

# **Prison Staff Wrongdoing: An Exploratory Study**



**Bronwen Frow-Jones**

**School of Social Science**

**Cardiff University**

**Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**September 2024**

## **Abstract**

Prisons are a fertile environment for staff wrongdoing to thrive. Wrongdoing includes a wide range of behaviours, from criminal acts to violations of the professional standards set by the Prison Service. All share the potential to undermine safety and security. Little academic research has been conducted on this important subject globally and none in the United Kingdom. This thesis addresses the knowledge gap by identifying those behaviours staff perceive as wrongdoing, the factors which increase vulnerability to wrongdoing and the barriers to reporting it.

This exploratory mixed methods study collected data from a survey and semi-structured interviews with staff from two Category B male local prisons, combining both deductive and inductive approaches. The convergent parallel design enabled findings to be triangulated through the use of different sources, methods and data.

The survey findings show a positive correlation between perceived seriousness of wrongdoing and willingness to report. The resultant typology evidences a common understanding of the hierarchy of wrongdoing. The findings reveal a workforce which feels undervalued by managers as well as wider society and identifies individual, organisational and societal factors which influence propensity to wrongdoing. Fear of retaliation from other staff and a belief that nothing would be done were found to be significant barriers to reporting wrongdoing.

This thesis refutes the notion that staff wrongdoing is due solely to individuals who actively pursue money making opportunities. Instead I identify three types of staff offender who have different motivations and vulnerabilities: the predatory offender, the disillusioned offender and the unintentional offender. I argue that the Prison Service's conception of staff wrongdoing fails to consider that it requires a holistic approach. I conclude with seven policy recommendations to improve future practice. These recommendations include the need to promote ethical leadership and to increase staff awareness that wrongdoing is a continuum which needs to be addressed at all levels.

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>List of Tables and Figures</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Why prison staff wrongdoing matters	2
1.2 Prisons in England and Wales	5
1.3 The Security Investment Programme	8
1.4 Thesis contribution and structure	10
<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Definitions, terminology and context	13
2.2.1 What is corruption?	16
2.3 The paucity of research on prison staff wrongdoing	22
2.4 Researching and measuring wrongdoing in prisons	24
2.5 Staff-prisoner relationships: the balancing act	25
2.6 Boundary violations and inappropriate relationships	27
2.7 Prison staff culture	31
2.8 One grey area: the use of discretion	36
2.9 Staff stress and other factors which increase staff vulnerability to wrongdoing	38
2.10 Barriers to reporting wrongdoing	39
2.11 Criminological framework	44
2.11.1 Situational crime prevention	44
2.11.2 The slippery slope perspective	47

2.11.3 The psychological perspective	49
2.11.4 The wider perspective	53
2.12 The research questions	57
<b>Chapter Three: Methodology</b>	<b>59</b>
3.1 Introduction	59
3.2 Researching wrongdoing	60
3.3 Researching prison staff wrongdoing	64
3.4 Initial planning	65
3.5 Research design and pragmatism as a methodological approach	66
3.6 Application to the NRC and access to prisons	70
3.7 Trying to access additional data sources	72
3.8 The survey	74
3.8.1 The scenarios	75
3.8.2 Non scenario questions	82
3.8.3 Survey sample	83
3.8.4 Survey dissemination	86
3.9 Interviews	87
3.9.1 Interview sample	87
3.9.2 Interview guide	88
3.10 Ethics, anonymity, confidentiality and protection from harm	89
3.11 Positionality	91
3.12 Data Analysis	93
3.12.1 Quantitative analysis	93
3.12.2 Qualitative analysis	94
3.12.3 Reflections on survey fieldwork	95
3.12.4 Reflections on interviews and qualitative survey data	96

3.13	Validity and reliability	97
3.14	Conclusion	98
	<b>Chapter Four :The contours of prison staff wrongdoing: how it is understood and perceived</b>	<b>100</b>
4.1	Introduction	100
4.2	Staff perceptions of wrongdoing	102
4.3	Classifying the types of wrongdoing	107
4.4	Perceptions of the extent of corruption	123
4.5	How respondents view other staff	126
4.6	The dangers of failing to recognise where minor wrongdoing can lead	129
4.7	Conclusion	132
	<b>Chapter Five: Crossing professional boundaries: victims or villains?</b>	<b>134</b>
5.1	Introduction	134
5.2	Boundary violations	135
5.3	Which factors increase staff vulnerabilities to engage in wrongdoing?	138
5.4	Individual factors	139
5.4.1	Vulnerability factors	139
5.4.2	Victims or villains?	142
5.5	Organisational factors	146
5.5.1	The gulf between management and staff	147
5.5.2	Management – caught in the middle	150
5.6	Societal factors	153
5.6.1	No one cares or understands	154
5.6.2	The increasing challenges facing prison staff	161
5.7	The drive to recruit – an organisational and societal problem	163
5.8	A new framework	166

5.8.1	Predatory offenders	167
5.8.2	Disillusioned offenders	169
5.8.3	Unintentional offenders	171
5.9	Conclusion	174
	<b>Chapter Six: Barriers to reporting wrongdoing</b>	<b>177</b>
6.1	Introduction	177
6.2	The knowledge gap	179
6.3	Owning up to own wrongdoing	184
6.4	Why it is so hard to report on colleagues – staff culture and consequences	186
6.5	Lack of confidentiality and distrust	192
6.6	What can be done?	196
6.7	Conclusion	203
	<b>Chapter Seven: Discussion and Conclusions</b>	<b>206</b>
7.1	Introduction	206
7.2	How do prison staff at two Category B male local prisons perceive and understand the relative seriousness of different types of prison wrongdoing?	211
7.3	What are the factors believed by prison staff which make prison staff vulnerable to different forms of wrongdoing?	213
7.4	What are the barriers prison staff face in reporting wrongdoing of themselves and others?	216
7.5	Why do prison staff engage in wrongdoing?	220
7.5.1	Why low level wrongdoing should not be ignored	221
7.5.2	Justifying assault	224
7.5.3	Becoming too friendly – inappropriate relationships	226
7.5.4	Different motives require different approaches	228
7.6	Contributions to knowledge	232
7.7	Policy implications and recommendations	234

7.8 Implications for further research	236
7.9 Final comments	237
<b>References</b>	<b>238</b>
<hr/> <b>Appendices</b>	<b>280</b>
Appendix A: staff survey and information	280
Appendix B : Interview topic guide:	304
Appendix C: Participant Information sheet and consent form	307
Appendix D: Standard Deviation in mean responses	313
Appendix E : Respondents' perception of seriousness and willingness to report– percentage scores	314
Appendix F: Perception of the extent of corruption of non-uniformed staff	315

## List of Tables and Figures

<b>Table 1: Neutralisation techniques .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Table 2: Scenarios .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Table 3: Demographic information for survey respondents.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Table 4: Mean scores and rank order of prison staff views by prison site .....</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Table 5: Percentages – seriousness and willingness to report by prison site</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Table 6: Typology of seriousness: mean scores and rank order of prison staff views of wrongdoing .....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Table 7: Perceptions of the extent of corruption of uniformed staff .....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Table 8: Perceived corruption risk and vulnerability factors .....</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>Table 9: Staff satisfaction .....</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Table 10: Willingness to report.....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Figure 1: Normalising organisational corruption .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Figure 2: Convergent parallel design.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Figure 3: Respondents’ perception of seriousness and willingness to report - mean scores .....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Figure 4. Mean scores for respondents’ perception of seriousness and opinion of colleagues’ perception of seriousness .....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>Figure 5: Mean scores for respondents’ willingness to report and opinion of colleagues’ willingness to report .....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>Figure 6: Types of wrongdoing offenders and motivational factors .....</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Figure 7: Barriers to reporting wrongdoing .....</b>	<b>196</b>



## **Abbreviations**

Band 3, 4, 5 etc: Level of seniority for prison officers

CAT A, CAT B, CAT C, CAT D: Category A, B, C and D– the security level of a prison.

CC: Counter corruption

CM: Custodial manager (Band 5)

EGS: Enhanced Gate Security

GG - Governing governor: the most senior governor in a prison, often referred to as 'number one gov'. Normally Band 11

HMIP: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons

HMP: His Majesty's Prison

HMPPS: His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

IMB: Independent Monitoring Board

'Local': a local prison which serve the courts in their area

MoJ: Ministry of Justice

NRC: National Research Committee

OCG: Organised criminal gang

OSG: Operational support grade prison officer

PO: Prison officer (Band 3)

POA: Prison Officers Association

POELT: Prison Officer Entry Level Training

PSI: Prison Service Instruction

PSI: Prison Service Order

SIP: Security Investment Programme

SO: Supervising officer (Band 4)

UoF: Use of Force

YO: Young offender

## **Acknowledgements**

I want to start by thanking the prison staff who I met while on the Independent Monitoring Board for taking the time to talk to me about staff corruption. Their honest admission that corruption was an ongoing problem, which needed to be better understood, inspired me to start my PhD journey. I would also like to thank the prison staff who generously gave up their time to participate in my research.

Thank you to my supervisors, Professor Mike Levi and Dr Alisa Stevens. Your support and guidance have been invaluable as I dealt with the obstacles which are part and parcel of most prison fieldwork - as well as a few other challenges which appeared along the way. Thank you also to Dr Kirsty Hudson my progress reviewer for providing the sort of 'fresh eyes' perspective which is crucial in such a long-term project.

To Andrew, thank you for patiently putting up with my obsession with prisons, for listening to me, encouraging me and having faith in me when I doubted myself.

Thank you also to my daughters Indy, Merry and Sas who sent lots of 'keep going Mum' messages when it felt easier to give the finish line a miss. Finally, thank you to my parents who were a bit bemused as to why I thought a PhD instead of retirement was a good idea but who were tickled pink that I ended up studying at Cardiff University where they met over 65 years ago.

## Chapter One: Introduction

*Corruption facilitates the flow of drugs, mobile phones and other illicit items into prisons. These in turn fuel violence, debt and the illicit economy ...Corruption damages the reputation of the organisation; reduces workforce morale and performance.*

(HMPPS Counter Corruption Policy 2022, p.4)

*Prison corruption remains a theme stubbornly ignored by prison scholars.*

(Goldsmith 2022, p.272)

These quotations highlight the ongoing problem of prison staff corruption, and the absence of any academic research focussed on this issue in England and Wales. In 2023 Kelly and Potter conducted a global review of the literature on prison staff boundary violations from the period 2001-2022. The review was limited to peer reviewed articles in English but employed wide search terms, including prison 'corruption', 'staff', 'guard', 'officer', 'boundary violations', 'misconduct', 'assault', 'contraband', 'inappropriate relationships' and 'trafficking'. The number of articles which fitted these criteria was 20. A search in Scopus for peer reviewed articles in English covering the same period which had 'corruption' in the title brought up 12,880 articles. A search for police, 'corruption', 'misconduct' and 'deviance' brought up 361 articles. This startling contrast reveals the need for additional research on prison staff wrongdoing.

In this thesis I will argue that corruption is only one type of wrongdoing and can only be understood if staff wrongdoing as a whole is addressed. The underlying issues are: why and how do prison staff become involved in wrongdoing? How do boundary violations occur in a prison environment? Why are some staff able to resist engaging in corrupt activities while others fail to do so? Why do some staff turn a blind eye to wrongdoing and what are the barriers to reporting wrongdoing? These questions and the lack of research on this subject inspired this thesis.

### **1.1. Why prison staff wrongdoing matters**

Prisons house sentenced offenders and those held on remand awaiting trial or sentencing. Prison environments are particularly vulnerable to corruption due to the closed nature of imprisonment, the lack of public scrutiny, the fact they hold individuals accused of or sentenced for having committed criminal offences and the close proximity between staff and prisoners (United Nations 2017; Cooke et al. 2019). Many prisoners are vulnerable people struggling with poverty, unemployment, addiction and poor mental health (Tait 2008). There are also those prisoners who adapt to the prison environment and continue criminal activities in the prison, taking advantage of opportunities to manipulate or disrupt the orderly operation of the prison and using corruption as a tool to commit criminal offences while in detention (United Nations 2017; Russo et al. 2019; Gooch and Treadwell 2024). Prison staff exercise significant power over prisoners. They are entrusted with maintaining security and control but they also have the responsibility of looking after prisoners and supervising them. To a certain extent prison staff, particularly officers, are seen as a role model for prisoners who have “the opportunity to exhibit and promote pro-social behaviours and values” (Arnold 2016, p.267). The influence of prison staff on the prison environment and the prisoners is considerable, and, as Liebling (2011b, p.485) has argued, the moral quality of prison life is “enacted and embodied by the attitudes and conduct of prison officers.” Consequently, staff wrongdoing can undermine institutional authority as well as safe and secure operations within a prison (Taylor-McCune 2020).

Staff wrongdoing is behaviour which violates ethical, moral and formally established rules. It can range from ignoring rules not to accept gifts (however small) from prisoners or bending the rules to ensure the smooth running of the prison through to the illegal, for example, selling confidential information, theft of prisoner property and the trafficking of contraband. Staff wrongdoing has the potential to create chaotic and unstable work environments, contribute to a culture of unprofessional behaviour, destroy trust between staff and prisoners and erode public trust in the legitimacy of prisons to hold offenders in a safe and secure place (Ross 2013; Ross et al. 2016; Worley and Worley 2013, 2016; Kelly and Potter 2023).

Although there is a paucity of academic research into prison staff wrongdoing in England and Wales, this is not to say it has failed to be formally recognised. In 2005 Penfold et al. completed the first systematic study into prison drug markets. The presence of drugs in prisons was considered to be a major cause of violence, intimidation and corruption. The six main routes for drug importation into prisons identified through the study were social visits, mail, new prisoners, over the perimeter walls (known as 'throw-overs'), returning prisoners after court visits and prison staff. A year later the leaked findings of a Metropolitan police report on prison staff corruption in England and Wales claimed there were at least 1,000 corrupt prison staff and more than 500 inappropriate relationships between staff and prisoners (BBC News 2006). In the same year Ben Crewe published his ethnographic study on prison drug dealing. Crewe (2006) identified the same methods of drug importation as Penfold et al. (2005), before concluding that the route which permitted the smuggling of the largest quantities of drugs was through staff corruption.

In early 2008 David Blakey, a former Inspector of Constabulary, was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to conduct a review into the strategies used by the prison service to prevent drugs from entering prisons. Although Blakey did not focus on staff corruption, he confirmed that staff corruption was one of the main ways drugs were conveyed into prisons and that "staff corruption is a live issue for the Service" (2008, p.15). Soon after this report was published the Prisons Corruption Prevention Unit (CPU) was established. Although under-resourced, the CPU formulated policies for identifying corruptors and began to identify staff vulnerabilities to corruption. Unfortunately, due to financial cutbacks the CPU was disbanded in 2011. In the same year Transparency International (TI) reported on corruption in the United Kingdom, noting that:

*Previous research has indicated that corruption in prisons is both more widespread and deep-rooted than is officially acknowledged. Our research suggests that even these conclusions could underestimate the true extent of prison corruption, since they omit three key factors: the risk of non-prison officer staff being involved in corruption; the impact of organised crime within*

*the prison population; and the symbiosis between corruption and performance management* (TI 2011a, p.26).

TI went on to argue that prison corruption had been consistently overlooked by policy makers at the highest level. Despite these warnings, the prison service remained in denial for the next five years about the extent of corruption even though prisons were the perfect environment for corruption to flourish (Podmore 2012).

