

STILL I RISE

The power of connections

Finding new and positive connections in prison

Making race equality a priority in women's prisons

Legal aid for women in prison

Looking ahead to life after prison

What do 'connections' mean to you?

From the moment we come into the world we form connections – the first being with our parents or carers. How we make and keep connections affect who we are and our wellbeing.

There's also the bigger picture of how we connect as a society and how positive connections can help us collectively bring about the change we want to see, such as confronting climate change and preventing wars.

Then there are the connections we make with nature. Many of us enjoy things like walking, looking up at the trees, nurturing a garden, a pot plant, and so on.

This edition of the magazine looks at the theme of connections and we would love to hear what 'connections' mean to you. It could be about how you connect with nature or people; the connections you have on a personal level or as part of society; or maybe you even have

a vision for a new world where we could all connect better. Whatever your thoughts or experiences on 'connections', we want to hear from you.

Rules for entering the competition:

- Feel free to give your own interpretation of what 'connections' mean to you.
- 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").

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Cover artwork by Paige, a woman with lived experience of prison. Her accompanying words:

'Good, bad, happy or sad, connections are important and we all make different kinds through our lives. However, they aren't all good, so now and again, we need to sit back and ask ourselves if we need that kind of connection in our life.'



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, Surrey 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



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
Please note, we're experiencing disruptions to our services, including answering the freephone and post due to COVID-19.

Email us on:

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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.

We welcome

a new connection. In the last edition of *Still I Rise*, we said goodbye to Kate Paradine, our Chief Executive of the past six years. We now welcome a new connection with her successor Sonya Ruparel. In our opening article, Sonya introduces this edition's theme of 'connections', in which she explores the connections she's made in her first few months at WIP, and the wider connections that enable us to work collectively for change in the criminal justice system.

Working on this edition of *Still I Rise* really got me thinking about the connections we need to create the magazine. There are the connections with the editorial and design team who listen to your ideas about articles and put them into print; the connections with all you women in prison who send in articles sharing your experiences; and the connections that women make (and can break) in prison – Lyndsey, a woman in prison, tells us more about her own experience of this on page 14.

There are also the other connections available to women outside of the prison estate, which you can read about later in this magazine. For example, how organisations like the New Leaf Initiative, started by Marie-Claire following her own experience of prison, is helping to create pathways to employment for people who have been in prison.

On a personal level, this edition has made me think about the connections I've recently made with the women in Bruce House at HMP Styal who have been developing their own *Still I Rise* magazine editorial group. They have been reaching out to women across the prison to gather ideas for future articles, and to encourage them to send in their drawings, poems and writing. For us, the best parts of the magazine are written by you. If you would like to become more involved with the magazine, you can get all of the information you need in our article on page 40 which provides a step-by-step guide.

In all of our lives, we are likely to experience less healthy connections with people or places. In our health article on page 52, we offer some tips on how to deal with negative connections. I hope it helps you manage any difficult connections you might be experiencing at the moment or have experienced from the past.

I am looking forward to connecting with more of you through your editorial groups and the inspiring work you send to us for the magazine.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate".

Kate

(Women in Prison, Head of Prison Partnerships and Participation) & the editorial team

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The magazine you are reading is free for all women affected by the criminal justice system in the UK.

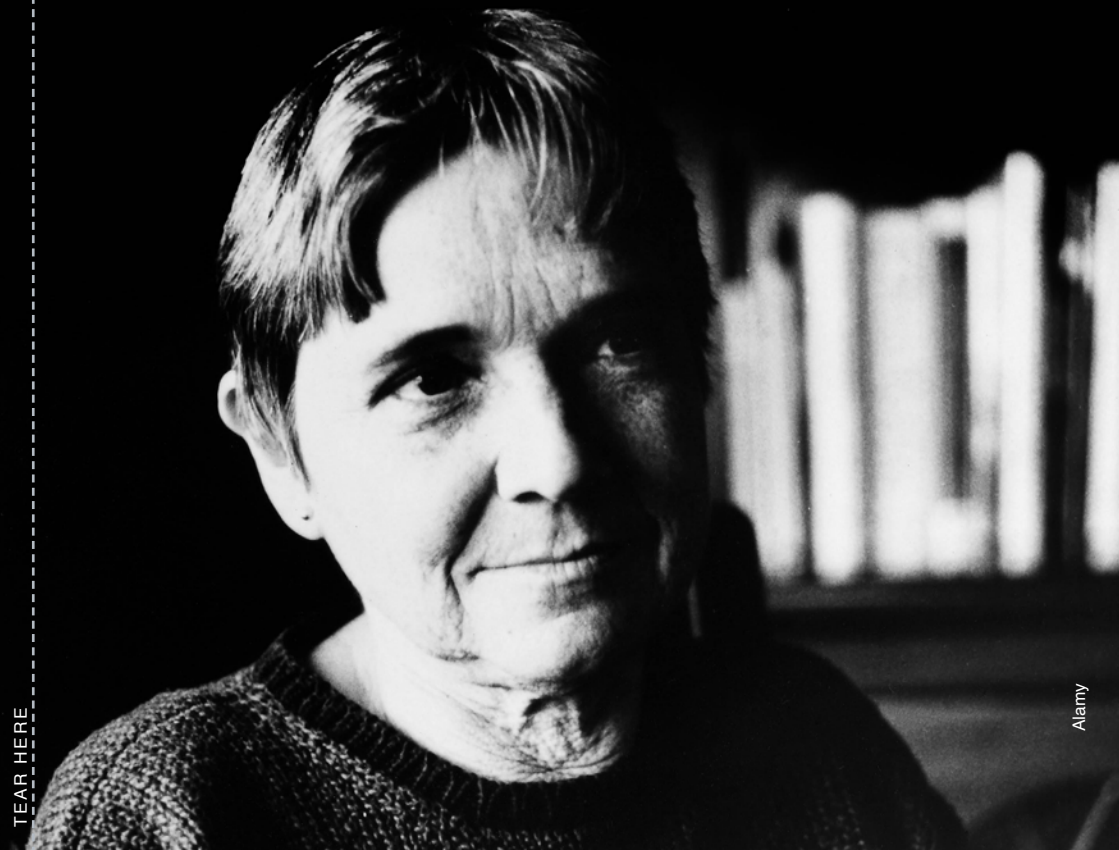
We send copies to all women's prisons and you should be able to find the magazine easily. If you can't, write to tell us. If you are a woman affected by the criminal justice system and would like to be added to our mailing list for free, please contact us at Freepost WOMEN IN PRISON or info@wipuk.org

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“The connections between and among women are the most feared, the most problematic, and the most potentially transforming force on the planet.”

— Adrienne Rich



The power of connections

Illustration: Ulla Puggaard

Women in Prison's new CEO **Sonya Ruparel** reflects on the importance of building and keeping positive connections with the people around you.



Women in Prison has an incredible history of demanding change, and I am excited about the theme of 'connections' for this issue of *Still I Rise*.

It is the connections that we build among us in the work we do that allows us to challenge harmful cycles of power.

Unequal power in society can lead to us being excluded, marginalised, ignored, overlooked, pushed into poverty, abused, criminalised, and many other things. To shift this power imbalance, so that fewer women are drawn into the criminal justice system, we need to use the power of positive connections.

As the new Chief Executive of Women in Prison, I have spent my first weeks and months connecting with people. Connecting with the women we work with, our staff, our trustees, partner organisations, allies, and decision makers. Without these initial connections, I would not be able to do justice to the work of my colleagues and those who have come before me. One person alone, one community alone, one organisation alone, will not achieve the kind

of changes that we need to break harmful cycles of power.

Recently, I met some of the women in one of our women's centres who had come for the last workshop in a series we were delivering. I could feel the connectedness between them: sharing their own experiences, views and opinions on how they had come to be at our women's centre, and their thoughts on the name of our organisation.

I heard about their connectedness with the facilitators of the workshop, and with my lovely colleagues who they had met each week. This is where our power comes from; from building these relationships, from shared experiences, from trusting one another – great things can happen if we can connect and share power with each other. My hopes for that group of women, and all the women that we work with, is that we stay connected to each other, and that our voices can be magnified, and become louder as we speak collectively. The power of the connections we are making with each other will lead to real change, not only in the lives of the women we work with, but for all women affected by the criminal justice system. ●



Introducing 'Life After Prison'

Words: Jo Halford

Photo: Jon Holloway

'The Sit Down' and 'Getting Out' are two exciting new podcast series under the 'Life After Prison' podcast brand that are providing support, information and entertainment for people who have been in prison or have been affected by prison. Podcast producer **Becky** and host **Jules** sat down to tell us a bit more about what we can expect.



What is National Prison Radio?

Becky: National Prison Radio is the world's first national radio station for people in prison. We operate out of HMP Brixton, a men's prison, and HMP Styal, a women's prison. The station itself is available in almost all prisons in England and Wales. We operate like a traditional commercial radio station, with a breakfast show, news, loads of music, a popular request show, a friends and family request show, and specialist music shows. Most of the voices you hear presenting these shows are people serving sentences either at HMP Brixton or HMP Styal, or other prisons we visit.

How did the idea for the two new podcast series come about?

Becky: During the COVID-19 pandemic, access to prison became challenging, so

we started to think about ways we could do things differently. My colleagues started working with people they'd known inside prison, who were now outside, and it got them thinking about what we could do for them. We came up with the idea to create a podcast channel called 'Life After Prison' that would continue to bring National Prison Radio to people after their release from prison, and to others affected by the criminal justice system. We're starting with these two new podcast series on the channel, but we hope to grow it to include others.

Can you tell us about each podcast series?

Jules: 'Getting Out' will be eight episodes long, and will provide support, information, advice, and guidance for people who have just been released from prison and need help with things like accommodation and knowing what organisations there are to support them in areas such as physical health, mental health, recovery, and confidence building. Each episode will feature someone from organisations that offer that kind of support. Zak, my co-host, and I will also be sharing our experiences.

The 'Sit Down' is a conversational series. We've got three planned so far, and in each series we will have eight episodes. On each episode our guests will share their own experience of life after prison; where they've come from, and where they are now.

What's it like being a co-host on the podcast series?

Jules: It's an amazing journey and process. I have a great co-host, Zak, and we work really well together. We have very different stories and experiences, especially because I'm a woman and he's a man. It's been lovely working with him and getting an insight into how it is for

'On each episode our guests will share their own experience of life after prison.'

men, as I've only ever understood the prison experience from a woman's point of view.

