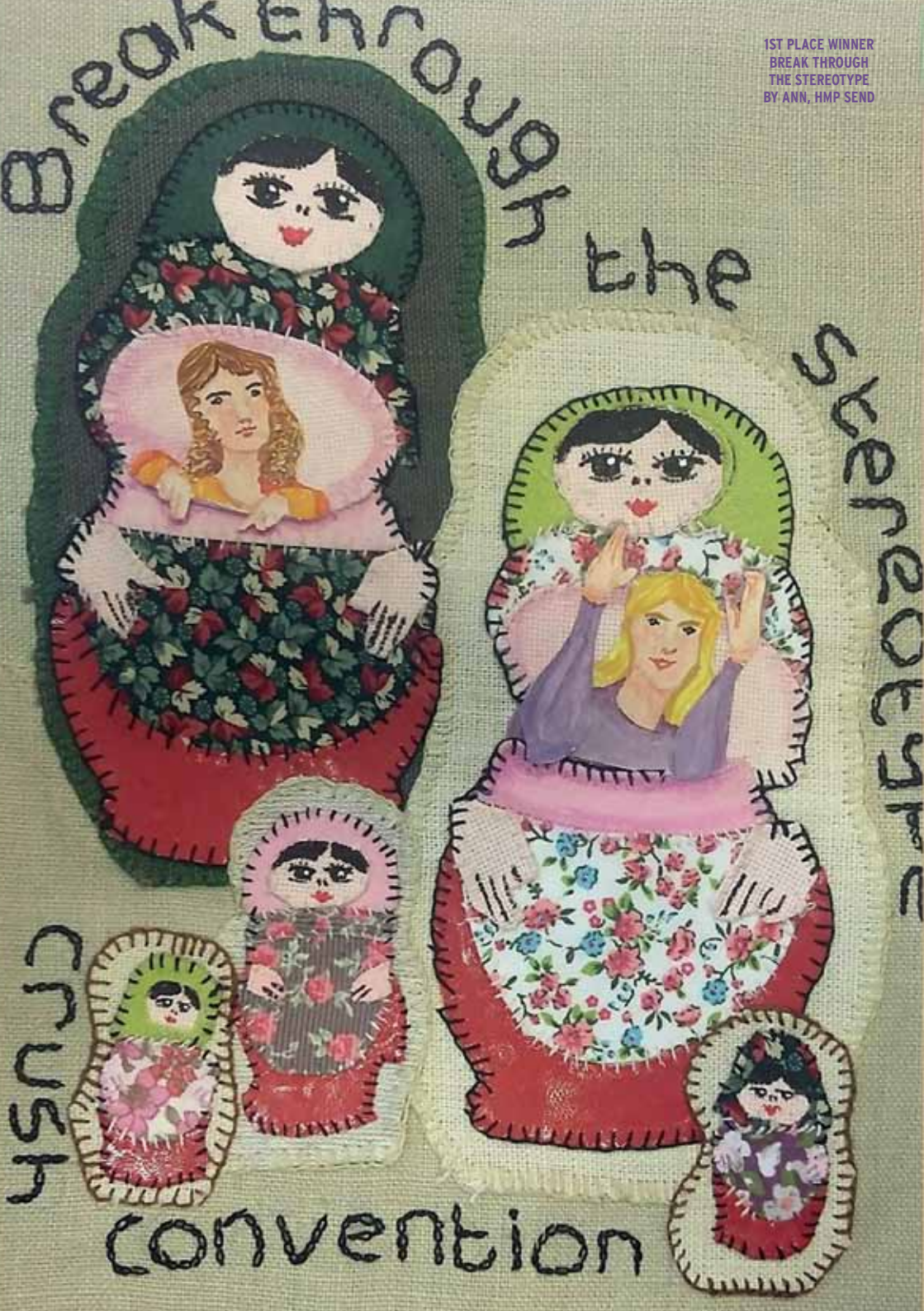
CALM

UNDER

SABOTAGE



1ST PLACE WINNER  
BREAK THROUGH  
THE STEREOTYPE  
BY ANN, HMP SEND



Breakthrough

the

never

crush

convention

# HAVE YOUR SAY!

Complete this pull-out questionnaire and return to Women in Prison before Monday 31st December 2018 for your chance to win a prize and to help shape this magazine.

---

This magazine has been produced by Women in Prison for many years and is very important to us. We print and deliver around 4,000 copies to all the women's prisons in England (and some in Scotland) and also out into the community. We hope the magazine provides you with advice, information, activities, updates on the criminal justice system, poetry, artwork, and a place to hear stories and achievement from other women as well as opportunities for your own voice to be heard.

But we know there is always room for improvement and that's where we need your help.

Please complete this questionnaire to let us know what you think about the magazine, what you like about it, what could be better and how we can encourage more people to read it.

The questions also relate to the previous edition of the magazine, on the theme of health and wellbeing. Our friends, the Reading Agency, that encourages reading in prisons, have also posed some questions.

Everyone who replies will be entered into a prize draw. The winner will receive £20 and three runners up will receive an adult colouring book. We must receive your questionnaire by Monday 31st December in order to be entered into the draw (the four prizes will be sent out in January 2019).