In 2016 the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) launched their Counter Corruption (CC) Policy which ran alongside their Reporting Wrongdoing Policy which had been implemented in 2013. The CC Policy included a definition of corruption and gave examples of types of corrupt behaviour. Through 2017 HMPPS<sup>1</sup> developed the CC Policy based on the 'four Ps' approach drawn from what, at that time, was the Government's Countering Terrorism and the Serious Organised Crime Strategy. This re-formulated policy focussed on: **p**rotecting against corruption; **p**reventing staff from engaging in corruption; **p**ursuing those involved in corruption and **p**reparing for the consequences of corrupt behaviour. The four Ps approach formed the basis of the Counter Corruption and Reporting Wrongdoing Policy Framework issued on 15 April 2019 (reissued 2022).<sup>2</sup> In the same year a specialist task force to tackle staff corruption in prisons was established (MoJ 2019a) and a significant government investment was promised to "bolster efforts to tackle corruption" (MoJ 2019b). This investment became known as the Security Investment Programme which was intended to reduce crime in all closed male prisons in England and Wales.

During the course of this research, prison staff wrongdoing has become the subject of greater media interest. Newspapers have reported prosecutions for inappropriate relationships between prison staff and prisoners (for example Odling and Hale 2024), staff trafficking of contraband (Busby and Allison 2020; Bardsley 2021), the selling of

---

<sup>1</sup> Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) replaced NOMS on 1 April 2017.

<sup>2</sup> The reissued HMPPS in 2022 reflected the termination of all Community Rehabilitation Contracts, (CRC)s necessitating a revision to the references to CRCs but there were no other substantive changes to the policy. For the sake of brevity, it is referred to as 'CC Policy 2022' and cited as HMPPS 2022a.

confidential information to organised criminal groups (Austin 2023; Crowson 2023) and the current Chief Inspector of Prisons stating on his blog that staff corruption is a route for drugs getting into prisons (Taylor 2024). There have even been interviews on YouTube with two corrupt ex-prison officers who were willing to describe their journey into corruption (LaDbible TV 2023).

## **1.2 Prisons in England and Wales**

HMPPS runs 105 out of the 122 prisons in England and Wales (HMPPS 2024a). The brief description which follows is limited to a discussion of HMPPS prisons.

Of the prisons run by HMPPS, 92 house male adult prisoners who are assigned an alphabetical categorisation between A and D where 'A' prisoners pose the highest risk of escape and harm to the public and 'D' signifies lowest risk. HMPPS organises the adult male prison estate into three main functions: reception, training and resettlement. Reception prisons (also called local prisons) are meant to hold short term populations – those on remand who are due to attend court in the local area and prisoners who are convicted but unsentenced. Local prisons also hold those with fewer than 29 days' time left to serve and sentenced prisoners waiting to transfer to other prisons. In practice, the time spent on remand can exceed six months and a transfer can be months, if not years.

The prison service is a hierarchical institution. Each HMPPS prison has a governing governor (also known as the number one governor). Below the governing governor are a number of managers, also known as governors who have responsibility for specific areas of the prison such as residential wings, operations, safety and security. Custodial (uniformed) and non-custodial staff report to their managers. For those employed by HMPPS these managers are normally the governors. Some departments such as healthcare report to their own managers but the governing governor has overall responsibility for the prison. Frontline operational staff are



categorised from the lowest level of Band 2s – officer support grade, Band 3s – prison officers, Band 4s – supervising officers and Band 5s – custodial managers.<sup>3</sup>

The Prison Service Rules 1999 set out the rules for the regulation and management of prisons including the general duties of prison officers. The Rules identify specific prohibitions on officers such as accepting gratuities, taking any items in or out of prisons for prisoners and communicating with any former prisoner, relative or friend of a prisoner. There are also prohibitions on any person throwing in, conveying in or depositing any article for a prisoner and there are lists of prohibited items which cannot be brought into the prison. Prison staff directly employed by HMPPS are also subject to the Civil Service Code, their employment contract and associated policies such as the Conduct and Discipline Policy. Rather confusingly, some HMPPS policies, for example, the CC Policy also apply to prison staff not directly employed by HMPPS. These individuals include healthcare staff, catering staff, education and training providers, contractors, agency staff and volunteers at the many charities which work in prisons. These laws, codes and rules are supplemented by a “never-ending flow” of Prison Service Instructions (Liebling et al. 2012, p.138) and to the observer “regulations governing the minutiae of prison life often represent an impenetrable bureaucracy. In order to uncover management policy, one has to unravel layers of rules upon rules” (Loucks 2000, p.6).

Between 2010-2017 as part of public spending reductions, the Government reduced the number of front-line prison officers by 26% (Bromley Briefings 2023). Prison officers were offered enhanced redundancy payments based on their length of service as well as salary. As a result, the most experienced staff received the largest redundancy pay outs. Consequently, the average length of service for leavers ranged from 17.1 years to 24.5 years (Selous 2016), resulting in a collective loss of not just ‘boots on the wing’ but also institutional knowledge about how to do the work, known as ‘jailcraft’.

---

<sup>3</sup> To maintain consistency with the Ministry of Justice and HMPPS, I have adopted their terminology of eg. Band 3-5 to denote uniformed prison officers (as opposed to Bands three to five).

In November 2016 the Government committed to recruit 2,500 officers to reverse the decline in staff numbers (MoJ 2017). However, retention remains a significant problem to the extent a Justice Committee was convened in 2023 to report on how to retain the prison operational workforce. Although some evidence from witnesses is available online and the survey results have been published, the Justice Committee report itself was not released before the announcement of the general election in July 2024. The election announcement resulted in all the work of the Justice Committee ceasing and the report remains, to date, unpublished. Although prison officer numbers have increased from the levels in 2016, the percentage of inexperienced staff as opposed to experienced staff has continued to grow. Almost half of the officers who left in 2022 (the year the fieldwork for this research was conducted) had fewer than three years' service (HMPPS 2022b), and almost a third left after less than a year in service (Neill 2024). At the same time the number of staff with 10 or more years' service continues to decline and as at 2023 constituted 28% of the workforce (Bromley Briefings 2024). The combination of inexperienced staff, staff shortages and prisoner overcrowding have led to the current prison system being described by Nick Hardwick, ex-Chief Inspector of Prisons, as a 'tinderbox' at breaking point (Sylvester 2024).

The poorest performing prisons in England and Wales are male local prisons and female prisons (MoJ 2024c). Male local prisons have long been recognised as the prisons least fit for their purpose (Sparks 1971; Jewkes 2011). They are chronically overcrowded, poorly resourced, often located in Victorian buildings and offer limited opportunities for prisoners to spend time out of cell. The ongoing problems faced by local prisons is reflected by the number of Urgent Notifications (UNs) issued by the Chief Inspector of Prisons. Since the UN process was introduced in 2018, only 16 UNs have been issued to 12 establishments, of which five were Young Offender and Secure Training Centres, one to a male Category B prison and six were to Category B male local prisons (HMIP 2024). These prisons were identified by HM Inspectorate of Prisons as having high levels of violence, particularly against staff, high levels of recorded self-harm, poor living conditions, and major drug problems. This is significant because the limited academic research suggests that prison staff wrongdoing is higher in stressful environments (Armstrong and Griffin 2004; Lambert et al. 2009; Mahfood et al. 2013; Worley and Worley 2013, 2016; Worley et al. 2018).

In 2014 I joined the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) at one of the most challenging Category B male local prisons in England and Wales. Through my role I spent 10 years observing and interacting with prisoners and prison staff. When in the prison I had my own set of keys and could visit the prison at any time of day or night. I observed meetings in all areas of the prison, including segregation, the prison wings, the healthcare centre, education and training classrooms. I soon became aware that prison staff corruption was an ongoing problem and ensured I attended all the security briefings to increase my knowledge of how the prison service was dealing with the issue. As an employment lawyer who had drafted whistleblowing policies and dealt with whistleblowing claims, I was aware of the challenges faced by staff members who wished to report wrongdoing. Out of personal interest I tried to find academic literature on prison staff corruption and was puzzled, that compared to the copious research on police corruption (which I had previously studied as part of my Masters degree), there was a dearth of independent studies and research on prison staff. In 2016 the book *Tackling Correctional Corruption* (Goldsmith et al.) was published. The authors conducted an international review of relevant prison corruption literature before concluding there was very little relevant research. This was the catalyst for my decision to undertake a PhD. Owing to my IMB position I was able to discuss my ideas for research with a succession of security governors and number one governors. All were encouraging and supportive with several of them asking me to base my research in their prison, (which was clearly not possible due to a conflict of interest). However, my familiarity with Category B local prisons and the challenges faced by other local prisons encouraged me to conduct my research in the same type of prison. I therefore chose two male Category B local prisons of different size and geographical location, to permit a comparison between the two groups of staff, one prison is in England and one is in Wales.

### **1.3 The Security Investment Programme**

The Security Investment Programme (SIP) announced in 2019 involved an injection of £100 million of Government funding to reduce crime in male closed prisons (MoJ 2019b). The first strand of SIP focussed on the introduction of physical security measures to reduce the trafficking of contraband into prisons via the gate (where visitors and staff enter), the reception area (where prisoners enter) and through the

post (where postal items are scanned for drugs and/or checked by drug detector dogs). These situational crime prevention methods included the installation of baggage X-ray machines, metal detectors and body scanners across the entire male closed prison estate. The baggage X-ray machines and metal detectors are meant to be used on everyone entering the prison including all staff, visitors and prisoners but the body scanners can only be used on prisoners who are suspected of concealing contraband. The MoJ publishes data on the number of body scans on prisoners and the number of finds. From July 2020-October 2023 scans on prisoners produced 46,925 positive finds (MoJ 2023e). However, there is no publicly available data on the nature of the finds, which could be any of the items prohibited by the Prison Rules 1999 and which range from chewing gum, to drugs and mobile phones. The second strand of SIP included resources for the increased supply of mobile phone detectors and staff capability. The third approach was to strengthen staff resilience to corruption through increasing staff knowledge of corruption and to identify and investigate corrupt staff. The last strand of SIP focussed on serious and organised crime to increase targeted disruptions and to develop a list of the highest-harm serious organised criminals.

In February 2021, shortly before I applied for permission to conduct my fieldwork, I became aware that as a condition of releasing funding for the Security Investment Programme the Treasury had required an evaluation to look at the specifics of how SIP was functioning and the outcomes/impacts. The researchers commissioned to conduct the overview and outcome study were MoJ data analysts. A second report on the process evaluation was produced by The National Centre for Social Research and a third report to evaluate the Multi-Agency Response to Serious Organised Crime (MARSOC) was produced by Ipos UK. Although these evaluations were delayed due to Covid 19, the researchers were eventually able to conduct case study research across 12 prison establishments involving interviews and focus groups with prison staff and prisoners as well as distributing an online survey of prison staff across 20 establishments. The SIP evaluators were also able to obtain expert opinions from HMPPS National Intelligence Assessment Centre and were given access to X-ray body scanner data and Enhanced Gate System audit data. The evaluation reports were due to be published by summer 2024 but due to the general election in July 2024, publication did not take place until early September

2024 during the final writing up of this thesis (Ramzan et al. 2024; Kerr et al. 2024; Craston et al. 2024).

#### **1.4 Thesis contribution and structure**

At the time of writing, it remains the case that, to date, no independent academic research into prison staff wrongdoing in England and Wales has been undertaken. The aim of my thesis is to address this omission and to undertake an empirical exploration of staff wrongdoing to increase the understanding around why prison staff risk losing their job, their reputation and imprisonment. In order to do this I employed a mixed methods research design in which I collected both qualitative and quantitative data from the two research sites. The primary contribution of this thesis to the field of criminology is four-fold. First, in order to develop practical methods to deal with the ongoing problem of staff wrongdoing, the reasons for the problem need to be understood. This necessitates an examination of the causes and correlates of staff wrongdoing. Secondly, in the absence of a body of previous research methodology to draw on, I developed a survey instrument to explore how wrongdoing is understood and perceived by the staff themselves. The survey findings were used to develop a typology of wrongdoing while the interview data permitted a more in-depth consideration of why staff engaged in wrongdoing. The quantitative and qualitative findings also addressed the need to identify different motivational factors and vulnerabilities. This formed the basis of the third contribution which involved a consideration of individual, organisational and societal factors which contribute to wrongdoing as well as the perceived barriers to reporting wrongdoing. Fourthly, although this thesis is not an evaluation of HMPPS CC Policy I highlight the limitations of the policy, its continued focus on identifying wrongdoing individuals rather than reflecting on wider organisational and societal factors. I will also directly address the Security Investment Programme focus on expensive situational crime prevention methods to reduce the trafficking of contraband. Although one of the aims of SIP was to increase CC training and the number of CC staff, the problem of staff retention has undermined much of the work done by HMPPS as the numbers of inexperienced staff continues to increase as a proportion of the workforce. It is therefore suggested there are alternative approaches to reducing staff wrongdoing.

Chapter two of this thesis follows this introductory chapter and reviews the literature related to the key concepts and dimensions of wrongdoing. The chapter begins by considering how wrongdoing, and in particular corruption, is defined before drawing on the existing research on prison staff and on the wider literature on reporting wrongdoing. The chapter ends by considering a number of criminological theories which could assist in understanding staff wrongdoing before outlining the primary research questions underpinning this research.

Chapter three provides an account of the methodological design and process. I explain the rationale for a mixed method research design and the reasons for employing an ethical attitudinal survey and conducting semi-structured interviews. The challenges faced by prison researchers, particularly those wishing to research a sensitive subject, are described, and I discuss some of the compromises which were necessary in order to secure permission to obtain access to the fieldwork sites.

My findings are explored in chapters four – six. These are organised around three of the research questions. Chapter four is the first of the findings chapters and examines the contours of prison staff wrongdoing, how it is understood and perceived. The findings from an ethical attitudinal survey developed to measure perceptions of seriousness and willingness to report wrongdoing are discussed together with the resultant typology of wrongdoing. Interview participant opinions on the perceived extent of corruption in each prison supplement the survey findings. Chapter five considers the causes and correlates of corruption and the need to recognise that wrongdoing cannot be understood as the actions of ‘one rotten apple’. The data findings identify societal, organisational as well as individual factors which are associated with staff propensity to wrongdoing. The chapter also considers the extent that corrupt staff can be regarded as victims or villains and suggests there rather than this binary distinction, there are three types of staff wrongdoer – the predatory offender, the disillusioned offender and the unintentional offender, each of whom are motivated by different factors and who have different vulnerabilities. Chapter six draws predominantly on the interview data to explore the barriers staff believe they face in reporting the wrongdoing of themselves and others. Within this chapter I consider how the deep-rooted blame culture in prisons and the fear of retaliations are significant barriers to reporting wrongdoing. I make proposals for how

trust in the reporting system can be improved and how staff who report wrongdoing can feel more supported.

The final chapter offers a synthesis of the research findings. The key findings from chapters four-six are drawn together to consider theoretical approaches to staff wrongdoing and returns to the overriding research question which inspired this study – why do prison staff engage in wrongdoing? Several proposals for preventative strategies to decrease the occurrence of staff wrongdoing are suggested in the hopes they may inform future policy of HMPPS.

