SPRING—SUMMER 2022

STILL I RISE

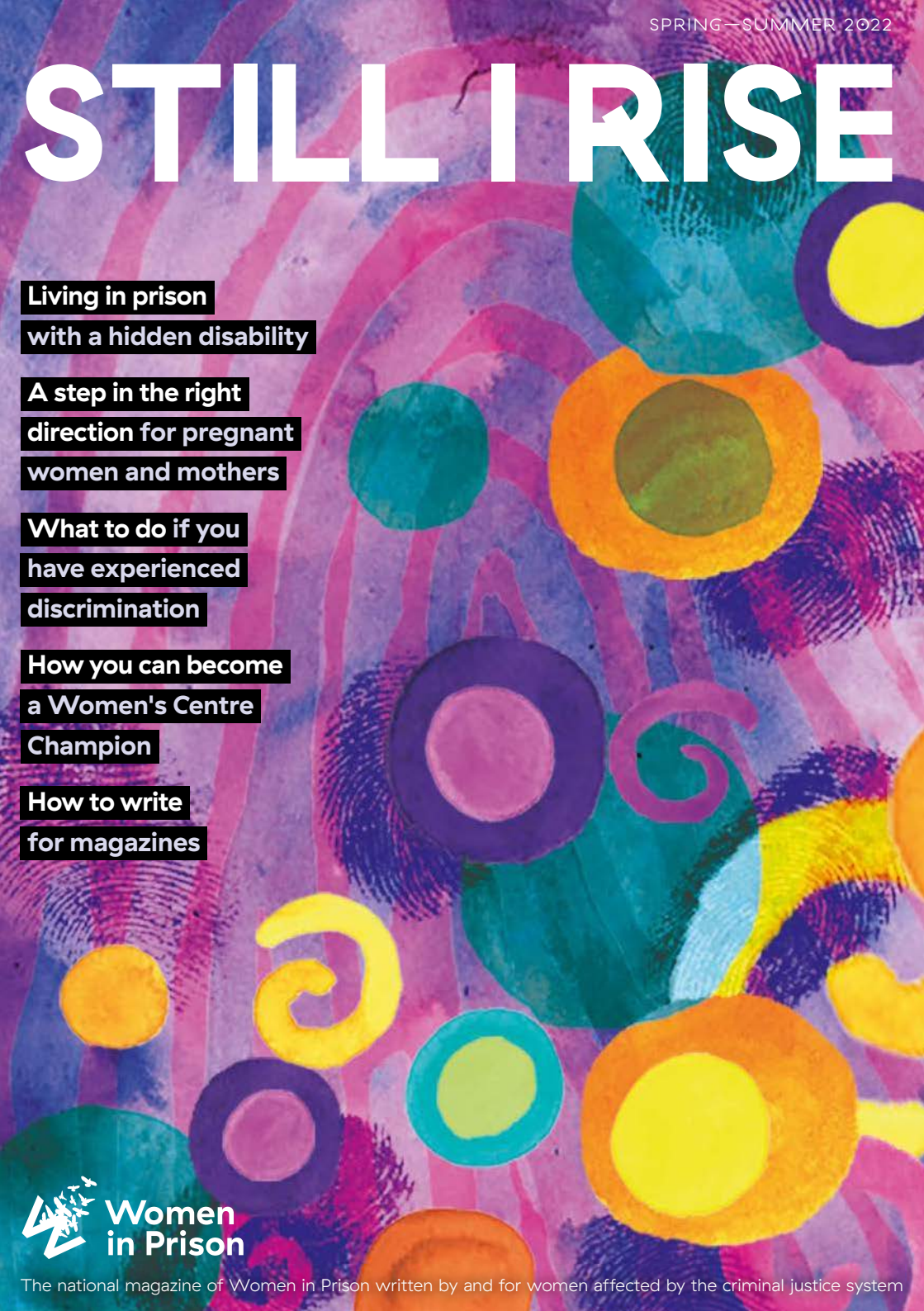
Living in prison with a hidden disability

A step in the right direction for pregnant women and mothers

What to do if you have experienced discrimination

How you can become a Women's Centre Champion

How to write for magazines



Women in Prison

The national magazine of Women in Prison written by and for women affected by the criminal justice system

What does inclusion mean to you?

Inclusion is something we often hear people talk about; from a young age we are told to include people in our games and to not leave them out. At school we might have learnt about the civil rights activists who fought to make the American South more inclusive for Black people.

We can all think of examples where we've come across the concept of 'inclusion' at both a personal and societal level. This edition of the magazine looks at the themes of equality, diversity and inclusion (see our introduction article on page 8) and we would love to hear what inclusion means to you; how you go about including people; and how you feel we as a society should do this. We've created a competition on the theme of inclusion so you can share your thoughts on inclusion with others – we hope you will take part.

Rules for entering the competition:

- Feel free to give your own interpretation of what inclusion means.
- If it's a story, essay, interview or article (fiction or non-fiction) please write 500 words or less. When handwritten, this is between 1½ and 2 pages of A4.
- An entry can also be a poem, drawing, painting or a collage.
- Please include a completed consent form (see page 65) with your entry and send it to Freepost – WOMEN IN PRISON (in capitals). Without the consent form we are unable to include your submission in the magazine.

One entry will be selected as a "Star Letter" with the writer receiving £10 (only entries that include the consent form on page 65 can be considered for "Star Letter").

CONTENTS

The Inclusion of Diversity by Erika Flowers, a woman with lived experience of 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 in the community through hubs and women's centres (the Beth Centre in London, WomenMATTA in Manchester and in partnership with the Women's Support Centre in Woking, Surrey).

WIP campaigns to reduce the number of women in prison and for significant investment in community-based support services for women so they can address issues such as trauma, mental ill-health, harmful substance use, domestic violence, debt and homelessness. These factors are often the reason 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 is unable to help because of a constraint on its resources, it endeavours to direct women to other charities and organisations that can. WIP believes that a properly funded network of women's centres that provide holistic support is the most effective and just way to reduce the numbers of women coming before the courts and re-offending.

WIP's services include...

- **Visits in some women's prisons**
- **Targeted 'through the gate' support for women about to be released from prison**
- **Support for women in the community via hubs for services and women's centres in London and Manchester**
- ***Still I Rise,* a magazine written by and for women affected by the criminal justice system with magazine editorial groups in some women's prisons**

Women in Prison

Got something to say?

Please contact Women in Prison at the FREEPOST address below. Please include a completed consent form with your query; turn to page 65 for more details.

Write or call free:
Freepost WOMEN IN PRISON

Call us free on 0800 953 0125

Email us on:
info@wipuk.org

Women in Prison
2ND FLOOR,
ELMFIELD HOUSE
5 STOCKWELL MEWS
LONDON
SW9 9GX

WIP's freephone is not an emergency or advice line, but a means to get in touch with us. Please know that whatever you are going through, a Samaritan will face it with you, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call the Samaritans for free on 116 123.

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.

One of my many highlights

of the past six years has been seeing *Still I Rise* magazine come together. Writing this I feel a little sad, as it will be the last edition I'll introduce before I move on from my role as Chief Executive of Women in Prison.

In this edition we celebrate the wonderful diversity of our society and life across women's prisons, while also looking at the ways in which we can make things fairer and more equal. From news of the brilliant Double Disadvantage 10-Point Action Plan to tackle racism in the criminal justice system, developed in consultation with women with lived experience, to hearing about the experiences of d/Deaf women in prison, and also tips on how to write for a magazine, among many other features.

This edition's front cover was produced by a woman with lived experience of prison. Using circles and other shapes of different sizes and colours to represent diversity and inclusion, and the backdrop of a finger print to symbolise everyone's unique identity. This vibrant cover brings together the theme of this edition.

Every copy of this, your magazine, represents hope for change and a brighter future for us all. It has been the honour of my life to be trusted to lead Women in Prison, and to have learnt from you all about the brilliance, strength and change that women are capable of. Some of my best memories of my time at WIP have been sitting with the magazine groups – at HMP Foston, HMP Styal and HMP Holloway, now moved to Downview – laughing, talking, learning and being energised by your ideas. A favourite quote I discovered since joining WIP is Alice Walker's: 'The most common way people give up power is by thinking they don't have any'.

I hope you read this magazine and feel your own power grow; power to change your life and together to change the world.

Wishing you peace, joy and hope.

Best wishes,

Kate
Chief Executive of Women in Prison

Project Manager: Katie Fraser
Art direction & production: Henry Obasi & Russell Moorcroft @PPaint
Production Editor: Jo Halford
Chief Sub-Editor: Raeesah Akhtar

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 or info@wipuk.org

Women's Centres where WIP staff are based

- WomenMATTA – Manchester
- The Beth Centre – Lambeth, London
- Women's Support Centre – Woking, Surrey

Women's Prisons

- 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 - Sutton, Surrey
- HMP Send – Ripley, Surrey
- HMP Bronzefield – Ashford, Surrey
- HMP East Sutton Park – Maidstone, Kent
- HMP Cornton Vale – Scotland

‘It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognise, accept, and celebrate those differences.’

— Audre Lorde

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Words: Katie Fraser, Women in Prison Head of Prisons Partnerships and Participation, and Dean Hall, Quality Standards & Training Manager for the Greater Manchester Women's Support Alliance
Illustration: PPaint

The theme of this edition is equality, diversity and inclusion — but what exactly does this mean and what does an equal world look like?

For some people, things in life can be harder to achieve because of where they were born, their experience of education, a disability, their sex or race.

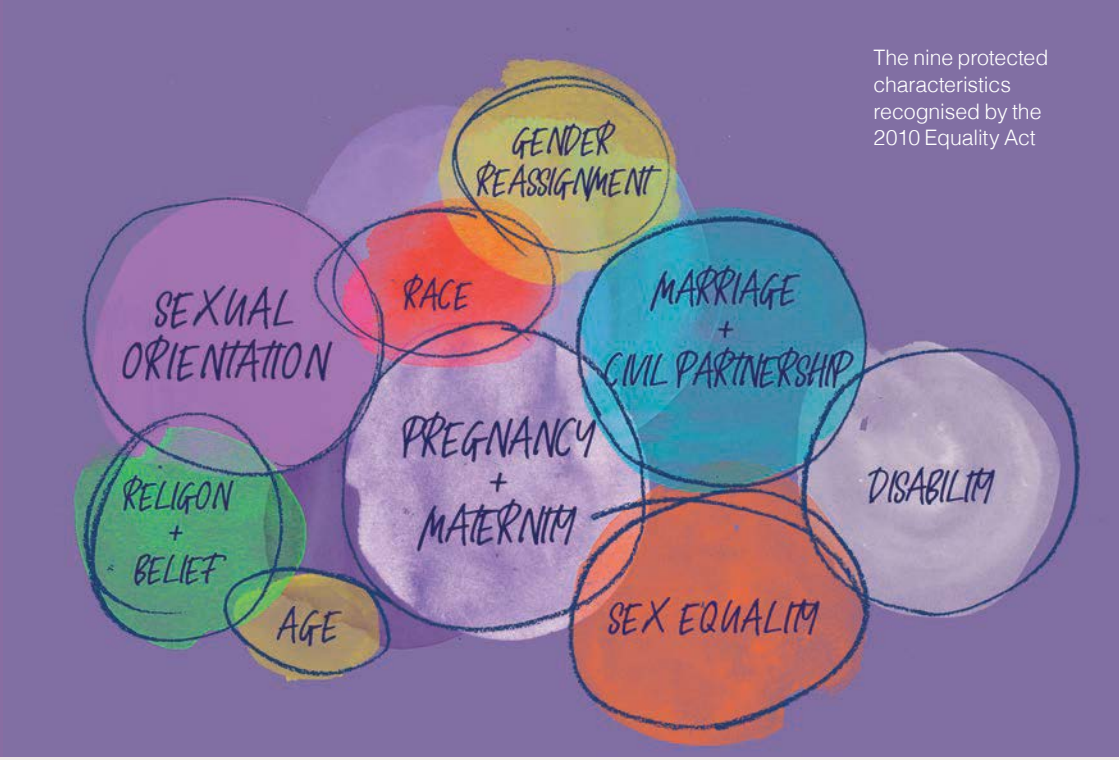
When we talk about equality, diversity and inclusion we are talking about making things fairer for everyone in society. This means fairer treatment and opportunity for all, without prejudice or discrimination against someone based on their identity or protected characteristic.

So how do we achieve this? Should everyone be treated the same? It isn't as straightforward as that. When we talk about equality we mean that everyone should have, as far as possible, equal chances in life and not be treated differently because of who they are. Diversity refers to respecting and celebrating the fact that everyone is different. And inclusion means to create an environment that caters to everyone, and makes everyone feel valued and welcome, regardless of their background.