### **How to take part:**

- Pull out the questionnaire pages from the magazine
- Complete the questions – you do not need to complete every question
- Fill out the contact details below – this is optional and your answers are still really helpful to us without contact details but we won't be able to enter you into the prize draw without this information
- Pop the questionnaire in an envelope and send to Women in Prison using our freepost address (see below) or give it to member of the WIP team.

To send to Women in Prison for free, write **Freepost - WOMEN IN PRISON** on the envelope, you do not need a stamp.

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

(This is optional but without these details we won't be able to enter you into the prize draw)

**NAME:**

**PRISON NUMBER (if relevant):**

**PRISON:**

**WOMEN CENTRE (if relevant):**

**CONTACT EMAIL or PHONE NUMBER**

(if you are in the community or being released before 31st December 2018):

Please note we may use some of your comments in our reports to help us raise the money needed to keep producing this magazine..

Please tick here if you DO NOT want us to publish your comments – we will not use your name, just the comment.



Where did you find/pick up this magazine?

Which articles, features or activities do you enjoy in the magazine?

What would you like to see in future editions of the magazine?

---

**How could we improve the magazine and attract more readers?**

**Do you have any examples of when the magazine was helpful or gave you useful advice or information?**

**Do you like the magazine's title - Ready, Steady, Go? If not what suggestions do you have for a different title?**

**Please share any other comments you have about the magazine - on its style, design, content or availability. We want to hear!**

---

## HEALTH BOOKLET

Overall, how would you rate the health booklet?

1    2    3    4    5

Did you learn anything new about your health?

1    2    3    4    5

Did you find out how/where to get help?

1    2    3    4    5

Did it make you feel empowered about your health?

1    2    3    4    5

Was there anything you didn't like? Please explain:

Is there anything else you would like to learn that wasn't covered in the booklet?

Any other comments?



FIND  
YOUR COPY  
IN THE  
PRISON  
LIBRARY

---

# THE READING AGENCY

The Reading Agency is a national charity which tackles life's big challenges through the proven power of reading. It runs the annual Reading Ahead programme for less confident readers which is delivered by library staff in around 110 prisons across the UK. This invites you to pick six reads of your choice and read, rate and review them in a diary to get a certificate and a pocket dictionary from the charity Give a Book. The Reading Agency also runs other reading schemes you may have heard of such as Quick Reads, World Book Night and Reading Well and the Summer Reading Challenge for children through public libraries.

The Reading Agency is keen to hear from you about how much you read for pleasure and what would encourage you to read more.

## 1) How much do you agree or disagree with these statements?

### I ENJOY READING

Agree a lot / Agree a little / Not sure / Disagree a little / Disagree a lot

### I THINK I AM A CONFIDENT READER

Agree a lot / Agree a little / Not sure / Disagree a little / Disagree a lot

### I LIKE USING THE PRISON LIBRARY TO BORROW BOOKS

Agree a lot / Agree a little / Not sure / Disagree a little / Disagree a lot



---

**2) Are you aware of or do you take part in these reading activities?**

**TURNING PAGES (formerly Toe by Toe)**

**Aware / Take part**

**READING AHEAD (formerly Six Book Challenge)**

**Aware / Take part**

**READING GROUPS**

**Aware / Take part**

**STORYBOOK MUMS**

**Aware / Take part**

**BOOKS UNLOCKED**

**Aware / Take part**

**3) Tell us what would inspire or help you to read more.**

---

# THANK YOU! WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOU HAVING YOUR SAY AND TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE OUR QUESTIONNAIRE!

Now please either pop your questionnaire in an envelope and send to Women in Prison using our freepost address or please hand in to a WIP staff member. Please send to us by Monday 31st December 2018.

To send to us using freepost, you just need to write the following on the envelope –

Freepost – WOMEN IN PRISON

Make sure the WOMEN IN PRISON is in capitals. You do not need to put a stamp on the envelope.

Thank you!!

The Women in Prison Team





“Being a penfriend has meant a lot to me because it shows that people care.”

These are the words of a prisoner who corresponds with a volunteer via Prisoners' Penfriends, a registered charity which has been going since 2003.

Prisoners' Penfriends is fully supported by HMPPS – which encourages staff in prisons to work with the scheme.

What we do is very simple: if a prisoner would like a penfriend, we can find someone to write to her. The letters are exchanged via our office – so that both prisoner and volunteer penfriend send their letters to our Post Box address.

Our volunteers are ordinary people, living in the community outside prison, who want to do something to help others. Many of them are early retired and some are a bit older; but there are also people in their 20s and 30s taking part.

The letters tend to be about the kind of thing you might chat about with a new acquaintance: often the early conversations are about the weather, the TV and the news and then, as you get to know each other better, the talk turns to how you are feeling, what is happening day to day and what you are looking forward to in the future.

If you would like a penfriend, you need to be in one of the prisons where we have been given permission to operate. These are: HMP Bronzefield, HMP Downview, HMP East Sutton Park, HMP Foston Hall, HMP Low Newton, HMP Peterborough, HMP Send and HMP Styal.