It's really exciting now we're starting to launch. The people who have joined us on the podcast have been amazing, and our producers Beth and Becky are great. It's been a beautiful process to be able to share my own feelings and thoughts in a safe space and know that it's okay.

What's been your favourite thing so far?

Jules: My favourite part is being able to talk about things. It gets quite emotional because it may have been a bad time in our lives, but we're now doing this, and we're able to talk about those times from a better place. We are happy and fun people talking about something that is quite an emotional part of our lives. Another amazing thing is the people who come onto the podcast, everyone is so committed to helping people, and have such a valuable story to share of their journey through the criminal justice system.

Can you tell us about the guests you have on the podcast shows?

Becky: On our 'Sit Down' podcast series, we have an episode with the team that make 'Ear Hustle', a well-known American podcast about prison life, recorded in San Quentin prison in California. We have an episode with Bobby Kasanga, who spent eight years in prison and is now a community leader and the founder of Hackney Wick FC. He is big in the post-prison media space and runs Big Ego media. Next week, we're recording an

episode about family; we've got Zak's (Jules' podcast co-host) mum coming onto the show and another woman called Tracy, who has two children in prison. We've also got Aliyah Ali who runs a project called Daddyless Daughters* in an episode, and Tassie, the Lived Experience Lead in the Ministry of Justice, who has come through the care system and prison, in another.

On our 'Getting Out' podcast series, we have people who can bring some expertise or experience about the specific issue we're looking at in that episode; for example we've got somebody from the housing and homelessness charity Shelter, and another person from Unlock, the charity campaigning for the equality of reformed people who have been in prison.

How do you feel this work relates to this edition's theme of connection?

Jules: It's all about bringing people together and connecting them, people who have been inside prison or affected by the criminal justice system. ●

How to access these podcasts:

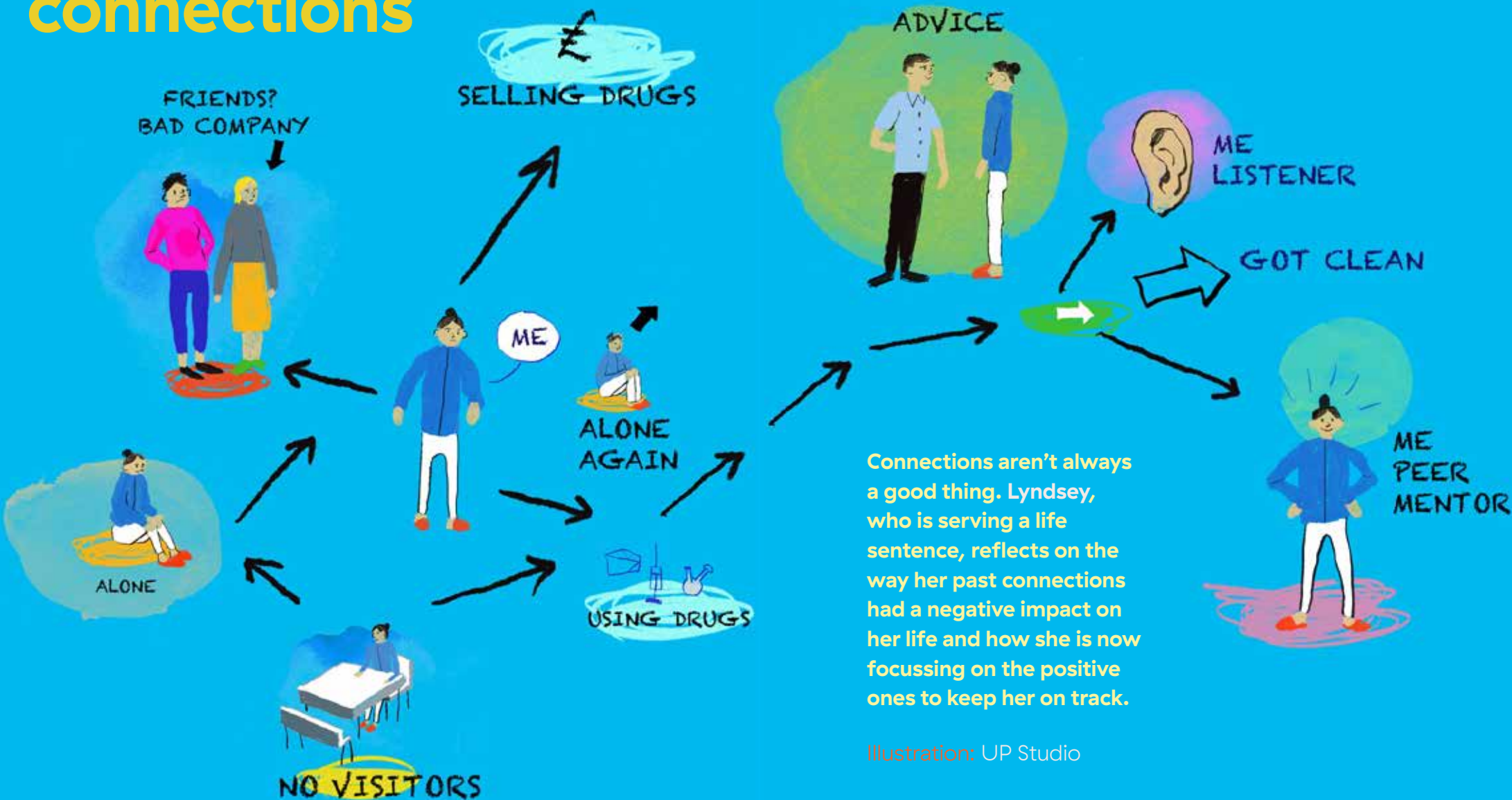
Inside prison: 'The Sit Down' is available to listen to from 25 October on National Prison Radio, and will air every Tuesday at 12am and Friday at 6pm. 'Getting Out' is available from 30 October, and will air at 7am and 2pm every Sunday.

Outside prison: Both podcasts will be available on YouTube, Spotify and iTunes; search for 'Life After Prison', and follow us on Twitter and Instagram @AfterPrisonPod.

Podcast hosts
Zak and Jules



Finding new and positive connections



Connections aren't always a good thing. Lyndsey, who is serving a life sentence, reflects on the way her past connections had a negative impact on her life and how she is now focussing on the positive ones to keep her on track.

Illustration: UP Studio

My name is Lyndsey. I am 42 years old and I'm currently doing a life sentence. This is not the first time I have been to prison – in fact, the very first time I was in prison I was only 18 years old. Back then I had good family connections and support, but over the years, when my family just couldn't keep doing it, slowly but surely I lost contact with them all.

So, when the subject of connections came up, I had a different outlook than others. Many people think of family when you say connections, and often associate the word with positive thoughts. However, that hasn't been the case for me for a very long time. I replaced family with what I believed at the time were friends, but the thing I didn't realise then – because I was not in a good place – was that the friends I had were all addicts and were only my friends because I sold them what they needed.

Fast forward a few years, and I was handed a life sentence with no outside connections. But I quickly made connections in prison so I could get hold of and sell drugs. Before I knew it, I had

made all sorts of unhealthy connections. Because this was the life I had lived on road, it felt normal.

I did this for a few years, and really thought it would just be my life. Then a prison officer came along and suggested to put me in a drug-free house. I won't lie, me and everyone else laughed, but I went because I had spent years on the wing and I wanted a change. The prison guard whose idea it was (Miss B) said, "You could prove everyone wrong". Those few words sparked something inside of me, and over the next year I got clean and started making healthy new connections to help me along the way.

I made connections that for all those years I hadn't known existed. I even made new friends, which really shocked me as I'd always thought 99% of the women in prison were addicts, but that's not true – there are women in prison that don't take drugs, and women who are trying to get clean. At the beginning of making these changes, I thought it was only a matter of time before I slipped back to my old ways, but that hasn't happened.

My life has started to change with

these new connections. I have become a Peer Mentor for this house and I am also a Listener. People used to joke that "if Lyndsey can do it, anyone can", but this has a whole new meaning now – it's not a joke anymore, they mean it. I really like who I've become and, who knows, maybe this will be the new me or maybe I will slip back into old habits. All I can do is keep on trying and help encourage others to make the right connections in their lives.

Now you know a bit of my story, I hope this can get you thinking about your own connections. When I was asked what connections mean to me, I replied: "Connections aren't always a good thing, in fact, it totally depends on where you're at in your life. If you're in a good place, then you'll make good connections, and if you're in a bad place then the connections you make will suit your lifestyle and probably keep you in that bad place."

If you're reading this and think that you are someone who makes unhealthy or negative connections, all I want you to know is that it's never too late to change that. If Lyndsey can do it, anyone can. ●

'Those few words sparked something inside of me, and over the next year I got clean and started making healthy new connections to help me along the way.'

Example abstinence houses in women's prisons

HMP Send has an addiction treatment programme where women live in a standalone unit for 16-21 weeks. It has been set up to support the needs of women with addiction, who in many cases have experienced deep trauma and need specialised support to turn their lives around. The programme also focuses on building healthy relationships with partners, children and other family members. To date, 450 women have successfully gone through this programme.

HMP Styal has a designated substance free living unit that offers enhanced accommodation with incentives and additional security measures to support women to address their alcohol or drug dependency issues. Support is tailored to each resident, with individual plans that identify and address any gaps to help women maintain their commitment to themselves and to those who are important to them, helping them to change their lifestyle for good.

Help and support

If you need support around addiction help is available for you, no matter which prison you are in. Some prisons have their own rehabilitation programmes, and, in some circumstances, you could be transferred to another prison if the treatment you require is not available in your own prison.

CARAT teams

CARAT teams are in every prison. They are there to offer support to anyone identified as having a drug problem. CARAT stands for: Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare.

Looking ahead to life after prison

Emily shares her experience on how she planned for life after prison, taking opportunities where she could to invest in her own future.

My name is Emily, and I was given an eight-year prison sentence for conspiracy to supply class A drugs. I served four years in prison, starting out in HMP Holloway then onto Bronzefield and finishing my sentence in East Sutton Park. I am now on licence in the community following my release in 2019.

This was my first offence. I had never had any involvement with the police before. So, as you can imagine, it hit me hard. I got involved as a result of an extremely controlling relationship.