This introductory chapter has highlighted the lack of research into prison staff wrongdoing and the need for ongoing studies to address this important subject. The paucity of research meant I have had to trawl wider disciplines of literature to situate the research. These disciplines include literature on corruption, policing, whistleblowing and the related issues of prison staff culture and stress. All contribute some concepts to aid the understanding of why prison staff engage in wrongdoing but none directly address the question itself.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

The introductory chapter described the need for academic research into prison staff wrongdoing. This chapter considers the problem of prison staff wrongdoing in the context of the empirical literature. The first section draws on policing and prison literature to address how the terms corruption, wrongdoing and boundary violations should be defined. The lack of directly relevant literature and the challenges of conducting prison research provide the backdrop to this part of the chapter. I then explore the broader issues of staff–prisoner relationships before reviewing the literature on how professional boundaries can become violated. The following section is able to draw on the rich literature on prison staff culture and the use of discretion in how rules are applied by staff and a growing amount of empirical work on the job stresses experienced by prison staff. The review on barriers to reporting wrongdoing necessarily draws on the wider whistleblowing literature and the very limited number of studies on prison staff whistleblowing. The last section focusses on relevant criminological theories and their usefulness in explaining why prison staff engage in wrongdoing. The chapter concludes by posing the research questions informed by the literature and driven by my own experience as a member of the IMB.

### 2.2 Definitions, terminology and context

Definitions determine what is being captured by the term, the way the problem is understood and therefore the strategies which are developed to combat it (Andersson and Haywood 2009). HMPPS Counter Corruption (CC) Policy (2022) applies to all staff, custodial, non-custodial and management as well those not directly employed by HMPPS. The CC Policy defines wrongdoing as:

*Any behaviour that falls short of the professional standards expected of staff. Wrongdoing is a broad category and can be intentional or unintentional. It can encompass staff behaviours such as inadvertently overstepping professional boundaries with prisoners and supervised individuals, bullying and harassment, and inappropriate use of force as well as corruption (HMPPS 2022a, p.6).*



This is an important definition as a failure to adhere to professional standards can be a disciplinary offence but it is arguable that the definition is ambiguous and the attributes themselves are not well defined. In the absence of any explanation in the CC Policy as to what is meant by “professional boundaries” or “professional standards” it is necessary to refer to additional prison documents to determine the meanings of the attributes. This is not a straightforward task.

The CC Policy refers staff to the professional standards of conduct set out in the Conduct and Discipline Prison Service Instruction (PSI 06/2010) which was issued when the prison service was run by National Offender Management Service (NOMS). The PSI has been reissued several times, most recently in 2020 but remains mostly unchanged. This 84 page PSI is primarily concerned with staff misconduct and discipline for staff directly employed by NOMS. As a retired employment lawyer, I have yet to meet anyone who joins an organisation and reads the conduct and discipline policy unless they are responsible for administering it or they are made subject to it so it is highly unlikely that the majority of staff will read this document unless they have to. Their knowledge of the contents of the policy is therefore likely to consist of sections which are referred to during training.

On page five of the Conduct and Discipline PSI is a link to the Professional Standards Statement which sets out the NOMS (now HMPPS) ‘values’ which staff are expected to act in accordance with. These values include general instructions to “carry out duties loyally, conscientiously, honestly and with integrity” as well as guidance on how to deal with prisoners. Staff are instructed to exercise care to ensure that their dealing with prisoners, former prisoners and prisoner friends and relations should not be open to abuse or exploitation on either side while staff relationships with prisoners should be professional. In particular staff must not:

- *Provoke, use unnecessary or unlawful force or assault a prisoner.*
- *Use offensive language to a prisoner.*
- *Have any sexual involvement with a prisoner.*
- *Give prisoners or ex-prisoners personal or other information about staff, prisoners or their friends and relatives which is held in confidence.*
- *Have any contact in or outside work with prisoners or ex-prisoners that is not authorised.*
- *Accept any approaches by prisoners for unauthorised information or favours and must report any such incidents.*

There is also a short section informing staff that corruption is not acceptable and staff must not:

*Solicit or accept any advantage, reward or preferential treatment for themselves or others by abusing or misusing their power and authority.*

As will be seen below, this definition of corruption differs from the one in the current CC Policy. The PSI goes on to refer to unprofessional conduct which includes trafficking and lists examples of misconduct and gross misconduct. It seems very unlikely that prison officer recruits will receive clear guidance on how to maintain professional boundaries or the possible consequences of boundary violations during their two week induction in their home prison, followed by seven weeks college training and one week 'consolidation' in their home prison before being deployed to the prison wings.

Although the Conduct and Discipline Policy gives examples of gross misconduct which includes sexual involvement with a prisoner there is no explanation of what 'boundary violations' means in the PSI or in the CC policy so it is necessary to consider how this term has been defined by prison researchers. The definition most widely adopted in prison literature was formulated by Marquart et al. (2001, p.878): boundary violations are those behaviours which "blur, minimise, or disrupt the professional distance" between prisoners and staff. Boundary violations include behaviours such as physical or sexual abuse of prisoners and bringing contraband into the prison, but they can also include ignoring minor inmate violations or ignoring prisoners altogether (Blackburn et al. 2011). However, professional boundaries are not clear cut and part of the skill of being a good prison staffer is recognising where the boundary should be with prisoners particularly as professional boundaries can vary according to the prisoner and the member of staff (Liebling et al. 2011).

The term 'contraband' is used frequently in the literature, policies and in this thesis so it is pertinent to note at this point that this is another term not defined in the CC Policy. The Prison Rules 1999 state that "no person shall, without authority, convey into ... a prison, or convey ... out of a prison or convey to a prisoner... any article whatever." The Conduct and Discipline PSI repeats this prohibition for staff although it is described as trafficking (p.26). Lists of items which cannot be brought into any

prison without authorisation are set out in the Offender Management Act 2007. Items are graded in terms of seriousness with those in list A (class A, B and C drugs and offensive weapons) being the most serious and list C (items falling within Rule 70 of the Prison Rules which include tobacco, money, food, chewing gum, clothing, drink, letters or paper) being the least serious. The maximum penalty on conviction for conveying items from list A is 10 years imprisonment. Mobile phones and alcohol fall into list B where the maximum penalty is two years imprisonment.

‘Contraband’ therefore includes trafficked items such as drugs, alcohol, mobile phones, cigarettes and weapons which pose a substantial threat to the safety of prison staff and prisoners. These items can be used by prisoners to engage in criminal activity, create illicit economies, perpetuate existing addictions and compromise public safety (Treadwell et al. 2019; Gooch and Treadwell 2019; Russo et al. 2019). However, ‘contraband’ also refers to items which are permissible within authorised areas of a prison such a kitchen knife which can be used in the kitchen but becomes contraband if it is taken to a cell and items which are generally authorised but can become contraband if modified, for example, a shaving razor embedded into a toothbrush to create a weapon (Peterson et al. 2023).

As discussed below, the CC Policy does include a definition for corruption but there is, as yet, no global consensus of what corruption looks like for prisons (Barrington et al. 2021). Given this lack of consensus, and the paucity of literature focussed on prison corruption, it is necessary to consider how definitions of corruption sit within the broader literature.

### **2.2.1 What is corruption?**

The complexities of trying to define corruption have long been recognised (Heidenheimer 2002; Gardiner 2002; Philp 2002; Rothstein and Varraich 2017; Sparling 2018). One problem is that corruption is interpreted differently by researchers in different disciplines (Punch 1985; Souryal 2009). In the absence of a universal definition, many researchers either use the term without defining it or fail to identify which definition of corruption they have adopted in their study (Bussell 2015). The conundrum is that while any definition of corruption is hampered by a lack of

clarity as to what is meant by the term, an understanding of corruption can be enriched by using concepts found in a wider literature (Nelken and Levi 1996).

Owing to the history of policing being “littered with scandals in which police officers broke the law” (Punch 2000, p.301), the search for a definition of police corruption and police integrity has been the subject of extensive study (for example, Sherman 1974, 1978, 1985, 1999; Klockars 1979, 2008; Punch 1985, 2000, 2003; Kleinig 1996; Klockars et al. 1997, 2000, 2007; Newburn 1999, 2015; Miller 2003; Kutnjak Ivkovic 2003, 2005a and b; Punch and Gilmore 2010; White and Kane 2013; Westmarland and Conway 2020). Although the police have essentially a service role while prison officers have a care role (Cockcroft 2016), there are sufficient similarities between the roles for the policing literature to offer “some useful sensitizing tools to apply to the less researched practices of prison officers” (Liebling, 2000, p.336). The study of prison corruption therefore benefits “from closer engagement with the extensive literature on police corruption” (Goldsmith 2022, p.288).

Despite the rich policing literature, there is still disagreement about what constitutes police corruption and about the corruptness or otherwise of specific police practices (Kleinig 2008). Consequently ‘corruption’ is often used as an all-purpose label to cover a broad range of police deviant activity of which there are three broad categories which are not mutually exclusive: corruption, misconduct and police crime (Punch 2000). While there is no consensus as to how police corruption should be defined, there is broad agreement that it involves exercising or failing to exercise police authority where the primary motivation is for gain or benefit which can be personal, group or organisational (Punch 1985; Kleinig 2008; Newburn 2015 – although Kutnjak Ivkovic (2005a) argues that the gain should be motivated in significant part by personal, not organisational gain).

A further type of police behaviour which has provoked much debate is what Klockars (2008) called ‘the Dirty Harry problem’. This is more widely known as noble cause corruption: the use of illicit means to achieve approved goals. Like other forms of police corruption, it is an abuse of police authority but it is primarily motivated by organisational gain as opposed to personal gain, where the gain could be status, acclaim or promotion (Punch 2000; Fyfe and Kane 2005).

One aspect on which there has been greater consensus among police researchers is the recognition that police corruption cannot be understood as the behaviour of isolated individuals – so called ‘rotten apples’ who bend the rules in an otherwise clean organisational ‘barrel’ or who spread corruption through the organisation. If this were the case, the removal of the ‘rotten apples’ would remove the problem. Instead, police corruption needs to be recognised as an organisational and societal problem in which whole departments or forces can be corrupt (Sherman 1978). If the organisation itself (the ‘barrel’) has a corrupt culture, the rotten barrel will influence the behaviour of individuals (Punch 2000). The content of the organisational barrels, in turn, depends on the ‘orchards’ which encompass the criminal justice system and the broader socio-political context (Punch 2003; 2010).

In their book *Tackling Correctional Corruption*, Goldsmith et al. (2016) agreed with policing scholars that prison staff corruption cannot be understood solely in terms of individual ‘rotten apples. Instead, it needs to encompass the organisational structure (prison rules, laws, regulations and staff responsibilities); organisational culture (how staff think and behave); and organisational climate (factors external to the prison such as political, social and economic conditions). Consequently, prison corruption is “not only a reflection of the choices of particular individuals but must also be understood as behaviours that occur in the context of the organisational and normative systems within which individuals work” (Goldsmith and Halsey 2018, p.1).

Despite the policing literature and the arguments propounded by Goldsmith et al. (2016) that corruption is not solely due to rogue individuals, the CC Policy (HMPPS 2022a) continues to focus on the behaviour of individual staff members, as do media reports of prison staff corruption. Even media reports from the last five years continue to perpetuate the narrative that corruption involves one individual or (rarely) a small group of staff who engage in corruption and/or inappropriate relationships with prisoners (for example, Grierson 2019; Wise 2020; Lavery 2021; Russell 2022; Rogers 2023). With the exception of McIlwain (2005) and Goldsmith et al. (2016) the prison literature has not yet challenged this prevailing narrative. As I will argue in this thesis, the continued focus on the actions of ‘rotten apples’ necessarily leads to prison policies which focus on deterring or catching the rotten

apples, whilst failing to recognise that corruption is a complex problem which also needs to be address the organisational failings and the societal climate.

There have been attempts by some prison scholars to distinguish between corruption, crime and misconduct and whether 'gain' should be limited to personal economic gain or include organisational gain. McCarthy (1981), in what was the only study focussed on prison staff corruption, defined corruption as "the intentional violation of organizational norms (i.e. rules and regulations) by public employees for personal material gain" (McCarthy 1981, p.9). However, this definition excludes prison staff who are not public employees, restricts the type of gain to material forms and expressly excludes organisational corruption. In his thesis and later work McCarthy (1981, 1984, 2019) categorised types of corrupt behaviours into misfeasance, malfeasance and nonfeasance. Misfeasance referred to the improper performance of acts which prison staff could lawfully do such as the selective application of rewards and punishments to prisoners for a fee. Malfeasance referred to misconduct where staff set out to supplement their incomes through acts including theft, embezzlement, trafficking contraband, extortion and assisting escapes. Finally, nonfeasance referred to the failure to act, for example 'turning a blind eye' to drug smuggling in return for payment or failing to report on other employees because of an implied or direct promise of personal gain such as a promotion. Souryal (2009) adopted the same categories as McCarthy but argued that acts of misfeasance were more likely to be committed by high ranking officials who utilised the services of an external company, for example a building firm in return for a personal gain. All of the behaviours identified by McCarthy (1981, 1984, 2019) and Souryal (2009) involve the abuse of position motivated by personal material gain but they do not include behaviours which would be, at the very least, considered unethical and/or in breach of conduct rules which might also be corrupt, or lead to corruption but do not involve payment.

These omissions were addressed by Ross (2013) who, on the basis of a literature review, constructed a typology of prison officer wrongdoing (which he described as 'deviance'). Ross (2013) defined deviance as inappropriate work-related activities in which a prison officer may engage. Ross sought to distinguish between abuse of power and corruption, arguing that officer violence against prisoners should be

regarded as an abuse of power whilst corruption involved the achievement of personal economic gain. Whilst it is debatable whether this is a useful distinction, Ross's typology of officer wrongdoing recognises that corruption is only one type of wrongdoing and it needs to be acknowledged that there are a range of types of wrongdoing which can lead to a breakdown in prisoner-officer trust. Ross (2013) identified three interrelated categories of wrongdoing: (a) deviance against the institution which includes misuse of prison property, failing to perform normal duties such as watching television or sleeping while on duty, theft of prison property and accepting gifts from prisoners; (b) deviance against prisoners which includes abuse of authority (for example accepting bribes from prisoners in return for preferential treatment), theft of prisoner property, discrimination and/or violence against prisoners and sexual relations with or sexual assault of prisoners; and (c) deviance against other prison officers which includes drinking alcohol on the job, sexual harassment of fellow workers, blurring professional boundaries and smuggling contraband. Ross justified his decision to categorise smuggling contraband as a type of deviance against other officers (as opposed to deviance against the prison) on the basis it places the officer smuggling the contraband at risk of being unable to perform their duties correctly because their position may have been compromised or because they had decided to engage in corruption to make money.

In their extensive review of prison corruption literature, Goldsmith et al. (2016) took a different approach. They adopted Transparency International's (TI) definition of corruption: the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. The TI definition excludes noble cause corruption which Goldsmith et al. (2016) noted was an omission but in the absence of seeing the concept in the prison literature, decided to limit their understanding of corruption to private gain.

Although the TI definition is wide enough to cover "a wide range of unethical behaviour in the public, private and other sectors that is harmful to society" (TI, 2011b, p.1) it is still not wide enough for some writers who argue the TI definition should be expanded to make it clear that corruption is not limited to bribery. Andersson and Haywood (2009, p.749) proposed that a more inclusive definition would be: "the misuse of power in the interests of illicit gain." Rather than become preoccupied in definitional debates, Goldsmith et al. (2016) concluded the TI

definition “suits the focus of this book” (p.7) and instead identified five types of prison corruption: inappropriate relationships, unlawful assaults, trafficking of contraband, misuse of information and procurement. It is arguable that assault should not be regarded as a form of corruption, as it does not fall within the traditional concept of ‘corruption’— it is not consensual, there is a victim who does not agree to be part of the behaviour and the gain is not economic. However, Goldsmith et al. (2016) argued that ‘gain’ should include psychological and reputational gain and, as will be seen, an assault on a prisoner can be a way of asserting control over prisoners. Regardless of whether unlawful assault can be regarded as ‘corruption’ it clearly constitutes staff wrongdoing so it falls within the remit of this study.