All you need to do is to send us a letter, with your name and number, and to tell us which prison you are in. Then we'll write to you and send you one of our application forms. (You cannot obtain the forms from prison staff.)

**The address to write to is: Penfriends, PO Box 33460, London SW18 5YB.**

*If you are not in one of the establishments listed above, why not have a word with someone on the staff there and ask them to contact us so that we can get the scheme started with you?*

**A GUIDE TO  
PRISONERS'  
EDUCATION  
TRUST AND  
DISTANCE  
LEARNING**



“Learning in prison brought a different part of my brain to life – it gave me an escape. I just came out of my cell excited, sharing my knowledge. I felt I was doing something with my time.”

*Michelle, funded for an OU Access course.*

**P**RISONERS' EDUCATION TRUST (PET) is welcoming applications from women who want to study distance learning. Here's a guide to who we are and how we could support you.

## Who is PET and what is distance learning?

PET is a charity that works in every prison in England and Wales, funding distance-learning courses and pushing for the right of every prisoner to access education. We provide courses that are not typically offered in prisons, in diverse subjects and higher levels. Students are posted course packs which they complete at their own pace, sending off assessments to a tutor outside. Most courses end with recognised qualifications that are the same as ones gained in the community.

### What could I study?

PET's curriculum is available in every prison library or education department. There are almost 200 courses to choose from – from bookkeeping to beekeeping, plumbing to Portuguese, via health and beauty and health and safety. Courses generally start at Level 3 and go up to university level, allowing you to study the first units of a degree for free.

### Why do it?

There are a number of benefits to studying through distance learning. You can gain knowledge about subjects that interest you, while also gaining qualifications that interest employers.

### Who can apply?

PET welcomes applications from every prison in England and Wales. The main criteria are:

- You should have six months or more left to serve on your sentence

- You should have gained Level 2 in Maths and English

In a few cases, prison rules bar people with certain convictions from doing particular courses. Our curriculum holds more information on this.

### How much does it cost?

We're a charity, and are able to fund 90% of each course ourselves. We ask the prison to pay the remaining 10% and learners themselves to contribute what – if anything – they can afford.

### How do I apply?

You can find PET application forms in your education department. You'll need to fill one out, and attach a letter explaining what course you've selected and why you want to do it. Successful applicants show plenty of motivation and enthusiasm, and might talk about how the course will help you now and in the future. A member of staff will need to add a message of support and send the form to us. We review courses on a monthly basis, and fund most of the people who apply to us.

We hope this has encouraged you to take a look at our curriculum and find a course that interests you. If you have any questions that can't be answered by your education team, you can write to us FREEPOST Prisoners' Education Trust. We'd be happy to help.

Good luck and happy learning!



## Jayne's story

School was never a happy place for me. At 16 I had sufficiently good qualifications to allow me to leave and start an administration role within the civil service. I was employed in a variety of sectors, but this ended when I was convicted and sent to prison at the age of 34.

It took time to settle into prison life and come to terms with the enormity of the situation and the loss of my partner, career, home, liberty, my much-longed-for only child, and the loss of who I was. I knew however, that I had to use my time constructively to give myself the best possible chance of employment in the future. But belief in myself was at an all-time-low. My thoughts were: 'Who would want to help someone like me, who doesn't even believe that she has the ability to complete a course, or has the right to ask anyone for help?'

My attitude was commonplace. There was a palpable anxiety amongst the women I met about being accepted. There is a fear that they will always be judged by their past and will never truly serve their sentence, despite efforts to improve themselves.

I cannot express sufficiently how much this meant to me when Prisoners' Education Trust agreed to assist me in enrolling on an Open University (OU) foundation course in history. I took my studying very seriously

– determined to prove myself to the people that invested their trust and money in me.

It took me five years to complete the degree. I graduated in 2014, attending (whilst on Release On Temporary License), in a graduation ceremony with thousands of others at the Barbican in London. I was awarded a BA (Hons) in Humanities, 2.1.

Now I'm released I've found work in the charity sector, helping other people with resettlement. Time

**“Who would want to help someone like me, who doesn't believe she has the right to ask for help?”**

is my biggest barrier. I have the determination however, not least because I was able to get through those years in very challenging circumstances and get that degree I always wanted.

Who knows what's next for me. All I know is that I am now never going to stop reaching for the stars no matter what life throws at me. To those in prison at the moment and considering distance learning I would say: research the best course for you, something that you have always had an interest in, or feeds into the career you have always wanted, and take small steps towards achieving that. It will at times be hard and it will need your determination and self motivation to succeed but, my friend, it's the best thing you can do, for nothing else than to prove to yourself that you can be more than you are, and go for those dreams that you have.


*Stratford Literary Festival*

# BEDTIME STORY WORKSHOPS

Writing workshop enables those in prison to share their child's bedtime

**W**ERE YOU READ A BEDTIME STORY AS A CHILD? It's that time of day when mum or dad stop what they are doing and share a tale about a princess or a space man, a sleepy bear or a loving rabbit. Research shows that a bedtime story is a very important part of a child's day – a time to share anxieties, to feel closer to a parent or carer, to help literacy, to feel secure.