When I arrived in custody it was overwhelming having to remember the daily regime and adjust to what would be my life for the next four years. It soon became apparent that you have two choices while in prison: mess about and waste your days or get as much as you can out of it by taking advantage of the free education and courses on offer.

I chose to use my time wisely and gain various qualifications.

While you are in prison people will tell you how difficult it is to obtain employment on your release; I didn't find this to be the case. At East Sutton Park, I learnt that there are many organisations that hire people who have been in prison and that you can meet and start work with them while you are in prison and, in some cases, even secure a job for when you are released.

I worked for Max Spielmann when I was in East Sutton Park which was paid employment. This allowed me to save up money for a first month's rent and deposit, enabling me to secure a property before I'd left prison. I continued working for Max Spielmann on my release as they had a shop local to where I lived. I also spent time working for an organisation called Kenward Trust, delivering outreach work and talks in schools and colleges to young



local people, where we discussed what we had been through to help them make the right choices in life, and to see how easy it might be to find themselves in situations like mine.

Through one of the qualifications I gained in Bronzefield I have been able to work as a mobile hairdresser. I was also approached through social media to write an article for a magazine, which was really exciting as I used writing as an outlet to process my thoughts and feelings and to help me cope while I was in prison. I also appeared on TV discussing my experiences within the criminal justice

system, took part in podcasts, and I'm now working as a delivery driver.

I wanted to write this article to give hope to those of you who are reading it that there is still a life to be lived after prison and the work opportunities are there for you to take. This experience doesn't have to define who you are. Take it and use it as an opportunity to create the future that you want to live! ●

To find out more about employment opportunities after prison see our article on page 44 about the work of the New Leaf Initiative.

Getting to know Louise

Words: Jo Halford

We sat down with HMP Styal prison chaplain, Louise, who told us more about her job, some of the challenges she has faced, and what she is doing to support women in prison.

Photo: Tim booth2770/Dreamstime.com



Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

I like hanging out with friends and socialising. The older I get the more I value the people who have known me for a long time. Before I became a chaplain, I worked in marketing for 25 years selling all sorts of things, mainly in banking, but also some time in the over-the-counter pharmaceutical industry.

Could you tell us about your journey to becoming a prison chaplain?

I became a carer for two people with dementia for a couple of years. After that I didn't want to go back into marketing. I had been a volunteer chaplain in a city centre chaplaincy for about a decade, and I thought I'd see if I could find work in a similar field as I liked it. I applied to be ordained as a priest in the Church of England and was accepted.

While going through my training I particularly enjoyed my placement at HMP Styal. I couldn't say why I felt called to this and not running a parish or being a chaplain in a hospital or a school, but I go home every night and feel like turning up to work was worth it, even if it was a difficult day.

What does your job involve?

I work in a multi-faith team. This includes Church of England, Roman Catholic, Muslim, Pagan, Methodist, Quaker, Sikh and Buddhist colleagues. We all cooperate and collaborate. For example, it's not only the Muslim chaplain who supports Muslim women in prison.

Our team has a statutory duty to see every woman within 24 hours of them coming into prison, to see how they are feeling and to signpost them to spiritual support. A lot of women say they have no religion. It might be that the last time they had a connection with faith was in a school

assembly, but they believe in something. Those in prison for the first time are particularly grateful for something to provide a sense of hope and security.

One of our team visits the Care and Separation Unit every day, and women at Styal can contact us through an app. If somebody has something going on, they can ask for a chat, or we can send some distraction materials such as colouring or puzzles to them. This morning I walked down to the wing because a woman sent me a message via the app saying they were struggling a bit, and so I had a chat with her and put in place some extra support to help her to not self-harm. There's also a woman in prison who I see periodically as she is doing a business degree. I met her when she attended our restorative justice course. I support her with essays and encourage her to stay motivated.

Our team also sits in on a lot of decision-making meetings on topics such as safety, sentence planning and self-harm. We're there to learn and cooperate with others, but we're also there to advocate for women who sometimes get overlooked. In addition, we support staff when they are dealing with complex and difficult situations.

When people come to the chapel they always say how peaceful it is, as the rest of the prison can feel busy and loud. Throughout the week we hold various services for the different faith traditions. Any woman can attend services. If they are registered with a religion, they are entitled to one hour of worship and one hour of faith study. If they are not registered, our practice at Styal is to say someone can come along three times to see whether or not they like it, and then work out if they want to register. Until we reach a point when we've got too many women for the space everyone is welcome.

‘While going through my training I particularly enjoyed my placement at HMP Styal. I couldn't say why I felt called to this and not running a parish or being a chaplain in a hospital or a school, but I go home every night and feel like turning up to work was worth it, even if it was a difficult day.’

Chaplains also support people when they suffer a bereavement. We make practical arrangements to validate information and request permission for deathbed visits or to attend funerals. We also provide emotional support for bereavement in its widest sense. Not only coping with loss caused by death but also loss of the things our women hoped for and the grief of separation from children.

What are some of the highlights of your role?

I'm so grateful that I get to see God at work in our women's lives, encouraging and comforting them, creating opportunities for them to see that their lives have value and potential because He loves them. For example, when someone has come in petrified, barely able to string two words together, then six months later they've managed to get themselves a job or are studying, and you've dipped in and out of their lives at small points when they needed you.

What are the challenges of your role?

The sheer complexity of our women's situations – they have often experienced multiple bereavements and enormous amounts of trauma having come out of abusive relationships. I can't magically make a woman not addicted to drugs or give someone access to their children, as much as I wish I could. I can't change somebody's circumstances, it's out of my control, but what I can do is to provide support. Another challenge is not having enough uniformed officers, which is a problem across all prisons.

The theme of this edition is connections, how do you feel this relates to your work?

It's foundational because what we are trying to do is connect with the women and we all need that connection with God. Because that is what strengthens and sustains us, and gives the hope to look into dark and difficult circumstances and believe that change is possible. ●

Putting women centre stage at Clean Break

Words: Jo Halford
Photo: Ali Wright

Clean Break is a women's theatre company that puts a spotlight on the stories of women who have been affected by the criminal justice system. Since the 70s, they have been supporting women through theatre workshops, access to education and projects in prison and in the community. We sat down with Member Artist Lucy Edkins who told us more about her longstanding connection with Clean Break and how they've helped encourage her journey.



Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I'm a painter, actor, and writer. I also have a part-time job as a Peer Support Worker for Connected Communities with Haringey Council. I've always enjoyed creating art and writing, even as a child. I've done other things in between, but I always come back to creative ventures.

How did your relationship with Clean Break begin?

It started in the mid-1990s. My mum was an actress and she knew about Clean Break. I had a criminal record and I responded to a call-out for an acting role, but they were more interested in me as a stage manager at the time. I went on to do quite a bit of stage management work with Clean Break, and got my equity card through that.

Can you tell our readers what being a member of Clean Break offers?

Clean Break is a safe environment for women coming out of a vulnerable situation, or women who are still vulnerable because of what they've been through. They are really good at supporting women who need help. They were good at working with me to help me progress creatively. You don't need to see yourself working in the creative industries to take advantage of what Clean Break offers, you can just be using creative skills for your own reasons. You might decide it will help your confidence more generally in speaking up in things like job interviews. Their courses are beneficial for all sorts of reasons.

As a Member Artist, I can check in with Clean Break's

offers whenever I want. I'm on email lists about things that are going on that might interest me, like performances relevant to members, castings, courses, or visiting speakers. They may also suggest things specific to you. I'm currently doing a year-long script writing course, supported by a bursary from Clean Break.

Importantly, member artists can also participate in overall decision-making along with other members, staff and visiting artists. I was asked to participate in a workshop focused on drawing up an anti-racism plan, for instance, and to attend an awayday to help the company reflect and move forward in difficult times.

We heard you performed in 'Typical Girls' at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield last year, can you tell us a bit more about this?

I played what was mainly a supporting role to the main character. My character, Geordie, was described by the writer as being a mother figure to the other women in the unit. I played electric guitar and

sang one of the songs, which was fun, and challenging! It was a seven-woman play based on HMP Send's PIPE (Psychologically Informed Planned Environment) unit. It was about a woman coming into the unit to teach us music from The Slits, who got us to form a band. This was the third professional play I've acted in with Clean Break

Which role have you most enjoyed playing?

'Inside Bitch' was in a way the most exciting as it was a devised* piece working with performance artist Deborah Pearson and writer Stacey Gregg. It was their concept,

Niall McDiarmid



and they brought myself and three other member artists to workshop the ideas over a couple of years. With their overall vision, we helped to pull it together into a piece of theatre drawing on our life experiences. We performed it at the Royal Court Theatre in London. It felt like it was challenging stereotypes while being entertaining. The title came from one of the member artists during a workshop.

All the Clean Break plays I've performed in have involved new writing and been enthusiastically received by audiences in high profile venues.

How do you prepare for a performance?

Focusing on the moment is the best way to be in the character and be alert to the other actors. I try and get any distractions out of my head. I can be quite shy – I think a lot of actors are. Sometimes I get a bit of stage fright, especially if there's somebody in the audience who I relate strongly to, that can take me on a train of thought away from the part. Not so much now, though.

Has being an artist with Clean Break changed you in any way?

When they thought of me for 'Inside Bitch' that was a real breakthrough for me. I hated auditions, and this audition process was just chatting about what I'd feel comfortable doing on stage. After that experience, I got a lot better at doing auditions.

My next play, '[BLANK]' was a co-production between the Donmar Warehouse and Clean Break, who supported members through the audition process. This led to me getting an agent, who put me forward for a role in episode one of 'The Serpent Queen' which I got – it aired on. Starz UK in the UK in September this year.

If our readers were interested in joining Clean Break how would they go about it?

They can come along to the centre in Kentish Town or get in touch. If you're interested in theatre and you think you could do with the support Clean Break offers, it would be a good place to go. If you've come from a prison environment or are at risk of entering a prison environment due to challenges you're facing like homelessness, addiction or mental ill health, you could join Clean Break.

Our magazine theme is connections, how do you feel this relates to your time with Clean Break?

I've stayed connected with Clean Break in one way or another since 1994, which is pretty impressive. They are people I can always check in with for work and opportunities.

