The Department of Law and Criminology's Research Clusters Launched

We are now up and running with the Department of Law and Criminology's Research Clusters as a key mechanism through which to meet the aims of the Departmental Research Strategy.

Already the clusters have evolved with at least one changing its name (from Doctrinal and Empirical Law) and the chair of another changing. This is very much the spirit of the model with the clusters designed to support the interests and needs of its membership, and to enable effective engagement with the appropriate research and practice communities. This is also true of membership with several people engaging with more than one cluster and no barriers on new members of staff joining.

Research Clusters and Chairs

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster name</th>
<th>Co-chairs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Desistance and recovery</td>
<td>David Best, Paula Hamilton</td>
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<td>Criminal justice institutions</td>
<td>David Best, Craig Paterson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-legal studies</td>
<td>James Marson, Jill Dickinson</td>
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<td>Human rights and social justice</td>
<td>Bankole Cole, Andrew Watson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching and learning</td>
<td>Tanya Miles-Berry, Simon Feasey, Bankole Cole</td>
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While our prime purpose remains the submission for REF2020, it is also important that the clusters service the longer term needs of the department by building research capacity and individual research careers and promoting a culture of shared participation in research activities and research development. The way each of the groups will run will also become increasingly individualistic and idiosyncratic and again that is to be encouraged.

A Research Leadership Group of David Best, James Marson and Bankole Cole will loosely oversee the clusters, will make decisions about research funding support and conference attendance and will liaise with a Research Advisory Committee and with DLC. Attendance at the clusters has been good and there have already been partnerships and collaborations about studies and papers emerging from the meetings, and at least three of the clusters have opportunities to launch their work through special issues of academic journals.

In criminology, the clusters are also linking to Level 6 electives so that there is a synergy between teaching and research and the development of teaching specialisms that can match the research activities of staff. There are also similar opportunities with both the post-graduate re-design and with the re-validation of the law subject group. Finally, the research clusters will also support and be supported by the Helena Kennedy Centre and one of the four key pillars of HKC will be research - this will provide researchers an opportunity to link their research to a wider audience and potential partners.

In each of the following newsletters, we will showcase the work of one of the clusters with Socio-Legal Studies kicking off this series in our Spring Issue.
The needs and wants of victims of crime are currently subject to an elevated level of consideration in British political rhetoric, just in time for the forthcoming 2015 UK general election. The promotion of 'victim-focused' policies by major political parties has included among other things: calls for codified victims' rights, a new offence relating to domestic violence, new legislation addressing anti-social behaviour and the consideration of enhancing sentences for hate crime offences. These aims and objectives can be considered within a revised 'ideal victim' framework (initially developed by Nils Christie three decades ago). In doing so, the current positioning of the specifically demarcated, prioritised and responsibilised victim in popular political discourse can be examined. Drawing on victim hierarchies and the tendency of political parties to see victims as vote winners, the prioritising of particular types of victimisation for enhanced criminal justice responses is judged to manipulate the true needs of the most vulnerable in society in order to further a punitive political agenda. Victims of childhood sexual abuse are one group currently occupying this position. How these and other politically prioritised victims (such as older victims and victims of trauma) fare in the run-up to the general election requires close monitoring. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), who some suggest may hold the balance of power if no one party achieves an overall majority, has traditionally failed to consider victims of crime by advocating an offender-focused punitive agenda.

Managing the Marginalised: Future Directions in UK Victim Policy

In January, Dr Vicky Heap Dr Marian Duggan (University of Kent) presented a paper examining victim policy at the British Society of Criminology Victims Network Research Conference, University of Lincoln.

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**Transforming Anti-Social Behaviour**

Dr Vicky Heap's article published in the December 2014 edition of the British Journal of Community Justice reflects upon the recent changes to anti-social behaviour policy alongside the changes that have been made to probation as part of the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda.

The Coalition Government has recently made the most substantial changes to anti-social behaviour (ASB) legislation since it was enacted in 1998. New Labour’s flagship Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) has been replaced as part of a raft of reforms to streamline the tools and powers available to tackle ASB. This paper examines the legislative changes to ASBOs and the proposed impact of these changes by considering the turbulent development of their replacement: the Injunction. ASBO reforms are subsequently analysed within broader transformative processes currently being undertaken in the criminal justice system, with specific reference to the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda and the probation service. A lack of evidence-based policy; rushed changes, payment incentives and marketisation are highlighted in this paper as cross-cutting concerns between these two different, but ultimately interconnected policy domains. Fundamentally the changes to ASB legislation are deemed to be superficial, although it appears the foundations are being laid for more radical changes in the future.