But what if a parent is in prison and isn't there to read at night? For the child, it can compound the trauma of a parent being away from home and, for the parent, it is a part of being with their child that they say they miss the most. »



## Bedtime Story written by Alex's Mum in a workshop

It's bedtime and Alex asks his Mummy: 'What will I be when I grow up?'

'You can be whatever you want,' says Mummy.

'I could be a lorry driver then. I'll have a big, red, shiny lorry. I'll drive up the hills. I'll drive through the woods. I can toot the horn - whoo hoo.

'...but what if I don't get home at night?'

'I could be a cowboy then. I could ride a really spotty horse. I'll ride on the prairies, I'll gallop up the canyons and shout Yee Harr!

'...but it would be very, very hot and I'd get tired.

'I could be a deep sea diver, and blow bubbles in the sea. I'll dive with the fishes. I'll dive with the octopus, squid and crabs. I could splash and splosh about as I get in and out

'...but it could be cold and I'd always be wet.

'I could be a scientist and be clever and invent things. I'd invent flying cars. I'd invent bicycles that go in the sea. They'd have bright lights and bells - ring ring!

'...but I'd be too busy to paint or play.

'I could be an artist and use crayons and paints all day. I could paint aliens. I could paint robots. They'd be red and gold and clatter and bang.

'...but I would miss inventing things.

'So, shall I be a long-driving cowboy deep sea diving scientist-artist?'

'Or,' says Mummy, 'best of all, you can just be Alex.'

'That is best of all,' says Alex, 'as tomorrow, I'm going to be a dinosaur trainer...Roar, roar!'

As a charity that is committed to helping literacy, education and well-being through books and reading, the Stratford Literary Festival has made championing the bedtime story a central part of its work, and for the last 12 months, it has been running workshops across the UK helping prisoners to write a bedtime story for their children.

The day-long sessions, run by a published children's author, start with fun games to get the imagination going, then participants are shown how to craft and shape a story suitable for their child's age. The afternoon period is usually quiet, interrupted only by the scratch of pens, as we all write our story which, if possible, can then be recorded by the Storybook Dads and Mums charity with

**“Everyone is sure they can't write a story when they arrive.”**

whom the Festival is working.

‘Everyone is sure they can't write a story when they arrive,’ says Festival Director, Annie Ashworth, who began the Festival in 2008, ‘but we work closely with each person building their confidence. The fact that mum or dad has written a story

is the most important part, not that it's some piece of literary genius! It shows their child they are missing them and thinking of them. What is lovely is the way most of the writers centre the story around their child or children, making them the heroes. We've had tears and laughter during the sessions, and some wonderful stories have emerged at the end.’

It's clearly a resounding success with the participants too, building confidence and,

### What they say...

**‘Our words flew over the prison walls.’**

*Nadia,  
HMP Drake Hall*

**‘My little boy will love the story I've written for him. He will know I think about him every day, miss and love him very much. I feel very proud of myself for doing this. I can**

**achieve things in life.’**

*Natalie,  
HMP Styal*

**‘I thought that the workshops were excellent, a very tangible and effective way in which the women can reach out to their children, keeping those all-important family ties in place or a start to building them with**

**their children.**

**Writing the stories was very hard for some of the women as it stirred up memories and often a feeling of loss and guilt, but [the workshop leaders] helped them manage their emotions, channelling them into the story, resulting in the women feeling more confident and**

**better about themselves. All this will help the women not to re-offend as well as remind their children that their mothers are thinking about them, giving the women some much needed comfort.’**

*Jane Wright,  
Learning Skills and  
Employment Manager  
HMP Drake Hall*

importantly, a sense of achievement. ‘The feedback we have had has been immensely encouraging,’ continues Annie. ‘The workshops not only help to establish and maintain a bond between parent and child at a time of terrible separation and anxiety on both sides, it can also provide a sense of accomplishment for the parent and encourage their child to read – because reading at bedtime is an element of the day that is fast disappearing for many children.

‘Maintaining a link with the parent can help lessen the damaging impact of imprisonment on children, and it is an essential element in discouraging re-offending. We hope that the bedtime story workshops will go some way to achieving those things.’

Prison librarians who are interested in running a bedtime story workshop should go to [www.stratlitfest.co.uk](http://www.stratlitfest.co.uk) and contact [info@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk](mailto:info@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk) (why not take this article to your librarian and suggest they look into running these workshops).

**‘I felt totally relaxed. Both tutors were brilliant and non-judgemental. They encouraged us to write a story and truly made us believe we could. I loved it!’**

*Kerry,  
HMP Peterborough*

**‘I was so impressed by the way the workshop leaders relaxed the ladies**

**and got the best from them. I think they all surprised themselves by what they actually achieved, and they certainly surprised me! It was an excellent day’s work.’**

*Victoria Barnett  
Prison Library  
Development  
Manager, Kent  
County Council*

\*All names have been changed.