My connection with Clean Break has been its strongest over the past few years, particularly with the people I've worked with more recently. I've kept in touch with company members of the three plays I've worked on, and sometimes we can help each other out a bit, or support each other's work. ●

**A devised piece is a play that has been developed collaboratively, often with the whole of the creative team*

How to get involved:

Clean Break's Members Programme is available to women aged 18 and above. The programme offers members a foundation of learning and skills in theatre performance, creativity and wellbeing, and opportunities to engage in professional, public facing performance projects.

If you are interested in joining Clean Break, we would love to hear from you! You can contact us directly or if you have a keyworker, they can refer you: Call us on 020 7482 8600 or email participation@cleanbreak.org.uk

My experience as a Women's Centre Champion

Words: Jess

MS volunteered as a WIP Women's Centre Champion (WCC) during her time in prison, which connected her with the St Giles Trust where she now works as a Project Coordinator. MS tells us all about her rewarding experience as a WCC.

I became a WCC because I wanted to do something productive and help other women in prison. I wanted to feel I was doing something worthwhile that could make a difference. I also wanted to know more about the support services in prison and the community for myself.

I found out how to apply from posters and leaflets on the wings. Once my application was accepted, I received training that taught me the skills and qualities I needed to be an effective WCC. This included how to support others to set

goals; ways of working together; hopes and challenges of the role; and the importance of confidentiality. I also learnt about interpersonal and communication skills, such as diversity and cultural awareness, equal opportunities, developing empathy, making assumptions, attitudes and values, and questioning styles.

I felt like I was doing a worthwhile job, letting other women know about the services available to them in the community, like local women's centres,

health facilities, domestic and substance misuse support services, and local housing providers.

Through my work as a WCC, I managed to find employment with St Giles Trust as a Project Coordinator when I left prison. Being a WCC gave me the confidence and guidance I needed to do this role; I gained so many skills and picked up a lot of knowledge about services in the community that I was able to share. For example, I developed the skills and experience to be professional, deal with challenges, delegate tasks, meet deadlines etc. Through listening to women's difficulties, I learnt how to help them through their problems. It's helped me to grow on a deeper level, with more empathy and understanding than I had before, even in my personal life.

My advice to women wanting to become a WCC would be to take every opportunity you can to do something worthwhile while you are in prison; develop your skills and get qualifications in the area you want to work in when you get out. It will help pass your days that bit more easily, as you'll hopefully be doing something you enjoy.

Don't waste your time, because that freedom day comes around sooner than you might realise. I remember when I still had so many years to serve and couldn't



even imagine applying for a job in the 'outside world' – it genuinely felt so far away and impossible, I just didn't believe it would ever happen. And now look where I am – your day will come, so get working towards making it as easy as possible to support yourself when it does! ●

To put an application in to become a WCC, speak to a WCC on your wing or a visiting Link Worker, or look for further information on posters and leaflets available on your wing.

Women4Change Speaking truth to power

Words: Louise, Women4Change,
and Sarah, Women in Prison

Louise from Women4Change tells us how community-based services and support like women's centres are crucial to helping women break vicious cycles.

“ I was petrified of coming out of prison. Every day I wanted to come home, but when it finally happened, I didn't know what to do. I was very dubious of everyone. I didn't trust anyone. But I was not alone. The Women's Centre Advocate was there standing at the gates to take my hand and support me to achieve my goals.

She was there for every step, the ups and downs, with housing, probation, and social services. I felt human again. This one-to-one support meant so much to me and my family. It just made me think why are there not more things like this to support women like us? Where would I be if I'd had this support before I went to prison? She helped me to break the vicious cycle I was in. But not just that, I achieved goals that I didn't even think were possible.”

Louise, Women4Change



Women's centres are a one-stop shop that provide women in the community with services and support on a range of issues, including housing, benefits and debt, mental and physical health, drug and alcohol support, domestic abuse and other forms of gender based violence. Independent advocates at women's centres help women overcome barriers to accessing and finding their way around services, and ensure a woman's voice is prioritised in decisions around their treatment and support. Enabling women to move forward and heal from harmful cycles of trauma, disadvantage and abuse is at the heart of this work.

A new report by Women in Prison shows that in the long term women's centres save public money by significantly improving health and social outcomes for women. There are around 40 women's centres across England and Wales. Today, these

centres are facing an unprecedented challenge from insecure funding and an increase in demand due to the impact of COVID-19 and the spiralling cost of living.

Women4Change are a group of women who have received support from women's centres. Together with Women in Prison, we are campaigning for change. We are calling on the government to stand by its commitment to reduce the number of women in prison and provide sustainable funding for women's centres.

Next month we will be going to Parliament to share

the evidence from our report findings with MPs and Peers, to tell them about our experiences, and to ask for their support. We know what works. We do not need more prison places that worsen the circumstances that lead to women coming into contact with the criminal justice system in the first place. What we need is a focus on early intervention and investment in services like women's centres that enable women to address their needs and not just survive, but thrive.

We can collectively work to end the harm of the criminal justice system to women, their families, and communities by ensuring there are effective community-based services across the country. The time to act is now. ●

To find out more about **Women4Change** you can contact us on [FREEPOST Women in Prison, Campaigns.](#)

Cooking together & sharing cultures through recipes

Food is a way of staying connected to our culture and traditions. Through food, we can share our heritage and make connections with each other. We hope that these recipes from around the world inspire you to celebrate our similarities and differences and make some new connections of your own.

All of these ingredients are available on the canteen list; if you are on a self-catering wing you may want to try them.

POLISH PANCAKES

Enjoy these as a sweet breakfast or a nice treat any time of day.

Makes approximately

4 servings

Total cost: £6.43

Ingredients

4 small or 2 large apples (£1.59 for 4)
2 large eggs (£1.00 for 6)
125g of self-raising flour (£0.75 for 1kg)
250 ml of warm milk (£0.99 to £1.99 depending on milk used)
2 tablespoons of granulated sugar (£0.45 for 500g)
2 teaspoons of cinnamon powder (£0.65 for 100g)
Icing sugar (optional): £1.00
Pinch of salt (provided)
Oil for frying (provided)

Method

● Peel, core and thinly slice or grate apples using the largest grate side. Set to one side.

● In a large bowl, mix together the eggs and warm milk. Then whisk in flour, salt, sugar, and cinnamon until well combined.

● Stir in sliced/grated apples.

● Heat one tablespoon of oil in a frying pan. In batches, spoon some of the batter into the pan. Fry on one side until golden brown (about two minutes) before flipping over to cook on the other side. Repeat until all the batter is used.

● Serve the pancakes while hot, dusted with icing sugar (if using) and additional cinnamon.



BRAZILIAN VINAIGRETTE SALSA MOHLO VINAGRETE BRASILEIR

An easy, healthy, and delicious snack. Just chop, mix, and serve.

Um lanche simples, saudável e gostoso. Basta picar, misturar e servir.

Makes approximately 6 servings

Rende aproximadamente 6 porções

Total cost: £6.67

Custo total: £6.67

Ingredients (Ingredientes):

1 onion (£0.75 for 750g)
1 cebola (£0.75 por 750 g)
3 tomatoes (£0.99 for 6)
3 tomates (£0.99 por 6)

1 green or red pepper (£1.35 for 3)

1 pimentão verde ou vermelho (£1.35 por 3 unidades)

4 tablespoons of coriander (£1.19 for 100g)

4 colheres de sopa de coentro (£1.19 por 100 g)

80 ml of lemon juice – approx. 2 lemons (£0.70 for 2)

80 ml de suco de limão - approx. 2 limões (£0.70 por 2 unidades)

125 ml of olive oil (£1.69 for 250 ml)

125 ml de azeite (£1.69 por 250 ml)

Salt & pepper to taste (provided)

Sal e pimenta a gosto (fornecidos)

Method (Modo de preparo):

● Dice the onion, tomatoes, and green or red pepper, and mix together in a bowl.

● Corte a cebola, os tomates e o pimentão verde ou vermelho em cubos e misture-os em uma tigela.

● Add chopped coriander, lemon juice, and olive oil to the bowl and mix well.

● Acrescente o coentro picado, o suco de limão e o azeite à tigela e misture bem.

● Add salt and pepper to taste and serve.

● Acrescente sal e pimenta a gosto e sirva.

● Serve with toasted bread of your choice.

● Servir com pão torrado de sua preferência.

ALL YOURS

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

Illustrations: PPaint

THE SERVANT QUEEN and the King she serves

Marcia

Her majesty the Queen
Called home at last
A woman of God
Whose faith and service
Was steadfast and fast

In all of her life, her speech to the nation
She mentions her faith, that is firm as a rock
Her service to God, and to the nation
Has led us like a flock
So God calling her home
Has left the nation in shock

She's been called home to heaven
And she'll be rewarded I'm sure
'Well done good and faithful servant' she'll hear
And rewarded in heaven
So there's plenty to cheer

She would not want us mourning her death
God saved the queen, she's in heaven, it's true
She took her faith seriously, and her service to others too
She led by example, we should follow her too

Serving God, and serving others
Has no retirement age
So let's follow the Queen's example
No matter our mortal age
As we write our next page

You hurt me day and night

Bibi



You hurt me day and night
I fell in love with you, feeling inside was amazing
I would run, leave everything for you
the pain I suffered was so bad I beared with it

You hurt me day and night
how could you start from loving
me to shouting at me, emotional
mental, physical abuse, pulling
my hair kicking me while I was
carrying your son inside me.
Willing to keep peace you
hurt me day and night
You still abused my trust treated
me like a doormat, scars are there
fading away. Memories
won't go, they will remain for life

I need to tell you, I let
free out of my body
forgive you for what you did
the pain you caused me
I started to accept my life
back in control and
Looking into the future

You hurt me day and night
I want to say I am sorry
too, it's not been easy
life, situation you put me through
I want to say sorry for what I did to you
to understand I was too good for you
and you treated me as damaged goods
I still will say I loved you and I forgive you,
I will carry this trauma for
the rest of my life.

The bees

Kelley

We are the bees who built the hive
 We are the milk and the honey
 The land is spread for miles
 I see the bee landing on the flower
 Its wings expand in the wind
 It gets lifted higher and higher
 Through the trees, passing enemies
 Autopilot
 Cos God designed it
 Amen

Inside my cell

Kylie

As I sit inside my cell
 Trying not to ring my bell
 To let them know I'm not so well
 Trying hard not to dwell
 It's very hard not to cry
 Cried so much my eyes are dry

Being locked up all these hours
 Feeling like I've lost my powers
 Tomorrow comes another day
 Praying I finally get my say

Waiting for my final hour
 Finally getting back my power



In our last edition of the magazine, we asked you to send in your own creative works on the theme of 'inclusion' and what it means to you. Below is our winning entrant.

