

Institution: University of Strathclyde		
Unit of Assessment: C20 Social Work and Social Policy		
Title of case study: Enhancing justice services to advance social integration and desistance		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2013 – 2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Beth Weaver	Professor	28/09/2009 – present
Monica Barry	Principal Research Fellow	02/04/2007 – 11/05/2018
Claire Lightowler	Principal KE Fellow	02/12/2013 – present
Kristina Moodie	Research Associate	03/12/2012 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 – July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>The pressure for better policies and practices to promote desistance from crime is a longstanding problem for criminal justice systems and the societies they serve. Strathclyde's research around supporting desistance (giving up crime) and social integration has driven the introduction of a new desistance-informed, strengths-based assessment and short-term intervention framework across the Scottish Prison estate. It has also directed a shift in governance practices in community justice contexts leading to the diversification of and innovations in service delivery and provision, and shaped policies encouraging service-user involvement in community justice. Furthermore, it has incentivised the development of new work integration social enterprises in both Scotland and Canada; informed Scottish legislation on progressive approaches to the disclosure of criminal records; and encouraged policy-makers across the UK to recognise the need to develop work integration social enterprises in justice contexts to address labour market inequalities for people with convictions.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Scotland's prison population, per capita, is the highest in Western Europe, and the proportion of people under community supervision is the highest in Europe. This signifies a rapid expansion in recent years in the numbers of people involved in the justice system, the collateral consequences of which include widening inequalities and social marginalities. Despite policy commitments, existing rehabilitative endeavours are limited in their capacities to ameliorate these effects and support the social inclusion and (re)integration of people with convictions. Indeed, while desistance is both the implicit focus and intended outcome of penal policy and practice, the dominant short-term focus on abstinence from/reduction of offending, which is characteristic of contemporary rehabilitative practices, is limited in its efficacy at supporting longer-term behavioural change. Contemporary rehabilitative practices tend towards risk-focused, programmatic models of intervention which are implemented in a one-size-fits-all manner, concerned with 'correcting' thinking and behaviour. Evidence suggests that such interventions may be effective at reducing re-offending in the short-term, but are insufficient to support desistance in the longer-term, which requires a different set of practices that are strengths-based, personalised, enable participation and support social integration. Led by Weaver, Strathclyde's programme of research helps address this problem by exploring and advancing innovative justice approaches.</p> <p>Seeking to explore new desistance-supportive interventions based not only on 'what works' but also on <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> change happens, Strathclyde has undertaken a series of mixed-method, empirical and participatory action studies in collaboration with policy-makers, practitioners and people with convictions. Notable projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of social relations in offending and desistance (Weaver, 2009-2015): This project included a detailed investigation to understand the role of a co-offending peer group in shaping and influencing offending and desistance. The research took the form of life story analysis, examining the onset, persistence and desistance of criminal activity among men who previously comprised a gang, which revealed the relative contributions of individual actions, social relations and social systems to both offending and desistance [R1]. 		

- **Management of High Risk Offenders under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)** (Barry and Weaver, 2013): This project used interviews with 26 professional respondents (9 probation; 5 police; 12 policymakers) and 26 service-users to explore professional and user experiences and perceptions of the high-risk offender community supervision process and outcomes in an English Probation Trust [R2].
- **Custody to Community Voice: An Evaluation** (Weaver and Barry, research leads 2014-2016): This mixed-method evaluation of Prison and Community Councils encompassed 6 prisons and 3 Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) areas in England and included 235 initial and follow-up questionnaires, 301 initial and follow-up Intermediate Outcomes Measurement Instruments completed by Council participants, and 68 interviews with Council members, User Voice, prison and CRC staff and senior managers [R3, R6]. The findings highlighted the ways in which User Voice Prison Councils have contributed to improvements in prison governance and practice but emphasised the need for greater engagement with front-line staff to increase buy-in and reduce resistance.
- **The Role of Social Cooperative Structures of Employment** (Weaver, 2015-18): This ESRC-funded investigation into the role of social cooperative employment structures comprised observations and interviews with 22 prisoners/former prisoners and 18 professionals across 3 social cooperatives in Italy; interviews with 24 professionals (95% from disadvantaged backgrounds) and 'participants' across 8 social cooperatives in Sweden; and interviews with 54 staff at three social enterprises in the UK providing paid employment to people with convictions [R5].
- **User Engagement: A pan-Ayrshire project** (Weaver, Lightowler and Moodie, 2016-19): This project used action research, participatory community planning, community mobilisation and knowledge exchange undertaken with service-users and professionals involved in Community Justice Services across Ayrshire's 3 local authorities to inform and support the design, development, implementation and review of a multi-layered service-user involvement strategy/plan and practice. The research culminated in the publication of a practical guide to service-user involvement in community justice entitled *Inclusive Justice: Co-producing Change* (June 2019).