Ultimately, the aim is to make a society that is fair for everyone, while recognising and celebrating that we are all different.

To achieve this, we need to make changes to how we do things, to make it fairer for people who face greater challenges and fewer opportunities.

For example, we have ramps to access buildings for people with disabilities, we



The nine protected characteristics recognised by the 2010 Equality Act

provide information in different languages for people who don't speak English, or we provide special facilities for pregnant women.

These are just a few examples of how we can make things more equal, recognise our differences and promote inclusion for everybody, whatever their individual needs might be.

A prison is a reflection of society, so the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion apply there as much as anywhere.

Sometimes, things may be adapted or changed because of someone's needs. It's not about getting special treatment; it's about understanding and respecting everyone's unique differences and creating a fairer environment that is inclusive for all.

So, what does this mean on an individual level? One of the easiest ways of promoting equality is to think about how you communicate and behave with those that are different to you. Words and language we use about others, as well as our actions, can really make a difference to how included someone feels.

If we are as inclusive as possible and take time to think about the challenges that others may face and see a situation from their point of view, we can all do our part to create a fairer, happier society for everyone.

Valuing diversity is every individual's responsibility, because every individual is unique and if we weren't, it would be a pretty boring world.

'The aim is to make a society that is fair for everyone, while recognising and celebrating that we are all different.'

ThinkDeaf

Meeting the needs of d/Deaf people in prison

Words: Jo Halford
An interview with Dr Laura Kelly–Corless

We sat down with Dr Laura Kelly–Corless, a leading UK scholar on d/Deaf people in prison, who told us all about her research and how prisons need to be doing more to cater to different needs.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your work?

I'm a senior lecturer in Criminology at the University of Central Lancashire, where I've worked for seven years. Criminology in its simplest sense is the study of crime and criminality, but also the study of the criminal justice system. I specialise in prison studies. My PhD was about the experiences of d/Deaf people in prisons. Since then, my research interests have been around that, as well as other things like the arts and education in prison. In particular, I've been trying to raise awareness about the issues d/Deaf people experience in prison.

How has your work developed?

It started off with my PhD, which explored what it's like to be d/Deaf in prison. I interviewed 28 people – 18 of the interviews were with d/Deaf people in prison and 10 were with staff who had worked with a d/Deaf person in prison.

What have you found from your research to be the biggest barriers for d/Deaf people in prison?

Prisons rely on sound to run, with tannoys for announcements and alarms and bells to manage everyday routines. For a d/Deaf person who can't hear these, things are automatically more difficult. A lack of specialist equipment is a big problem: without the right resources, d/Deaf people are often left out of prison life and unable to participate in much of the day-to-day

procedures. There is also a need for more training among prison staff about the different levels of deafness and the behaviours that come with them, as there's currently not enough understanding about this. It has been valuable having staff members involved in discussions – the staff that came forward were concerned about the situation, and it backed up what people in prison had said.

From your findings, what sort of adjustments could be made to make it better for d/Deaf people in prison?

There's currently no legal requirement for prisons to record how many d/Deaf people there are in prison and which prison they are in. The prisons themselves often don't know who's d/Deaf or what support they need. A reliable recording system would be an important step forward. The Equality Act is also limited in how it protects these groups because it's vague and ambiguous – for example, it's tricky to define a 'reasonable adjustment' in a prison setting. There needs to be a Prison Service Instruction dedicated to these groups that translates the Equality Act into something prisons are obliged to follow.

Providing appropriate resources is also critical. If a person is medically deaf, can hear less, or can't hear certain sounds, they need equipment that converts sound into a deaf-friendly format – things like hearing aids, hearing loops, flashing fire alarms, vibrating alarm clocks, and equipment that allows them to use the phone to contact their family. People who are culturally and linguistically Deaf, who identify as part of the Deaf community, and use sign language, need access to sign language interpreters to know what's going on in a prison setting. Finally, there also needs to be an increase in d/Deaf awareness across the system.

d/Deaf — what's the difference?

Deaf people usually refer to themselves as either being deaf (with a lowercase 'd') or Deaf (with a capital 'D'). Deaf with a capital 'D' refers to people who are culturally Deaf, meaning they use British Sign Language (BSL) and see themselves as part of the Deaf community, which is made up of people who often prefer to be with other Deaf people and have culturally distinct norms and values. Whereas deaf with a lowercase 'd' refers to the audiological condition, measured most simply by the extent to which someone is unable to hear, and usually viewed as a medical condition.

If you were sharing a cell or in a communal area with a d/Deaf person, what could you do to be supportive?

I think it would depend on how d/Deaf the person is – for example, for people who use sign language it might be difficult to communicate without an interpreter. For d/Deaf people who can speak and communicate in English, you could go to a quiet place and speak slowly; if they lip read, it might help to enunciate your words and be patient as it may take a little longer for them to understand things. You could also write things down for those who write (culturally and linguistically Deaf people often do not write as their language is visual), or you could help with things like giving information about prison rules and what's expected, how they can orientate themselves around the prison, or how to book a prison visit.

In prison, people may not know a person is d/Deaf, and you can support them by reminding other people. You could also make other people aware that a d/Deaf person won't necessarily be able to read information provided.

For culturally and linguistically Deaf

‘d/Deaf women are especially vulnerable in a prison setting as they are more likely to be experiencing some kind of post-trauma.’

people, acknowledging their culture and language is important, understanding that their Deafness isn’t a learning difficulty and that their language is visual. If you can’t use BSL there is still a lot that can be communicated, including the use of gesture and pointing and the use of iconic signs that most people would recognise.

How do you think the situation differs for women in prison in comparison to men?

d/Deaf women are especially vulnerable in a prison setting as they are more likely to be experiencing some kind of post-trauma. There are also so many more men in prison than women, which means that even though d/Deaf men are a minority there are simply more of them. Less d/Deaf women in prison means that there’s less first-hand experience among the women’s prison estate staff on to how to meet the needs of d/Deaf women in prison.

In your view, what needs to be done to make prisons more inclusive for d/Deaf people?

Prisons need further adjustments to cater for d/Deaf people. For example, at the moment BSL isn’t treated like a language in the same way that other languages are, and it would help if documents could be converted into a visual format.

I have produced a set of *Think Deaf* resources that were initially sent out to prisons in 2019, and have recently been updated and redistributed across the prison system. The resources include a booklet and poster to help prison staff understand the d/Deaf experience, which outlines what they can do and the changes they can make to meet the legal requirements set out in the Equality Act. On the back of the booklet there is information about organisations that can provide help and support. All prisons across the women’s prison estate have been sent copies that equality and diversity staff should have access to.

Useful information

Sensory teams

Many councils have a sensory social services team who can provide support for d/Deaf people in prison. Ask your Offender Manager or Personal Officer if they can help with this.

For information relevant to culturally and linguistically Deaf people, contact the British Deaf Association at bda@bda.org.uk or 020 7697 4140.

For information relevant to audiologically deaf people, contact Action on Hearing Loss atinformationline@hearingloss.org.uk or 0808 323 3376.

See more by Laura Kelly-Corless

‘Suffering in Silence: The unmet needs of d/Deaf prisoners’, available at: https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/publications/psj/prison-service-journal-234

‘Sounding out d/Deafness: The experiences of d/Deaf prisoners’, available at: https://clok.uclan.ac.uk/18620/

Living in prison with a hidden disability

Claire shares her experience of life in prison with a hidden disability and reminds us how we can all do more to understand each other's differences.

My name is Claire. I'm a 48-year-old woman in full-time work with a happy life. I was recently released from prison, and I would like to share my experience of being a woman in prison with one of many 'hidden' disabilities.

I am hard of hearing and as a result I wear hearing aids in both ears – not that you'd know, they are small and discreet, and my hair is long. But therein may lie part of the problem: you can't see my disability. Many of us, myself included, often do not consider what other women in prison may be dealing with – something that could make them feel isolated or in need of extra support. By sharing my story, I hope some of you will become more aware of the difficulties some women in similar situations face.

Prison is a noisy and echoey place. For someone who is hard of hearing it can be extremely tiring trying to decipher who is talking to you and what is being said. It can leave you feeling isolated and unsure if you are missing something you should know about. I was lucky; I built a small friendship group who knew about my difficulties and would check I had heard shouts of 'canteen' or the like. I am also comfortable talking about my disability, so I was able to keep staff informed about my needs. But there were still trials and tribulations.

On my arrival in prison, my hearing aid batteries were immediately taken away. I was told I would need to go to the meds hatch when I needed batteries for my aids. So, when my batteries died I went to the meds hatch, but the nurse told me she didn't hold batteries on her daily trolley and that I should have let them know in advance. It's difficult to plan because, dependant on noise levels in your surroundings, batteries don't always last the same amount of time. Frustrated, I asked if I could have batteries from my property instead. 'No' was the answer, and I was sent away without batteries. So, before 'lock up', I asked my wing staff for a DIRF* form. When asked why, I explained and an officer soon appeared with replacement batteries which were handed over so there would be no need for me to submit a DIRF. This wasn't the best start to me feeling that I was in an inclusive, deaf-aware establishment. I got into a routine of asking for batteries earlier than I probably needed to in order to not run out – I made it work.

Time passed, and I moved to another prison where I was told I could hold a packet of spares. This was great, but it only solved the battery issue. For visits, I requested the corner table by two walls which helped deaden ambient noise, making it easier for me to hear my visitors; however, I was often not allocated this table and was instead placed in the middle of the

'Many of us, myself included, often do not consider what other women in prison may be dealing with.'

‘Deafness is just one of many hidden disabilities. As people in prison, maybe we could lift one another and show patience and understanding towards each other. Imagine what we can achieve if we all pull together, regardless of our differences.’

noisy room. One of my family members is also hard of hearing and his needs were not catered for when he visited.

Little things can often be seen as something much bigger. Someone in prison who is called from behind by a member of staff, but who doesn’t stop or look around, can be seen as being rude or difficult, when maybe they simply can’t hear them. To then suddenly hold the person by the arm to stop them, can be frightening or confusing.

I met some staff who were keen to learn to sign and to understand how they could make a difference to the wellbeing of people like me, but sadly they were the minority. I know of a profoundly deaf woman who felt completely isolated while she was in prison as her first language was British Sign Language (BSL) and there was not a single member of staff who understood it at the prison she was in.

Being hard of hearing or deaf can be difficult in prison. The next time someone asks you to repeat yourself, or appears to ignore you, please be patient and understanding. For anyone who is in a position where they can make change, please consider how BSL classes for people in prison and staff alike, or even deaf awareness courses, could make a huge difference to those suffering in silence.

To those of you who are deaf or hard of hearing, please speak up where possible. The more people understand about the difficulties you face, the more likelihood there is of change.

Deafness is just one of many hidden disabilities. As people in prison, maybe we could lift one another and show patience and understanding towards each other. Imagine what we can achieve if we all pull together, regardless of our differences.

*** Discrimination Incident Reporting Form** (DIRF). For more on DIRFs, see pages 46-47. Further information and support on being d/Deaf in prison can be found at the bottom of page 13.

In prison and pregnant: my journey of healing and self-discovery

Words: Ivory Illustration: PPaint

Ivory found herself in prison and heavily pregnant. She shares her experience of how she took advantage of the positives by trying to enlighten others about our collective humanity, taking inspiration from the work of organisations like Hibiscus who are supporting Black, minoritised and migrant women who encounter the immigration and prison system.

I am Ivory. I'm 35 years old and heavily pregnant. I served half of the six-month prison term handed to me after I was found guilty of fraud. It was a hellish experience with a sprinkle of hope and redemption.

During my first days in prison, I realised how priceless freedom is and how costly losing it can be. I discovered the discomfort of a forced regime, and I couldn't wait to close my eyes every night to escape the thoughts in my head around my new reality. Getting up each morning to face the day was a monumental task, coupled with the small matter of a kicking baby in my big belly.

Losing your freedom is challenging and traumatising but I also dealt with racism. I told myself I had other women from different minority ethnic groups, and in fairness some kind-hearted women from privileged groups, to hold and share our experiences together and to encourage one another. It was a blessing not to be the only woman from a minority group.

Prison has a very negative effect on women no matter how strong they have been in their lives. It is a challenge that takes both a physical and mental toll. You wake up feeling unwanted, unforgiven and absolutely useless. It was a terrible state to be in.