Away from Inclusion of a non-binary prisoner

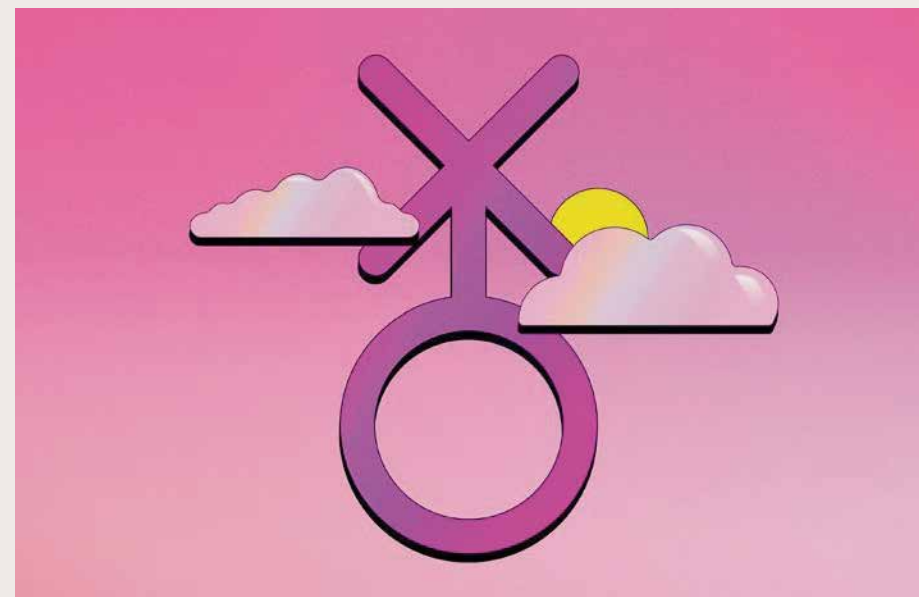
Fran

When I knew I wasn't any specific gender, after years of not knowing who I was, I had to think hard about opening up to someone, as I knew I would then receive some amount of seclusion and people not understanding, especially more so as I'm a prisoner, even more so going from a female prisoner on paper to non-binary. I can say I received a lot of understanding and exception,

but only at a certain level. I went from acceptance to exclusion from one prison then to another. Examples include, "are you originally male or female?", "but you have breasts so you must be a woman", and even from one staff member, "I see with my eyes and you're in a female prison".

When sitting in a group, I feel the most exclusion when they talk about

womanly things such as make-up and dating. And inner inclusion within myself by trying to fit in and ignoring my own identity. It also all depends on the person in front of you. I can't blame anyone for the exclusion, as like they say, I'm in a woman's prison. But where do I fit as a prisoner. I'm not a man so won't go to a male prison, I'm in a woman's prison because I have the 'parts' but there is no prison for a non-binary person. I am then just a person who doesn't fit anywhere. Hidden within my own prison walls. Unfortunately, I don't see any change in prison – to think what I'll feel out there in the big wide world.



Making race equality a priority in women's prisons

Hannah Pittaway, Senior Policy Officer at the Criminal Justice Alliance (CJA), and Di Askwith, Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) member at HMP Eastwood Park, talk to us about the recent 'Towards Race Equality' report on racism and discrimination in women's prisons and how its findings are helping to push for race equality in the women's estate.

The CJA and IMBs recently surveyed over 260 Black, Asian and minority ethnic women (including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and foreign national women) in prison to better understand their experiences. Thank you to all the women who took part in our survey and trusted us with your experiences.

What we found

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic women in prison told us they had experienced distressing incidents of racism and discrimination from both prison staff and other women. This included the use of racist language, name calling and stereotypes.

- Although not all women had a negative experience of staff, a third of women told us that their treatment was poor or very poor. Over 40% of women said they had experienced discrimination, but many women had limited confidence in the complaints process for reporting it. *'There is never no punishment when someone says racial things, it is then dismissed ...so it's a waste of time.'*
- Women also said that they had experienced unfair treatment and had less access to employment and education opportunities than white British women.
- Staff awareness of different cultures was also inadequate. *'They don't even try to understand and accept our culture'*



What we did

Since we published the report in April 2022, we have been sharing its findings with the Prison Service, the government, MPs, and the media to bring attention to your experiences.

We put forward recommendations to governors, the Prison Service, and the Ministry of Justice on how to help tackle the racism and discrimination women in prison are experiencing. These included:

- Creating a more positive, equal culture in prisons.
- Developing equality and diversity work in prisons, with dedicated staff to work on equality issues.
- Collecting more data on different women's experiences to tackle any discrimination.
- Increasing checks and oversight of women's discrimination complaints by independent organisations.
- Providing more translation and interpretation services for women whose first language is not English.

We also made recommendations for the IMBs to improve their monitoring.

The government have said they will publish plans to support minority ethnic women in

prison. The Ministry of Justice are providing training for staff working in women's prisons to improve their understanding of different cultures and faiths, and more funding for specialist organisations.

The report has received national media interest. It was featured on BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour, covered in The Independent by their Race Correspondent, and broadcast across England on ITV Evening News.

The women's accounts of racism and poor treatment are shocking and distressing. There is an urgent need to address these issues. We will continue to push for action, for our recommendations to be implemented quickly, and for racial equity to be a priority in women's prisons. ●

Useful information

If you have seen or experienced discrimination, you can put in a confidential request to see a member of the IMB using forms available on the wings or by talking to people with IMB badges/red lanyards when they come into the prison – board members are independent from the prison.

In the last edition of *Still I Rise* magazine, we also featured an article on pages 46-47 about how to complete a Discrimination Incident Report Form.

Putting the magazine in your hands

Words: **Katie Fraser**, Women in Prison
Head of Prisons Partnerships and Participation

Illustration: **UP Studio**

We want you to have a bigger part in the magazine. Here's how you can set up your own magazine group in prison and help produce future editions of *Still I Rise*.

Back in summer 2019, we invited you to have your say and to give us your ideas and feedback about what you did or didn't like about the magazine. You told us and we listened. You said you didn't like the name of the magazine, so we changed it. You wanted more articles about knowing your rights, and they are now a regular feature. Then the pandemic hit, which made it harder to connect with you and for you to collectively tell us your thoughts about what you would like to see more or less of in the magazine.

So we want to get the ball rolling again, and this time we want to hand the magazine over to you. We are calling for you to get together and form your own magazine groups, so you can produce 'guest edited' editions moving forward. You will be able to make decisions around who we should interview, and what sort of questions we should be ask; suggest ideas for articles, or write them yourself; and encourage other women in your prison to contribute by sending in their poems, stories and artwork.

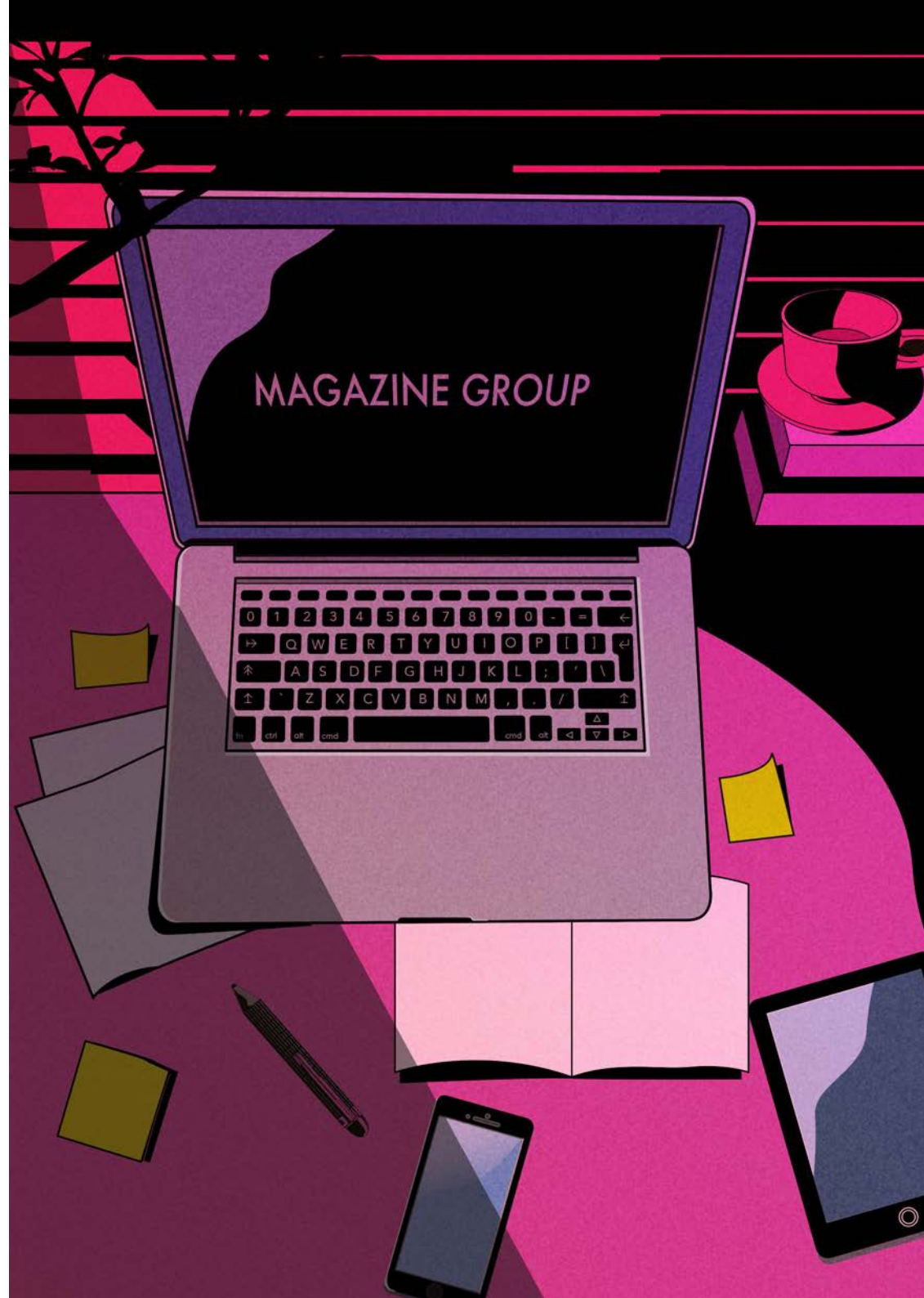
Recently, the women in Bruce House,

HMP Styal, decided they wanted to take the next magazine edition on. I have been meeting with them every Friday, looking at old editions of the magazine, and they have been putting lots of thought into the sort of things they would like to see and read. So, the next edition will be theirs, and you could have the chance to do the same. ●

How to get involved

- Find out if there is a Women's Centre Champion in your prison – they are part of the Creating Community Connections project, run by different charities across ten prisons. If there is, speak with them and they will support you in setting up a group.
- If you don't have a Women's Centre Champion, you can ring the Women in Prison FREEPHONE telephone number and let them know you want to be involved. If you leave your contact details, I will get in touch with you.
- Or write to us at the Women in Prison FREEPOST address, making sure you mark your letter with the words **MAGAZINE** – that way it will come straight to me.