These studies provided original insights into the type of relational contexts within and through which social integration and desistance can be 'co-produced', and how such practices can be developed and realised; the role of social cooperatives/enterprises in supporting social integration and desistance; and user-involvement and co-productive approaches to designing, developing and delivering justice services. The **key research findings** were:

- Desistance occurs in and through social relations and taking a relational approach can inform how practitioners might reconfigure relationships between individuals, groups and communities to 'co-produce desistance' through innovative, integrative and inclusive policies and practices that harness their experiences, expertise and resources e.g. via peer- and co-productive practices, asset-based and participatory approaches, mutual aid and social cooperatives/enterprise [R1].
- Social cooperatives/enterprises providing holistic, multi-sectoral practical and relational support in addition to paid employment are particularly effective in supporting desistance, work and social integration. Those which include diversely situated people, and that practice co-operative values and principles, co-produce the relational contexts and cultures that can support desistance and social integration, with particular reference to the development of bridging and linking social capital, their participative nature, collectivist values, community focus and solidaristic characteristics which foster cultures of acceptance, belonging and mutual support [R4, R5].
- User-involvement, participatory, integrative and co-productive approaches to 'rehabilitation' are inherently more inclusive and empowering than the short-term focus of many existing practices. Such approaches can improve service effectiveness; enhance feelings of trust and respect between professionals and service-users; and support processes of change and social integration [R1, R2, R3, R6].
- Given the centrality of employment to sustaining desistance, and the importance of reducing existing barriers to work integration as a consequence of contact with the justice system, a

closer policy relationship between community justice and social enterprise is required. Broader legislative and policy reform around the nature of non-conviction information, and the lengths of time criminal records are disclosed, is also needed [R5].

3. References to the research (Strathclyde-affiliated authors in **bold**)

- R1 B. Weaver** (2015) *Offending and Desistance: The Importance of Social Relations*. Routledge. [REF2]
- R2 B. Weaver, M. Barry** (2014) Managing high risk offenders in the community: Compliance, cooperation and consent in a climate of concern, *European Journal of Probation* 6(3): 278–295. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2066220314549526>.
- R3 B. Weaver** (2019) Co-production, governance and practice: The dynamics and effects of User Voice Prison Councils, *Social Policy and Administration*, 53(2): 249-264. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12442>. [REF2]
- R4 B. Weaver, D. Nicholson** (2012) Co-producing Change: Resettlement as a Mutual Enterprise *Prison Service Journal* 204: 9-16 <https://bit.ly/3fRe7Ew>.
- R5 B. Weaver** (2016) Co-producing Desistance from Crime: The Role of Social Cooperative Structures of Employment, *ECAN Bulletin* Issue 28, Feb 2016. <https://howardleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ECAN-Bulletin-Issue-28-February-2016.pdf>.
- R6 M. Barry, B. Weaver, M. Liddle, B. Schmidt**, (2016) *Evaluation of the User Voice Prison and Community Councils*, Nesta. <http://www.nesta.org.uk/user-voice>.

Notes on the quality of research: Many of the original findings were published in Weaver's monograph [R1], which been cited on more than 130 occasions and won the British Society of Criminology Book Prize in 2016; other articles are published in peer-reviewed journals. The research has been supported with competitively-awarded funding totalling GBP345,000 from a range of funders, including the ESRC (Weaver (PI), Co-producing Desistance from Crime: The Role of Social Cooperative Structures of Employment, 05/01/2015-04/01/2018, GBP140,121).

4. Details of the impact

Through sustained and responsive engagement with a wide range of bodies concerned with community justice, Strathclyde's research has directly informed policy and practice in Scotland (with broader influence across the UK and in Canada) leading to the enhancement of justice services and advances in social integration and desistance. Since 2014, the research has:

- Improved relationships and experience for prisoners, prisoners' families, and officers in Scotland through provision of a participatory/co-productive assessment framework.
- Enhanced service development and delivery in Scotland by enabling diversification and innovation through Co-productive Community Justice Councils.
- Encouraged new models of prison industry and work integration in Scotland and Canada by informing and supporting the work of social enterprises.
- Shaped legislation, social policy and practice to address labour market inequalities for people with convictions in Scotland and the UK.