I took a journey by saying to myself, what is it going to be? Are you going to wallow in self-pity or take advantage of some of the positive things happening in the prison? The prison service offered classes like Information and Computer Technology, Sewing, Cookery and other faith-based activities. These were my outlets and also a preparation to engage positively in society once released. My faith in God also grew at this time: I concluded that I needed to acknowledge my wrong and not see other people as the cause of my predicament. My healing journey started gathering momentum.

Every day it became easier to take further steps to redemption. I decided to enlighten everyone about our collective humanity regardless of race, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation. A life well lived is a life full of love and sharing. We have to come together and confront the dark issues of racism and discrimination. Together, we will win.

The government has a role to play in this battle for equality. An all-hands-on-deck approach beyond the prison walls, ensuring human dignity and equality. Organisations like Hibiscus can be engaged to help and support. I enjoyed the Black History Month programme organised by Hibiscus, it was full of love, mentoring and sharing.

I look at myself in the mirror now and all I see is a woman who has made progress. I see a woman who wishes to tell her story to help anyone who has come out of prison. I want to say do not give up and hang in there. You are a victor and you will pull through.

I am Ivory; I am a changed woman and am looking forward to making a great impact in the United Kingdom and the world at large. I have my precious son cheering me on every day in his own little way as we journey together.

‘A life well lived is a life full of love and sharing. We have to come together and confront the dark issues of racism and discrimination. Together, we will win.’

How to write for magazines

Illustration: Lucy

Daniella Scott has been a writer and journalist for over five years and is currently Senior Entertainment and Lifestyle Writer at Cosmopolitan UK magazine. Starting as an intern and working her way up, Daniella has had some great advice along the way; here, she shares some top tips on how to write for magazines.

I fell in love with writing as a kid when my older sister made me read her favourite books. She's five years older than me so I often didn't understand much, but as I grew older I began to appreciate how writers put a story together and take you on a journey, and from then I knew I wanted to be a writer and journalist. Writing features is modern-day storytelling, and that's basically the oldest skill in the world. If you're interested in writing for magazines, here is some of the most useful advice I've learned over the years.

Coming up with ideas

The ideas stage is about building the right habits. The first thing is to read as much and as widely as possible – magazines, newspapers, books, news reports, all of it. Some of the best ideas come from small, seemingly insignificant snippets of news.

Next, proactively get into the habit of coming up with ideas. Start by committing to noting down at least one feature idea per day. From there you can build up to two or three. This helps train your mind to look for a story in everyday life; your brain will start spotting a potentially great idea in what normally would have passed you by.

Pitching

Pitching can be tricky because it's different from editor to editor, but the general rule is to know who you're pitching to. Make sure the publication you're approaching is the right place for the piece. Have a look at their

other work, would your piece fit? Have they covered similar topics? Do you like their other work?

Then, you need to make sure you're pitching to the right person. Most publications list their staff somewhere – in print it's usually in the front of the publication (on the masthead). When you write your pitch, you want to get three things across: what the story is, how you will tell it, and why you're the right person to tell it. Put together a summary of the story with a suggested headline, set out how you will report (the themes you'll explore, experts you'll speak to, case studies you'll refer to etc.), and finally, write a small paragraph about who you are and why you're the person to write this.

Researching

For many writers, this is the fun bit. Often, you can spend more time on research than writing. Read widely around your topic and speak to experts and people with first hand experience of the subject you are researching. Try and see if something similar has been written before, if so, what was missing? Think carefully about how your piece is going to tell the reader something new. Speak to people about it, new and different perspectives will help you find that originality.

Writing

The best writing advice I was ever given is to take your reader on a journey, and don't overcomplicate things. Begin with something that sets the scene and then pull the reader back to the big question – the thing you're going to investigate or speak about. Then, set out the facts, explaining why you're looking into this topic – what do the stats say? What's going on in the world right now to make this relevant? Then, take them on that journey. At the end, the reader should feel like they are in a different place to where they started. You don't have to answer every question your reader might have; you just have to take them somewhere new.

Further information

If you feel inspired to write an article you could also look out for prison magazine groups you can join, or set one up yourself. You could even see if you can submit an article to a magazine group in another prison. To practice writing more generally you can submit to writing exercises and competitions in the WIP magazine – see the Pluto Press writing exercise and competition on page 58 or the magazine competition on the inside front cover.

Getting to know Rebecca Vickerman

Words: Jo Halford

We sat down with Diversity and Inclusion Lead of the women's prison estate Rebecca Vickerman who told us more about her job, some of the challenges she has faced, and what she hopes to improve for women in prison.

Could you tell us a bit about yourself?
I am Becky, I'm in my mid-thirties. I have three children who are 5, 6 and 2, and two dogs. I live in Yorkshire.

Could you tell us about your journey to becoming the Diversity and Inclusion Lead for the women's prison estate?
I've worked in the prison services for over 18 years in a variety of roles and prisons. My last job was Head of Safeguarding at HMPYO Weatherby. I moved from there to my current role in August last year. The women's estate has always interested me so I was fortunate to get this role. I believe diversity and inclusion is intrinsically important to keeping people safe.

What does your job involve?
My job involves assurance visits to all the women's prisons across the estate, checking on everything to do with equality, diversity, and inclusion for both staff and the women in prison. I meet with the diversity & inclusion leads within the prison and the equality teams, including the

diversity reps and peer mentors. I talk to them to see what is and isn't working and what support is needed. I also monitor data outcome areas for women to highlight if there is any disproportionality, reporting any inequalities to my director and to the relevant prison. I then ask for a report to investigate findings and developments. I also sit on the transgender case board, making sure there's an awareness among staff and that the needs of transgender people in prison are met, as well as lots of strategy and policy working groups to discuss things like menopause and neurodiversity awareness.

What are the most common protected characteristics that require adjustments?
All of the different ethnicities; disabilities (visible and non-visible) – these are definitely on the rise in terms of outcomes, awareness and the support that's needed; Gypsy, Roma & Traveller (GRT) is a protected characteristic and although it falls under ethnicity, it's an area of its own in as far as the outcomes for women; and there's pregnancy, maternity and age.

Can you give us examples of the types of adjustments that are in place?
For our ethnic minority population we have an alternative catalogue to make sure they can get the beauty and body products they need. I attended a forum this week and a woman of Asian heritage talked about the oils and body products used within her culture so we'll look at adding them. Adjustments are around the kind of things that make people feel the best they can in the prison environment, and for these women their product needs are different to someone white.

What are some of your priorities as the Diversity and Inclusion Lead?
One of my key priorities is ensuring the voices of women are heard, that they are involved in decision-making and that a good peer mentoring scheme is in place. We know women feel more supported by women they relate to and in who they recognise themselves. So, making sure women can meet in the protected characteristic groups they associate with is a really important part of the puzzle for us; it allows women to be heard, and it allows prison staff to hear what their needs are.

I do believe there is a balance to getting forums groups right so that women feel comfortable to talk while staff are there, and so that staff can understand the different cultures, learn the richness and the diversity of our populations, and ask questions.

What are some of the highlights of your role?
Meeting the women on my visits and talking to them, they really celebrate diversity and inclusion and want to improve how we do things. The equalities team staff are also really committed to making a difference for women in prison, wanting to make sure all we do is inclusive and celebrating difference and culture. Working for our new director, Pia Sinha, has given the women's estate a new focus and I believe will allow us to give a real sense of hope to women.

What are the challenges of this role?
Covid has been a challenge; some of the things we'd like to see for diversity and inclusion haven't been possible, like support groups and forum meetings that allow women to get together – these kind of logistical things have halted our innovation, but I think we're getting better.

From a strategic and policy-making side of things, there is a challenge in that our policies and prison service instructions were written a long time ago and from a male perspective, so they don't have a women-

‘One of my key priorities is ensuring the voices of women are heard.’

centric approach; in fact, women are considered at the end of it as a protected characteristics in themselves – as an add on, rather than being a woman who’s 50, who’s got a disability, who’s a mum. We need to get better at thinking of women with protected characteristics, as opposed to the woman being the protected characteristic.

Has your role taught you something new?
It’s taught me that I have a drive and want to make a difference to the women in prison. Being a woman and mum myself, it’s given me perspective on how we can be effective, do better, and give hope to women in prison.

In your capacity as the Diversity and Inclusion Lead, what are you doing to improve the situation for women with diverse needs?
I’m pushing for protected characteristic groups to meet and have their voices heard. I also want to drive prisons to know more about the demographics of their population: knowing about the women they care for, what their needs are, and how they can be met.

I’m making sure we’re working around the Double Disadvantage* action plan, looking at how we consider it in our business planning and narrative. It’s a disadvantage being a woman in custody, in addition to other factors, so it’s about how we can make a difference and use the action plan as a sounding board.

I also want to make the care and transition process for our 18-25-year-old women better, particularly those who transition from youth custody at 18, or are new into custody at 18. They have really distinct needs and we need to make sure we’re meeting them and keeping them safe.

How do you ensure you are listening to the concerns of women affected by diversity and inclusion in prison and are acting on their feedback?
When I visit sites, I do an assurance check on Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms (DIRFs) to make sure they are procedurally fair. I also look at complaint forms that record discrimination, harassment, or victimisation against a protected characteristic, making sure these are taken into the DIRF process. I’ve been attending forum meetings on my visits, speaking to a diverse group of women and feeding back to my director, the team within the women’s directorate, and the senior leadership team of the prison. If something is urgent, I’ll follow it up straightaway, and then on my next visit I have a sense check on whether anything has been sorted or whether things have got better or worse.
I think this is really important and it’s one of my favourite parts of the role: being able to go out and speak to the women to see what’s happening, and hearing what they have to say – which is not all bad.

If you feel someone is discriminating against you, fill in the DIRF form. It’s our official way to monitor your complaint and to see if we have a systemic problem. You can also use a complaint form, but if your complaint is about discrimination, it should automatically go into the DIRF process (see our article on page 46 about the DIRF form process).

*See page 30 for our article on the Double Disadvantage action plan.

A farewell tribute to Kate Paradine

After nearly seven years as the CEO of Women in Prison (WIP), Kate Paradine is moving on to explore new challenges. Harriet Johnson, co-chair of WIP's Board of Trustees and barrister at Doughty Street Chambers, pays tribute to Kate and her work at WIP.

Kate joined WIP when budget and funding cuts were hitting the charity sector hard and austerity was having a severe impact not just on WIP, but on the women who WIP works with. Kate took on a big challenge and from her first day got straight to work.

In 2017, Kate commissioned *The Corston Report: Ten Years On* exposing the shameful fact that ten years after Baroness Corston's damning assessment of how the criminal justice system fails women, that very little had changed. Kate used this report as a platform to demand meaningful policy change from those in power.

Kate also led the response to the sudden closure of Holloway prison in 2016 – a closure that saw many women moved to prisons miles away from their families and support networks, which had a significant impact on their health and mental wellbeing. At the same time, women's services working out of Holloway had to find new bases at incredibly short notice, leading to a huge rise in running costs. Suddenly, the women WIP was working to help were further away, and there was less money to help them. Through all of this, Kate managed not only to raise awareness of the unfairness that was being inflicted on women, but also to manage WIP in a way that meant it could continue to provide the support its service users so desperately needed.

Kate has been a regular on *BBC Woman's Hour*, major news programmes, and in the print media, always fighting to achieve justice for women in prison and

those worst affected by the criminal justice system. As well as advocating for women in prison in the public domain, she has done an incredible job of keeping the issue of women's imprisonment high on the political agenda. Kate has appeared before government select committees*, given evidence to parliamentary groups, and become the recognised expert that those in power want to hear from when discussing women and the criminal justice system. She has shown time and again that she is a hard woman to say no to.

Perhaps the least glamorous, but arguably the most important, part of Kate's legacy is her ability to not only fundraise for WIP, but to manage its finances to ensure the charity, and the women it supports are on stable ground. This would be an incredible feat at the best of times, but is especially remarkable given the financial background of the last seven years. While doing all of this, Kate has been responsible for ensuring the day-to-day delivery of key services to women worst affected by the criminal justice system.

She has achieved all of this with tenacity, warmth, resilience, and an incredible ability to balance practical details with emotional intelligence. She has been a wise big sister to so many women who work at, or with, WIP and she will be dearly missed.

*Select committees are small groups of MPs or members of the House of Lords set up to investigate a specific issue in detail or/and to scrutinise one. They often call in officials and experts to question them about the issue and can demand that the government provides information. These committees publish their findings in a report to which the government is expected to respond, particularly to any recommendations they make.

Kate has been a real leader across the sector. She has helped create an inclusive and supportive network of women's services working in the criminal justice field. She is an inspiring woman.