Although I recognise that the search for a universal definition of corruption, or indeed, a definition of prison corruption, remains, like the search for the Holy Grail, something unattainable that can only be a kind of guiding star (von Alemann 2004), my research aims were not focussed on the resolution of this problem. For the purposes of this thesis, I therefore adopted the operational definition employed by HMPPS:

*A person in a position of authority or trust who abuses their position for benefit or gain for themselves or for another person. In prison and probation services this would include the misuse of a person’s role to plan or commit a criminal act, or a deliberate failure to act to prevent criminal behaviour.*

Where:

*Abusing their position may include acting or failing to act ....‘benefit’ or ‘gain’ can include financial, emotional, sexual or other personal and/or work-related reasons or any other perceived actual gain or benefit. Staff may be motivated by malicious or ‘noble causes (i.e. where individuals break the rules “for the right reasons” (HMPPS 2022a p.7).*

I adopted this definition as it is wider than the TI definition and it might be better understood by my proposed research respondents on the basis it should have been referred to during CC training.



Finally, to conclude this section on definitions and terminology, it should be mentioned that it remains the position in England and Wales that there is no offence of 'corruption'. The CC Policy is therefore intended to capture conduct which might result in a prosecution under a range of offences including the: Prisons Act 1952; Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; Criminal Law Act 1977; Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986; Offender Management Act 2007; Bribery Act 2010; Crime and Security Act 2010; Serious Crime Act 2015; and Psychoactive Substances Act 2016, or, as is more generally the case in practice, the offence can be prosecuted under the common law offence of Misconduct in Public Office.

### **2.3 The paucity of research on prison staff wrongdoing**

One of the first prison studies which recognised the 'dark side' of prison officers and the challenges of maintaining professional boundaries with prisoners was Sykes's (1958) *The Society of Captives*. Sykes argued that one of the reasons the authority of prison officers is vulnerable to corruption is due to their role which necessitated (and still necessitates in most prisons) close contact with prisoners. This can lead to friendship and inappropriate relationships, while the management pressure to achieve a smooth-running prison can lead to reciprocity whereby officers' buy prisoner compliance or obedience at the cost of tolerating disobedience elsewhere. The need to exercise discretion to facilitate the orderly running of the prison cannot, according to Sykes, be avoided. However, such behaviour could be sufficiently serious to render staff vulnerable to blackmail by prisoners "for it is a paradox that they can insure their dominance only by allowing it to be corrupted. Only by tolerating violations of 'minor' rules and regulations can the guard secure compliance in the 'major' areas of the custodial regime" (Sykes 1958, p.58).

Describing reciprocal arrangements as 'corruption' has not met with universal academic approval. Sparks et al. (1996) argue that such arrangements should be more accurately described as 'accommodations' and not corruption. Morgan and Liebling (2007) refer to reciprocal arrangements as 'negotiated settlements' between officers and prisoners to ensure that routine tasks are accomplished while Liebling (2000) describes rules and relationships as 'resources' which officers draw on using their discretion to achieve order rather than 'law enforcement.' Regardless of the terminology, Sykes (1958) recognised that that corrupt staff can be a way for

prisoners to obtain desirable goods and services which are withdrawn from prisoners as part of what Sykes called the 'pains of imprisonment'. In modern prisons two types of goods denied to prisoners are drugs and mobile phones. The problems associated with the supply and use of these types of prison contraband has been widely recognised (Penfold et al. 2004; Crewe 2005, 2006; Blakey 2009; Tompkins 2016; Ellison et al. 2018; Peterson et al. 2023). However, while these studies identified staff corruption as one of the key supply routes, prison service responses to it have been largely reactive rather than preventative (Treadwell et al. 2019).

As the statistics cited at the start of this thesis evidence, research directly addressing prison staff wrongdoing is sparse (Ross 2013; Goldsmith et al. 2016). McCarthy's (1981) research referred to in paragraph 2.2.1 above remains the only empirical study focussed on prison staff corruption while McIlwain's (2005) research is the only research on misconduct between non-custodial staff and prisoners. Nevertheless, certain types of wrongdoing have attracted some academic interest, in particular the problem of staff boundary violations and inappropriate relationships between staff and prisoners (Calhoun and Coleman 2002; Worley et al. 2003; Cheeseman Dial and Worley 2008; Worley and Worley 2011, 2013, 2016; Blackburn et al. 2011; Jones 2013). There have also been studies on excessive force and/or violence by prison officers (Marquart 1986; Hemmens and Stohr 2001). Other scholars have explored the links between corruption and contributory factors such as low pay (Souryal 2009; Worley and Worley 2016), feeling unsupported or uncared for within the organisation (Worley and Worley 2013) and high levels of work stress (Armstrong and Griffin 2004; Lambert et al. 2009; Garland et al. 2012; Mahfood et al. 2013; Worley and Worley 2013, 2016; Worley et al. 2018).

In addition, the problem of prison staff wrongdoing has been touched on in a range of academic texts, journal articles and reports. Such studies include those on the illicit economy within prisons (Kalinich 1980; Crewe 2005, 2006; Blakey 2009; Treadwell et al. 2019; Gooch and Treadwell 2019; Gooch and Treadwell 2020, 2024) and prison officer culture (Sykes 1958; Liebling 2000, 2011a; Liebling and Arnold 2004; Crawley and Crawley 2008). There is also a considerable body of

work on the nature of staff-prisoner relationships which refer to staff wrongdoing but do not focus on it (Sykes 1958; Hay and Sparks 1991; Sparks and Bottoms 1995; Crawley 2000, 2004; Morgan 2006; Crewe 2009; Liebling et al. 2011, 2012; Crewe et al. 2015; Liebling and Kant 2016; Arnold 2016). This literature has resulted in findings which amount to 'pieces of a jigsaw' which, when put together, provide a partial (albeit limited) understanding of prison staff wrongdoing.

## **2.4 Researching and measuring wrongdoing in prisons**

The major problems confronting researchers into staff wrongdoing in any organisation are first gaining access to sources of information regarding wrongdoing and secondly the validity and reliability of data sources. Participants have little to gain by telling researchers about their involvement in wrongdoing, particularly serious wrongdoing such as corruption, as they could lose their jobs, face public disgrace if they have committed a criminal offence which is reported in the media and possible imprisonment. These difficulties are compounded for prison researchers due to the hidden and sometimes secretive nature of prisons and the reluctance of prison authorities to permit academic researchers to study sensitive topics (Crewe 2009; Souryal 2009; Worley and Worley 2013; Stevens 2019; Rainbow 2024).

In England and Wales permission to conduct fieldwork in prisons needs to be granted by HMPPS National Research Committee (NRC), a process described as 'politically motivated' (Stevens 2019) and a 'Sisyphean' task (Warr 2021). The various challenges associated with prison research have been highlighted by a number of writers (Liebling 2014; Sloan and Wright 2015; Jewkes and Wright 2016; Barragan et al. 2023; Rainbow 2024) and may explain the lack of empirical research on prison staff wrongdoing. Even when access has been granted, prison is a 'soul sapping' institution (Earle 2014) and prison staff can be reluctant to accept outsiders into their domain (Kaufmann 1988; Liebling 1999), feeling that outsiders are not interested in fully understanding their work (McIlwain 2005).

Over the last sixty years various approaches to studying prison staff have been employed by researchers. Some scholars have spent long periods conducting ethnographic studies inside prisons (for example Sykes 1958; Lombardo 1989;

Liebling 1999, 2008; Crawley 2000; Liebling et al. 2011). Others, like Marquart (1986; 2003), Worley (2003, 2006, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2021) and Jones (2013) were formerly American prison officers who were granted access to prisons to examine personnel files, distribute surveys to prisoners and/or staff and conduct interviews with staff and/or prisoners.

Despite the challenges of gaining access, organisations such as U4 (the Anti-Corruption Resource Centre) and Insight Crime have reported on systemic corruption in Latin American prisons, the Philippines, Indonesia and South Africa (Hill 2015; Dudley and Bargent 2017). Academic researchers in the United States have been granted access to prisons to study various types of staff wrongdoing, particularly inappropriate relationships between staff and prisoners (for example McCarthy 1981; Marquart et al 2001; Worley and Cheeseman 2006; Worley and Worley 2011, 2013, Worley et al. 2021). In Australia McIlwain (2005) was permitted to analysis criminal justice complaints, distribute surveys and hold focus groups to research non-custodial staff misconduct while three Australian Crime Commissions (2000, 2009 and 2018) took evidence from witnesses and distributed surveys to prison staff and prisoners. In sharp contrast there have been no Government backed investigatory commissions and no independent research into prison staff wrongdoing in England and Wales. As described in more detail in chapter three, despite the widespread recognition that staff wrongdoing is an ongoing problem there are still significant challenges in obtaining access to prisons in order to conduct empirical research. I will now turn to the literature which make up some of the pieces of the jigsaw which contribute to the overall picture.

## **2.5 Staff-prisoner relationships: the balancing act**

Staff behaviour and staff-prisoner relationships have a significant impact on the quality of a prison regime and on the prisoners themselves. However, there is a lack of clarity about what the 'right' relationship might be and staff-prisoner relationships can go wrong in different ways as they can be too close, too flexible, too distant and/or too rigid (Liebling et al. 2012). Part of the challenge for prison staff in maintaining the 'right' relationship with prisoners is due to their conflicting roles. Prison staff, particularly officers, have to maintain security and order but also be caring and supportive, they are both 'turnkeys' and 'care bears' (Tait 2008). Although

non-custodial staff do not have the responsibility of 'turnkey', they face the same challenges as custodial staff in setting boundaries with prisoners. Indeed, due to the nature of non-custodial work, McIlwain (2005) argues that maintaining professional boundaries can be more challenging for non-custodial staff than it is for officers. Non-custodial staff may need to have private meetings to focus on the prisoner's personal problems, rehabilitation needs or emotional problems which necessitate a greater sense of intimacy. Drug workers need to be empathetic and share personal experiences (Wheatley 2008) while medical staff, teachers, counsellors, psychologists and chaplains all have to establish good relationships with prisoners to deliver their services. As a result, all prison staff experience tensions between maintaining good prisoner-staff relationships while also maintaining security, justice and order (Liebling and Arnold 2005). As Van Dijk et al. (2023, p.72) wrote:

*[The] everlasting attempt to find a middle ground between being too soft and too harsh ...navigating relationships through the use of discretion, authority and power makes prison work a complex endeavour.*

In trying to conceptualise the need to balance the conflicting roles of care and control of offenders detained in high secure hospitals, Hamilton (2010) formulated the 'Boundary Seesaw Model'. This model visualises the dynamic nature of boundary management as a seesaw with the care and control roles straddling the pivot. Moving too far away from the pivot 'tips' the seesaw into boundary crossings. At the ends of the seesaw are the extreme roles of excessive control or excessive care which represent boundary violations. In Hamilton's model, there are boundary shifts such as treating a prisoner differently by relaxing the rules for them, using nicknames or familiar terms. There are also boundary crossings whereby a prisoner is singled out for special attention (punishment or care) and boundary violations which involve inappropriate relationships, trafficking, breaching physical and procedural security, exploiting and/or abusing the prisoner. In the context of a prison, maintaining a position on the seesaw pivot of care and control can be challenging, not only are there no clearly defined boundaries but even a minor boundary violation has the potential to lead to more serious wrongdoing (Marquart et al. 2001; Cheeseman and Worley 2006; Worley and Worley 2013).

Good staff-prisoner relationships are important for instrumental reasons to facilitate the smooth running of the prison and for normative reasons to make prison work easier (Liebling et al. 2012). Prison staff have the power to shape the prison environment and to facilitate good staff-prisoner relationships if they are able to balance the competing needs of security and care. However, managing the contradiction between authority and helper tests the skill of prison staff to maintain their position on the seesaw pivot while the consequences of boundary shifts can be significant. Jones (2013) gives an example where sharing food with a colleague would not generally violate any normal work rules but sharing food with a prisoner can have serious repercussions. While Jones focusses on the jealousy between different prisoner groups because of perceived favouritism, it can also compromise the staff member's position as sharing food with a prisoner may be against the rules in a prison. Consequently, this simple act which could be motivated by 'good' reasons, might place the staff member in a vulnerable position vis-a-vis corruption and lead to more serious transgressions such as a friendship which can have the effect of blurring the professional boundaries and be a gateway to boundary violations (Blackburn et al. 2011).

## **2.6 Boundary violations and inappropriate relationships**

Professional boundaries are legal and ethical frameworks between staff and prisoners (Kelly and Potter 2023). A boundary crossing is an act that is outside of the scope of normally accepted behaviour but does no harm, whereas a boundary violation is outside the normally accepted behaviour and results in harm or exploitation (Gutheil and Gabbard 1998). Boundary violations require special attention in prisons due to the power imbalances in the relationship between prisoners and staff (Cooke et al. 2019). In England and Wales prison staff who are directly employed by HMPPS are subject to the Conduct and Discipline Prison Service Instruction (PSI 06/2010) which refers to the need to keep relationships with prisoners 'professional,' this includes not providing prisoners with any personal information about staff or other prisoners, not having any sexual involvement with a prisoner and not giving prisoners any unauthorised information. One key problem for prison staff is that not only are there no clearly defined boundaries in prisons,

but static boundaries do not exist, and this ambiguity may lead to boundary blurring (Blackburn 2011).

Although prison scholars in the United Kingdom have examined the working life of prison staff, their power, authority and culture (Liebling 2000, 2011, 2012; Crawley 2004; Liebling et al. 2011; Arnold 2016) these studies have not directly addressed the issue of boundary violations between staff and prisoners. Similarly, with the exception of McIlwain (2005), research on non-custodial prison staff including educators (Nichols 2017), health professionals (MacDonald and Fallon 2008), psychologists (Towl and Crighton 2008) and drug workers (Wheatley 2008), all fail to focus on the challenges of maintaining professional boundaries. There is, however, a larger American literature examining the factors which facilitate boundary violations and how they can lead to serious wrongdoing (for example, Marquart et al. 2001; Calhoun and Coleman 2002; Worley et al. 2003; Cheeseman and Worley 2006; Jones 2013; Worley and Worley 2013, 2016).

Boundary violations encompass a wide range of behaviours from minor wrongdoing to criminal behaviour. They range from letting prisoners break rules (Blackburn et al. 2011), to contacting prisoners' families on their behalf (Marquart et al. 2001; Dial and Worley 2008) to trafficking contraband (Peterson et al. 2024a; Peterson and Kim 2024b) and entering into sexual relationships (Worley et al. 2003; Jones 2013; Worley et al. 2018). Although these behaviours vary in seriousness, they all have the potential to undermine prison stability (Worley 2011; Worley and Cheeseman 2006; Worley and Worley 2013; Worley and Worley 2016). Researchers have suggested that poor supervision, low hiring standards, lack of training and the stressful nature of prison work contribute to an increased prevalence of boundary violations (Marquart et al. 2001; Lambert et al. 2009; Worley and Worley 2013; Mahfood et al. 2013). As shall be seen in this thesis, these factors are all prevalent in many prisons in England and Wales.

