Welcome …

… to the first newsletter from the Sexual Offences, Crime and Misconduct Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University.

This newsletter will be produced annually to provide updates on SOCAMRU activities.

The Sexual Offences, Crime and Misconduct Research Unit was set up in 2007 to build upon the collaborative relationship of ongoing research between the Psychology Division at Nottingham Trent University and HMP Whatton (the largest sex offender prison in Europe, holding approximately 850 convicted male sex offenders).

The unit's primary aim is to conduct and facilitate applied forensic research in the area of sexual offending and sexual crime, with the research unit sitting at the juxtaposition between the world of prison and that of academia. The unit has continued to broaden its focus and develop new collaborations, including research within HMP Nottingham, HMP Lowdham Grange and Rampton High Secure hospital. The unit is continually developing specialism in mixed method evaluations of interventions to provide comprehensive and reliable findings.

The aims of SOCAMRU include:

● To continue to develop collaborations and links with HMP Whatton (and other local prisons and secure hospitals), the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), the Ministry of Justice and the NHS.

● To create a two-way dialogue with a range of other agencies who have an interest in the field of sex offenders and sexual crime (for example, Victim Support, the Probation Service, the Police, Rethink, offender-focused groups or organisations with a role in public education).

● To continue to develop a programme of research that makes a significant contribution to our understanding of offending in areas such as: sexual crime and sex offenders (the latter includes both actual and potential offenders, as well as individuals who have not actually been convicted or found guilty of a sexual offence); mental health and resettlement of offenders; religion and sexual offending; denial among offenders; and intellectually disabled offenders.

● Offering opportunities for postgraduate research in the field of forensic psychology utilising a range of methodologies.

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SOCAMRU Members

Dr Belinda Winder ...

is a Reader in Forensic Psychology and Head of the Sexual Offences, Crime and Misconduct Research Unit (SOCAMRU). She teaches primarily within forensic psychology, with specific focus on sexual crime. Belinda is continually working to develop the programme of research in collaboration with HMP Whatton that makes a significant and practical contribution to our understanding of sex offenders and sexual crime.

Dr Nicholas Blagden ...

is a Lecturer in Forensic Psychology and a Chartered Psychologist. He has worked and researched within the Criminal Justice System and HM Prison Service for many years and has also trained police officers. His research interests include denial in sexual offenders, aetiology of deviant sexual interest, rehabilitation of sexual offenders and crime desistance. Nick recently advised the NOMS steering group for the redesign of sex offender treatment programmes in England and Wales.

Laura Hamilton ...

is a HCPC Registered Forensic Psychologist, Cognitive Analytic Therapist and Acting Consultant Forensic Psychologist. Laura has worked with prisoners on remand, and those serving determinate and indeterminate sentences in a range of prison settings. For the past nine years Laura has specialised in working with personality disordered offenders detained under the Mental Health Act. Laura has had a leadership role in the accredited MSc Forensic Psychology, and more recently has acted as a clinical advisor to the course.

Dr Christine Norman ...

has teaching and research interests in biological and cognitive psychology with application to forensic psychology, psychiatric disorders and behavioural addictions such as gambling and eating disorders. As a member of SOCAMRU she is particularly interested in the role of conditioning in early sexual experiences and the development of sexual deviance and in the use of medication in treatment of sexual preoccupation in sex offenders. She is also developing research on the role of traumatic brain injury in offending behaviour.
Dr Karen Slade ...  
practiced as a Forensic Psychologist and worked for HM Prison Service for 12 years. She is a full member of the Division of Forensic Psychology and Chartered Psychologist and is registered with the HCPC as a Forensic Psychologist and supervisor. Her teaching, research and practice interests centre on self-harm and suicide, with a focus on offenders, staff and the prison environment. Karen has extensive experience in practice including risk assessment, intervention, consultancy, crisis management, training and supervision. Karen is also Course Leader for the BPS accredited MSc in Forensic Psychology.

Dr Claire Bloxsom ...  
joined SOCAMRU in 2009. Her research interests relate to attachment theory, anger, and affective violence. Claire is also interested in the application of psychological and psychotherapeutic theories to practice, and in developing and maintaining links with forensic and mental health practitioners. Claire has most recently been working with HMP Gartree on the role of attachment and anger on the murder of a love rival.