## TOP TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR OWN CHILDREN’S STORY – WHY NOT GIVE IT A GO!

■ Keep your story simple and don’t over complicate the plot

■ Write out in rough a bit about the characters (names, characteristics etc) and what will happen

■ Introduce the situation then describe what happens then resolve the situation

■ Use words to describe people and places so that it gives the story colour (‘The very tall man with the long beard and in the long, dirty, yellow coat’ is more interesting than just ‘The man...’)

■ Children have wonderful imaginations so don’t hold back when imagining character, names and situations

■ You might just want to write a no-plot story and make it a mother telling her child she loves them in many ways (Like the best-selling *Guess How Much I Love You* book)

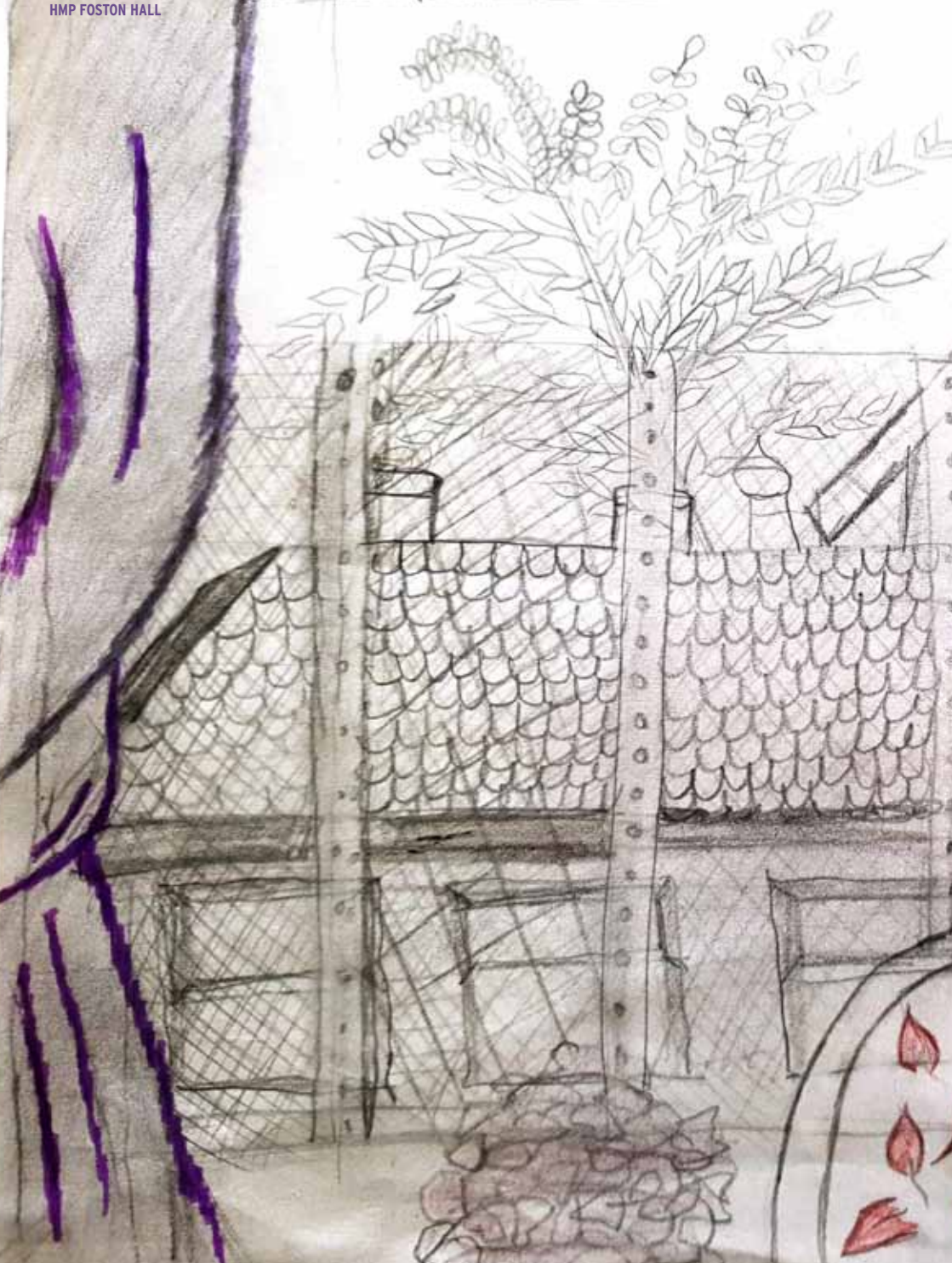
■ A happy ending is a comforting conclusion to a story before bed

■ Don’t be over ambitious - your child will be delighted it’s a story from you however simple it is



MY WORLD  
BY ANON,  
HMP FOSTON HALL

WHEN I LO





OK OUT MY WINDOW



# COOKING UP A STORM

Angella shares her top tips on starting up your own business

**A**fter volunteering for Women in Prison's Mentorship Scheme, I achieved a BA (Hons) then went on to King's College London to obtain an MA in Criminology. Both areas of research focused on domestic violence and my passion to fight for women who had been abused as children, led to penning a manuscript ("Sadie's Shoes" due for release) using tools I had gained throughout my research.