**Transience and Permanence in Urban Development**

On 14 January, Luke Bennett and Jill Dickinson presented a paper at an EU funded, 2-day workshop at the University of Sheffield on 'Transience and Permanence in Urban Development'. The workshop featured 17 papers from across Europe and North America, presenting a multi-disciplinary account of current research about vacant land and urban voids. The discussant for Luke and Jill's paper was Prof John Henneberry, the event organiser. Luke and Jill's paper surveyed the ruinphobia (and fetish of land-use) at the heart of UK urban policy and laws.

**The Heartbleed Bug: Insecurity Repackaged, Rebranded and Resold**

Dr James Banks’ forthcoming research paper explores the techno-security-capitalist complex.

The emergence of a post-industrial information economy shaped by and around networked communication technology has presented new opportunities for identity theft. In particular, the accidental leakage or deliberate harvesting of information, via either hacking or social engineering, is an omnipresent threat to a large number of commercial organisations and state agencies who manage digital databases and sociotechnical forms of data. Throughout the twenty-first century the global media have reported on a series of data breaches fuelling amongst the public an anxiety concerning the safety and security of their personal and financial data. With concern outpacing reliable information, a reassurance gap has emerged between the public's expectations and the state's ability to provide safety and security online. This disparity presents a significant opportunity for a commercial computer crime control industry that has sought to position itself as being able to offer consumer citizens the antidotes for such ills. This paper considers how neoliberal discourses of cybercrime control are packaged, branded and sold, through an examination of the social construction of the Heartbleed bug. It demonstrates how security company Codenomicon masterfully communicated the vulnerability, the product of a simple coding error, through its name, a logo and an accompanying website, in turn, shaping news coverage across the mainstream media and beyond.
**Life in Recovery Survey**

In 2012, the US recovery advocacy organisation, Faces and Voices of Recovery (FAVOR) published the findings of an online survey of people in recovery to measure the changes in a range of aspects of their wellbeing from the time of their active use to their recovery. A total of 3,228 people completed the online survey suggesting both the viability of this approach and this led Turning Point in Australia to partner with a private rehabilitation provider, South Pacific, to develop an Australian version which resulted in 573 successful completions.

The samples for both surveys were intriguing with just over half of all respondents female, and both were similar in that in mean length of the substance using career was 18 years in the US and 18.6 years in Australia, while average ages of recovery initiation were also very similar – 34.8 years in Australia and 36 years in the US. Both studies have been important in suggesting that there is an available recovery population who are willing to engage in research and whose lives have changed across multiple domains following the start of their recovery journeys.

DLC, in the form of David Best and Kathy Albertson, have just entered into a research partnership with the charity Action on Addiction (who are sponsoring the project) to undertake the first ever UK recovery survey during the course of 2015. This will allow participants to report on how their lives have changed following the start of a recovery journey and to reflect on the pathways and mechanisms to recovery. We will also use this project to create a 'register' of individuals willing to engage in recovery research and policy discussions. We are also exploring options around repeating the survey for family members and it will open up the option of making this a regular assessment of UK recovery functioning. The results should be available by Autumn 2015.

**Gateways Project Evaluation**

The transition from prison to the community can be a difficult one, particularly for individuals with co-occurring alcohol and drug dependence issues. Returning to the communities and social networks that preceded imprisonment is likely to be a significant relapse and recidivism. Nonetheless, there are studies of professional groups like doctors and airline pilots who show remission rates of in excess of 75% when provided with the appropriate therapeutic packages and social supports (eg Skipper and DuPont, 2011). The idealistic rationale of the Gateways package is that drug users released from prison should be given a package of support that is as close as is possible to those of high functioning groups. This work is currently being piloted in ten prisons across the North-West based on a transition model informally referred to as 'jobs, friends and houses'. The evaluation - conducted in partnership with Baseline Evaluation - has the following aims:

- to track 'implementation fidelity' of the Gateways model involving detoxification and therapeutic engagement in the prison, effective transition arrangements 'through the gate' and supported integration into the community
- evaluating the effectiveness of recruiting recovery champions / mentors who will act as transitional supports to recovery in the prison and into the community
- assessing staff engagement across settings and disciplines
- monitoring short-term outcomes in Gateways clients in terms of recovery capital, wellbeing and functioning, and risk and harmful behaviours

This is a key social justice project that is about equity of access to evidence-based models of intervention and DLC is also exploring opportunities for engaging at least one Gateways client in a teaching role in the faculty.

Although the initial phase has demonstrated challenges in integrating Gateways within the prisons, there are already a number of case successes of clients engaged in volunteering, training, employment and recovery housing in several of the participating areas.