Much of the literature on prison corruption is based on the premise that it is the prisoners who deliberately groom and manipulate vulnerable prison staff (Allen and Bosta 1981; Marquart et al. 2001; McIlwain 2004; Elliott 2006; Cornelius 2009; Cooke et al. 2019). These studies have identified a number of factors which make staff more vulnerable to boundary violations, these include relationship problems,

family problems, financial difficulties, drug or alcohol abuse (Worley and Cheeseman 2006). Prisoners have time to observe staff, identify vulnerable targets and find out personal information about the staff. Once prisoners have identified staff which might be vulnerable, they can use personal information to build up trust with a staff member. This can involve giving the appearance of having common interests, common problems and/or being helpful to staff. There may even be staged fights from which the staff member appears to need protection, and it is the prisoner with whom he is friendly who is able to offer the protection (Cooke et al. 2019). The prisoner can then move on to test the limits of professional boundaries to establish what the staff member will agree to or not object to. Testing can include the offering of food, or small physical contacts such as a pat on the back or a request for items to which the prisoner is not entitled. If the staff member fails to object to breaking these minor rules the prisoner can build up over time to a request or demand for a larger favour. These 'games criminals play' can therefore start off in a small way but can trigger a descent down the slippery slope of more serious corruption. If the staff member balks, s/he is then blackmailed and reminded of the consequences of the earlier rule breaking, in particular the threat of disciplinary action.

This method of grooming and manipulating prison staff has been widely reported in academic literature (Allen and Bosta 1981; Marquart et al. 2001; Elliott 2006; Cornelius 2009; Cooke et al. 2019). However, this approach fails to acknowledge that there are some staff who are motivated by greed and who actively seek out money earning opportunities and sexual relationships (Worley and Worley 2016). In their study into the illicit economy in prisoners, Treadwell et al. (2019) went further, arguing that some people apply to work in prisons with the intention of working with Organised Criminal Gangs (OCGs) in the prisons to make money, thereby entering employment to actively engage in corrupt activities. These findings have been recently confirmed by the Prison Officers Association, the ex-Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nick Hardwick and the current Chief Inspector of Prisons, Charlie Taylor who have gone on record stating how prison staff with links to OCGs are joining the prison service with the intention of smuggling in drugs (Pidd and Syal 2023; Tingle 2024; Taylor 2024)



One type of boundary violation which has been researched more widely than others are inappropriate relationships (Marquart et al. 2001; Calhoun and Coleman 2002; Worley et al. 2003; Cheeseman Dial and Worley 2008; Jones 2013; Worley and Worley 2013, 2016). Inappropriate relationships have been defined as:

*Personal relationships between employees and inmates/clients or with family members of inmates/clients. This behaviour is usually sexual or economic in nature and has the potential to jeopardize the security of a prison institution or compromise the integrity of a correctional employee (Worley et al. 2003, p.179).*

The risk of inappropriate relationships between staff and prisoners, particularly female prison officers with male prisoners has also been the subject of media interest (for example, Nottingham Post 2018; Bazaraa 2020; Press Association 2021; Lavery 2021; Gibson 2022; Rogers 2023; Sales 2023). Although some research suggests female officers may have a calming effect on male prisoners and be more successful than men in diffusing confrontational situations (Cheeseman and Worley 2006), others have argued that the presence of female officers in male prisons and male officers in female prisons increases opportunities for inappropriate behaviours (Worley and Worley 2016).<sup>4</sup> Researchers who analysed demographic factors in studies on prison staff wrongdoing found the staff most at risk were female, single, younger, less educated and inexperienced (Marquart et al. 2001; Worley et al. 2019, 2021; Boateng and Hsieh 2019).

In the United States, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) (2005) defines any sexual activity between a prisoner and a prison employee as an assault against the prisoner. Since the implementation of the PREA, the Bureau of Justice Statistics is required to collect information on sexual assaults in prisons. The data that have been gathered has shown that the incidence of prison staff on prisoner assault is

---

<sup>4</sup> It is no longer possible in the United States or the United Kingdom to prevent women officers working in male prisons or to prevent male officers working in female prisons. This is due to the United States Title VII of the Civil Rights Act 1991 which prohibits discrimination based on sex and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (now the Equality Act 2010) in the United Kingdom.

higher than originally believed (Blackburn et al. 2011). In the period 2009-11 just under half (49%) of prisoner allegations of sexual relations and/or victimisation involved staff sexual misconduct of which over half (54%) were committed by female employees, most (84%) of whom described the relationships as 'willing' (Beck et al. 2014). There is no similar database readily available to researchers in England and Wales. Although Wilkinson (2020) was given access to sexual assault data on the Prison Service's centralised Incident Reporting System (IRS), this was the first and last time IRS data was accessed by an independent researcher. Calls for greater transparency and for the release of IRS data to researchers to permit analysis have gone unheeded (Stevens 2017, 2019; Wilkinson 2020). Questions included in HM Prison Inspectorate (HMIP) surveys distributed to prisoners during prison inspections is limited to whether a prisoner has been sexually assaulted by prisoners or staff and is not the focus of further inquiry. Replies from the MoJ to Freedom of Information requests made during my research reveal that the numbers of Band 2-5s investigated for inappropriate relationships with prisoners has increased from 43 in 2019/20 to 47 in 2022/23 (MoJ 2023a). In the same period the number of Band 2-5 officers employed by HMPPS was 26,974 in 2020 (MoJ 2020) and 27,811 (HMPPS 2023d). It is a reasonable assumption that these figures are just the 'tip of the iceberg' and do not truly represent the extent of inappropriate relationships between prison staff and prisoners in England and Wales.

An investigation into prison corruption conducted by the Australian Crime Commission (2018) concluded that "inappropriate relationships are at the core of corruption in prisons" (CCC 2018, p.11). Whether prisoner inappropriate relationships are with custodial or non-custodial staff they blur professional boundaries and can often be the starting point for various forms of prison staff corruption (Marquart et al. 2001; Worley et al. 2003; Cheeseman and Worley 2006; Worley and Worley 2013; Goldsmith and Halsey 2018). Additional research on this aspect of staff wrongdoing is sorely needed.

## **2.7 Prison staff culture**

Organisational culture is "the set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments" (Schein 1996, p. 236). Therefore, in order to understand

the attitudes of prison staff towards wrongdoing, it is necessary to understand prison staff culture: the shared beliefs, values, informal rules and habits which determine how things are done and what is done within prison staff workgroups (Crawley and Crawley 2008; Taylor 2023). Through acknowledging the influence of social contextual factors, the focus shifts from individual 'rotten apples' to organisational structures, practices and incentives which may contribute to the corrupting 'barrels'. This, in turn, provides opportunities for organisations to examine and learn which factors invite or condone wrongdoing (Steenbergen and Ellemers 2021).

Prison staff culture shapes the institutional climate while staff attitudes and practices have a significant impact on the 'moral climate' of a prison (Liebling and Kant 2016). Culture perpetuates and reproduces itself through the socialisation of new staff although individuals may respond differently to the culture (Schein 1990). Furthermore, any decision to engage in wrongdoing is affected by the social world within the organisation (Coleman 1994). However, prison staff culture is not monolithic and it would be a mistake to treat staff as a homogenous group or one where there are no conflicting cultures. As Liebling (2008) notes, prison staff culture is complex and differs from prison to prison according to both security category and specific institutional cultures. There are also discernible subcultures between different staff groups. Those staff working in, for example, healthcare, education and drug-work "hold allegiances to their professional codes and values and to the core operational imperatives of the prison that are often inconsistent" (Crewe 2008, p.426). In short, prison staff are individuals who belong to different workforce groups, while the occupational culture of prison officers is "shot through with splits and fissures, conflicts and instabilities. In this sense it makes more sense to speak of prison officer cultures" (Crawley 2000, p.307). Nevertheless, the experience of working in the closed environment of a prison and the challenges of working with prisoners will, inevitably, shape staff behaviour.

The subject of prison officer culture has been the focus of considerable academic interest (Sykes 1958; Hay and Sparks 1991; Liebling 2000, 2008; Crawley 2004; Crawley and Crawley 2008; Crewe 2009; Liebling et al. 2012; Crewe et al. 2015a; Arnold 2016). There is a smaller amount of literature on prison governors and non-

operational managers (Brookes et al. 2008; Bryans 2008; Crewe and Liebling 2015b; Bennett 2015; Bennett 2016) and considerably less research on different types of non-custodial staff including teachers, healthcare workers, drug workers and psychologists (McIlwain 2005; Bayliss and Hughes 2008; Towl and Crighton 2008; Wheatley 2008; MacDonald and Fallon 2008; Kolind et al. 2015; Warr 2018, 2021). Although the literature on prison officer culture is more copious than other roles, there is sufficient commonality between the experiences of all staff working in prisons for some general insights on prison staff culture.

One key group of prison staff are the prison officers. Some scholars have sought to identify a collective working personality or officer culture applicable to prison officers (Crawley and Crawley 2008; Liebling 2008; Liebling et al. 2012). The norms, working practices and informal rules constitute the occupational culture of prison officers which creates the “cognitive lens through which their working world is viewed” (Bennett 2016, p.20). The main aspects of prison officer culture identified in the literature include: a sense of insularity with strong bonds of solidarity with colleagues but a feeling of being neglected and undervalued by management and wider society; authoritativeness; cynicism; humour; an attitude of constant suspicion as a response to danger from prisoners and machismo as use of force is part of the job. The strong sense of internal solidarity and social isolation are mutually reinforcing leading to a ‘them and us’ culture. In prisons the ‘them’ is not just wider society; ‘them’ includes management and the prisoners in their care where officers hold negative attitudes towards these groups while focussing on maintaining order and safety (Crewe et al. 2011).

There is comparatively little research on the people responsible for managing Band 3 prison officers within each prison. This group are the uniformed supervising officers and custodial managers who are, in turn managed by the governors who have a range of roles including the governing governor, the deputy governor and the heads of various functions such as operations, security, residential wings, safety and reducing offending. The influence of these managers on the officer culture is considerable as managers establish the “core cultural values of their department. These core values should serve as the basis for a moral compass in the

department.... They are the very people responsible for the integrity of the organisation” (Vito et al. 2011, p.161).

Most governors will have started their career as prison officers and worked their way up through the ranks; others will have been fast tracked as part of the Leadership Development Scheme or the Senior Leadership Scheme.<sup>5</sup> The paucity of research into prison governors has led to them being described as the new “invisible ghosts of penalty” (Crewe and Liebling 2015b, p.10). They are a diverse group who shape the social climate of the institutions they command although their power is constrained by those above them as well as the officers below them (Bennett 2016).

The importance of strong ethical leadership within organisations has long been recognised in the wider literature (for example Schein 1996) and in the smaller prison literature (Souryal 2009). Leaders embody organisational goals, they are models for normative behaviour and they choose whom to punish and whom to reward, thereby signalling what is necessary to be a valued member of staff (Steenbergen and Ellemers 2021). However, more recent research has recognised that many governors feel the same as the officers they manage - overworked, undervalued and exhausted physically and mentally, struggling to cope with long hours and high levels of responsibility while navigating a culture of ‘toxic masculinity’ within the prison service (Smith 2023; Harrison and Nichols 2023).

Research on non-custodial staff is even more limited and, despite an extensive literature review, McIlwain (2005) was unable to find any research on non-custodial staff wrongdoing. However, non-custodial staff are subject to many of the same rules and regulations as custodial staff. Non-custodial staff interact with custodial staff and prison management and are therefore part of the organisational culture. Decisions made by prison management and prison officers will directly impact on non-custodial staff. For example, the decision to keep prisoners locked up due to a lack of prison officers will mean prisoners cannot attend education, training classes, or even health

---

<sup>5</sup> The Leadership Development Scheme is also known as ‘Unlocked Graduates’. The Senior Leadership Scheme is a three year training scheme for those with management experience.

appointments, leaving those non-custodial staff unable to access the prisoners they are employed to work with. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that some factors influencing custodial staff might also influence non-custodial staff (McIlwain 2005).

One aspect of prison staff cultures not explored in the penal literature but which has been highlighted in studies on policing culture is the 'blame factor'. The fear of individuals being blamed for wrongdoing was a finding in this study and the search for an individual to blame for wrongdoing underpins HMPPS's Counter Corruption Policy. Although there is little policing literature to draw on, there is recognition that an organisational 'culture of blame' which responds to wrongdoing primarily at the level of individual staff might deter officers from reporting minor wrongdoing. The perception that individuals will be blamed and punished increases mistrust, leading staff to become more cautious with what they document and record (Metcalf 2017). One consequence of officers failing to report less serious wrongdoing for fear of negative consequences is that it remains hidden, and examples of minor wrongdoing cannot be used as an organisational learning opportunity (Westmarland and Rowe 2018). This focus on individuals is noted by police researchers who have found that policing organisations and oversight bodies such as the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) continue to approach wrongdoing investigations by attempting to identify whether individual staff should be held responsible (Farrow 2024). This approach can lead police staff to demonstrate defensiveness and assign blame for wrongdoing to individual staff instead of examining wider organisational structure when wrongdoing arises.

Farrow (2024) notes that blame cultures are not unique to the police and although policing is subjected to higher scrutiny and external pressure than other public sector organisations, workers from the National Health Service, social work and the health and social care sector also claim that "they operate in a culture that continually prioritises individual fault finding over genuine lessons for learning and reflection" (Farrow 2024, p.3). Prison staff are not subject to the same level of external scrutiny as the police and there are clear differences in their roles. However, the findings in the police literature about a blame culture, the perception that policing organisations

try to identify individual 'rotten apples' rather than address organisational failings and the lack of trust in reporting systems all resonate with the findings of my research.

## **2.8 One grey area: the use of discretion**

As Sykes (1958) and Liebling et al. (2012) note it would be impossible for all prison rules to be enforced all of the time. So it is for prison staff to be the "frontline personnel (who) translate policy into practice and – within certain boundaries - ...interpret and implement a multitude of organisational rules and procedures" (Crewe 2009, p.104). Prison staff therefore have the power to use discretion to judge situations and to allow for flexibility around rule enforcement. Consequently the rigidity of boundaries and rules are often bent in an effort to be more efficient and to make life easier for the staff (Crawley 2000). This can lead to uncertainty around professional boundaries particularly in the implementation of prison policies and procedures (McCarthy 1984 a and b; Crawley 2000; Liebling 2000; Stohr et al. 2000; Liebling et al. 2012; Liebling and Kant 2016).

The discretionary power available to prison staff, particularly wing officers, is considerable. As with police organisations it is the 'rank-and-file police officer who exercises discretion where it really counts (Bowling et al. 2019). This means that wing officers who might still be in their late teens and with very limited experience or training have responsibility for highly discretionary choices. Prison officers can, on a daily basis, ignore minor rule infractions, give some prisoners more favourable treatment than others, determine privilege levels and contribute to reports on prisoners. Crewe (2011) describes this 'soft power' as working through psychological as well as physical means and gripping as tightly as coercive or authoritarian power. However, whilst the under-enforcement of rules can facilitate the smooth running of the prison it can also result in a lack of clear professional boundaries. There is also the risk that where staff underuse their power to maintain good relationships, they can be perceived as too friendly, and this can come at the expense of safety and control (Crewe et al. 2015). So "the underuse of power can be as treacherous in its outcomes as the overuse of power" (Liebling and Kant 2016, p.25).

Staff can therefore both under and over enforce their legal power in ways which can facilitate the smooth running of the prison. However, the element of discretion also means rules may be enforced unfairly and inconsistently so that while one member of staff might exercise discretion to benefit a prisoner, another member of staff will refuse to exercise the same discretion. Consequently, discretionary decisions need to be exercised in a fair and consistent manner as they contribute to the perceived legitimacy of staff, which is, in turn, positively associated with good prisoner-staff relationships and prisoner compliance (Ryan and Bergin 2022).<sup>6</sup> This discretionary power means there are ample incentives and opportunities for wrongdoing (McCarthy 1984). As a result, discretion can function for or against legitimacy (Liebling 2000), where 'legitimacy' is a perception that the arrangements, procedures and processes a person is subject to are appropriate and fair (Franke et al. 2010).