Helen Voce, Chief Executive Officer, Nottingham Women's Centre

Kate has shown strong, dedicated and passionate leadership in every aspect of her role at WIP and across the women's sector. In doing so, she has made a difference to the lives of the women we all support.

Angela Everson, Chief Executive, WomenCentre Ltd

Kate has been a fantastic leader of not only WIP but the sector. Her approach is collaborative and gives platforms to specialist organisations to take the lead.

Marchu Girma, Chief Executive, Hibiscus Initiatives

Kate has always made me feel valued as a member of the coalition even though we are so small in comparison to many of the members. I have always been amazed at her ability to value each of us and take the time to know and support us with our individual concerns whilst managing her own priorities.

Gemma Fox, Managing Director, North Wales Women's Centre Ltd

Kate has been a wonderful collaborator during the last six years. Who can forget her rabble-rousing speech at the launch of Birth Companions' Birth Charter*? Numerous meetings in which she cut through the guff and asked the difficult, vital questions of officials and colleagues.*

Naomi Delap, Director, Birth Companions

‘Kate managed not only to raise awareness of the unfairness that was being inflicted on women, but also to manage WIP in a way that meant continued support for its service users.’

It has been an absolute pleasure working alongside Kate. The strength & tenacity that she has brought to the arena of women caught up in the criminal justice system is inspiring, Kate is someone who speaks truth to power.

Joy Doal MBE, Chief Executive Officer, Anawim — Birmingham’s Centre for Women

Kate’s time leading Women in Prison has been a shining example of a charity truly standing up for the women it represents. Kate has spoken out eloquently and fearlessly whenever possible on behalf of women and has done so much to help the public and policy makers understand the experiences, needs, challenges and solutions for women who are sent to prison.

Natasha Finlayson, Chief Executive, Working Chance

When you know we have someone, professional, committed, articulate, assertive, well respected, and really supportive who represents our voices and the voices of many women, it is a safe, secure place to be.

Angela Murphy, Chief Executive Officer, Tomorrow’s Women Wirral

Kate will be sorely missed by the sector – her passion, dedication and sheer tenacity have brought about momentous changes for all of our organisations and ultimately the women we serve!

Lisa Dando FRSA, Director, Brighton Women’s Centre

Kate has led Women in Prison with kindness, determination and resilience – attributes that the sector has needed in bucket loads, particularly over the past couple of years. She is never afraid to speak truth to power, and this has meant that under her influence and vision, she has affected huge sector and structural change. Reflecting on the battles that have been won – contracts now within women’s sector control, steps made to improve the quality of services, and the widespread support for stopping investment in future prison builds – Kate has been at the helm of these, galvanizing and motivating us with her energy and passion.

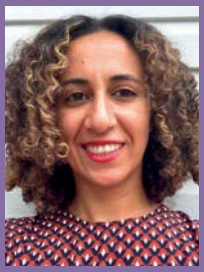
Anna Herrmann, Joint Artistic Director/CEO, Clean Break

I have admired Kate’s passion and tenacity, driving forward the cause of sending less women to prison. Her passion comes from deep within her heart, and for that reason, I am sure that no matter what, she will continue to give women a voice.

Niki Gould, Head of Women’s Community Services, The Nelson Trust

Tackling double disadvantage

Words: Ghadah Alnasseri,
Head of Policy and Public Affairs,
Hibiscus Initiatives



On 31 January this year, a coalition of organisations* launched a 10-point action plan designed to tackle the persistent inequalities experienced by Black, Asian, minoritised, and migrant women in the criminal justice system. The aim of the plan is to improve outcomes and reduce the inequalities and discrimination faced by these groups. Developed through consultation with women with lived experience, as well as government officials and specialist organisations, the plan provides clear steps to making a real difference in the lives of some of the most marginalised women in our community.

‘Currently there are unacceptable levels of inequalities in the criminal justice system that result in many Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women suffering. I am certain these inequalities are not mountains that cannot be moved.’
Marchu Girma, CEO, Hibiscus Initiatives

Too often, Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women face the 'double disadvantage' of gender inequality and racism when they encounter the criminal justice system. This stops them from getting the support they need both within the system and when they try to rebuild their lives outside, which leaves them at risk of reoffending. The government has made a public commitment to tackle racial inequality in the criminal justice system but progress has been slow. The Government's strategy on women offending was published in 2018, but it does not go far enough to meet the needs of Black, Asian, minoritised, and migrant women.

Women's experiences of violence and abuse can drive them into the criminal justice system, with the majority serving short sentences for non-violent offences. Many women then face further abuse and vulnerability as they experience the 'ripple effects' of criminal justice involvement, like worsening mental health, isolation, and poverty. These experiences can be heightened by racism, prejudice, and discrimination.

Women can also face additional disadvantage in the form of faith inequalities. The failure to acknowledge and support faith as an important part of their identity can further accentuate their sense of unfairness and marginalisation.

Hibiscus, and five other organisations (including Women in Prison), are calling for urgent and practical changes to training, recruitment, and external scrutiny to end biases that disadvantage marginalised women in the criminal justice system. We are also calling on the Ministry of Justice to analyse and publish data on racial inequalities in women's contact with the prison system. Evidence shows that Black, Asian, minoritised, and migrant women are more likely than other women to face harsher treatment across the criminal justice system.

By working together across political parties and specialist organisations, and alongside women with lived experience in prison, we can create real change and ensure some of the most marginalised women are no longer overlooked.

Below is the 10-point action plan; each action is supported by quotes from women with lived experiences, taken from research undertaken by Hibiscus.

ACTION ONE

- Train criminal justice staff on culture, ethnicity, race, faith, gender, and anti-racism to meet the multiple and intersecting needs of Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women.

'I don't know whether it's the colour of my skin or that I'm Muslim that I was treated differently.'

ACTION TWO

- Develop practical resources and guides for Home Office (HO) and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) staff on the rights of Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women who have language barriers and require support in different languages or in easy-to-read formats.

'I didn't get the chance to tell my story.'

'A lot of the ladies who are sentenced do not know what a pre-sentence report is.'

ACTION THREE

- Recruit Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women with lived experience of the CJS to become peer mentors and cultural

mediators across the whole system.

'Nobody was talking to me; I couldn't understand what was going on.'

'The Officers don't even want to speak to me because of the way I look.'

ACTION FOUR

- MoJ to publish their report on Women in the Criminal Justice System on an annual basis. This report should also identify and analyse in greater depth the key racial disparities in women's experiences, including level and type of contact with, and experiences within, the criminal justice system.

'When you're Black it's like being a poison in the prison system.'

ACTION FIVE

- MoJ and HO to ensure use of diversion and out of court disposals (OOCD) and end the use of disproportionate custodial sentencing and remands, for Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women.

'I was in prison for four months for a crime I didn't know I committed, then I was released because of a lack of evidence.'

ACTION SIX

- Identify gaps in the services for Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women with insecure immigration statuses.

'If they had listened to me at the beginning, things would've been different.'

'Without the help of the specialist organisations, I wouldn't know my rights and what to do.'

ACTION SEVEN

Improve the effectiveness of current external scrutiny bodies to identify and challenge direct and indirect discrimination based on race, sex or religion.

'I didn't know if I was allowed to practise my religion.'

'I use my faith as a rehabilitation tool.'

ACTION EIGHT

- Ensure Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women and their individual circumstances are properly taken into consideration by effective legal representation and other actions in court.

'I didn't know how the system worked.'

'I was not allowed to get in touch with my family.'

ACTION NINE

- Ensure funding and commissioning mechanisms and procedures are accessible to small and medium-sized, voluntary and specialist sector organisations to deliver specialist support for this group in all parts of the CJS.

'Without the help of the specialist organisations, I wouldn't know my rights and what to do.'

ACTION TEN

- Address issues identified in the Farmer Review around strengthening family, children, and community relationships in prison for Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women, addressing their specific needs around contact, mediation, and risk.

'They arrested my mum who had nothing to do with the case! Once they arrested my mum it broke me.'

*Hibiscus Initiatives, Muslim Women in Prison, Zahid Mubarek Trust, Agenda, Criminal Justice Alliance and Women in Prison

Further information

The full action plan can be found at: https://hibiscusinitiatives.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/DD-Action-Plan.pdf

Cooking together & sharing cultures

For this edition we are reintroducing our canteen recipes, taking inspiration from the diverse heritages of some of the women in prison. Romanian and Vietnamese are two of the most spoken languages in prison after English, so we have decided to share some recipes from these cultures. For some of you, these recipes might be warmly familiar and for others they might be entirely new — they might even remind you of your own cuisines. Either way, we hope you enjoy them, and they inspire you to learn more about the different cultures around you. All of these ingredients are available on the canteen list; if you are on a self–catering wing you may want to try them.

VIETNAMESE CARROT SALAD

A fresh and healthy salad to be enjoyed as a light main dish or a side. See top tip below to make it more substantial with noodles.

Makes approx. 4 portions
Total cost: £9.66

Ingredients:

3 carrots (£0.59 for a pack)
1 cucumber (£0.75)
1 red onion (£0.85 for three)
1 pack dry salted peanuts (£0.59)
½ pack coriander (£1.19 for a pack)

For the dressing:

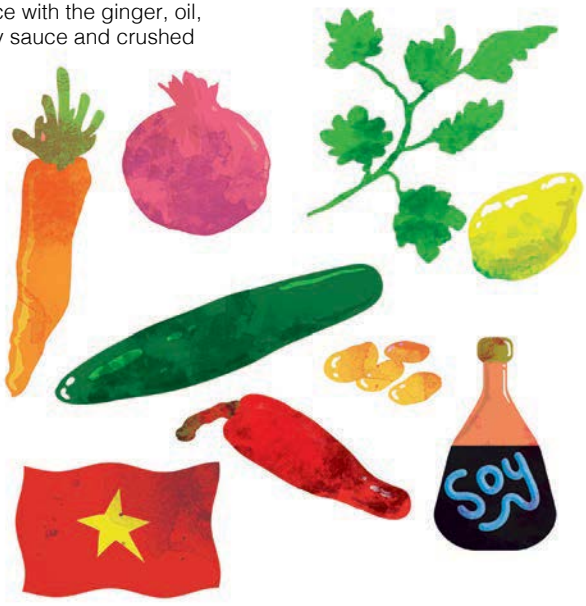
3 tablespoons oil (provided)
2 tablespoons soy sauce (£1.49)
2 limes or lemons, juice and zest (£0.70 for two)
1 thumb-sized piece of fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated (£2.75)
½ - 1 teaspoon crushed chillies (optional, £0.75 for pack)

Method:

- Wash and peel carrots. Cut into strips or grate.
- Wash the cucumber, cut length ways and remove the watery centre. Cut into long strips.
- Finely slice the onion.
- Roughly chop coriander and peanuts.
- In a large bowl, mix the carrot, cucumber and onion with the chopped coriander and peanuts.
- In a separate bowl, mix the lime/lemon zest and juice with the ginger, oil, soy sauce and crushed chillies (if using) to make a delicious dressing.
- Pour the dressing over the veg and mix until well combined.

Top Tip:

To make this a more substantial meal, simply add some cooked noodles, hot or cold. One pack of Ko Lee Egg Noodles costs £1.49, and will feed around 4 people.



ROMANIAN CREAMY SPINACH & FRIED EGG

CREMĂ DE SPANAC CU OU PRĂJIT, REȚETĂ ROMÂNEASCĂ

Enjoy this healthy dish as a filling breakfast or a quick afternoon snack. Serve with a slice of bread to scoop up the spinach and egg together!
Bucură-te de acest fel de mâncare sănătos ca mic dejun sau ca gustare rapidă pentru după-amiază. Serviți mâncarea cu o felie de pâine pentru a întinge în spanacul cu ou!

Makes 1 large portion, or 2 small portions.
Rețeta este pentru 1 porție mare, sau 2 porții mici.