Dr Sebastian Teicher ...  
is a Lecturer in Forensic Psychology and a Chartered Psychologist, with research interests in the area of legal and investigative psychology. He has worked alongside police forces on aspects of credibility assessment and police-suspect interview strategies and has also practical policing experience. In addition, Sebastian has delivered training in credibility assessment and eyewitness testimony to legal professionals and is keen to apply psychological research to practice. Sebastian also teaches various areas of criminological and legal psychology.

Helen Elliott ...  
completed her MSc Forensic Psychology in 2012 and now works as a researcher at NTU for SOCAMRU. Helen is leading a project aimed at evaluating the 'Helping You Out' service provided by Rethink Mental Illness. Helen is also the research coordinator and administrator for the Safer Living Foundation involved in various other research projects including the evaluation of the use of pharmacological medications with sexual offenders and an exploration of the origins of sexual preoccupation using grounded theory.

Rebecca Lievesley ...  
is a trainee Forensic Psychologist working as a researcher within SOCAMRU. As such, she is involved in numerous research projects with much of her work focussing around sexual offenders at HMP Whatton, but also includes investigating reoffending and desistance in short sentenced offenders at HMP Nottingham. Rebecca is also involved in some of the forensic teaching within the criminological psychology module and the MSc Forensic Psychology.
An Introduction to our Collaborative Organisations

**HMP Whatton** is the largest sex offender prison in Europe, holding approximately 850 convicted male sex offenders. It is a category C prison with a huge therapeutic focus, providing sex offenders with the opportunity to participate in Sex Offender Treatment Programmes. SOCAMRU was born out of a desire to build upon the collaboration between HMP Whatton and the Psychology Division at NTU.

**HMP Nottingham** is a Category B local prison which holds prisoners from the surrounding area. This allows prisoners to keep close links with their families, Offender Management services and agencies they engage with. The prison expanded in 2010 to hold 1060 prisoners and is committed to working in partnership to deliver shared outcomes that serve to protect the public and reduce re-offending.

**Rampton High Secure Hospital** is one of three high-secure Hospitals in England. The care provided at the Hospital is split into five areas: Mental Health; Women’s Services; Learning Disability; Personality Disorder; and Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorder.

**HMP Lowdham Grange** is a long term category B prison. The regime within the establishment combines and embraces work, education, vocational training, accredited offending behaviour programmes, as well as prisoner health and appropriate interventions where individual need is identified.

**Nottingham Magistrates Court** is Nottingham’s local court where all criminal proceedings start. The court holds visits for both under-graduate and post-graduate students with an interest in forensic psychology. The court present talks at the university, providing an insight into the court processes.
Research at HMP Whatton

The aims of our research with HMP Whatton:

The primary aim of the research at HMP Whatton is to continue to develop a programme of research that makes a significant contribution to our understanding of sexual crime and sex offenders. In particular, an overarching current aim is to evaluate the use of pharmacological medication (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor [SSRIs: Fluoxetine] and Anti-androgen [Androcur] medication) with convicted male sexual offenders experiencing high levels of sexual preoccupation.

The progress to date:

The evaluation of the pharmacological treatment programme has been ongoing for three years and comprises a comprehensive mixed methods programme.

Quantitative Research

The initial and most prolonged studies are two quantitative research projects. The first collates a variety of different information from offenders on medication including (but not extensive) referral information, offending information, static risk and level of sexual preoccupation (determined by a number of clinical measures).

This data is then used to compare individuals who (i) are referred for medication to reduce their sexual preoccupation; (ii) assessed as suitable and begin taking the medication; (iii) drop out of the medication or are non-compliant and (iv) who continue to take the medication.

The second study collates quantitative data on a number of static and dynamic psychometric scales and measures from individuals taking the medication. Data analysis for this study is ongoing.
Qualitative Research

As well as quantitative research, qualitative methods have been used to look at the more intimate and person details of the pharmacological treatment programme. Two studies employed such methods to explore the experiences and understanding of individuals taking SSRIs and Androcur.