Where discretion is unfettered or the prevailing culture of a prison is punitive or indifferent, staff may misuse their discretion (Crewe 2008). The question therefore arises as to what are the 'right reasons' for prison staff to exercise their discretion and to 'bend' the rules? Liebling et al. (2012) conclude that decisions are informed by individual interpretation, knowledge, values, experience and relationships. In the absence of clear guidance, discretion should not be exercised in an arbitrary way. Liebling et al. (2012) argue that 'flexible consistency' lies at the heart of keeping order and legitimacy in prison and the maintenance of the 'right relationships' between prison officer and prisoners. However, flexible consistency can only work if senior managers provide guidance as to the values and principles on which the exercise of discretion should be based (Liebling et al. 2012).

---

<sup>6</sup> Ryan and Bergin 2022 note other relevant factors such as general staff performance and the wider prison climate can also influence perceptions of legitimacy.



## **2.9 Staff stress and other factors which increase staff vulnerability to wrongdoing**

Prison staff work in environments which are challenging, stressful and dangerous with a high risk of physical assault and verbal abuse from prisoners (Armstrong and Griffin 2004; Lambert et al. 2010; Garland et al. 2012; Kinman et al. 2014; Clements and Kinman 2021). A growing body of literature over the past forty years has found that various factors such as role overload, poor supervision, a lack of organisational support and a lack of input into decision making are related to job stress and low job satisfaction among prison staff (Lambert 2004; Armstrong and Griffin 2004; Lambert et al. 2010). The need to comply with numerous policies and procedures, (which, if not followed could result in serious repercussions), and a feeling of being undervalued by the prison management and colleagues all contribute to high stress levels in a prison workforce (Armstrong and Griffin 2004; Lambert 2004; Lambert et al. 2009; Clements and Kinman 2021). It is therefore unsurprising that prison officers have lower rates of physical and mental health compared to their counterparts working elsewhere in criminal justice and security occupation (Clements and Kinman 2023). These factors have an impact on levels of staff wrongdoing. There have been a number of studies which have established that high levels of job stress are associated with inappropriate relationships with prisoners, high turnover of staff, high absenteeism, low staff morale and lower organisational commitment (Armstrong and Griffin 2004; Lambert et al. 2009; Mahfood et al. 2013; Worley and Worley 2013, 2016; Worley et al. 2018). Furthermore, if poor management permits organisational wrongdoing to exist within a prison, it can become normalized it to the point that prison staff are more likely to engage in wrongdoing (Worley and Worley 2013).

Within institutions, the concepts of justice, fairness and equity are essential components of organisational justice and are the basis of institutional effectiveness (Boateng and Hsieh 2019). If staff perceive that salary, promotion, recognition and evaluation reflects the work input and that work processes are transparent and fair, they are less likely to experience work stress and be more rule compliant (Lambert et al. 2010). In their empirical study, Boateng and Hsieh (2019) observed the significant impact which organisational justice, job satisfaction and organisational

commitment had on prison officers' wrongdoing, finding that perception of low organisational justice, low job satisfaction and low job commitment were all predictive of a greater potential to engage in wrongdoing.

There are also individual factors which have been identified as increasing vulnerability to wrongdoing. In a series of studies Worley and Worley (2011, 2013, 2016) and Worley et al. (2017, 2021) found that a lack of support from peers, and/or family as well as managers was positively correlated with higher levels of wrongdoing and a perception that other colleagues are engaged in wrongdoing. Individual problems such as financial difficulties and relationship breakdowns also increase the risk of staff wrongdoing (Worley and Cheeseman 2006). Policing researchers have found similar individual vulnerability factors (Miller 2003). However, these factors do not affect everyone equally; some individuals will respond to them by engaging in wrongdoing and others will resist. Prior life experience and perception of how likely the wrongdoing will be discovered will also influence decision making (Kutnjak Ivkovic 2005a). The difference for prison staff is that due to the closed environment of a prison, those staff experiencing stress, financial and/or personal difficulties are more likely to be noticed by prisoners who have ample time to observe staff behaviour, thereby enabling them to target vulnerable staff. This can, in turn, lead to manipulation by prisoners and staff corruption (Allen and Bosta 1981; Elliot 2002; Worley and Cheeseman 2006; Cornelius 2009).

## **2.10 Barriers to reporting wrongdoing**

The terms reporting wrongdoing and whistleblowing tend to be used interchangeably in the literature, with 'whistleblowing' being the most commonly used term.

Whistleblowing has been defined as "the disclosure by organisation members ... of illegal, immoral or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers to persons or organisations that may be able to effect action" (Miceli and Near 1985, p.525). This definition includes reporting made within the organisation, for example to the Human Resources department or to senior management, as well as outside the organisation, such as the media or a regulatory body. In theory, whistleblowers can provide an organisation with the opportunity to address the concerns which have

been raised but whistleblowers may also threaten the organisation's authority structure (Weinstein 1979 cited in Miceli and Near 1985).

In England and Wales whistleblowing is protected by statute.<sup>7</sup> Workers and employees have the right to complain of being subjected to a detriment such as threats, loss of pay, disciplinary action or dismissal as a result of reporting a type of wrongdoing which falls within the protection of the statute. However, it is for the worker or employee to bring a claim in the Employment Tribunal and this may take months, if not years, for a judicial decision to be given. This protection might be considered by individuals as being of little use if they suffer significant organisational retaliation from their colleagues or their employer – a risk which has been a consistent finding in whistleblowing literature (for example Rothschild and Miethe 1999).

Most large scale research on whistleblowing has focussed on organisations outside the criminal justice sector (Miceli and Near 1988; Near and Miceli 1996; Rothschild and Miethe 1999).<sup>8</sup> Although some studies have included police forces (Rothwell and Baldwin 2006; 2007; Gottschalk and Holgersson 2011; Taylor et al. 2024), none of these studies included prison staff. However, it is reasonable to infer that prison staff experience some, if not all, of the same barriers to reporting wrongdoing as those in other organisations, particularly the police. In 2021 Nicholls et al. conducted a review of 217 whistleblowing studies across different countries and multiple domains including medicine, health, finance, government and the police (but not prisons). The review concluded whistleblowing has individual and organisational dimensions and there are a wide range of reasons associated with willingness (and unwillingness) to blow the whistle. These reasons include personal cost and benefits, outcome expectancies, the seriousness of the offense, the reporting system (in particular whether reporting was anonymised and whether it was to an internal or external

---

<sup>7</sup> Employment Rights Act 1996 as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Micelli and Near collected data from 22 governmental departments in the United States; Miethe and Rothschild interviewed employees from 292 workplaces from six organisations.

organisation) and the identity of the wrongdoer. One significant finding in the wider literature was the well-founded fear of retaliation after whistleblowing had occurred (Gottschalk 2022) and that the fear or threat of retaliation greatly reduces the likelihood of whistleblowing (Rothschild and Miethe 1999; Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran 2005).

There have been a number of empirical studies into whistleblowing in the police which have reached conflicting conclusions. Rothwell and Baldwin (2007) found the police in their study were slightly more willing to report wrongdoing than civilian public sector employees due to a mandatory reporting policy. However, Gottschalk and Holgersson (2011) found that whistleblowing in the police is not common due to the organisational culture of the police, in particular the 'code of silence' which has been defined as the informal prohibition in police culture against reporting the wrongdoing of police colleagues (Punch et al. 2004). The theory that a strong sense of solidarity and loyalty to colleagues is part of policing culture and inevitably results in a 'code of silence' or 'blue wall' has attracted considerable support (Westmarland 2005; Porter and Prenzler 2016; Westmarland and Rowe 2018; Kutnjak Ivkovic et al. 2018). The less serious the wrongdoing is perceived to be, the higher the blue wall. Although the code of silence can vary enormously across different police forces, it is a "worldwide prevalence" (Klockars et al. 2004a, p.17) and is a concept which has been widely applied in police integrity studies.

However, in a more recent study in England and Wales, Conway and Westmarland (2021) concluded that while the code of silence within police persists, it has changed in form. Instead of being motivated by loyalty and a sense of solidarity, the main reasons for police staff to not report on a colleague was more due to fear of being stigmatised and ostracised by colleagues. One reason Conway and Westmarland (2021) suggest for this change is that since 2014 police are statutorily obliged to report wrongdoing and a failure to do so could be regarded as a criminal offense, and/or gross misconduct. Police are also subject to considerable surveillance through the presence of Global Positioning Systems on vehicles, body worn cameras and the public who film events involving the police. As a result, if a police officer witnesses a colleague engaged in wrongdoing, there might be a higher chance their

failure to report will be found out. Consequently, there is an element of self-preservation in the decision to report, rather than maintain silence (Grace 2024).

It is questionable whether the code of silence is as prevalent in prisons and is a major barrier to reporting wrongdoing. The culture of solidarity amongst prison officers has previously been described as the most significant cultural norm for prison officers and one which is central to an officer's occupational identity (Crawley 2000; Crawley and Crawley 2008; Arnold 2016). Kauffman (1988) goes as far as to argue that prison officers learn not to be a 'rat' and never to co-operate with superiors by participating in activities which would be detrimental to a colleague. Whether or not Kauffman's research conducted over 40 years ago in a high security Massachusetts jail is relevant to current prisons in England and Wales is a moot point. However, Liebling et al. as recently as 2012 have argued that the need to rely on colleagues to provide support in dangerous situations and the shared experience of sometimes traumatic outcomes leads to a sense of camaraderie and cohesiveness which are central to the prison officer's role.

Some American researchers still consider that a code of silence is prevalent in prisons (Worley 2021). This might not be the situation in England and Wales. Although solidarity might be a core component the role of prison officer, the code of silence has been undermined by concerns such as fear of disciplinary action due to the mandatory reporting policy, as well as a more individualised culture which is "more about watching your own back than others" (Arnold 2016, p.279). However, some researchers still consider that the code of silence is a prevailing element of prison staff culture and caution that the consequences for officers who do not comply with prevailing prison culture can be serious. These consequences can range from social ostracism to damage to property and person, revealing "the darker side of the familial group ... such that the group member is left under no illusions that the group supersedes the individual" (Garrihy 2024, p.181).

Regardless of whether or not there is a code of silence or whether staff feel a strong sense of solidarity, reporting the wrongdoing of work colleagues is a difficult decision to make in any organisation. This applies particularly to the closed environments of prisons where staff whistleblowing can result in extreme forms of retaliation (Dryburgh 2009). There is very little data which directly addresses the reasons why

prison staff fail to report wrongdoing. McIlwain's 2005 study of non-custodial prison staff concluded that managerial indifference and fear of retaliation were major barriers. In a more recent study, Wells et al. (2021) noted the absence of research on prison staff whistleblowing before focussing on correlates of whistleblowing in an American jail. Their findings suggested that being male and college educated with high job satisfaction were positively related to willingness to blow the whistle. Low levels of job satisfaction, an organisational context which was hostile to whistleblowing and fear of retaliation were correlated with lower levels of willingness to report wrongdoing. Surprisingly, Wells et al. (2021) did not find any relationship between work environment factors such as supervisor support and workplace trust and propensity to blow the whistle. However, their quantitative data came from 236 survey replies from one jail and did not include any qualitative data. Wells et al. (2021) acknowledged these limitations and concluded there is a need for further research to identify perceived barriers to reporting wrongdoing.

In England and Wales reporting wrongdoing was made mandatory in the CC Policy which replaced separate policies on corruption and prevention and reporting wrongdoing. The CC Policy (HMPPS 2022a) is now 39 pages long and requires all staff and non-directly employed persons to "report suspicions of wrongdoing and corruption at the earliest opportunity through the appropriate channels" (p.15) where 'wrongdoing' has the broad definition referred to in paragraph 2.2 above. Staff are warned that failure to report corruption or serious wrongdoing may be a disciplinary matter and may constitute a criminal offence (p.15). HMPPS managers "must ensure that members of staff who report concerns receive adequate protection from any form of discrimination or victimisation" (p.16). Freedom of Information replies reveal that fewer than 100 Band 2-5 officers were investigated each year (2019-2023) for failing to report the wrongdoing of others and there have not been any dismissals for this offence (MoJ 2024d). In the absence of any longitudinal studies, it is not possible to assess whether making reporting mandatory has had any impact on prison staff willingness to report wrongdoing and, according to HMPPs' own figures, the number

of staff investigated for failing to report the wrongdoing of others has decreased in recent years.<sup>9</sup>

## **2.11 Criminological framework**

“The question “Why did they do it?” is central to the criminologist’s quest” (Maruna and Copes 2005, p.221). This question lies at the heart of my thesis but, as is the case with most criminological issues, prison staff wrongdoing is a multi-faceted problem and it seems unlikely that any one criminological theory can plausibly make sense of all the causes and correlates of staff wrongdoing. This section will outline some of the theories which might offer a degree of insight into possible reasons for some types of wrongdoing. However, there is no one overarching theory which encompasses the diversity of staff wrongdoing and any attempt to invoke one core motivation would be over-simplistic.

### **2.11.1 Situational crime prevention**

Criminal behaviour results from a “coincidence of appropriate motivation and opportunity” (Coleman 1987 p.407). HMPPS CC Policy is almost exclusively based on reducing the opportunity while ignoring motivational factors. This approach reflects the wider shift in the later part of the twentieth century where instead of identifying the psychological or sociological causes of offending, the criminological focus for some researchers moved to exploring how changing immediate crime situations could reduce physical opportunities of offending. For these researchers, situational crime prevention methods promised “better prospects of shorter-term, measurable success,” confining the offender to a “vestigial” role (Ekblom and Tilley 2000, p.376).

---

<sup>9</sup> Number of investigations for failing to report misconduct by others: 68 (2019/20), 93 (2020/21), 83 (2021/22) and 43 (2022/23). Freedom of Information Act request dated 31 July 2024.

Situational crime prevention techniques began with a practical focus: to reduce the physical opportunities of offending and/or increase the chances of being caught. Two theories underlie this approach. Routine Activities Theory (RAT) was developed by Cohen and Felson in the 1970s followed by Cornish and Clarke's Rational Choice Perspective (RCP) in 1986. RAT argues that for illegal conduct to take place in physical space, there must be a convergence of a motivated offender, a suitable target (person or property) and the absence of a capable guardian against a crime. The other theory, RCP, is focussed on the premise that offenders make rational decisions based on the costs and benefits of their actions and then acting on the basis of the outcome of this calculation. Consequently, potential offenders can be deterred through altering an environment to increase perceived effort, increase perceived risk and reduce the anticipated rewards. As the originators of these theories subsequently argued, these are not competing paradigms, they are compatible and mutually supportive (Clarke and Felson 1993).

Rational choice perspectives have been subject to considerable criticism. Loughran et al. (2016, p.86) described how "many criminologists harbour great scepticism about it, particularly its rationalist assumption." There has been particular objection to the generality of the theory which might account for some crimes such as property crimes, but cannot explain how impulsive offences, those committed under the influence of alcohol or under duress can be explained as the result of 'rational' choices. Wortley (2001, 2003) argued that opportunity reduction is only half the situational crime prevention story; instead, there should be a two-stage model to conceptualise criminal decision making. The first stage involves situational forces that precipitate criminal behaviour but it is not until the second stage that the behaviour is subject to consideration of the costs and benefits analysis. As such situational crime prevention techniques need to reduce opportunities *and* control the situational precipitators of crime which Wortley (2001, 2003) identifies as: prompts (situational cues such as an open house window); social pressures (for example conforming to group norms); permissibility (factors which distort moral reasoning, for example drunkenness) and provocations (which can vary from environmental irritants such as excessive noise to over-crowding).