Following my studies, I contracted in the corporate sector but became quite jaded. A conversation with my brother who lives in the US, led him to suggest I cook for people so that's how Angella's Kitchen "Learn to Cook and Eat the Caribbean Way" was founded.

With no formal business experience of how

to sell my services, I took my pots and pans to market. Just as I was embarking on my business, I went through a series of personal setbacks and with little funds, learned how to do business. I paid for basic training, listened to audio books and found a mentor who helped me get clear about my business goals. I drew on my organisational, time management and research experience to create structured themed

content on social media, put office systems in place while continuing to take my products and services to market.

It was difficult to know where to access support, so I set up a local networking group for women; many who had been in business 5, 10 even twenty years while simultaneously reaching out to key stakeholders who became supportive of my vision.

As I began to engage, doors I thought would open didn't, and doors I thought would not open did. I learned about persistence and consistency, that being tired means it's time to rest not quit. I learned to remain open and flexible to changing schedules, drink plenty of water, exercise and stick to my healthy food programme.

I became creative, learned how to become a

## My Top 5 Tips for Starting Up Your Own Business

- Listen to or read "Think and Grow Rich" by Napoleon Hill
- Look for a mentor
- Build a support network of other business leaders
- Get plenty of exercise and fresh air
- Eat well



ANGELLA WILLIAMS

better negotiator and once I had found my flow, put everything I had learned into a six-week business start up programme designed to empower women affected by the criminal justice system.

As a self-taught entrepreneur, I learned to surround myself with experienced business owners. To survive, I needed to be mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually fit. Life will throw curveballs and there are people who will stick with you in the trenches which allows you

to value real friendships and that value flows through into how I do business which is essentially about maintaining good relationships.

Angella's Kitchen "Learn to Cook and Eat the Caribbean Way" is a dynamic fun filled day out for teams to get involved in a series of ice breaking exercises followed by chopping, mixing and marinating. Teams learn about the culture of the Caribbean island of Jamaica, and what goes into making delicious heart-warming food with

classes taking place in three locations across London.

The Healed Project is a six-week business start up course I designed for women affected by the criminal justice system to help process guilt, shame and move forward by exploring business ideas within a safe environment. I used The Healed Project to not only empower and heal my own broken life but to also contribute towards healing other lives one at a time.

**For more information  
or collaboration  
[www.angellawilliams.co.uk](http://www.angellawilliams.co.uk)**





# CHRIST CARD CRAFT PACK

# MAS

Over the next few pages you will find step-by-step instructions and crafting ideas for reusing old Christmas cards to make new cards, decorations and gifts.

In January 2018 Women in Prison ran a campaign on social media encouraging people to send us their Christmas card fronts. The aim of collecting the cards was to gather craft materials to be used in arts and crafts workshops for women in prison to make new cards for family and friends in the lead up to next Christmas.

In previous years there has been real demand for these workshops and we have generally not had enough cards to go round. This year, however, the success of the campaign took us by surprise and we were overwhelmed with support, unexpectedly receiving thousands of cards. Retweets on social media included from Bette Midler and Cher! We received cards with lovely supportive messages from Girl Guides, churches, the Women's Institute, MPs offices, schools and mums groups.

Each prison has received a share of these donated cards for you to use in workshops or maybe in your room. The cards were addressed to the Governor and the Chaplaincy. We hope you find these craft ideas and instructions useful and happy crafting!

*All the best, The Women in Prison Team*



## New Christmas Card

You can use your Christmas card fronts in a variety of ways to make a new unique card. Cut up images, patterns and words from the card fronts and stick onto a plain piece of A4 card folded in half. Combine with stickers, glitter and draw/write onto your new card with a felt tip pen to create a striking new design.

If you don't have plain card then try sticking two card fronts that match in size together - choose ones that are blank on the back. Alternatively fold a card front in half to make a smaller new Christmas card. You can then add glitter, draw or use cut up images from the card fronts to decorate.

Another idea and a good way to save on envelopes is to make a Christmas postcard. Just choose a card front that is blank on the back and decorate the front as you wish. On the back draw a line in the middle to write the address on one half and your message in the other half. Don't forget to leave space for the stamp.





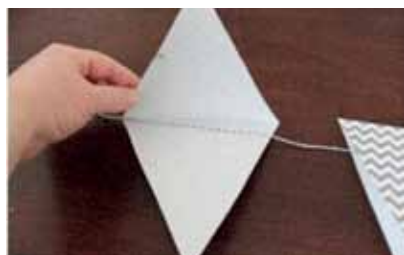
## A Christmas Bauble

- 1) Cut 8 circles out of the Christmas card fronts. It is easiest to make a cardboard template for both the circle and triangle first.
- 2) Fold each circle into a triangle of equal sides.
- 3) Glue the flaps of four circles together to make one-half of the bauble (like a pointed hat).
- 4) Do the same to the other four circles and let the glue dry.
- 5) Glue a string or embroidery cotton in a loop hanging out at a corner point.
- 6) Glue the two halves together. Let dry and trim any ragged edges with scissors.