I really looking forward to hearing about your groups, supporting you to set them up, and handing over the magazine for your input.



Creating opportunities and building communities

CEO **Marie-Claire O'Brien** of the New Leaf Initiative tells us about what the organisation is doing to help create paths to employment for people who have been in prison.

Prison can be an isolating and lonely experience. Russian thinker Peter Kropotkin, who spent time in Russian and French prisons in the 1800s, wrote many revealing things about prisons, but one which stays with me most was when he said prison is where 'a person lives inside their own head, despite being surrounded by people at close quarters, all of the time'.

Prison is unique in this sense. A place where society expects us to reconnect with our more positive and healthier selves, but a place where we find ourselves connected to strangers, living alongside them in an unusual and sometimes stressful way. A place where we might feel disconnected from the things that we feel define us.

I started the New Leaf Initiative in November 2014 because I wanted to

create a sense of community and opportunity for people in prison, both before and after release. I believe that if we put people in prison and then release them to the same issues that contributed to them being sent to prison in the first place, then we are only perpetuating the problem.

I am passionate about this work because I was once in prison myself. Everyone who has been in prison can relate to the unforgettable feelings and insights you get from the experience. Having been in prison makes us the 'same-same, but different', as they say in Thailand.

The New Leaf Initiative was born out of a consultation I carried out with 400 people who were attending probation. I asked two questions: 'What is holding you back?' and 'What support do you feel is lacking?' Most people said they needed



role models they could relate to and trust, and who could help connect them with the right support to resettle in the community, with a focus on employment opportunities.

We know that reoffending is almost halved when people find employment after prison. But we also know that only approximately 25-35% of people find employment within two years of leaving prison – for women this figure is far less, with 1 in 20 (4%) being in employment within six weeks of leaving prison.

People don't change because of processes and systems. They change because of an internal drive to achieve something positive for themselves – connecting with people, opportunities and organisations can help them to do that. ●

If you are interested in working with the New Leaf Initiative, call our Freephone Resettlement and Employment Helpline: 03001023456

Or write to us at: The New Leaf Initiative CIC, 9 Allcock Street, Digbeth, Birmingham, B9 4DY.



New Leaf provides a support pathway for people at any point in their journey. Our services include:

- **One-to-one community support:** from qualified peer support workers with lived experience of the criminal justice system.
- **New Leaf Ethical Recruitment agency:** supporting people with complex barriers such as offending histories, to find and keep employment.
- **A peer-led Visitors Council:** where families, visitors, and prison senior managers come together to resolve issues in a solution-focused way.
- **The New Leaf Network:** a positive network of people formerly in prison and supporting organisations. We send out a weekly bulletin via email to our 200+ members, advertising jobs, training, and other opportunities for people with lived experience of prison. We also hold an annual conference and awards ceremony.
- **New Leaf training academy:** funded by the National Lottery for three years, delivering vocational qualifications and traineeships for 19–25-year-olds.

The Nejma Collective is offering grants to Muslim women in prison

Words: Nejma Collective

We are a group of Muslim volunteers who work to support people in prison. We believe people should never be defined by their actions and that justice can only really be ‘just’ when people’s contexts are understood.

‘Nejma’ (نجمة in Arabic) means ‘star’. Our name is a reference to a chapter in the Muslim holy book, the Quran, called ‘Surah Yusuf’ (named after the Prophet Yusuf, otherwise known as Joseph). In this chapter, the moon, sun, and 11 stars bow to the Prophet Yusuf in his dream as a sign of the great status he will go on to have as a prophet and a leader. For us, this is a reminder that our family and friends in prison are just as valuable and important as everyone outside of prison, and that real justice doesn’t come from locking people away. We believe that connections between people inside and outside prison are essential to foster understanding, support, and long-term change.

To tell us other ways in which we can support you, please send a letter to **FREEPOST – NEJMA COLLECTIVE.**

This Ramadan we raised charitable donations (*sadaqa*) from the public to support Muslim women in prison. We are pleased to share that with this money we are now offering grants of up to £65 for items you might need, such as clothes, hair products, prayer mats, or phone credit.

We also want to hear from you about what support you need. We have only recently begun our work, and we want to support you in ways that matter most to you.

As we are told in the Quran by God: ‘Verily, with hardship there is ease’. We hope that if you are experiencing any hardship, we might be able to build a connection with you that provides a little ease.



NEJMA COLLECTIVE

The Nejma Collective

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR MUSLIMS

Are you a Muslim in prison in need of financial support?

We have raised money through sadaqa donations in Ramadan to send you up to a £65 grant for any items you need to purchase in prison.

We are prioritising Muslim women in our first round of grants but anyone can apply. *And verily, with hardship comes ease.*

FOR YOUR FREE APPLICATION FORM

WRITE TO: FREEPOST - NEJMA COLLECTIVE
Include your full name, prison number and prison name
or DOWNLOAD IT: www.nejmacollective.wordpress.com

Understanding Custody Time Limits

Illustration: Ulla Puggaard

Many people accused of crimes are put in prison (or ‘remanded in custody’) while they wait for their trial to go ahead. It’s increasingly common for people to spend months, if not years, in custody despite there being laws to prevent this from happening. Here, Fair Trials explains what Custody Time Limits are and how they might affect you.

What are Custody Time Limits?

Custody Time Limits (CTLs) are time limits on how long you can be kept in prison and refused bail before your trial. For most people facing trial at the Crown Court, the CTL is 182 days, which is around six months. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CTLs were temporarily extended to eight months, but they have now gone back to six months in most cases. If you pleaded guilty and it was accepted by the prosecution and the court, CTLs will not apply to you.

What happens after six months?

When your CTL has passed after six months, the general rule is that you should be released. But this doesn't

automatically happen. Unfortunately, lots of people are kept in custody for longer than six months.

CTLs can be extended if your judge is satisfied the prosecution did enough to make sure your trial will take place soon, and that there is ‘good and sufficient cause’ for keeping you in prison longer. The law isn’t totally clear on what ‘good and sufficient cause’ is, and whether the judge decides to keep you in custody longer should depend on the specific details of your case. Your judge might, for example, keep you in custody if they think there are good reasons why your trial hasn’t taken place yet, but they shouldn’t deny you bail just because you’ve been charged with a serious offence.

Fair Trials is a global criminal justice watchdog, campaigning for fairness, equality, justice, and the right to a fair trial. Please note that Fair Trials can't provide any help or advice. It's important that you speak to your lawyer if you want to know about your rights, and you want them to apply for bail. This information should not be relied on as legal advice.



How do the barristers' strikes affect CTLs?

Barristers in England and Wales went on strike at the beginning of September 2022 over the amount of legal aid they get paid for representing defendants who could not otherwise afford lawyers, along with other problems with the criminal justice system. They have recently announced the strike will end, but it could take a while before

things go back to normal, which could cause further delays to your case. It's not your fault that barristers have not been going to court, but the delays caused by the strike could still be used as a reason for extending the CTL in your case. However, the fact that your case has been delayed by the barristers' strike shouldn't prevent you from applying for bail. ●

‘When your CTL has passed after six months, the general rule is that you should be released. But this doesn't automatically happen. Unfortunately, lots of people are kept in custody for longer than six months.’

Legal aid for women in prison

As Women Prisoners' Caseworker at Prisoners' Advice Service (PAS), Kate Lill provides legal advice and representation to women in prison. Here she explains the different types of legal aid available to you.

Legal aid is public funding for a solicitor or barrister to provide free legal advice or representation. It is available for women on low incomes who cannot afford a lawyer themselves. Unfortunately, it doesn't mean that free advice is available for any problem you might have.

In December 2013, legal aid for prison law was further reduced, having already been cut by the previous government. At the time, it only covered cases that directly involved when a prisoner might be released. Following a legal challenge by PAS and the Howard League for Penal Reform, this has since been expanded.

Legal aid is now available in the following cases under prison law:

- **Parole board reviews:** when they assess whether you are safe to be released.

- **Pre-tariff reviews by the parole board:** when they assess those with an indeterminate sentence for suitability to open conditions.
- **Recall proceedings:** when the parole board considers your continued detention following a return to custody for breaching your licence.
- **Sentence calculation queries:** when you believe your release date has been incorrectly calculated and you have been unable to resolve this through the complaints process.
- **Category A/restricted status reviews:** when your security category is reviewed.
- **Adjudications for breaches of the prison rules before an independent adjudicator:** where extra days can be added to your sentence, and where the adjudicating governor, in a governor's adjudication, decides you require representation under the Tarrant Principles*.



Additional areas where legal aid is potentially available outside of prison law:

- **The exceptional case funding (ECF) scheme**:** this is in cases which engage the European Convention on Human Rights and usually concerns mother and baby unit applications/decisions, resettlement issues, licence conditions; and a decision to segregate you.
- **To legally challenge a substantive decision if it is irrational, unreasonable or procedurally unfair, through a 'judicial review':** This could be any decision taken by a prison or the Secretary of State for Justice, such as an unlawful recall, inter-prison contact, governor adjudications, or a failure to make reasonable adjustments for a prisoner with a disability. Legal aid is available for both pre-litigation work and court proceedings. PAS, or a solicitor's firm that practises in challenging decisions made by prisons, can advise on whether you have a case that could be funded under this scheme.
- **A civil claim:** to bring a civil claim against a prison or other public body for damages for breach of the Equality Act 2010, or the European Convention on Human Rights. It is also possible to bring a claim for damages for a civil wrong, such as negligence or misfeasance (when someone in authority fails to perform their

duty according to the law).