In response to these criticisms Cornish and Clarke expanded RCP and their techniques of situational crime prevention (Cornish and Clarke 2003). They also explained that they had not propounded a general theory of crime, instead RCP was a perspective, which focussed on criminal decision-making processes and was developed primarily to assist with situational crime prevention measures (Cornish 1993; Cornish and Clarke 2017). More recently Loughran et al. (2016) conducted an empirical study to respond to these criticisms of RCP. They argued that the perceived costs of crime should include both formal and informal sanctions while the perceived benefits should include more than just financial rewards. On the basis of this expanded conception of RCP, it should be regarded as a broad enough theory to account for behaviours such as impulsive and drug related offences. Despite this defence of RCP, Loughran et al. (2016) acknowledged that some of the individuals in their study did not behave in a 'rational' manner, but argued this did not undermine RCP, instead there should, they suggested, be a "deeper study of offending rewards and motivation" (p.108).

Regardless of whether RCP can be regarded as a general criminological theory, rational choice assumptions would appear to be applicable where individuals are faced with a choice of whether to engage in corruption. Such individuals often have options. Corruption is not a crime of passion or is unlikely to be as a result of drink or drugs. It is therefore understandable why, despite criticisms, RCP has dominated the academic study of corruption and counter-corruption policies (Dupuy and Neset 2018). It also appears to form the basis of HMPPS's Security Investment Programme (SIP). As already mentioned in paragraph 1.3, a significant amount of the funding for SIP has been directed towards situational crime prevention methods including the provision of more body scanners for use on prisoners and the Enhanced Gate System (EGS) through which both visitors and staff have to pass through. The EGS measures include additional baggage X-rays machines, metal detectors, increasing the number of staff searches and limiting the items which can be brought into prison. These measures were designed not only to reduce the risk of contraband being brought in and increase the risk of being caught but also to give staff under duress a reason to explain to those placing them under pressure as to why they could not smuggle in contraband.

However, as Friedrichs (2007) points out, rational considerations may not apply where individuals are uncertain as to how to act, lack clear precedents and are driven by emotions such as fear, rather than reason. Furthermore, if the only obstacle to corruption was the fear of being caught then many more people would be corrupt (Albanese and Artello 2018). Instead, most people obey the law because their attitudes and behaviour are influenced by social values about what is right and proper (Tyler 2006). Therefore, although situational crime prevention methods might assist in reducing the opportunities of engaging in the trafficking of contraband, RCP is not a sufficient explanation of corruption and fails to address the problem of how low level wrongdoing and/or inappropriate relationships might lead to corruption. Instead, of relying on expensive situational crime prevention methods, prison funding could be focussed on increasing staff awareness of wrongdoing, enhancing the recognition of harm to staff and prisoners and identifying different types of wrongfulness through training and reinforcement of ethical decisions. This training should include the identification of behaviours which might not be corrupt but which could be the start of a slippery slope.

### **2.11.2 The slippery slope perspective**

The slippery slope of corruption is a concept woven into theories about the sources of police corruption (Kleinig 2008). Part of the discussion in police literature concerns how low level wrongdoing, such as the acceptance of gratuities can lead to serious corruption and at what point these small, unsolicited gifts become corruption. If the gratuities were cash, they would be recognised as a bribe but because they are small gifts such as a cup of coffee there has been uncertainty as to how they should be regarded. Some scholars have argued that gratuities are an acceptable perk and can easily be recognised by police officers as a friendly mark of appreciation and not a bribe (Kania 2004). This stance has been dismissed by other policing researchers who argue that gratuities are the starting point of a slippery slope and that an officer who accepts even a minor gratuity compromises themselves morally and tarnishes their self-image, effectively undermining any moral ground for refusing to engage in more serious wrongdoing. Furthermore, once a certain practice is accepted, individuals are more likely to go on to accept other practices that are increasingly unacceptable while those giving the gratuities expect special treatment (Sherman

1974; Ruiz and Bono 2004). Other scholars have trodden a middle ground, recognising that a single cup of coffee is unlikely to create a sense of obligation but the public might regard gratuities as evidence that the police are corruptible, encouraging them to make more offers and paving the way for corrupting conduct in the future, particularly if the gratuities are given on a regular basis (Feldberg 1985; Coleman 2004a and b; Kleinig 2008).

Whilst a gratuity could be regarded simply as a mark of appreciation, similar to those gifts given to teachers, delivery drivers and even lawyers, there is, as Kutnjak Ivkovic (2005a) points out, a difference between these jobs and what police officers do and the nature of a police officer's job. The same can be said of prison officers; they too are entrusted with an extensive set of powers and wide discretion in the exercise of their duties, and they too could find themselves on a slippery slope where a minor boundary violation or concession has the potential to lead to more serious wrongdoing (Marquart et al. 2001; Worley and Cheeseman 2006; Worley and Worley 2013; Goldsmith 2022). Although prisoners do not have access to unlimited cups of coffee to offer as gratuities, they can offer a drink or food to a staff member who has missed lunch, or offer help beyond that expected of a prisoner, for example, offering emotional support by listening to a staff member's personal problems. Whilst many prison staff would not consider this type of help as corruption, it is against the Prison Rules (1999) which expressly forbids any officer from receiving "any unauthorised fee, gratuity or other consideration"<sup>10</sup> while the Conduct and Discipline Policy prohibits staff from giving personal information to a prisoner. Many prisoners will be aware of the Prison Rules and policies (sometimes more so than an inexperienced staff member) and, having manipulated the staff member into breaking the rules and violating professional boundaries, the prisoner may then use 'levers' such as the threat of blackmail to exploit the situation (Allen and Bosta 1981; Worley et al. 2003).

---

<sup>10</sup> Prison Rules 1999, rule 62

One of the features of prisons in England and Wales, is that they are governed by numerous regulations and rules. If prison rules and policies are rigidly enforced, a member of staff who realises they have violated professional boundaries may feel they have limited ability to navigate out of their position and, perceiving they have no other option, engage in more serious corrupt activity as they may see themselves on the slippery slope and have something to hide (Kleinig 2008). A large number of rules can also increase the temptation for staff to violate minor rules which, in turn will tie their hands with respect to reporting more serious rule violations (Kutnjak Ivkovic 2005a)

The slippery slope perspective is a useful analogy and highlights the fact that prison staff need knowledge and experience, as well as management guidance on which rules can safely be 'bent' without fear of disciplinary action. As Kleinig (2008, p.611) noted "experienced and/or cautious skiers are capable of stopping on quite steep slopes." One of the problems faced by inexperienced staff is that they might be too naïve to realise they are being manoeuvred towards the slippery slope by a prisoner and, once there, lack the knowledge of what to do to save themselves from the abyss below.

### **2.11.3 The psychological perspective**

More recent research to understand the drivers of corruption have focussed on social psychological factors such as the influence of group norms, individual decision-making and information processing (Dupey and Neset 2018). This approach attempts to explain the fact that not all staff seize the opportunity to engage in corruption. Some individuals may have the confidence, experience or personal attributes to resist any corruption opportunity. However, it is too simplistic to treat those who fail to resist engaging in corruption as 'rational' offenders who make a decision based on a cost:benefit analysis or as people who find themselves heading down the slippery slope without being able to stop. In a prison environment, some staff may be under duress and feel they have no real choice due to the potential costs of physical harm to self or family, loss of job or imprisonment. Such individuals might realise that what they are doing is unethical and/or against the law but the 'gain' is to avoid the harm which would result if they did not engage in the corrupt activity. In that sense it is more like extortion than

greed, but if caught, their reasons will be mitigating factors for the offence and not a reason for acquittal.

Even if prison staff feel they have little or no choice, they still have the option to report their situation to avoid committing a criminal offence or a further one. The barriers to reporting wrongdoing have been discussed above in paragraph 2.10. If those barriers prove too much to overcome or the staff member has made an active decision to engage in wrongdoing, individuals need to be able to justify their actions to themselves. These “vocabulary of motives” (Friedrichs 2007, p.214) - justifications, excuses, rationalisations, neutralisations and denials, can be used to justify behaviour on an individual basis and within the organisational context both before the wrongdoing and afterwards. The five techniques of neutralisation originally identified by Sykes and Matza (1957) have been expanded by subsequent scholars including Minor (1981), Coleman (1994) and Shigihara (2013). Neutralisation theory helps explain how individuals overcome the negative emotions such as shame and guilt associated with engaging in wrongdoing.

Despite empirical research providing mixed results for the effectiveness of neutralisation theory in explaining crime and deviance, it has been adapted into crime control theories, psychological theories and learning theories (Maruna and Copes 2005) as well as rational choice theory (Cornish and Clarke 1986). Its importance is in understanding the function of neutralisation techniques rather than detailing the full list of possible neutralisations (Cardwell and Copes 2021). In giving examples of several different types of neutralisations, it can easily be seen how they could be employed by prison staff.

**Table 1: Neutralisation techniques**

Neutralisation technique	Application and examples within a prison context
Denial of responsibility (I didn't mean it) (Sykes and Matza 1957)	The individual blames their behaviour on others: the prison is badly managed and management cannot be trusted; there is no other way of managing prison discipline.
Denial of injury (I didn't really hurt anybody) (Sykes and Matza 1957)	The individual feels their behaviour has not caused great harm: bringing in a phone helps prisoners keep in touch with their families especially where there are no in-cell phones.
Denial of the victim (They had it coming) (Sykes and Matza 1957)	The 'victim' deserved the injury: the prisoner deserved to be assaulted to be taught a lesson.
Condemnation of the condemners (Everyone's picking on me) (Sykes and Matza 1957)	The individual shifts the focus of attention from his own deviant acts to the motives and behaviour of those who disapprove of their action: management and society do not care about prison staff, if they supported prison staff more, there would be less staff corruption.
Appeal to higher loyalties (I didn't do it for myself)	The demands of the larger societal group need to be sacrificed for the smaller group such as a gang or family:

(Sykes and Matza 1957)	prison staff or their family/friends might belong to organised criminal groups.
Defence of necessity (I had no choice)  (Minor 1981)	The need to protect or help one's family: staff might face threats to their family or be under duress.
Everyone else is doing it (I deserve it)  Coleman 1994	If other staff can make some extra money by bringing in drugs, why can't I?; what difference will the drugs I bring in make to the overall volume of drugs in the prison?
Denial of excess (No one will notice)  Shigihara (2013)	Employees only steal small amounts: giving one prisoner some information about their release date is a small thing to do and it does no real harm.
No one cares (So why should I?)  Shigihara (2013)	Wider society does not care about prisoners or what happens to them.

One of the criticisms of Sykes and Matza's (1957) neutralisation theory is that it had been based on delinquent juveniles who expressed guilt or remorse and committed criminal acts but without rejecting societal norms. However, as Minor (1981) argued, not everyone who engages in crime needs to rationalise their behaviour as some people have little or no moral inhibition against some offenses. Topalli (2005) also questioned how the theory could be applied to street criminals who were not attached to conventional social norms. Such criminals felt no guilt and had little

contact with conventional norms. Instead, they neutralized being 'good' rather than being 'bad' to protect a self-image consistent with a code of the streets.

Prison staff who start work in a prison with the intention of engaging in corruption, or who soon actively decide to pursue corrupt money making opportunities, could be similar to Topalli's street criminals and be detached from conventional social norms. However, many (if not most) prison staff who join the prison service are at least partially committed to dominant social norms and have no initial intention of engaging in serious wrongdoing and/or committing crimes. If they go on to engage in wrongdoing, these staff will violate normative standards but may be able to neutralize their wrongdoing instead of reporting it. Neutralisations therefore play a role in the decision to engage in wrongdoing for some (but not all) prison staff as there are other influencing factors which should be taken into consideration.

#### **2.11.4 The wider perspective**

In 1970 the Knapp Commission was set up to investigate corruption in the New York Police Department (NYPD). The Commission rejected the theory that corrupt police officers were individual 'rotten apples' in an otherwise 'clean barrel'. Describing this theory as a "basic obstacle to meaningful reform," the Commissioners highlighted the systemic corruption in the NYPD at that time (Knapp Report 1972, p.7). The Mollen Commission 22 years later were very clear in their conclusion that corruption was not due to 'one bad apple', instead it was:

*A multi-faceted problem that has flourished in parts of our city, not only because of opportunity and greed, but because of a police culture that exalts loyalty over integrity; because of the silence of honest officers who fear the consequences of 'ratting'...because of wilfully blind supervisors who fear the consequences of a corruption scandal more than corruption itself due to police culture and poor leadership (Mollen Commission 1994, p.xi).*

The importance of strong and ethical leaders who are not "wilfully blind" was highlighted by Kutnjak Ivkovic (2005b) when she argued that leaders who endorse the rotten apple approach and deny the existence of organisational problems give the 'green light' for corruption to continue. As mentioned in paragraph 2.2.1 above, Punch (2003) argued it is necessary to understand police corruption by placing it



within the wider context of the organisation (the 'barrel') and the wider societal system itself (the 'orchard'). This approach was followed by Goldsmith et al. (2016) and Goldsmith and Halsey (2018): prison corruption is not only a reflection of the choices of individuals, it must also be understood within the context of the prison environment which has its own features in terms of organisational climates, structures and cultures.

The influence of organisational factors on the behaviour of individuals has been highlighted in social and organisational psychological research. In their analysis of internalised shared norms and values in organisations, Steenbergen and Ellemers (2021) drew on Social Identity Theory (SIT), a theory developed by two social psychologists, Tajfel and Turner in the 1970s and 1980s. At the core of the theory is the belief that social groups "provide their members with a shared identity that prescribes and evaluates who they are, what they should believe and how they should behave" (Hogg 2016, p.6).

According to SIT, individuals classify themselves and others into various social categories, one category of which is organisational membership. An employee's social identity may be derived not only from the organisation itself but also from their workgroup, department and/or union. To decide what are the (un)acceptable behaviours at work, individuals therefore rely on the formal and informal guidelines they receive, which, in turn, defines the ethical culture in the workplace.