Improved relationships and experience for prisoners, prisoners' families, and officers

On the basis of Weaver and Barry's research into the supervision of high-risk offenders [R1, R2], the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) commissioned Strathclyde to develop a distinctive participatory/co-productive assessment framework for short-sentenced prisoners and support its implementation through prison officer training. Intended to provide an alternative to existing risk-based rehabilitative approaches, the resulting AIRMAPS framework – designed to assist officers to support desistance, identifying and enhancing prisoners' strengths and social resources within and beyond the prison sentence – was piloted in 7 Scottish prisons between September 2015 and March 2016 and subsequently rolled out across the Scottish prison estate. Confirming that this was '*the very first person-centred asset-based approach to be implemented within the SPS*', the Director of Operational Delivery acknowledged the positive outcomes achieved through the application of Strathclyde's AIRMAPS framework, including improved relations, behaviour changes and positive aspects for prisoners [S1].

A 2016 independent evaluation involving 427 prisoners across 3 prisons observed the following benefits: improved relationships and trust between staff and prisoners, and between some prisoners and their family/friends; shifts in prisoners' confidence, self-esteem and attitudes towards change; and an improved relational environment and atmosphere [S2]. A number of examples were cited, including a prisoner who reported: *'I've built a really good relationship with...staff [and] my son that I never had contact with before, and that's come out of AIRMAPS'*, and another who reflected: *'It does make you think, "Why did I do that?" and... it does make you pinpoint things'* [S2, p.53-55]. Staff also noticed a difference in their practice. A case manager noted: *'It's like night and day. Before there would be no chat... but now you have to engage with them and... [that] can break down a lot of barriers'* [S2, p.55].

Enhanced service development and delivery in Scotland

Building on the Custody to Community Voice research [R3, R6], in 2016 Community Justice Ayrshire commissioned Strathclyde to establish the UK's first 3 co-productive community justice councils, bringing social workers, service-users and other agencies together to influence service development and delivery. From 2017, around 200 individuals participated in peer support and related activities. North Ayrshire County Council described the initiative as *'the first of its kind'* and *'a significant shift in justice social work'* [S3], and all 3 Ayrshire authorities employed former offenders as development workers. As one worker explained, their role in co-producing service changes and providing peer support gave them a *'chance at a new life. I'm clean, I'm providing for my family, my Mum is proud of me, and I'm helping [make] a difference to other people's lives. It's a million miles from where I thought I would be'* [S4].

Service-users reported *'a sense of purpose . . . positive relationships and increased confidence'*, and co-produced interventions included a support needs questionnaire, film events, a mentoring service, peer support/mutual aid groups, a community gym, football tournaments, and a community breakfast. Participants felt *'encouraged and inspired . . . to drive forward changes in their own lives'*, with one stating *'I feel that my voice is heard for the first time. That I matter'* [S3].

Practitioners experienced enhanced motivation, confidence and new interpersonal and professional skills. A Justice Services Manager reported social workers feeling *'more motivated . . . it has changed the way they approach service-users and...enhanced their understanding of the experiences of those involved in the justice system . . . they are developing more confidence in terms of pursuing innovations in practice'* [S3]. One social worker said: *'It has changed my approach . . . broken down some of the barriers . . . [and] helped relationships improve, leading to better outcomes for Service-Users...Working in this new way has become infectious. . . [and] we are seeing results'* [S5].

In 2019 a fourth local authority, East Dunbartonshire, implemented the justice council model, and in 2020 this model informed work ongoing in Stirlingshire.

Encouraged new models of prison industry and work integration in Scotland and Canada

Established in 2015, 'Freedom Bakery' was the first Scottish prison-based social enterprise providing employment plus post-release opportunities. The scheme was extended to 3 Scottish prisons, and by November 2019 had provided 32 day-release training placements and employed 5 former prisoners. Freedom Bakery's CEO acknowledged Weaver's research [R5] as a *'pivotal influence'* which enabled them *'to understand co-production and the role of responsibility and co-working within the prison context in the UK and informed the development of what has become Freedom Bakery'* [S6]. Confirming the positive influence on those involved, the CEO noted: *'We are making a big difference. Our employees now have work, they have hope, and they have not re-offended. We are giving people [a] chance to move on, and the skills they need to move into employment and gain qualifications'* [S6]. As one prisoner commented, *'You feel more trusted, you feel like you're outside, you feel like a civilian'*.