An additional qualitative study was employed to understand the experiences of individuals who facilitate interventions with offenders receiving pharmacological treatments. There is a distinct lack of research from the perspective of those working closely with offenders and this study explored staffs’ experiences of prisoners on medication looking into the effectiveness of the medications in reducing offenders’ sexual preoccupation and the medication procedures, including how prisoners are identified for medication, the efficiency of the referral and consent processes and the progression once medication has begun.

The Safer Living Foundation

The Safer Living Foundation is an organisation in the process of becoming a charity, set up by SOCAMRU and HMP Whatton. The Safer Living Foundation aims are:

- To prevent further victims of sexual abuse
- To protect the public and address the needs of communities by reducing risk of sexual crime
- To address the needs and promote the rehabilitation, treatment, education and care of persons who have committed or are likely to commit offences, particularly sexual offences against others

Circles of Support and Accountability

This year the Safer Living Foundation will start running the first ever prison based Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA). COSA is a restorative justice approach which aims to reduce victims of sexual abuse by supporting an offender in attaining a more satisfying, fulfilling, socially supported and therefore, offence free life. Evaluations have shown an 83% reduction in sexual offending (Wilson et al., 2005) and as COSA has never before started within a prison setting, nor has it focused on the most vulnerable high risk sexual offenders, this project, and the accompanying evaluation, will be of international importance.

www.saferlivingfoundation.org
Research at HMP Nottingham

The aims of our research with HMP Nottingham:

Our research with HMP Nottingham centres on the exploration and investigation of offenders resettlement into the community. There are two main strands of research; the first aims to investigate desistance and reoffending in prisoners who have served short-term sentences (strand one). The second is an evaluation of ‘Helping You Out’: A HMP Nottingham Resettlement Project run by Rethink Mental Illness (strand two).

The progress to date:

Strand One: This programme of research focuses on exploring resettlement for under 12 month offenders. A qualitative study using in-depth interviews with individuals who have reoffended is currently looking at what leads individuals to reoffend, by exploring different factors (related to pathways of offending) that influence offenders’ experiences.

Strand Two: There are three studies within the evaluation of ‘Helping You Out’. The first consists of a one page questionnaire recording practical issues around psychiatric and physical health, psychosocial functioning (including a measure of meaningful activity) and criminal involvement, e.g. contact with GP, received benefits, stable accommodation, etc.

The questionnaire is completed by the resettlement worker every time they see their clients. The second study involves the resettlement workers helping the clients to fill out some self-report measures to identify their needs. This will also provide data on which needs were most prevalent in the clients and general measures of self-reported well-being. The third study involves qualitative interviews with service users in the community under Rethink’s care to explore their experiences in resettling after prison.

As well as the above, a qualitative study exploring the experiences of staff implementing Rethink’s service has been complete and is being written for publication.
PhD Focus

There are a number of PhD students completing projects in areas relevant to SOCAMRU.

Danielle Mayes *Exploring the Sexual Beliefs of Intellectually Disabled Men who have Sexually Offended.*

This thesis concerns the exploration of sexual beliefs held by sexual offenders with intellectual disabilities. The thesis sits within an applied setting, seeking to contribute to a growing body of literature informing the treatment of this population within the prison and probation services. It takes an inclusive stance in which it gives voice to those who have intellectual disabilities, considering them valuable informants of their own experiences.

Karin Spenser *Pro-Social Skills as Contributory Factors to Offending and Anti-Social Behaviour in Young People.*

Research suggests that reduced Pro-Social skills contribute to offending behaviour. Whilst research with offenders has identified deficiencies in Empathy and Moral Reasoning, there are mixed results when considering Theory of Mind. This maybe because only the ability to recognise (but not understand) the thoughts, intentions, and beliefs etc. of another person was measured. This PhD will demonstrate that all deficiencies are detectable in offenders and (As these skills are learned in early childhood) also in younger people who are considered at risk of offending. This earlier identification and the ability to deliver more specific interventions may help in reducing (re)offending rates.