Total cost: £3.88
Costul total:

Ingredients (Ingrediente):

1 tin spinach leaves, drained (£0.99)
1 conservă cu frunze de spanac, scursă (£0.99)
3 cloves garlic (£0.25 for 1 bulb)
3 căței de usturoi (£0.25 pentru 1 căpățână)
1 tablespoon oil (provided)
1 lingură de ulei (furnizat)
2 tablespoons cream (£0.85 for tin)
2 linguri smântână (£0.85 o cutie)
2 eggs for frying (£1.00 for 6)
2 ouă pentru prăjit (£1.00 6 bucăți)
Salt and pepper to taste (provided)
Sare și piper după gust (furnizate)
1-2 pita breads (£0.79 for 6)
1-2 pâini pita (£0.79 pentru 6 bucăți)

Method (Modul de preparare):

- Drain the spinach and set aside.
- Se scurge spanacul și se pune de-o parte.
- Separately, in a pan, heat the oil and sauté (fry until lightly brown) the garlic for 1 minute.
- Separat, într-o tigaie, se încălzește uleiul și se sotează usturoiul (se prăjește până se rumenește ușor) timp de 1 minut.
- Add the spinach and stir until any liquid has evaporated.
- Se adaugă spanacul și se amestecă până când tot lichidul se evaporă.
- Add the cream, salt and pepper, and mix for a minute or two, until the flavours are combined.
- Se adaugă smântâna, sarea și piperul și se amestecă timp de un minut sau două, până când aromele se întrepătrund.
- Fry two eggs in oil, then add salt and pepper on top.
- Se prăjesc două ouă în ulei, și se condimentează cu sare și piper după gust.
- Place the spinach in a bowl and place the egg(s) on top.
- Se pune spanacul într-un bol și se așează oul (ouăle) deasupra.
- Serve with toasted pita bread on the side.
- Se servește cu pâine pita prăjită.

ALL Y

Here are some of the inspiring and creative entries you sent in.

Illustration: Lucy

Star Letter

Easter – the time of renewal

From the series of seasonal poems by NH

Easter,
The time of renewal –
Life begins again.
Spring into action,
Moving buds – the green;
At the start of the month,
Flourishing, as birth and re-birth
Bring us round again.

As each new leaf on each tree
Begins to bud, the sounds of wildlife
Burgeon.
The dawn of the new age begins
And we all go
Around again.

The dew of each blade of grass,
Each droplet precursors the day;
The sunlight slicing through
The frost of the morning.
Bringing us renewal and a new day,
As we all go
Around again.

Spring, the beginning of a new day.
We all go
Around again.

OURS

Swings & Roundabouts

By Saffron

I came around my memory faint,
I know that instant I'm not a saint,
I've gone back to darker days,
For a while I had changed my ways

And although I do not remember,
I know my mind got took again in November,
That's how it works my mental health and me,
It's swings and roundabouts you see

People tell me to hold on keep hope,
Brighter days to come so do not mope,
Passed another box of pills,
My life a battle of the wills

So don't hold your breath,
As there's nothing left,
Of me that I can see,
Long gone is who I used to be,
Don't recognise who I've become,
For mental health I have forecome,

Now I'm here and bleeding,
Don't know what I am needing,
Again it's left its mark,
Mainly the days are dark

Even the bright days are tainted,
It's often that my face is painted,
For I must not give in,
Must grit my teeth and grin

Often people are dealing with grief,
We do not know what lies beneath,
So please do not think twice,
When it comes to being nice

See everybody hurts someday,
And everything will be okay,
Keep hope that the future is bright,
Trust that everything will be alright,

So next time you start to doubt,
And you want to scream and shout,
When your mental health starts to sprout,
Remember it's swings and roundabouts.

In our last edition, Neda from Pluto Press asked you to share your views on the theme of 'community' as part of a writing exercise. Neda received some really inspiring and thought-provoking entries; here are the three entries that received a book prize for their submission.

Communities to me are rich tapestries

By Kerry

Communities to me are rich tapestries
a mixture of folk just trying their best
Somewhere to begin somewhere to rest.
Some want to fit in, some couldn't care less
Some may be your hometown, or a place
you're sent by the crown
At the end of the day it's where we stay
for some a fresh start, for some it's an art
Somewhere to begin, somewhere to rest
Whether it's home or, somewhere unknown
Whichever it is, you make it your own.

What community means to me

By Marcia

What community means to me
We are all kindred spirits, don't you see
Sisters united in humanity

It's supporting all women
Who are here now, and in the afterlife
To listen, to help and to comfort
Those in distress, in trouble and strife

To lend a hand, to help unburden their load
Helping each other, on our life's journeys road
Women in the afterlife, some in pain, fear and distress
Need us to listen, need us to care, and console
So we reach out to them, to make them feel whole

We are all sisters, bonded through the women's cause
Our women's history, we learned in our schools
Our lived history, following those, who have gone before
Votes for women and equality law

Uniting together, to own our own souls
Smashing the glass ceiling, achieving our goals
Supporting each other, to win the pearl of great price
To win the pearl of freedom for our sex
Here in this life, and the next

It's about compassion and care
A shoulder to cry on, and knowing you're there
That maternal bond we all have
That compels us to share
That's what community means to me, it's true
And I hope it means the same to you

i always walked alone

by Lauren

i always walked alone –
not my choice,
not anyone else's,
It just happened that way.

My ideas, my dreams, my plans –
so much to do, but none to follow.
Passions flourished, only to wither in the solitude.
Is that which we do alone worthless?
But none could follow.

To walk alone or not at all?
i walked, i ran
Slowly things changed – i found places, i found people.
They shared some of my passion, yet they walked different paths.
On mine, they could never keep up

To walk along or not at all?
Still I walked, still I ran
Meaningful bonds took root and grew.
i found ways to help, to volunteer, and take part.
i began to share this life and do things together.
i did small things for them, always happy to help,
while reluctant to take theirs, i learned this was ok

Trust and Community became vivid, almost tangible,
We shared more things,
Created more joy!
Life became richer

And later on came my hour of need,
So many friends ready to stand by me –
i walked alone no more.

How you can become a Women's Centre Champion

Words: Narinder Panesar and Jo Halford
Illustration: UP STUDIO

In the last edition of the magazine, we introduced you to the Creating Community Connections (CCC) project, set up to help women in prison to access specialist services. In this article, CCC Coordinator Narinder shares information about the role of Women's Centre Champions, the support and help they provide, and how you can become one.

The CCC's project vision is that every woman in prison (whatever the length of their sentence) is connected to specialist services and their local women's centre. Our Women's Centre Champions (WCCs) are there to help us achieve this.

Who are WCCs?

WCCs are women in prison trained to act as a point of contact to provide advice and guidance about women's centres, what they do and what they offer, along with other resettlement processes and support available to women in the prison and the community.

What do WCCs do?

- They make sure you have a good understanding of all the services and agencies available to you and the processes required to get you referred on to them, supporting you in referrals
- Run regular forums/workshops to promote the CCC project
- Listen and talk to women in prison and prison staff about their experiences and discuss ways in which the prison environment can be improved
- Advocate for women in prison, representing their views and making sure their voices are heard
- Deliver activities to increase awareness about issues in prison, exploring the root causes of these issues
- Plan and run events promoting personal growth
- Attend training to support their own skills and work
- Attend weekly meetings with other WCCs and the Women's Centre Link Worker who coordinates WCC activities and training

Where are they?

At the moment we have two WCCs at HMP Foston; we are in the process of recruiting two at HMP Eastwood Park; and have received nine applications from the Link Worker at HMP Drake, which, following a security check, will go through to the interview process and then training if successful.

We aim to eventually have WCCs on all prison wings. Roles are currently advertised on Wayout TV, in leaflets on the wings, and in the library and education centre. Women in Prison have recruited two Women's Centre Champions at HMP Foston who are providing training to WCCs.

How can I become a WCC?

You can apply to become a WCC by submitting an application to the Women's Centre Link Worker at your prison; details of how to contact a Link Worker are displayed on prison wings and in the library and education departments. The Link Worker can provide you with more details about the role. Alternatively, you can fill in your details on a WCC leaflet – these are displayed on the wing – and hand it in to a Link Worker. You can also get in touch with your activities department or your Offender Management Unit worker.

We are looking for women who are able to offer both emotional and practical support, who can motivate someone experiencing difficulties to seek support. WCCs require patience and an ability to work with vulnerable and sometimes demanding people. You must feel comfortable in sharing information with peers and staff, and have an ability to work well with others, often using your own initiative. Good emotional awareness is essential in allowing you to offer support without having an impact on your own wellbeing.

What are WCCs offered?

As a WCC you will be offered vocational training and qualifications opportunities, such as Peer Mentoring Level 1 and Peer Mentoring Level 2. You will also receive non-accredited Women's Centre Champions training. The career progression opportunities available are unpaid and/or paid employment in the community. WCCs also have opportunities to benefit from Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) to local women's centres.

Poem from a woman in HMP Foston Hall about her WCC

S is a Women's Champion
S is full of useful knowledge
S is kind
S is always there
S helps me out
S is such a special person
S is always on call
S is a guardian angel with butterfly wings
S gives me a lot of useful information
I wish S all the best

A step in the right direction for pregnant women and mothers

Illustration: Ulla

The director of Birth Companions, Naomi Delap, talks to Women in Prison about the new HMPPS policy framework on pregnancy, mother and baby units (MBUs) and maternal separation in women's prisons.

Birth Companions were among the first to welcome HMPPS's new policy framework, titled *Pregnancy, Mother and Baby Units (MBUs), and Maternal Separation from Children up to the Age of Two in Women's Prisons* when it was published last September. Its publication marked 25 years since Birth Companions first started working with pregnant women and mothers in Holloway prison, and although it came later than it should have, it is nonetheless something to celebrate.

As the first set of mandatory requirements relating to the care of pregnant women and mothers in the prison system, the policy framework, along with the accompanying operational guidance, is a major step forwards in improving the experiences and outcomes for pregnant women and mothers in prison.

It means there are now clear standards for how women experiencing pregnancy (including ectopic pregnancy, abortion, miscarriage, stillbirth, and neonatal death), birth, the postnatal period and separation from a child under the age of two are supported in prison. The policy addresses the emotional, physical and practical needs of these women to ensure the appropriate support is provided. As part of this, **Pregnancy, Mother and Baby Liaison Officers (PMBLOs) are to now be appointed in every prison, which means a single point of contact for women in these circumstances — something that has often been missing.**

Having taken these important steps, prisons now

What is a policy framework?

A policy framework is an official document that provides guidance on policies, procedures, and long-term goals in order to give overall direction to the running and development of an organisation.

need to focus on making sure the framework is followed in practice. This will not be easy in a prison system impacted by the recent pandemic, where women were confined to their cells for 23 or more hours a day.

We are keen to ensure that the standards set out in this framework are shared not only with staff but with the women in prison. Women should know what to expect in the care they receive and how to raise concerns if these standards are not met.

Birth Companions look forward to working with HMPPS and individual prisons to support the training and development associated with the framework, and to support the new PMBLOs. After a slow start, we're hoping we will soon be able to play a bigger role in the coming months.

Our efforts to support this work will run alongside our continued commitment to campaigning for an end to the imprisonment of pregnant women and mothers of infants.

What you can do

The HMPPS policy framework relates to the care of those who:

- Are currently pregnant
- Have been pregnant in the past year (including those who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth, ectopic pregnancy or had an abortion)
- Have given birth to a baby in the past two years, and are either on a Mother and Baby Unit or separated from an infant

If this applies to you, you should be in contact with the PMBLO in your prison. If you are not, please ask your Offender Manager for more information.

Further information on pregnancy, birth and motherhood in prison is available in the Birth Companions *Inside Guide* which should be available in the prison library or on request through your PMBLO.

About Birth Companions

Birth Companions is a specialist charity led by and for women. It focuses on supporting pregnant women and mothers of infants who are in contact with the criminal justice system, and currently provides direct services in HMP Foston Hall, HMP Peterborough and HMP Bronzefield.

What to do if you have experienced discrimination

Illustration: UP STUDIO

Katie Fraser, Women in Prison Head of Prisons Partnerships and Participation, tells us more about Discrimination Incident Reporting Forms (DIRFs) and how to submit one.

Sometimes, being in prison can make you feel helpless and like you have no rights, but this is not the case. If you have witnessed any form of discrimination or feel you have experienced discrimination yourself, there is a system in place that allows you to report this so it can be investigated and dealt with. You may not feel confident about reporting discrimination or have worries about repercussions, but all prisons must work within the 2010 Equality Act, which states that it's unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise someone because of a protected characteristic – protected characteristics include: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The prison process for dealing with complaints about discrimination is described in Prison Service Instruction 32/2011 Ensuring Equality instruction. If you want to report something you have seen or experienced, you should complete a Discrimination Incident Reporting Form (DIRF). DIRFs are available from many places in prison, so have a look on your landing or in the library or other areas. They come with an envelope so what you write can be kept private. This is important as you may want to complain about discrimination by a staff member and will

‘Prison governors will always welcome complaints because it gives them the opportunity to see what is happening in their prison and to change things for the better.’

want to feel confident they do not see what you have written.