Weaver's research and expertise also informed the establishment of related initiatives in Peterborough, Canada which has co-created *'a model for social reintegration and transformation'*. Designed, developed and led by a former prisoner, Clean Slate Enterprises, a recycling service, has been established as a federally-incorporated non-profit organisation, employing former prisoners and others who face barriers to employment. They have also signed a joint venture agreement to start a mattress recycling service in Peterborough [S7].

Shaped legislation, social policy and practice in Scotland and the UK

Implementing the recommendations from Weaver's ESRC research into the role of social cooperative structures of employment [R5], a Strathclyde-led Scottish Universities Insight Institute project (2018-19) resulted in the establishment of the Coproducing Justice National Steering Group in 2019. This group, comprising industry leaders, and representatives of the Scottish Government, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Community Justice Scotland, the Scottish Prison Service, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and academics, provides strategic direction and leadership to support social enterprise and related social firms in Scotland to make a greater contribution to addressing labour market inequalities for people with convictions. With the overarching aim of supporting work generation and integration for this group, the Steering Group produced a three-year strategy and funding model for the development and diversification of social enterprise in justice contexts in Scotland. While Scottish Government resources are currently prioritising supporting statutory and third sector agency recovery from the impact of Covid-19, the Steering Group are actively seeking funding to enable a full national roll-out of our strategy.

Weaver's social cooperative research [R5] also informed the submission of evidence to the Scottish Parliament regarding disclosure of convictions. It highlighted the systemic barriers to work integration – and thus desistance – faced by people with convictions, exacerbated by the length of periods for which convictions should be disclosed, and the nature of the non-conviction information disclosed by professionals [S8a]. This directly shaped the *Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019* and *Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020*. In particular, Weaver recommended that what constitutes other relevant information (ORI; disclosure of non-conviction information) should be clarified, and that guidelines to inform and streamline decision-making should be provided, to ensure that if ORI is to be disclosed, it is both proportionate and relevant. This was taken forward in the legislation [S8b, S8c]. Furthermore, outputs from the pan-Ayrshire project (2016-19) have influenced a wide range of UK bodies to enhance community justice policy and practice. For example, the findings have: informed the HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Standards of Excellence in Service User Involvement, with Weaver serving on the Service User Advisory Group (SUAG) [S9a]; underpinned HM Inspectorate of Probation's strategy to involve service-users in its inspection methodology [S9b research cited on pp.8,9,27,32,34]; supported Community Justice Scotland to develop service-user involvement in community justice contexts [S9c research cited on pp.14-15]; and been earmarked for inclusion in the redraft of the National Outcomes and Standards for Criminal Justice policy guidance by the Scottish Government [S10].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- S1** Factual statement from Governor of HMP Low Moss, Scottish Prison Service (04/03/2016).
- S2** Evaluation of the AIRMAPS Pilot, Scottish Prison Service (June 2016).
- S3** Factual statement from Senior Manager, Justice Services and Chief Social Work Officer, North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (15/01/2019).
- S4** Factual statement from Development Officer, People's Involvement Network Group (18/01/19).
- S5** Factual statement from Social Worker, Justice Services, North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (20/01/2019).
- S6** Factual statement from Founder and CEO, Freedom Bakery (29/01/2019).
- S7** Factual statement from Peterborough Social Cooperative Founder (14/12/2018), with copy of Peterborough Dialogues blog posts citing Weaver's research.
- S8 a.** Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR) and Howard League Scotland submissions to the Scottish Parliament Justice Committee; **b.** Education and Skills Committee report, 4/3/2020; **c.** Scottish Parliament, Meeting of the Parliament report, 16/01/2020.
- S9 a.** HMPPS Standards of Excellence; Service Use Involvement Toolkit; and factual statement from Senior Manager, Whole System Development Group confirming input and role on SUAG, dated 27/09/19; **b.** HM Inspectorate of Probation (2019), [Service user involvement in the review and improvement of probation services](#), Research & Analysis Bulletin 2019/03 **c.** Community Justice Scotland (2020) [Make the change](#).
- S10** Factual statement from Professional Justice Social Work Adviser, Scottish Government (19/10/2019), indicating intention to incorporate service user involvement in redraft.