Dean Fido *Modelling central inhibitory mechanisms in relation to aggression and impulsivity.*

Kerensha Hocken *How effectively does the Structured Assessment for Risk and Need for Sexual Offenders (SARN-SO) assess risk in intellectually disabled sexual offenders?*

The SARN is an assessment of the psychological risk factors associated with sexual offending and is intended to be used with adult males who have committed a sexual offence. However, this assessment is also used with intellectually disabled sexual offenders IDSOs although it wasn’t developed with this client group in mind. The aim of this research is to explore the utility of SARN with IDSOs and adapt it for use with this client group. It is a mixed methods approach, including a systematic review to assess the range and quality of the evidence based research on risk factors for IDSOs, an examination of the relationship between IQ and risk scores on the SARN using Bayesian regression analysis, and thematic analysis to explore expert opinion about risk assessment with IDSOs. These studies have revealed that SARN may over estimate risk for IDSOs but some changes to current practice could address this. The next steps are to produce an adapted risk tool for practitioners’ to use.

Elizabeth Scowcroft *What does Samaritans’ Listener Scheme do; implications for service users, Listeners and our understanding of suicidal behaviour in Prison?*

Lorraine Smith *The development and validation of two screening measures to help in the identification of intellectually disabled (ID) offenders.*

Rebecca Lievesley *An investigation of desistance and reoffending in prisoners who have served short-term sentences.*

Anthony McNally *Internet sex offenders: Deviant collectors, voyeurs or predators.*
Teaching

For NTU Psychology students interested in the work of Forensic Psychologists, there are third year optional modules related to the subject detailed below.

Criminological Psychology Module:
This module is designed to develop your knowledge of criminological psychology. The module should help you to: develop your knowledge of psychological theories relating to criminal behaviour; extend your knowledge and understanding of the psychological processes and theories which underlie moral and immoral behaviour; examine critically a range of ways in which psychology has been, and can be, applied to an understanding of relevant topical social issues, everyday experiences and the legal criminal justice systems and their functioning; consider the practical, ethical, personal, social, and political significance of such application; and evaluate psychological research on offending behaviour, crime and legal and criminal justice issues.

Psychopathy & Offending Behaviour Module:
The aim of this module is to critically explore the relationship between psychopathology and offending behaviour. This module will help students increase their understanding of how personality disorders, brain injuries, intellectual disabilities, paraphilia’s and major mental illnesses influence behaviour and how these conditions are associated with criminal offending.

Students will also be introduced to the history of laws governing offenders suffering from mental illness. Finally, the treatment, management, and risk assessment of offenders within the

Addictive Behaviours:
The module examines a range of issues associated with addictive behaviours. The lectures will identify issues with definitions of addictive behaviour and the critical evaluation of different types of addiction (i.e. in depth examination of alcoholism, drug addictions, pathological gambling, video game addiction, internet addiction, exercise addiction, sex addiction and paraphilia's).

This will provide a basis for students to develop a critical understanding of the identification and treatment of addictive behaviours. Topics covered may include: Problems of definition of addiction; Commonalities and models of addiction; Theories of addiction; Conceptual crises in the field of addictive behaviour; Addictive personality; Types of addiction (i.e. in depth examination of alcoholism, drug addictions, pathological gambling, video game addiction, internet addiction, exercise addiction, sex addiction and paraphilia’s); Treatments of addictive behaviour.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Trauma
The aim of this module is to explore some of the psychological assessment, case formulation, and interventions that are offered to people who have experienced trauma. The theoretical underpinnings of cognitive behavioural therapy for trauma will be examined, and students will consider and discuss the evidence that supports this kind of treatment.

The module is made up of theoretical and practical sessions, and these will include general aspects of cognitive-behaviour therapy, specific interventions for trauma and the process and procedures used in cognitive behaviour therapy (including assessment, case formulation, exposure, response prevention and identifying, challenging and modifying negative thoughts and beliefs).
Teaching

Professional Doctorate (DPsych) in Forensic Psychology*

The Division of Psychology and SOCAMRU are developing the opportunity for Chartered or Registered Forensic Psychologists to complete a Professional doctorate in Forensic Psychology.

This doctoral award is a research-only based course which will support practitioners to develop and enhance their research skills and complete high quality research with a focus on practice and enhancing the profession.

Contact us at S3.enquiries@ntu.ac.uk

*Subject to approval and validation.