## Christmas Bunting

- 1) Fold a card front in half.
- 2) Cut a triangle so that the shortest edge of the triangle is the folded part.
- 3) Cut several more triangles.
- 4) Open the triangles up and place string or ribbon against the folded edge.
- 5) Stick the triangle together to secure it.
- 6) A variation on this Christmas bunting is to cut out shapes such as the words MERRY CHRISTMAS or Christmas trees. You could also use plain paper and stick cut up christmas cards to decorate as a collage.





## Christmas Tree

To make a stacked Christmas tree decoration you simply pile up the Christmas card fronts at different angles to each other to suggest the different branches.

Start by cutting all the cards to roughly the same shape but you need a handful of large, medium and small sized pieces.

You may want to bulk out the tree by also using newspaper sheets in between the card pieces. Stick each piece with glue or a glue dot. You could also stick a small folded piece of card between layers to create space between the layers.

Finish by decorating with glitter (optional).



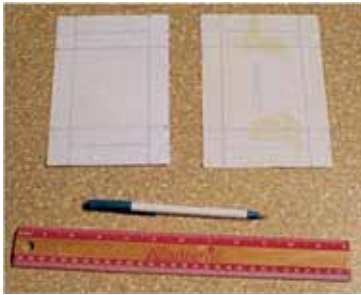


## A Christmas Wreath

To make a wreath for your door or wall start by cutting out a circular ring if you can to act as a template this can be out of paper or newspaper. You then simply stick the cards onto the ring. You could cut up the card fronts into holly leaves or different shapes and layer up onto your template. Either stick straight onto the door or wall or you could secure a ribbon. Add decoration such as glitter and buttons or leave as is.







## Gift Box

1) Take two card fronts and cut them so they are the same shape and size (a rectangle shape). Then trim off about 5mm (half a cm) from one of the cards.

2) Starting on the short sides measure 2cm (3/4 inch) from the corner and make a mark. Do the same on the long sides but also make a second mark which is 2cm (3/4 inch) further along from the first mark.

3) Draw in lines using the picture on the right as a guide.

4) Cut into the lines on the short sides as shown in the picture.

5) Fold and assemble your box as shown in the pictures. It might help to score along the lines with scissors. You may need to secure with a little tape or glue. You should now have a complete box with a lid.

## Women in Prison's 2020 Flower Meadow

Women in Prison is creating a large meadow of crafted flowers created by women affected by the criminal justice system. Why not consider using any left over card fronts to contribute to the meadow? For more information on this project and details of where to send your flowers, please write to Women in Prison using our freepost address or email [info@womeninprison.org.uk](mailto:info@womeninprison.org.uk). To post, just write the following on the envelope (no need for a stamp): Freepost WOMEN IN PRISON

One crafting method to use with the card fronts is to make flowers by Quilling (as seen in the picture). To start making your flower, cut up the card front into strips of equal width and as long as possible. Next it helps to draw out the shape of the flower onto paper to use as a template. Then curl the strips and shape to make the different parts of the flower. You might find it easier to curl the card around a pencil which you remove once shaped. Cut any excess from the strip of card and secure the flower together with glue or double-side tape.

If you don't want to use Quilling, then you could use the strips flat for the petals or cut the petals out and stick together as shown in the picture below and on the opposite page.





# IN PRISON FOR OWING COUNCIL TAX – NO WAY!

Rona Epstein explains the law on council tax debt

**I**N JANUARY 2017 A HIGH COURT JUDGE ruled that the magistrates who had sentenced a woman to 81 days in prison for failure to pay her council tax had made an unlawful decision. Her sentence was quashed. The woman is a single mother who has two part-time jobs, working hard to provide for herself and her son. She has never committed a crime. She should never have been jailed. Why did this happen?

Melanie, who lives in Wales, worked part-time and cared for her son and an elderly neighbour, then had a period of unemployment. She failed to pay her council tax; so magistrates ordered that she be sent to prison for 81 days. They suspended the imprisonment on condition that Melanie paid £10 every week towards the debt. She suffered some health problems and, again, failed to keep up with the payments. In August 2016, she realised that she had fallen behind in her payments and made a lump sum payment of £100. The next day, she was arrested by bailiffs and taken to prison. She was told she had to serve the sentence as ordered by the magistrates.

People sent to prison for not paying

council tax are given very little help. They never imagine that it is an error in law that has put them in a prison cell, as owing money is not a crime. No one tells them they can apply for bail and that the decision to send them to prison can be challenged. They receive no advice. They do their time.

Some time ago, I wrote an article on council tax debt for this magazine in which I explained the law about owing council tax and what should happen if someone has difficulty in paying the tax they owe.

Melanie, while in prison, read the article and then wrote to Women in Prison asking for advice. Women in Prison put Melanie in touch with the Centre for Criminal Appeals. The Centre arranged

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for a lawyer to take on Melanie's case. He acted for Melanie and got her out of prison on bail. At the subsequent court hearing, the judge declared that sending Melanie to prison because she owed council tax was an unlawful decision. The magistrates had made a number of serious mistakes. They had failed to assess Melanie's financial means and had no basis for concluding her failure to pay was because of 'culpable neglect'.