- **Other:** there are a variety of other areas of law that affect women in prison, including criminal, immigration and family law matters. Speak to a solicitor who practises in these fields if you need advice on whether legal aid is available for your issue or contact PAS if you have a family law query as we may be able to assist.

A lack of legal aid does not take away your legal rights, or mean that you cannot challenge decisions, but it does mean that you may have to represent yourself or pay privately if you cannot find a pro bono (free) service. ●

**The Tarrant Principles identify certain conditions and circumstances in which a prison governor might consider allowing someone in prison to be legally represented during an adjudication.*

*** Government guidance on the ECF scheme: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-aid-apply-for-exceptional-case-funding>*

PAS are here to provide you with advice on the options available to you. We can provide representation if legal aid is accessible or send details of solicitors who may be able to assist you. For more information speak to our specialist Women Prisoners' Caseworker on our freephone advice line 0800 0246 205, open on Tuesday mornings 10am to 12.30pm.

Healthy connections = healthier lives

Words: WVIP's Healthy Foundations Team

Recognising healthy and unhealthy relationships can be life-changing. Here, we reflect on what a healthy relationship should look like and how unhealthy relationships can negatively impact us.

As human beings, relationships and connections are an important and necessary part of life. A healthy relationship – this can be a friendship, a relationship with a family member, a colleague, or an intimate and romantic relationship – is one where both people are connected and respected. Having healthy and fulfilling relationships can boost our mood, help us to feel supported and valued, and make us feel less alone. They can also create stability and safety and increase our emotional and physical wellbeing. Relationships provide us with the capacity to learn and grow from others, see things from different perspectives, as well as allowing us to support those who need us. They can be great!

Some characteristics of a healthy relationship/connection:

- Trust
- Honesty
- Respect
- Communication
- Love
- Compromise
- Boundaries
- Equality
- Care
- Kindness
- Balance
- Support
- Openness
- Listening



However, when we find ourselves in unhealthy relationships – physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, or sexually – it can damage our self-worth, and leave us with an increased sense of fear, anxiety, stress, insecurity, and instability. It can also lead us into dangerous and threatening situations, and isolate us from healthier relationships. We might even realise we are the ones displaying unhealthy behaviours in relationships and want to get to the bottom of why we are doing this, and how we can make a positive change.

In these situations, it can be very helpful to talk to someone professionally trained, such as a counsellor or therapist, or a support worker or staff member you trust, to share what you are going through, and to explore why these unhealthy relationships are in your life and how you can change them.

Remember, healthy relationships and

connections impact our wellbeing. Imagine a tree; its roots are crucial to the wellness of the whole tree. If those roots are rotten, the tree can't grow properly. Similarly, if we are surrounded by and rooted in unhealthy relationships and connections, it will make us unwell in some way, either physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. Whereas if the tree's roots are strong and healthy, the tree will flower and bloom – just like us. ●

If you are in an unhealthy relationship and are looking for support you can get in touch with:

Prison Listeners: these are trained prison peers who are there to provide you with confidential emotional support, and direct you on to further help should you need it.

Peer mentors: these are women in prison who have received dedicated training to be able to support you. They will know where you can seek help for both mental and physical health, among other things.

Guided yoga: Goddess pose

Bernie Barry is a yoga teacher and therapist whose modern practice is underpinned by ancient wisdom. Here, she guides you through the Goddess pose, said to have originated from the posture of the Indian Goddess Kali.



Embrace the strength and power of your feminine energy by tapping into your inner goddess and re-charging in the Goddess yoga pose, Utkata Konasana. Practised over time, this pose can help strengthen your core, hips, thighs, calves, knees and shoulder joints, and bring you inner strength.

To warm up

- Circle your hips, then your knees and ankles one by one.
- Walk on your toes stretching your calve muscles.
- Finally, circle your arms to wake up your shoulders.

Goddess pose

- Stand with your hands together at the heart in prayer position.
- Breathe in and out, slowly and deeply, for several breaths, taking your full awareness to your feet, feeling yourself connected to the earth – supported by the earth.
- Breathe in positivity and breathe out any thoughts or feelings you

might like to let go of, sweeping them away with each outward breath.

Once you feel calm, you can begin

- Step both feet out to the side at a comfortable distance apart, with your heels in and your toes pointing outwards – keep your legs straight.
- Take your awareness back to the four edges of your feet, check they are connecting to the floor on all sides, and then roll your thighs outwards.
- Take a deep breath in, and with your next outward breath begin to bend your knees – keep your knees facing outwards in line with your heels, they should sit directly above your toes.
- Tuck your pelvis under, and send your tailbone down (the bone at the bottom of your back), lifting the front of your body upwards. This helps to keep your head above your heart, and your heart above your pelvis.
- Keep breathing, staying connected to the earth, and supported by the earth.
- Take several breathes in this position, then straighten your legs and come back up.

Once you are comfortable with the above pose, you can add the arm position, as follows:

- Repeat from the start, then once in position, take your arms out to the side.
- Take a full breath in, lifting the heart, and then exhale. Bend your elbows, palms facing out, fingers stretching upwards.
- Stay for several breaths, then straighten your legs and slowly come back up to standing.
- Repeat this several times.

When you are in your last goddess pose, visualise breathing your goddess energy into the very centre of your being with each inward breath, and with each outward



breath see yourself radiating powerful, unique goddess energy to every cell in your body. Imagine you are 'plugging in' and charging all your cells with your unique power.

- Relax afterwards in a comfortable posture, such as lying on your back on the floor.
- To feel your head, heart and hips in alignment, you can practise by leaning your back against a wall and bending the knees as you slide down into position.

If you have knee problems or have had recent knee surgery, you can practice this position from a chair.

A taste of your work

Words: Koestler Arts

Koestler Arts showcase some of your entries they received for their latest exhibition about food in women's prisons.

In the last issue of *Still I Rise*, we told readers about the upcoming Koestler Arts exhibition in partnership with Surrey University, themed around food in women's prisons and the subject of 'Taste'. We have had lots of tasty delights submitted to this year's awards, from a paper-coiled full English breakfast to a painting of doughnuts, a soap cupcake and even knitted cheese on toast.

We are still in the process of selecting work for the exhibition, which will open at South Hill Park Arts Centre in January 2023; however, we wanted to share some of the wonderful entries we received. We hope these will inspire you.

We have been blown away by the innovation, imagination, and creativity in your entries. The standard has been so high that it will make choosing pieces for the exhibition incredibly difficult!

Thank you so much to everyone who took part! ●

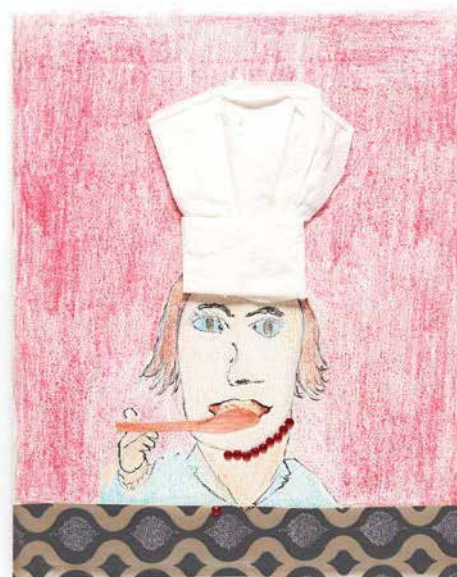
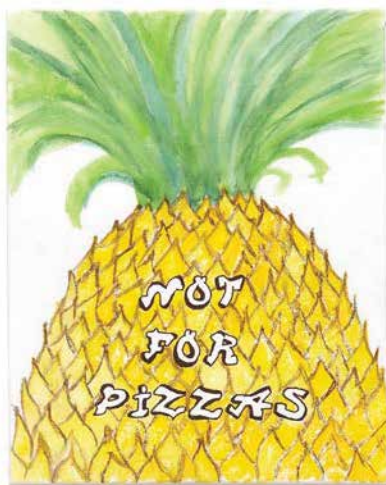


▲ **Iced Doughnuts**

HMP Bronzefield

▼ **Pineapples Not For Pizzas**

HMP Foston Hall



◀ **A Spoon Full of Soup**

HMP Foston Hall,

▼ **Breakfast on a Plate**

HMP Foston Hall



▶ **Fork It**

HMP Downview,
Julia Krish & Carolyn
Taylor Bronze Award

◀ **The Bitter Sweet
Taste of War**

HMP Eastwood Park

▼ **Delicious**

HMP & Young Offender
Institution Drake Hall,
Commended Award

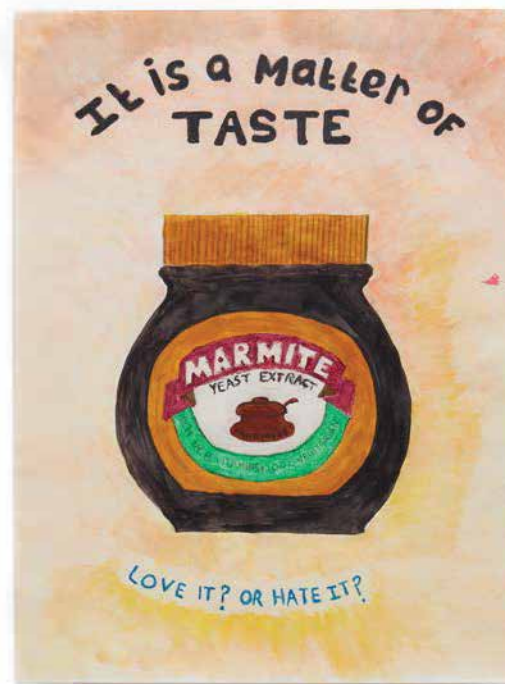




► **Cheese on Toast**
 HMP Bronzefield
 ▼ **One of the Losses of Covid**
 HMP & Young Offender Institution Styal, Outstanding Debut Award



Images courtesy of Koestler Arts



▲ **A Matter of Taste**
 HMP & Young Offender Institution Drake Hall
 ▼ **Prisoner Jam Tart**
 HMP Peterborough