DIRFs should be collected daily by a member of staff who is not an officer on that wing. All DIRFs must be logged and monitored when they are received and the guidelines state that you should get a response within five working days. If the prison is unable to give you a full response in that time, they should respond to you anyway, explaining why they have not yet responded and telling you when you should receive a full response.

Sometimes your concern might be addressed informally, but if a DIRF is about a serious incident or an allegation of misconduct by staff it should be referred for investigation. You should always be told this is happening and be kept up to date. The investigation will only be confidential up to a certain point as the person carrying out the investigation will need to interview you and the person/s you feel have discriminated against you. Try not to worry about this as the investigator has to follow a policy which states that anyone who complains is protected. When the investigation is complete you should be told about any part of the outcome which is relevant to you.

If you are not happy with the response to your complaint, you can appeal using a stage 2 complaint form (COMP2), just ask any officer and they will be able to get you one. If you are still unhappy, you can then complain to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO). Prison governors will always welcome complaints because it gives them the opportunity to see what is happening in their prison and to change things for the better.

You don’t have to be silent about anything that you think may be discrimination. Get your DIRF form in!

Why do women complain less than men?

Illustration: UP STUDIO

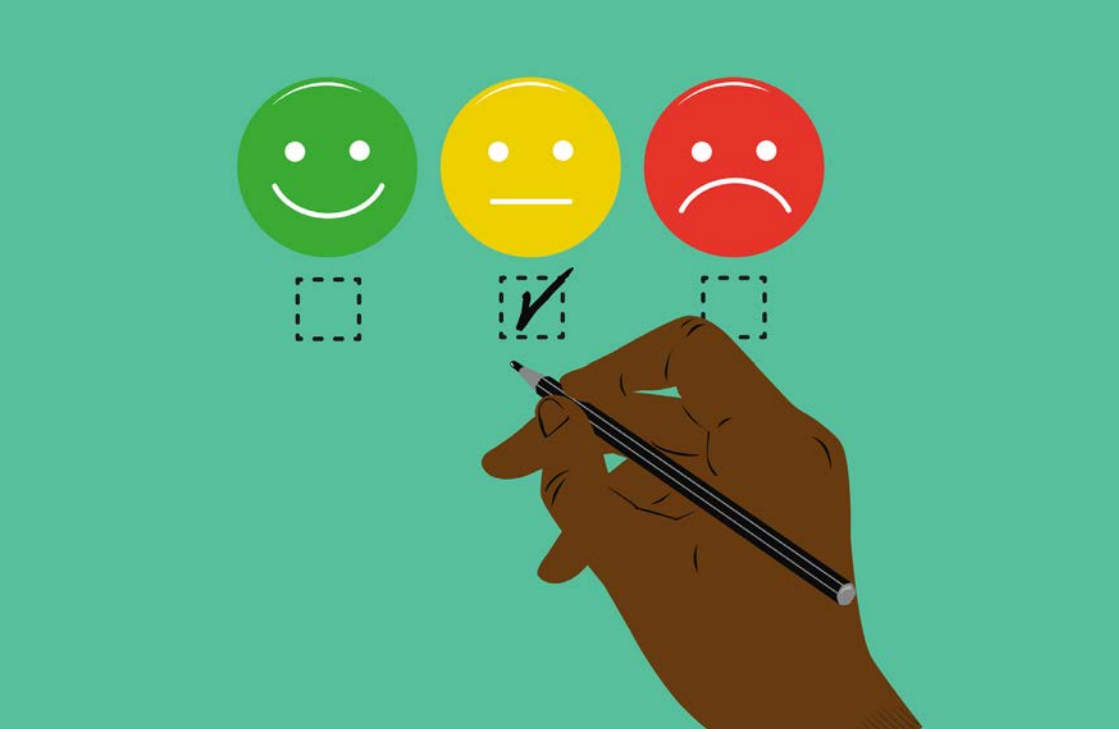
The Prisons & Probation Ombudsman (PPO) are trying to understand why women in prison file less complaints than men. Assistant Ombudsman Mike tells us more about what they are doing to try and encourage women to come forward.

Although women make up 4% of the prison population, only 1% of the complaints that come to the PPO are from women. In prison, men tend to be more vocal when it comes to making complaints, but we are keen to ensure women also feel confident to ask us to investigate a complaint on their behalf. We will take your complaint seriously and investigate it fully if it is within our remit. We can't promise to uphold your complaint, or give you the outcome you want, but we will always explain the reasons for our decisions.

The PPO are an independent investigative service and do not take sides. We work closely with prison staff and managers to try and resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity and to ensure mistakes are not repeated.

As a senior investigating manager, when I investigate individual complaints I look for patterns across complaints to see what

'The only people who can say why women in prison don't complain are the women who are in prison. For this reason, my team and I will be visiting as many women's prisons as we can.'



they might tell me about prison policies and procedures. I use this information to make recommendations to governors and senior managers in the prison service about the things that might need changing.

Some people tell us women in prison do not make as many complaints as men because women have better relationships with prison staff and are better at resolving conflict. But, I also worry that women are more likely to put up with bad situations or be more concerned about causing any trouble.

However, the only people who can say why women in prison don't complain are the women who are in prison. For this reason, my team and I will be visiting as many women's prisons as we can this year to speak with you. Please say hello if you see us and come along to one of our sessions – it is a chance to share your opinions. Information about how and when you can join these sessions will be available from prison staff as soon as dates have been agreed.

Making a complaint to the PPO

To make a complaint, you need to first submit a COMP1 form to your prison. If you are unhappy with the prison's response, submit a COMP1A to the prison and wait for their response. If you are still unhappy after both stages, you can write to us and ask us to investigate. You do not need to ask permission to do this and you will not be in any trouble with the prison for contacting us.

To send us a complaint for investigation, send us a copy of your COMP1, 1A or confidential access form and a short covering letter explaining why you are unhappy. You can photocopy complaint forms for the PPO free of charge and remember to include a copy of the prison's response to your complaint. You must do this within three months of the date of the prison's final reply.

Send your complaint to:

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
Third Floor
10 South Colonnade
London
E14 4PU

You might be able to appeal your case with the CCRC

Illustration: UP STUDIO

The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) is an independent body that investigates suspected miscarriages of justice. Catherine Dilks, Manager for Applicant Engagement at the CCRC, explains how they are helping women in prison by reassessing cases where coercive controlling behaviour may have played a role in their conviction.

Established 25 years ago, we look at criminal cases where people believe they have been wrongly convicted or wrongly sentenced. Since the CCRC began, we have appealed over 650 cases, 70% of which have been successful. Five hundred people have had their sentences reduced or their convictions quashed as a result of our work.

We want to make women feel empowered to ask for our help. We know women with criminal convictions will often have different experiences of the criminal justice system and different needs. To help us understand the varied experiences of women, we receive specialist training from charities and organisations like Women in Prison and the Centre for Women's Justice.

The CCRC is the only organisation with the power to send a case back to an appeal court, but we can only do this if there is a really good reason to do so. There must be significant new evidence in a closed case for it to be presented differently, or a change in the law that allows it to be presented again, as in the case of Sally Challen.

Although Sally Challen's case was not a CCRC case, it is one we watched with great interest. Following her successful 2019 appeal, we are now focusing on women, among others*, who may have been affected by coercive control and who might be eligible for our support. We are re-assessing hundreds of closed cases where coercive controlling behaviour may have played a part in a conviction. These cases will be individually reviewed with some potentially being re-opened; particularly if they support other legally recognised defences. The review of these cases is ongoing.

While Sally Challen's case is just one example of a case that may impact women in particular, we strongly urge anyone who was convicted under similar circumstances and who lost their appeal to apply to us for a review of their conviction and/or their sentence.

The CCRC is the only way that someone can get a second appeal if their first attempt has failed.

**The CCRC recognises that coercive control is not gender-specific*

The case of Sally Challen

In 2011, Sally Challen was convicted of killing her husband. Her murder conviction was later overturned because of medical evidence that she was suffering from mental disorders at the time of the killing due to decades of abuse from her husband. Challen's case was appealed after a new law in 2015 ruled 'coercive control' – controlling behaviour that seeks to take away a person's freedom and subject them to abuse – a criminal offence. It was the first time that the impact of coercive control played a role in overturning someone's conviction.

The CCRC look at any type of criminal conviction and you can apply whenever. You can request an application form by phone or email, or submit an application on the CCRC website. Family members or friends can apply on your behalf with your permission. It is completely free to apply to the CCRC.

If you have any questions, you can call us on 0300 456 2669 or email us at info@ccrc.gov.uk. For further information, visit ccrc.gov.uk

Did you plead guilty? We want to hear from you

Words: Bruno Min, Legal Director, Fair Trials

Fair Trials is a human rights charity looking to understand the circumstances in which young people plead guilty.

Pleading guilty

People plead guilty for various reasons, even if they haven't done anything wrong. But we don't know very much about how people make up their minds about pleading guilty, and the impact these decisions have. We also know very little about the reasons why young people, and in particular young women, choose to plead guilty; we want to find out if people are getting the support and information they need to make up their minds.

Our project

Fair Trials is looking into the decision-making process of young adults (18–25-year-olds) who plead guilty to a criminal offence (whether it resulted in a prison sentence or not), in England and Wales. We are investigating the short- and long-term implications of guilty pleas on these young adults. This includes different sentences or fines, reduction in pre-trial detention, socio-economic impacts on housing, education, employment, and further offending. To make sure we are effectively assessing the impact of these decisions on young women who are pleading guilty, given the specific and intersectional issues women face in the criminal justice system, we are seeking input from people who fit this profile to share their views.

What we will do with the responses

We want to develop practical solutions to the inequalities facing young women who plead guilty. We will collect and analyse the responses, taking note of people's experiences and looking for themes and trends. We aim to present and discuss our findings and draft policy recommendations during two subsequent events, and we will invite those who responded or otherwise took part to participate. We will then produce a final report and send out its key findings to policymakers and civil interest groups, with a view to influencing policy in this area, as well as sharing it in the media, to raise public awareness of the issue.

How to take part

If you were aged between 18 and 25 when you went to trial, you can help us understand the experiences of women who plead guilty by sharing your own experience with us.

You can help us by answering the following questions about the most recent crime you have been convicted of.

Please note that we aren't able to give people individual legal advice or assistance with their cases.

- **Did you plead guilty to the offence that you were charged with?**
- **How old were you when you made your decision to plead guilty or not guilty?**
- **Did anyone help you make your decision to plead guilty or not guilty? If so, who helped you, and how?**
- **What did you think would happen to your life if you pleaded guilty?**
- **What did you think would happen to your life if you pleaded not guilty?**
- **What were the consequences of your decision to plead guilty or not guilty, for you?**
- **Are you happy with your decision to plead guilty or not guilty?**
- **Do you think you would make the same decision about pleading guilty, knowing what you know now about the consequences?**
- **What offence were you charged with? (Only if you're willing to share).**
- **Are you willing for us to publish your responses (Yes/ Anonymous only/No)**
- **Are you willing for us to contact you about your responses? If yes, let us know your contact details including name and address.**

Please send your answers to: Fair Trials, 5 Castle Road, London, NW1 8PR.

Understanding anxiety

Words: WIP's Healthy Foundations Team
Illustration: PPaint

Anxiety is a term you might have heard a lot, but what exactly is it?

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, fear, worry, or tension. It's not always easy to recognise anxiety but there are some physical and psychological signs that can point towards it. These vary from person to person; physical signs can include sweating, feeling sick (nausea), headaches, a racing heart and dizziness, while psychological signs can include feelings of nervousness, restlessness and difficulties with concentration or sleeping.

Is anxiety normal?

Absolutely! **Anxiety is a very normal reaction to stressful and overwhelming situations – everyone experiences anxiety at some point in their life.** Anxiety can sometimes even be productive by increasing our alertness and allowing us to respond quickly under pressure. However, anxiety can become a problem when it occurs too often and interferes with our daily lives.

Anxiety is likely to occur when we are repeatedly exposed to stress over a long period of time, such as being in prison. So, if you are currently in prison and experiencing anxiety, you are definitely not alone. In fact, nearly half of women in prison experience problems with anxiety.

How can we manage anxiety?

Because anxiety is a normal response to stress, it's unlikely it will ever fully disappear. However, we can learn how to manage it better and reduce its interference in our life. We can do this by: 1) using techniques to reduce the physical sensations that come with feeling anxious; 2) challenging our thoughts about worry; 3) identifying and understanding our triggers (the things that set it off).