Melanie was interviewed by BBC Wales. She spoke about how hard it was for her to serve a prison sentence when she had committed no crime. She said 'I won't ever recover from the experience'. Still, she's back at home and, once again, running her household and caring for her child.

Then in June 2018 the Welsh government announced a consultation with the aim of abolishing imprisonment for council tax debt. This is a huge step forward!

Each year, around 100 people are imprisoned for non-payment of the council tax. In the vast majority of cases, the magistrates' decision to order them to prison goes unchallenged because those sentenced don't know how to challenge it and don't get help. Yet, the decision to send someone to prison for owing tax can and should be challenged.

We all have to pay council tax. The council requires this money to carry out services we all need: dealing with rubbish, providing schools and care homes for the disabled and the elderly, fixing roads and pavements, running parks, leisure centres and libraries... the list goes on. If you owe some of the tax, the council may order you to appear before the magistrates because of the debt.

The magistrates must make an enquiry into your finances (income, outgoings, dependants). They then make a decision:

are you guilty of 'wilful refusal to pay' or 'culpable neglect to pay'? If they find you are guilty of wilful refusal or culpable neglect to pay – this means that you have the money to pay but have refused to use that money to pay your council tax – the magistrates have options. One is to impose a prison sentence of up to three months.

However, imprisonment should be a last resort. There should be no jail sentence if there is an alternative way to recover the money you owe. If there is an alternative, for example ordering that an amount be deducted each week from your benefits or from your wages or salary, then you should NOT be sent to prison. You cannot be found guilty of wilful refusal or culpable neglect if you are simply unable to pay. In such a case, the council has the power to cancel all, or part, of the debt.

In Council Tax cases, the magistrates have no power to punish anyone. Judges have said this many times, first when people were sent to prison twenty years ago when the poll tax was introduced, and more recently when a few people in prison for owing council tax have had their cases looked at by the High Court.

If you or someone you know is in prison for owing council tax, please get in touch. Expert legal advice could make all the difference

**Please write to:**

**Rona Epstein**

**Freepost**

**WOMEN IN PRISON (no stamp required)**

**Or email:**

**[info@womeninprison.org.uk](mailto:info@womeninprison.org.uk)**

**Rona Epstein is Honorary Research Fellow at  
Coventry Law School, Coventry University.**



## Useful contacts:

### WOMEN IN PRISON

Freepost WOMEN IN PRISON  
Freephone: 0800 953 0125  
info@womeninprison.org.uk

### HOUSING

Shelter Helpline: 0808 163 1008

NACRO Helpline: 0300 123 1999

### LEGAL & GENERAL ADVICE

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

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

Freephone information line 0808 802 0060.

Open Monday 3.30pm - 5.30pm  
Wednesday 10.30am - 12.30pm

Thursday 3.30pm - 5.30pm

Prisoners' Advice Service (PAS): Prisoners' Advice Service, PO Box 46199, London, EC1M 4XA 0845 430 8923

### SUBSTANCE MISUSE SUPPORT

Frank Helpline: 0300 123 6600

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

### FAMILY SUPPORT

National Offenders' Families Helpline run by Family Lives: 0808 808 2003



# WOMEN IN PRISON (WIP) CONSENT FORM

We love to receive artwork, poetry, stories, articles, letters, knitting patterns, recipes, craft ideas, etc etc for publication in the magazine from women affected by the criminal justice system in prison or the community.

Anything you send to us, please also tear out, complete and send us this page along with your piece so that we know for sure that you are happy for us to publish and what name you would like to use.

Please note that we are unable to return to you any of the written pieces or artwork that you send to us for publication.

Thank you for your contribution! All the best, The Women in Prison Team.

Please use CAPITAL letters to complete please

TEAR HERE

<b>First Name</b>		<b>Surname</b>	
<b>Prison or Women Centre (if applicable)</b>		<b>Prison No. (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Any Contact Details (email, address, phone)</b>			
<b>Title of your piece (if relevant)</b>			
<b>Basic description (ie A letter in response to... or a poem or an article on...)</b>			
<b>I give permission for my work to be used by Women in Prison (PLEASE TICK):</b>			
<b>WIP's magazine (Ready Steady Go)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>WIP's Website <a href="http://www.womeninprison.org.uk">www.womeninprison.org.uk</a> and Twitter Feed @WIP_live</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>WIP's Publication &amp; Promotional Material (ie Reports, leaflets)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Please note we only publish first names (no surnames) and the name of the prison or Women's Centre only in the magazine (we don't publish prison name in other publications or online). You can of course choose to be Anonymous (no name used) or write a nickname or made up name.</b>			
<b>I am happy for my first name to be published</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Please write exactly what name you would like to be used:</b>			

Freepost - WOMEN IN PRISON (in capitals)  
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# 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 policy makers and demonstrate that the majority of convicted women should serve community rather than prison sentences. 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 have 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.**

# THE BBV NEWS

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PIERCINGS, MEDICAL/  
DENTAL TREATMENT  
ABROAD?**

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and  
HIV***



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Wales 1104279, Scotland SCO39914.  
Company Number: 05069924



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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:

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Please include a consent form  
turn to page 65 for details.