▼ **Pair of Sweet Peppers**
 HMP Eastwood Park



The power of protest

Words: Elif Sarican

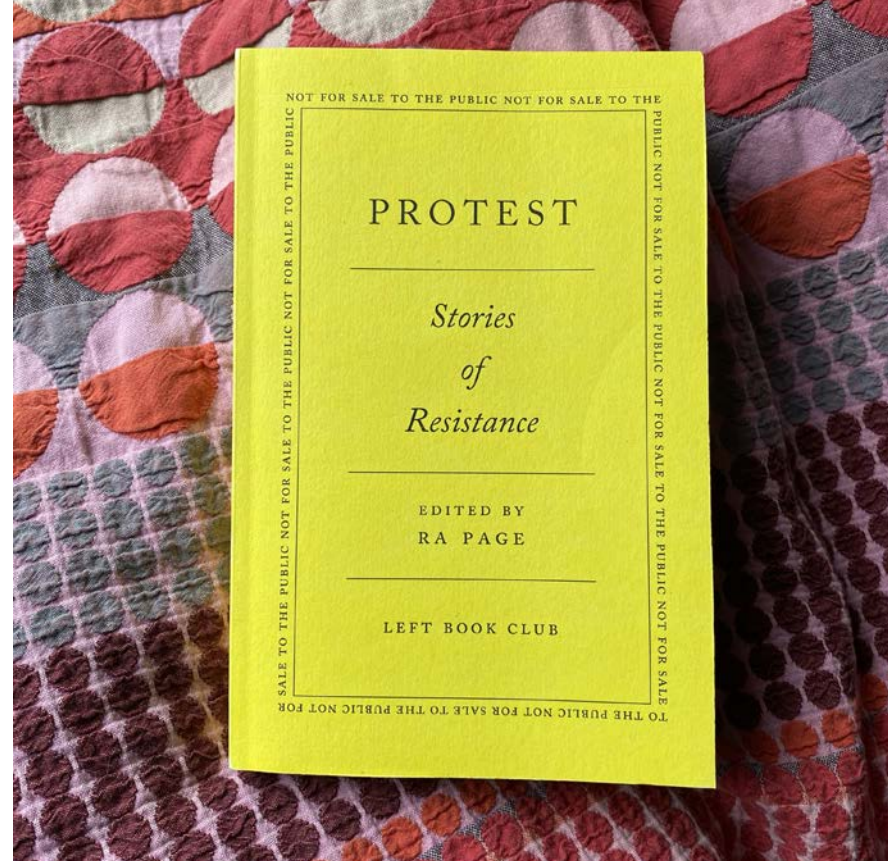
Throughout history, ordinary people have achieved great change through protest and direct action. Without the right to protest, we wouldn't be able to bring positive change across the world – it's how we maintain hope for a better society. The Left Book Club would like to hear about your experience of protest or protests, those that have most inspired you and given you hope for a better world.

From the Suffragettes to the poll-tax riots and anti-war demonstrations against the Vietnam and Iraq wars, people have taken to the streets to demand change from their governments – in some cases taking power from leaders.

With the UK government trying to restrict certain forms of protest through new laws, many movements and civil society organisations, such as Black Lives Matter and Extinction Rebellion, are faced with defending their right to protest – and our power to change the world. A central part of protest is often the hope we feel when we are around people who feel the same way as we do. Whether we are protesting to change our day-to-day living conditions or for wider systemic issues like climate change and wars, we can

remember those moments for months and years to come.

We want to hear about what protest means to you: you could tell us about protests you have taken part in, historic moments of protest you have found inspiring, or contemporary protests that give you hope – like young people fighting against climate change. You could even tell us about different and creative forms of protest you have thought of yourself for a cause close to your heart – you can get as imaginative and big as you like! We will be picking four winning entries and each winner will receive a copy of a special Left Book Club edition of the book *Protest: Stories of Resistance* by Ra Page, which includes 20 chapters of reflections on different protest and resistance movements.



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*. ●

Elif Sarican is Community and Partnerships Lead at the Left Book Club. The Left Book Club was founded in 1936 to oppose war, inequality and fascism. We seek to foster a spirit of collective learning and political education. We aim to create spaces and avenues where people can learn from each other and discuss radical ideas that inform actions and practical steps, with the goal of supporting the struggles fighting for us all.

WORD SEARCH

Find the words – time yourself!

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

- | | | | |
|------------|----------------|----------|---------------|
| Trust | Honesty | Respect | Communication |
| Compromise | Boundaries | Equality | Kindness |
| Balance | Responsibility | Support | Openness |
| Love | Care | | |

SUDOKU

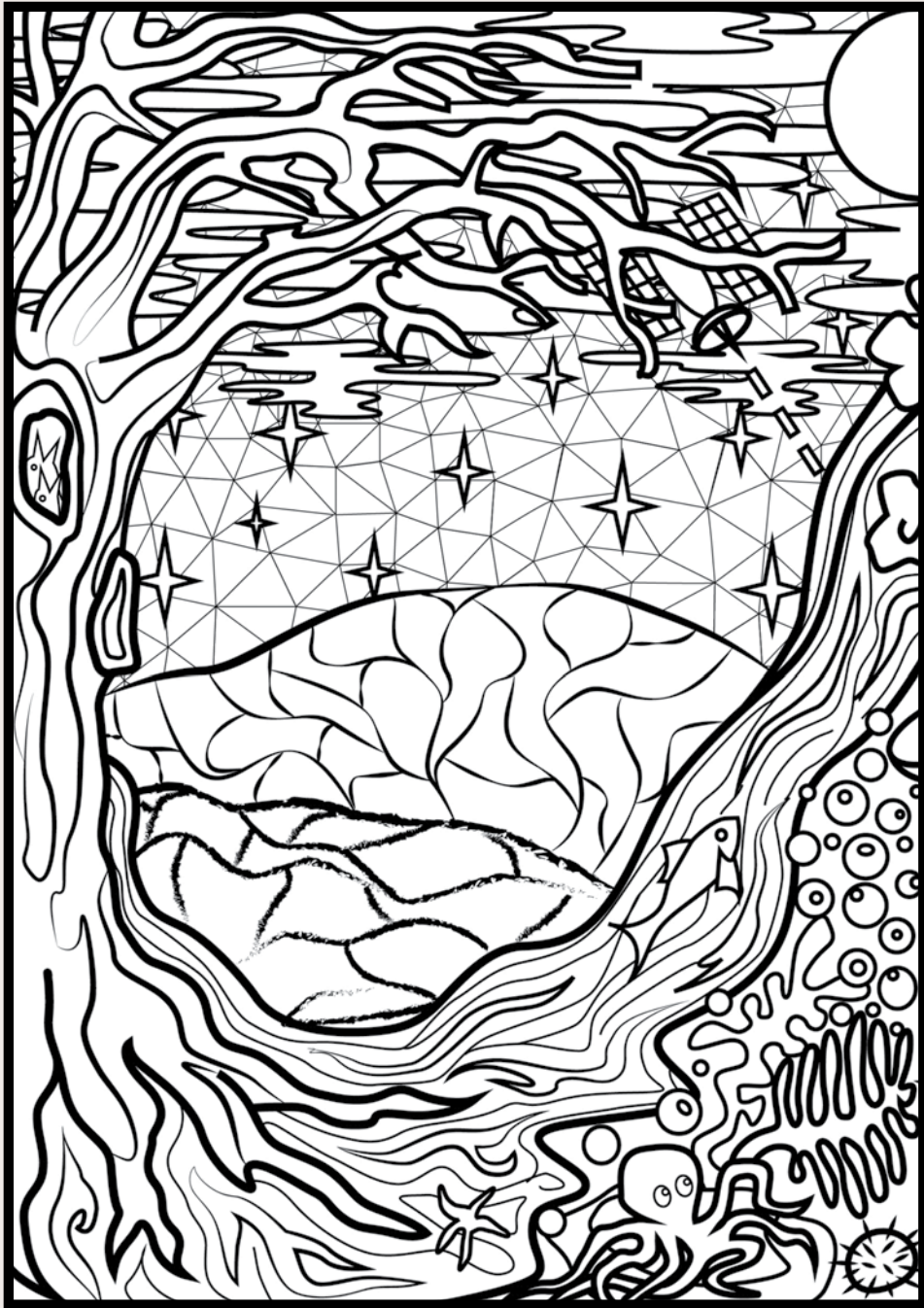
How to play? Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9, without repeating the number.

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

Puzzle by websudoku.com

Answers

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



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**Cruise Bereavement Care**

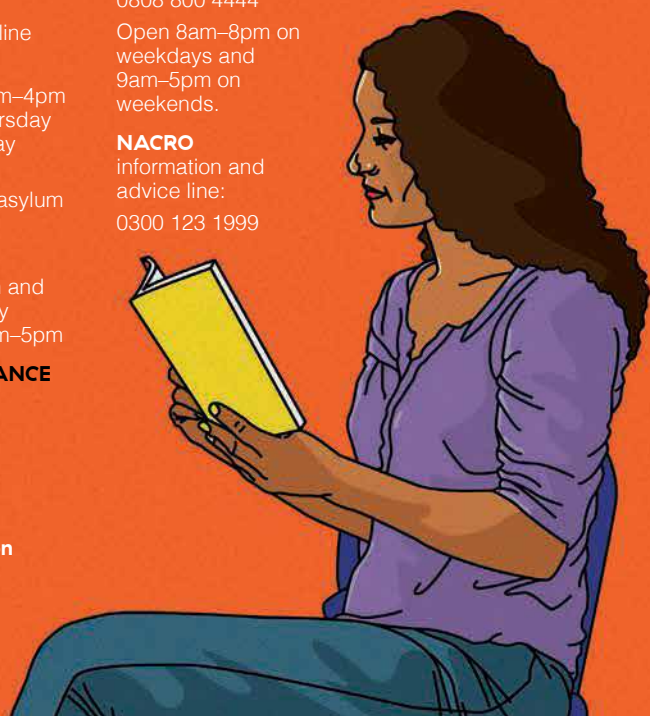
0808 808 1677

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.



Connected Songbirds

HMP Peterborough, Mixed Media

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

➤ **The power of connections**
‘Life after Prison’ podcast
Positive connections Looking ahead Getting to know a prison chaplain Clean Break Women’s Centre Champion All yours Putting the magazine in your hands Race equality The New Leaf Initiative The Nejma Collective: Grants for Muslim women Custody Time Limits Legal aid Women4Change Cooking together Healthy connections Koestler Arts Writing exercise Colouring exercise Goddess pose Word search and Sudoku puzzles.