Managing physical sensations

Breathing techniques can be helpful in reducing the physical sensations associated with anxiety. Mindful breathing and box breathing are two such techniques. Mindful breathing involves slowly inhaling and exhaling while keeping a phrase in mind, the phrase you choose is up to you and can be as simple as 'breathe in, breathe out'. To practise box breathing, please see the step-by-step illustration on the opposite page.

If you feel able to, practising general

self-care, such as doing regular exercise, getting a good amount of sleep, avoiding caffeine, and using relaxation techniques like yoga and meditation, can also help to prevent and reduce these physical sensations.

Challenging thoughts

We often give worrying more importance than it is worth. We may convince ourselves that worrying prepares us for bad things, or that it motivates us. However, by consistently challenging these thoughts, reminding ourselves that worrying can often demotivate us and make us spend a lot of time preparing for things that don't happen, we can give worrying less power.

Identifying Triggers

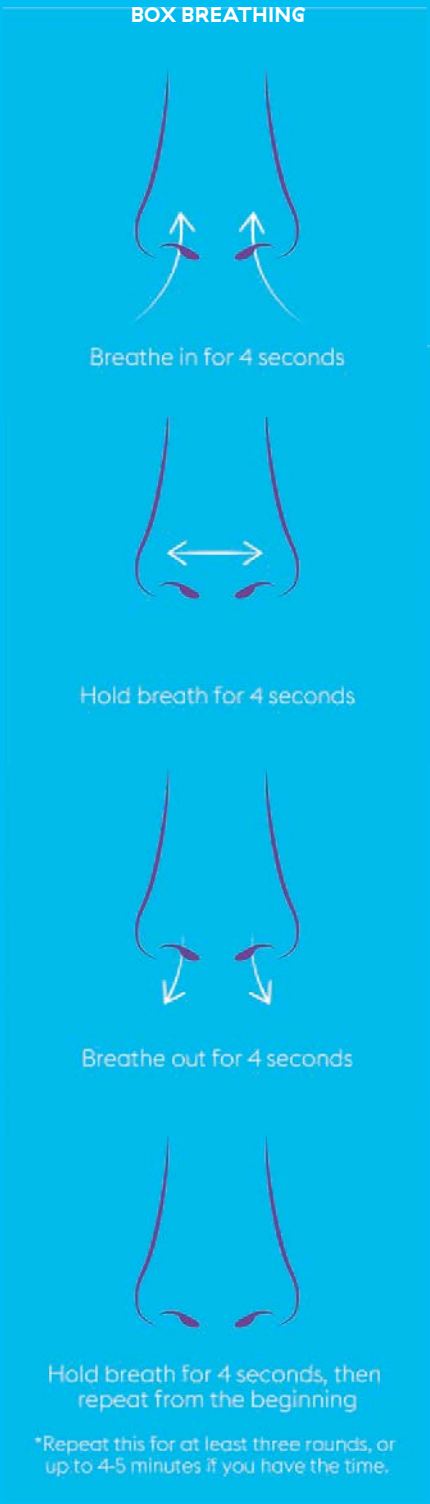
One way to identify triggers is by keeping an anxiety diary for two weeks. In this diary, rate your anxiety level from 0-10 every hour and write down any relevant details, such as where you were, who you were with and the thoughts you were having. This can help you to identify a pattern for when you experience high levels of anxiety.

Once you have identified your triggers, it may be worth talking with a friend about them as sharing these can increase your understanding and provide a different perspective.

Want further help?

Resources: check if the library has any self-help guides for further tips.

Speak out: Let a prison officer or healthcare know you would like to discuss available support options for anxiety in your facility. When you are released back into the community, let your WIP worker/advocate or GP know that you would like to discuss further options.



Ground yourself with this guided tree pose

This tree pose is a variation of the traditional yoga tree pose, used for balancing and centring the mind and body.

How to do the tree pose

During this exercise, it is important to think of your body like a tree.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart.

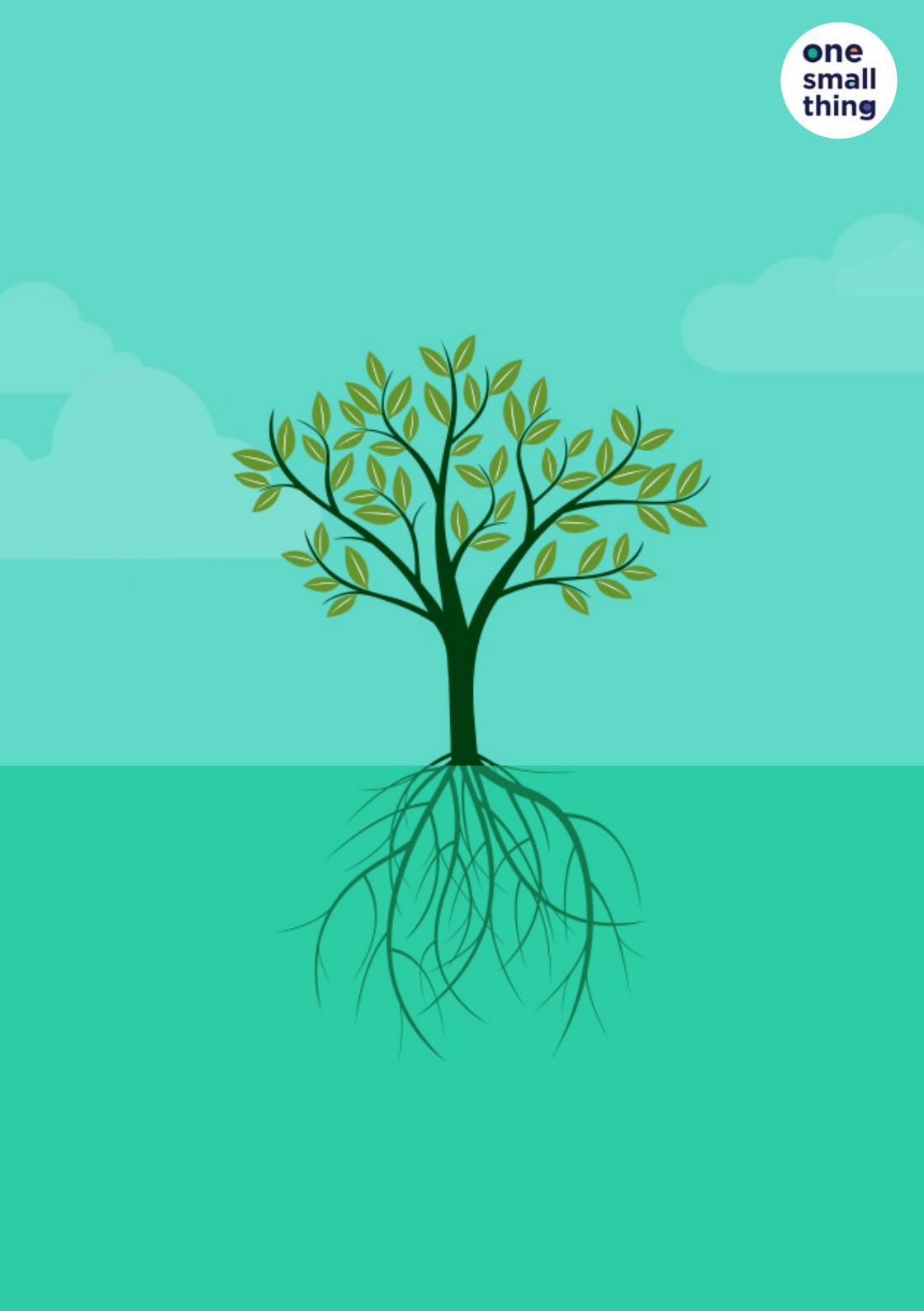
Rest your hands at your side.

- Plant your feet into the ground.
- Let your legs and feet descend as if they are the roots of a tree.
(illustration on opposite page)
- Let your feet extend deep into the ground, into the core of the earth.
- You may notice you have thick roots that firmly pull you down, roots that connect you to the energy and strength of the earth.

- Your legs and your feet feel heavy.
- You may have some thinner roots that spread to cover more areas of your body, ensuring security and abundance.
- Breathe up through the roots, move your breath from the soles of your feet through your legs to the centre of your body.
- With each breath, extend the roots up to the crown of your head.
- Notice the energy come into your body and feel it move into the sky.
- Keep breathing…

This mindfulness exercise is an extract adapted from One Small Thing's *Guided Self-Soothing Exercises*, currently broadcast on Wayout TV at 12 noon weekdays. Produced by The London Podcast Company, with text adapted by Dr Stephanie Covington and voiceover by Jenny Dyson.

One Small Thing's mission is to redesign the justice system for women and their children. For more information, visit www.onesmallthing.org.uk


one
small
thing

What does reading mean to you?

Words: Neda Tehrani

Reading can be a source of comfort, inspiration, joy and knowledge; it can allow you to immerse yourself into a world that is not your own or it can expand your understanding of your own world. In this new writing exercise, Pluto Press want to hear about what reading means to you.

Books continue to be one of the most important tools for learning, exploration and escapism. Organisations such as Haven Distribution and others do incredibly important work to deliver books to people in prison. Pluto Press is pleased to be able to send books to the women in prison who submit entries for these writing exercises. Through your submissions to the exercise in the last edition of the magazine, we learned about what community meant to you, in particular during an ongoing period of pandemic-related isolation. For this edition of the magazine, we would love to hear about what reading means to you.

Did you read a particular book at some point, earlier or later in life, which had an impact on you? What was the book and what did you enjoy about it? Do you prefer fiction, non-fiction, poetry or something else? Reading can be a healing process, something we enjoy on an individual level or something we take part in as a community. Have you considered setting up or taking part in reading groups where you can discuss books with your peers?

Books provide all readers with a range of experiences, and each reader will have their own unique views about the powerful words they are engaging with. Reading can improve our mental health, and get us thinking about ideas from a new perspective. It can help to connect us with stories and people we may otherwise not hear about.

As always, you can tell us about your ideas in a range of formats: a short story, a poem, a diary entry, an essay or any other writing style you'd like to experiment with! We very much appreciate and enjoy reading your entries, and hope to be able to share them with other members of the community in future editions of the magazine. We will be picking five winning entries that will receive one of the four books pictured on the opposite page, each of which have brought joy to a range of readers in various ways.

Recent Pluto Press titles, clockwise from top left: *Repealed: Ireland's unfinished fight for reproductive rights* by Camilla Fitzsimons with Sinéad Kennedy; *Tangled in Terror: Uprooting Islamophobia* by Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan; *A Decolonial Feminism* by Françoise Vergès; *Lost in Work: Escaping Capitalism* by Amelia Horgan

Writing tips:

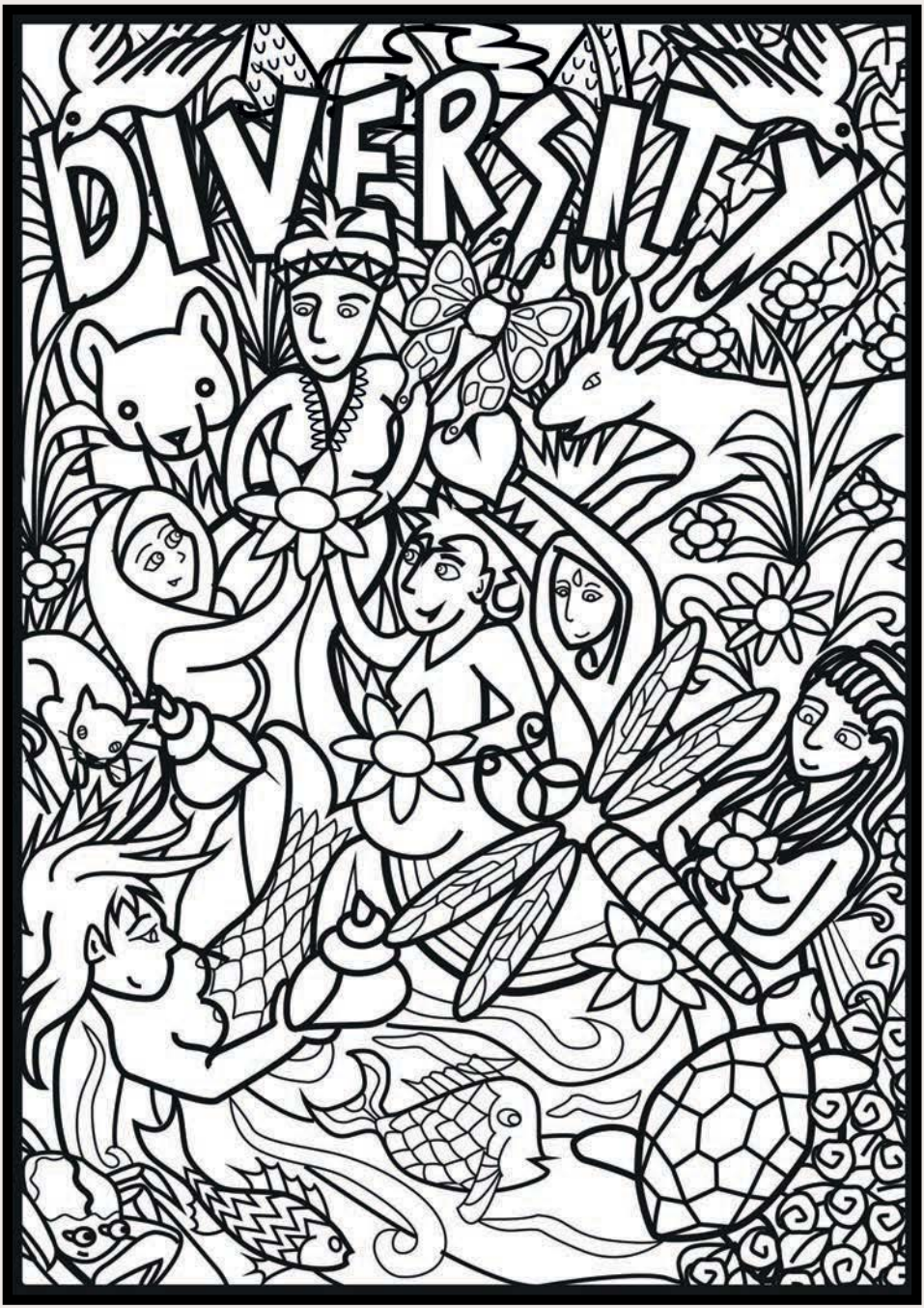
- **Plan your written piece.** Jotting thoughts down as they come to mind can help you to figure out a structure for your writing and which areas you would like to focus on.
- **Read through your writing more than once.** Even if you don't make any edits, your writing will improve after a second or third read-through. You may find things you want to take out or points you'd like to build on in more detail.
- **Pick something you're passionate about.** It's very likely that something you've spent time thinking about before will make for a very interesting topic and will show up in your writing.
- **Trust your voice!** Everyone's writing style is different and each writer has something unique to add, which is what makes the experience of reading so enjoyable.

Please make sure you complete and attach a consent form (see page 65) with your writing exercise and send it to FREEPOST – WOMEN IN PRISON.

Pluto Press will be reading your entries, and we may publish your writing in the next edition of WIP's magazine, *Still I Rise*.

If you have any questions about the exercise, or writing, books and publishing more generally, feel free to contact Neda at nedat@plutobooks.com or at Pluto Press, 345 Archway Road, London, N6 5AA.

Neda Tehrani is an Editor at Pluto Press, an independent publisher of radical, left-wing non-fiction books. Established in 1969, Pluto Press is one of the oldest radical publishing houses in the UK, but remains focused on making timely interventions in contemporary struggles.



Artwork by Erika Flowers www.recordedinart.com


INCLUSION

WORD SEARCH

Find the words – time yourself!

L	P	C	B	V	J	H	F	M	D	N	M	F	H
V	P	A	E	K	B	V	Y	J	Z	I	H	P	T
E	A	E	Q	L	C	S	M	P	M	R	W	D	U
S	A	R	M	K	E	U	V	A	L	U	I	N	G
O	L	T	I	B	X	B	W	M	R	M	H	T	X
C	U	V	S	E	R	V	R	R	E	L	R	D	D
I	I	M	C	H	T	A	F	A	R	M	D	T	R
E	X	A	O	K	A	Y	C	L	T	G	B	J	R
T	A	M	Q	C	L	R	P	E	C	I	L	E	K
Y	S	H	W	Q	R	A	E	A	T	A	N	L	R
N	I	P	U	P	D	E	T	D	M	T	I	G	M
O	L	E	N	C	O	M	P	A	S	S	I	N	G
B	E	L	O	N	G	I	N	G	E	X	Z	B	A
R	S	P	O	S	I	T	I	V	I	T	Y	K	Q

Belonging **Embrace** **Society** **Positivity** **Valuing**

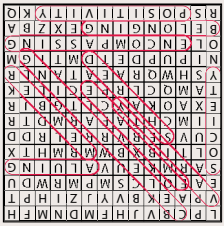
Encompassing **Member** **Celebrating** **Shared** **Variety**

SUDOKU

How to play? Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9, without repeating the number.

9				1	6		4	
2	4				7			
	7	1		2				6
		2		9		4		3
			1		2			
3		9		4		2		
6				8		3	2	
			4				6	1
	8		2	6				5

Answers



9	3	5	8	1	6	7	4	2
2	4	6	3	5	7	1	8	9
8	7	1	9	2	4	5	3	6
7	1	2	6	9	8	4	5	3
4	5	8	1	3	2	6	9	7
3	6	9	7	4	5	2	1	8
6	9	7	5	8	1	3	2	4
5	2	3	4	7	9	8	6	1
1	8	4	2	6	3	9	7	5

LEGAL & GENERAL ADVICE

Prison Reform Trust Advice and Information Service:
0808 802 0060

Monday 3pm–5pm

Wednesday and Thursday 10:30am–12:30pm

Prisoners' Advice Service (PAS):

PO Box 46199, London, EC1M 4XA

0207 253 3323

Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10am–12:30pm and 2pm–4:30pm, Tuesday evenings 4:30pm–7pm

Rights of Women

- Family law helpline

020 7251 6577

Open Tuesday–Thursday 7pm–9pm and Friday 12–2pm (excluding Bank Holidays).

- Criminal law helpline

020 7251 8887

Open Tuesdays 2pm–4pm and 7pm–9pm, Thursday 2pm–4pm and Friday 10am–12pm

- Immigration and asylum law helpline

020 7490 7689

Monday 10am–1pm and 2pm–5pm, Thursday 10am–1pm and 2pm–5pm

HARMFUL SUBSTANCE USE SUPPORT

Frank Helpline:
0300 123 6600

Open 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Action on Addiction Helpline:

0300 330 0659

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

National Domestic Abuse Helpline:

0808 2000 247

Open 24 hours.

LGBTQ+

Bent Bars

A letter writing project for LGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming people in prison.

Bent Bars Project, PO Box 66754, London, WC1A 9BF

Books Beyond Bars
Connecting LGBTQIA+ people in prison with books and educational resources.

Books Beyond Bars, PO Box 5554, Manchester, M61 0SQ

HOUSING

Shelter Helpline:

0808 800 4444

Open 8am–8pm on weekdays and 9am–5pm on weekends.

NACRO
information and advice line:

0300 123 1999

FAMILY SUPPORT

National Prisoners' Families Helpline:

0808 808 2003

Open Monday-Friday 9am–8pm and on Saturday and Sunday 10am–3pm (excluding Bank Holidays).

OTHER

Cruse Bereavement Care

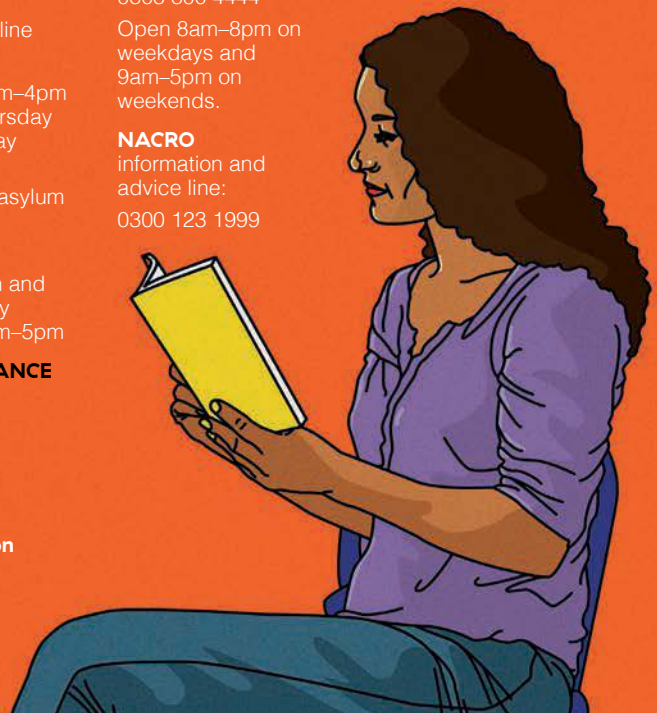
0808 808 1677

Open Monday–Friday 9:30am–5pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9:30am–8pm and weekends 10am–2pm.

Samaritans

116 123

Disclaimer: please be aware that some helplines will be operating under new opening hours due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



PPaint

Women in Prison (WIP) Consent Form

We love to receive artwork, poetry, stories, articles, letters, knitting patterns, recipes, craft ideas etc., for publication in the magazine from women affected by the criminal justice system in prison or the community. Please complete and tear out this form to send along with your piece so that we know you are happy for us to publish your work and what name you would like to use.

Please note that we are unable to return 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

First Name _____ **Surname** _____

Prison or Women Centre (if applicable) _____ **Prison No.** (if applicable) _____

Any Contact Details (email, address, phone) _____

Title of your piece (If relevant) _____

Basic description (e.g. a letter in response to... or a poem or an article on...)

_____

I give permission for my work to be used by Women in Prison (PLEASE TICK)**:**

WIP's magazine (*Still I Rise*) **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

WIP's online platforms *(our website, www.womeninprison.org.uk, and social media, including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn)* **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

WIP's Publications & Promotional Materials (i.e. reports, leaflets, briefings) **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

Please note we only publish first names (no surnames) and the name of the prison or Women's Centre in the magazine (we don't publish prison names in other publications or online).
You can of course choose to be Anonymous (no name used) or write a nickname or made up name.

I am happy for my first name to be published **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

Please write exactly what name you would like to be used: _____

Freepost — WOMEN IN PRISON (in capitals)
No stamp is required and nothing else is needed on the envelope.

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 serving a sentence in HMP Holloway. Upon her release, she campaigned 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 incarceration for all but a tiny number 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 the radical reduction of the women's prison population and for significant investment and growth in community-based support services, especially the network of Women's Centres.
- **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 men and women's experiences 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** knows, from experience and research, that prisons do not deal with the root causes which bring women in contact with the criminal justice system.
- **Women in Prison** believes that the most effective way to reduce women's offending is to deal with its root causes – including poverty, gender and racial inequality, and other social injustices – through community alternatives like Women's Centres.

Artistic Taste

The 2022 Koestler Awards for arts in criminal justice are still open for entries from readers of *Still I Rise*! Koestler arts stage impressive exhibitions in well—known venues around the UK so that audiences can experience and appreciate artwork from within the criminal justice system. The usual deadline is 7 April 2022, however, any eligible entrant who is a reader of *Still I Rise* has until 20 May to send us their entries.

This year the 2022 Koestler Awards for arts in criminal justice includes a special opportunity for women in prison

In early 2023, we will be putting on a public exhibition about food in women's prisons and other settings. If you enter artwork from a women's prison on the theme of food you stand a good chance of being selected for the exhibition. Visual art, writing and music will all be considered. Please enter your creations into this year's themed category – **'Themed Category: Taste'** – to help us find them.

How to enter the Koestler Arts Awards

The deadline is 20 May. You will need to complete an entry form for each piece you wish to submit; you can send up to five creative works. Entry forms can be found in your prison education department; requested from Koester Arts at 'FREEPOST KOESTLER ARTS; or accessed on the Koestler Arts website, www.koestlerarts.org.uk.

Send your work along with the completed entry form to: FREEPOST KOESTLER ARTS (no stamp or address is needed). Good luck!

At first, food might sound like a simple topic, but it's something that affects all of us, every single day. It's bound up with our cultures, memories, emotions and daily practices. We are really interested to see how this simple starting point inspires a whole range of different artworks – visual art, writing and music.

We hope this has made you hungry to get involved!

What's the Soup Today?, Littlehampton Probation, Highly Commended Award for Mixed Media, 2019

The national magazine of Women in Prison written by and for women affected by the criminal justice system

Inclusion & Diversity d/Deaf people in prison **How to write for magazines** Living with a hidden disability **Women's Centre Champion** Tackling double disadvantage **Right direction for pregnant women and mothers** Cooking together **All Yours** What to do if you experienced discrimination? **Why do women complain less than men?** Appeal your case **Understand anxiety** Did you plead guilty? **Ground yourself** What reading means to you? **Artistic taste** Colouring exercise **Suduko Puzzle** Word Search.