Master of Science (MSc) in Forensic Psychology

Course Overview
The MSc Forensic Psychology is a 180 credit course designed to provide coverage of the key knowledge, as well as practical and research skills and the MSc is accredited by the British Psychological Society’s (BPS) Division of Forensic Psychology. The course thus represents the first year of professional training, required by the BPS to become a qualified practitioner within the field of forensic psychology.

Entry Requirements
A BPS recognised undergraduate degree in Psychology (minimum 2:1) or an equivalent qualification which confers the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership with the BPS (such as our own MSc or PGDip in Psychology). Applicants whose undergraduate degree is a 2:2 or equivalent will also be considered, but will be required to demonstrate relevant forensic experience and the ability to study effectively at the required level. Final selection is based on an interview process with members of the course team.

A full list of acceptable English language qualifications, as well as information for EU and non-Tier 4 students, is available at: www.ntu.ac.uk/englishlanguage.

Start Dates, Duration, & Fees
The MSc Forensic Psychology starts in late September. A dedicated induction day is provided for all students which introduces you to your course, to your teaching teams and to the university facilities. The day ends with an informal social event.
The course is completed in one year of full-time study (your final piece of coursework is submitted in late August) or two years part-time. The teaching terms run from late September to Christmas and then from January to Easter.

For a statement of fees, please visit: www.ntu.ac.uk/s3fees.

Course Content, Delivery and Assessment
MSc Forensic Psychology students complete core modules entitled ‘Explanations of Crime, Criminal Behaviour and Victimology’, ‘The Police, Criminal Justice System and Psychology’, ‘Punishment, Rehabilitation and Aftercare’, ‘Assessment, Formulation and Treatment of Offenders and Victims’ and ‘Professional Forensic Practice’, as well as teaching covering both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. They also complete a research based dissertation focused in the forensic area, which is completed under the supervision of a research active member of staff.

The forensic staff at NTU have ongoing collaborations with local prisons, including HMP Whatton (Europe’s largest sex offender prison) and Rampton High Secure hospital, and forensic projects typically involve ‘hands on’ experience within a forensic environment. In addition, a particular feature of the MSc in Forensic Psychology at NTU is the weekly small group Reflective Practice tutorials, designed to facilitate emotional as well as cognitive development in students as they enter the frequently taxing world of forensic psychology.

The course is delivered primarily through lectures, interactive workshops and discussions, small group teaching and one-on-one supervision.

You will be assessed in a variety of ways and on a modular basis; through seen examinations, coursework (including essays, practical reports such as a risk assessment on case information, a reflective practice diary, literature reviews and oral presentations) and via your forensic research based dissertation.

Career Opportunities
Students generally choose the MSc Forensic Psychology because they wish to qualify as a registered forensic psychologist and to pursue a career in forensic psychology. Others have nonetheless used their qualification as a stepping stone toward doctoral training in clinical psychology, to work in criminal justice and mental health settings, with the police, the prison and probation services, the NHS, and so on. It is also possible to pursue an academic and/or research career in psychology following graduation (by working as a research assistant or associate, for example, or by studying for a PhD).

Indeed, your qualification in psychology is likely to be popular with a whole range of potential employers because, in addition to possessing in-depth theoretical knowledge of forensic psychology, you will also have demonstrated an ability to write essays and reports and to talk and present in front of other people (amongst other transferable skills). We’re very proud of the achievements of our many graduates and look forward to helping you graduate to a successful career.

To find out more visit www.ntu.ac.uk/s3postgraduate
Tel: +44 (0)115 848 4460
Email: s3.enquiries@ntu.ac.uk

There are also Masters courses available in MSc Forensic Mental Health and MSc Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health.
Conferences, Publications and Books

Conference Presentations

**Florida: International Association of Forensic Mental Health Services** (April 2012)

**Cyprus: European Association of Psychology and the Law** (April 2012)

**England: Qualitative Research on Mental Health** (July 2012)

**Scotland: National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers** (September 2012)

**Berlin: International Association for the Treatment of Sexual Offenders** (November 2012)

**Copenhagen: Faculty of Forensic Psychiatry** (February 2013)

**Cardiff: National Organisation of the Treatment of Sexual Abusers** (September 2013)

**Oslo: International Association for Suicide Prevention** (September 2013)

**Chicago: Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers** (October 2013)
A select few publications


Books