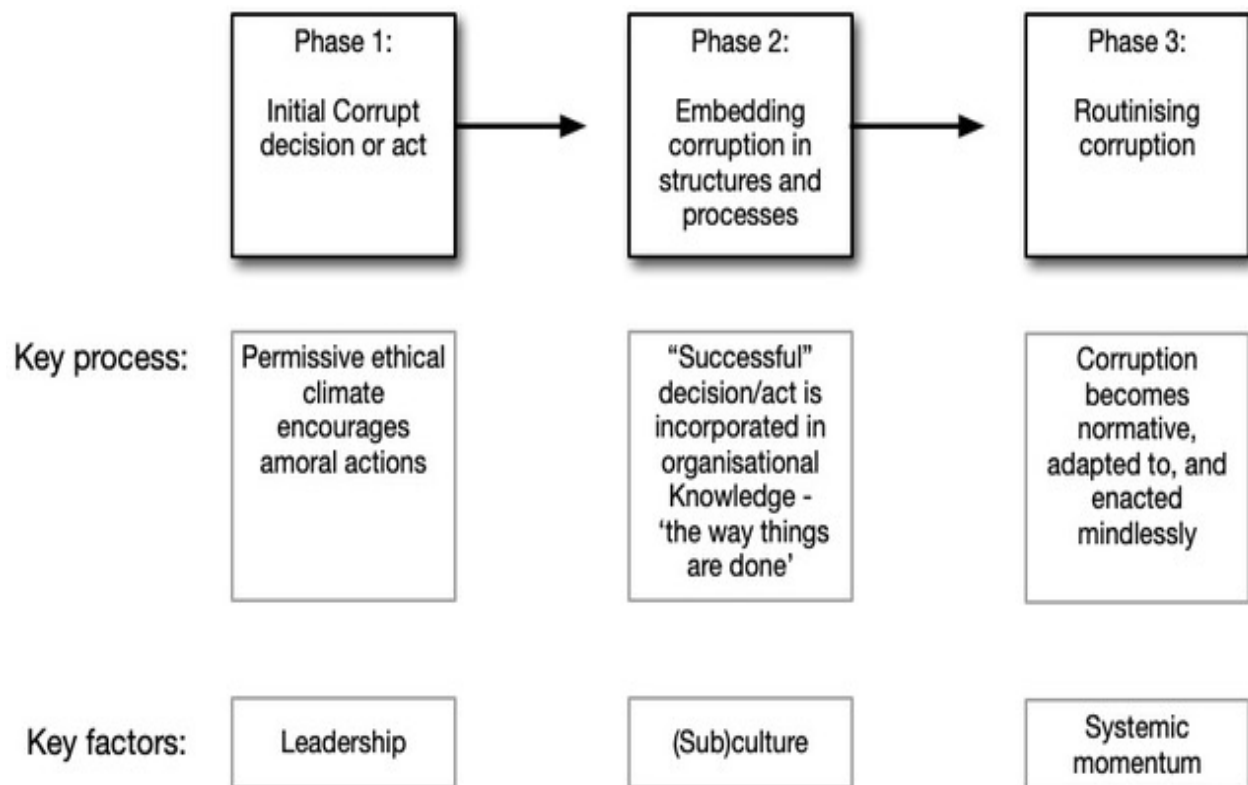
Although Steenbergen and Ellemers (2021) argue that ethical culture is developed and maintained through visible ethical leadership, Ashforth and Mael (1989) caution that workgroup favouritism can occur and simply assigning an individual to a group is sufficient to generate a sense of group identity and an internalisation of the values and beliefs of that group. More recently, Hogg (2016) refers to the consistent empirical findings that individuals who are categorised (even randomly) as part of a group will favour their own group above other groups. This approach goes towards explaining how there are different staff cultures within one prison and how, as Crawley (2000) argued, it is necessary to consider staff cultures, as opposed to one prison staff culture. Consequently, new employees may gravitate toward the values of their workgroup and look to the members of their workgroup for guidance as opposed to the organisation as a whole. This is not to argue that strong ethical

leadership of the organisation is not essential, but the influence of the workgroup should not be underrated and should be understood as part of what contributes towards staff cultures.

In paragraph 2.7 above I referred to the finding in this study of a culture of blame in prisons. This aspect of prison staff cultures has not been explored in prison literature but it appears to underpin the CC Policy which attributes wrongdoing to the decisions made 'rotten apples' who can be deterred through situational crime prevention methods. However, this approach fails to consider the findings from social and organisational psychological research and theories of how staff wrongdoing can become normalised through the behaviour of staff and/or managers. Once wrongdoing has been normalised, it can be either not be recognised as wrong and/or is believed to be so widespread as to be the accepted practice in the workplace.

In 2003 Ashforth and Anand proposed a model to explain how an individual who would not consider themselves to be a law breaker can engage in workplace corruption and how wrongdoing behaviour can become embedded in the organisational structure. This model can equally be applied to partly explain how staff wrongdoing behaviours can become embedded in prisons. Figure 1 below illustrates how the model consists of three elements which are mutually reinforcing and interdependent, together they can create an organisation where corruption is practiced by employees. These three elements are: rationalisation (or neutralisation); institutionalisation (where corrupt practices become a matter of routine); and socialisation (the process by which newcomers are taught to perform and accept the corrupt practices.)

**Figure 1: Normalising organisational corruption**



(Adapted from Ashforth and Anand 2003)

As can be seen, both leadership and staff culture are at the heart of the process of normalising organisational corruption. A lack of ethical leadership can result in corrupt acts being encouraged due to an unethical work culture. This behaviour can then become embedded into the sub-cultures of the organisation and be accepted as being 'the way things are done'. It has already been noted in this literature review that prison staff culture is not monolithic; there are sub-cultures and the influence of the workgroup culture can be favoured over the culture of the organisation as a whole. As a result, wrongdoing can become embedded in one workgroup and not in another, making it even harder for management to control. Assumptions as to what is accepted evolve to routinised corrupt practices where corruption comes to be seen as normative, adapted to and enacted without thought.

This thesis is not an evaluation of the CC Policy but there are good empirical grounds to challenge the approach adopted by it, based around what amounts to

theory failure rather than (just) implementation failure. The CC focus remains on attempting to decrease opportunities for corruption rather than address the (many) root causes of corruption or to increase understanding around how and why prison staff are motivated to engage in wrongdoing. Although the Security Investment Programme has increased CC training, the funding for this is likely to have been dwarfed by expensive situational crime prevention methods to reduce the trafficking of contraband. In the absence of any longitudinal studies measuring the success of opportunity reduction approaches relied on by HMPPS, it is impossible to evaluate their effectiveness, an absence noted in the Security Investment Programme Evaluation Reports (Ramzan et al. 2024). There also appears to be little awareness in the current CC Policy that corruption is part of a continuum of wrongdoing and different types of wrongdoing can become embedded in the organisational structure and culture. I will argue in this thesis that the failure to recognise organisational and societal factors which influence individual propensity to engage in wrongdoing represent an important oversight and one which should be addressed by the prison service.

## **2.12 The research questions**

The relevant literature involved in prison staff wrongdoing is not extensive and, in England and Wales, it is non-existent save for those studies where it is an adjunct to the main research. It is a reasonable assumption that the majority of prison staff are not corrupt. However, many will engage in low level wrongdoing and some will fail to recognise it as wrongdoing while others will make a conscious decision to exercise their discretion and bend the rules. I intend to demonstrate in this thesis that prison staff wrongdoing involves several factors which include individual decision making, the exercise of discretion, prisoner-staff relationships, individual propensity to wrongdoing, how wrongdoing is understood by prison staff, and how individuals who engage in wrongdoing rationalise their behaviour. I will argue it is crucial to recognise that staff corruption is not just about the decisions made by individual 'rotten apples'; each person who engages in wrongdoing is influenced by the organisational 'barrel' and the societal 'orchard'.

From my own observations as an IMB member and prior to conducting this literature review, I had a general idea of how to fill some (but not all) of the gaps

concerning the ongoing problem of prison staff wrongdoing. The knowledge gap is considerable so I had to be selective in my choice of focus. I knew I wanted to conduct research at two prisons which housed the same type of prisoner group but which had significant differences in terms of size and location to establish whether staff understandings of what constitutes wrongdoing is understood in the same way in different but operationally similar settings. Given the relatively limited time and resources as a sole researcher, I formulated the following research questions:

1. How do prison staff at two Category B local male prisons perceive and understand the relative seriousness of different types of prison wrongdoing?
2. What are the factors believed by prison staff which make prison staff vulnerable to different forms of wrongdoing?
3. What are the barriers prison staff believe they face in reporting wrongdoing of themselves and others?

Through addressing these questions, I aim to provide a greater understanding of the overriding question of why prison staff engage in wrongdoing.

Having completed my literature review, I consider these questions are even more salient as it is clear these subjects have not been addressed in any previous research in England and Wales. I knew my questions would entail applying for permission to access prisons to conduct sensitive research and was told at the outset this would be difficult to do. The next chapter describes the obstacles, expected and unexpected which I faced.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

As discussed in the literature review, there is very little research into prison staff wrongdoing but there have been a number of, predominantly American, studies on boundary violations in prisons (Marquart et al. 2001; Calhoun and Coleman 2002; Worley et al. 2003; Worley and Cheeseman 2006; Worley and Worley 2006; Cheeseman Dial and Worley 2008; Blackburn et al. 2011; Jones 2013; Worley and Worley 2013). However, the global review of prison boundary violation peer reviewed studies covering 2001-2022, conducted by Kelly and Potter (2023), found that of the 20 research projects which fitted their criteria, 15 studies were based on data obtained from the Texas prison system and 13 were authored or co-authored by ex-Texan prison officer Robert Worley. These studies therefore had a number of limitations in terms of generalisability of the findings as the officers in Texan prisons have “historically been known for behaving violently towards offenders” (Worley and Worley 2013, p.117). Of the 20 reviewed studies, 18 based their findings on either quantitative *or* qualitative data obtained from either prisoners *or* staff. None of the studies were longitudinal so causal relationships could not be empirically demonstrated and the focus on either prisoners *or* staff data sources meant the research findings lost a “great deal by not incorporating (the other) perspective” (Marquart et al. 2001, p.886). Kelly and Potter’s (2023) review concluded by highlighting the need for a systematic and replicable self-report measurement scale on boundary violations and emphasised the value of qualitative data.

Two studies on staff wrongdoing which did address the need to draw on both qualitative and quantitative data were conducted by PhD students. McCarthy (1981) focussed on prison staff corruption in the American prison system and McIlwain (2005) researched misconduct in non-custodial prison staff in Australia. Their mixed method designs included surveys, analysis of personnel files and interviews. In Queensland, Australia, the most recent Crime and Corruption Commission (2018) into corruption adopted a mixed methods approach, gathering evidence from written submissions, live witnesses during public hearings and a short survey distributed to prisoners and staff. However, there have, to date, been no independent academic

studies or Government commissions on prison staff wrongdoing in England and Wales.

My original intention was to address the limitations of most of the previous studies which relied on qualitative or quantitative data. I planned to employ a mixed methods research design to collect data from several data sources including quantitative data from a survey and an analysis of disciplinary records together with qualitative data from interviews with current staff and ex-staff. Through this research I aimed to explore the question of why and how staff engage in corruption and their perceptions of different types of corruption. My initial research design passed through several iterations with my decisions being based not just on which methods were most appropriate but also what would be permitted by the gatekeepers – the National Research Council and the governing governors. In the end, I was able to access two prisons to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. However, I was not given access to all the data sources I had identified and, as will be explained below, my research was focussed on staff wrongdoing, not just corruption.

This chapter first considers some of the relevant methodological literature which informed my research design decisions. I then explain the challenges of gaining permission to conduct research in prisons. Some challenges have been experienced by other prison researchers; others were obstacles unique to my research project. I then justify my choice of research design and the data analysis approaches concluding with reflections on my positionality and the validity and reliability of the research design.

### **3.2 Researching wrongdoing**

As described in paragraph 2.4 of the literature review, researchers studying a sensitive topic such as wrongdoing are faced with two main problems: one, gaining access to sources of information which by its nature is hidden and two, the honesty of participants who have no reason for sharing their knowledge. This has led researchers to seek proxies, most often understood as perceptions of corruption and to identify the factors most likely to prevent corruption such as transparency, accountability and integrity (Heinrich and Hodess 2011). Several organisations including Transparency International and the World Bank regularly conduct surveys

which attempt to measure the extent of perceived corruption in different countries. However, these surveys vary in breadth and methodology with some asking respondents to rate overall levels of corruption while others focus on different types of corruption. In the knowledge that I would face the same problem researching perceptions of corruption, I drew on the extensive policing literature and the lessons learned from the methodological approaches employed by police researchers.

Since the second half of the twentieth century, police scholars have attempted to measure police corruption using data from surveys, independent commissions, internal records, criminal justice records and complaints against the police. However, each of the potential data sources have inherent problems. Disciplinary records, complaints and intelligence records only capture the data for reported wrongdoing, while the criminal justice records only include the relatively small numbers of police who are prosecuted. Police departments have been reluctant to allow access to administer surveys on corruption and participants have no incentive to report on their own or the wrongdoing of others. Attempts to focus on the direct measurement of the extent and nature of police misconduct have resulted in police unions shutting down questionnaires or surveys being returned with a single officer answering the corruption questions (Kutnjak Ivkovic and Khechumyan 2014). Reasons for this appear to be due to the fear that any misconduct uncovered will be interpreted negatively for the police force concerned, fear of ostracism from colleagues and fear of disciplinary action (Kutnjak Ivkovic et al. 2018).

In an attempt to overcome these difficulties, police researchers have sought to measure perceptions of corruption and to focus on 'integrity': "the normative inclination among police to resist the temptations to abuse the rights and privileges of their occupation" (Klockars et al. 2007, p.1). This approach was adopted on the basis it would be possible to ask questions about police officers' knowledge of police force rules and their opinions about the seriousness of particular violations and likely punishment, without directly asking officers to report their own or another officer's corrupt activities.

The Klockars et al. (1997, 2004) surveys presented case scenarios dealing with ethical issues faced by police, for example bribery, theft and use of force. Officers were asked to rate the scenarios in terms of seriousness and the hypothetical



likelihood of reporting the behaviour. Since the development of the questionnaire, Klockars et al. type policing integrity surveys have been utilised in over 80 policing studies in more than 30 countries (Kutnjak Ivkovic and Haberfeld 2019). The findings, particularly in respect to the ranking of seriousness of different types of wrongdoing and the positive relationship between perceived seriousness and willingness to report have been consistently replicated in subsequent studies (including, but not limited to, Kutnjak Ivkovic 2005b; Kutnjak Ivkovic and Shelley 2008; Prenzler 2009; Gottschalk 2010; Vito et al. 2011; Kutnjak Ivkovic and Khechumyan 2014; Porter et al. 2015). This established methodological approach seemed a sensible place from which to develop my own survey, drawing on my IMB knowledge of prisons in order to develop scenarios which would be familiar to prison staff.

One of my aims was to test the suitability of a scenario based ethical attitudinal survey which had been developed to test police integrity to instead measure prison staff perceptions of wrongdoing. The highly replicated findings in the policing integrity research led me to formulate a hypothesis in respect of prison staff in two prisons. I hypothesised that the ranking of seriousness of the types of wrongdoing in the scenarios would be similar across both prison sites and the more serious a behaviour was considered to be, the more the staff member would be willing to report the wrongdoing. This part of the research was therefore deductive in approach as I wanted to establish if the policing findings would be replicated.

While the survey developed by Klockars et al. continues to be considered robust (Alain et al. 2018), some writers have expressed reservations. Hickman et al. (2016b) noted there is often little variation in perceptions of seriousness for each scenario and as the approach tends to view integrity through an organisational lens, the analysis and understanding of integrity at the individual officer level is limited. Additionally, differences across demographics such as gender and race remain virtually unexplored (Gottschalk, 2010; Hickman et al. 2016a and b). Gottschalk (2010) also points out that the scenarios are outdated and fail to include behaviour which is not considered serious; while Goldsmith (2015) highlights the need to include more recent types of wrongdoing such as off-duty social media transgressions. With the exception of exploring racial demographics, I aimed to

address these shortcomings while developing scenarios which would be familiar and relatable to my survey respondents.

However, there remains the key problem of ethical attitudinal surveys - attitudes do not always equate to behaviour. Survey respondents who tolerate or even support forms of wrongdoing might not themselves engage in those behaviours while those who engage in wrongdoing might rationalise their own actions whilst condemning the same behaviour in others. Ethical attitudinal surveys therefore do not measure wrongdoing behaviours; they measure attitudes or perceptions. Hence, from the outset, my intention was to capture perceptions and opinions, not to measure the extent of prison staff wrongdoing. In order to do this I aimed to also collect qualitative data by way of semi-structured interviews with prison staff.

Although there has been some research in America on boundary violations and inappropriate relationships, most of the studies have relied on quantitative data obtained from either an analysis of disciplinary records (Marquart et al. 2001) or large scale surveys (Cheeseman and Worley 2006; 2008; Blackburn et al 2011; Worley and Worley 2013; Worley and Worley 2016; Worley et al. 2019; Worley et al. 2021). Only a few studies included focus groups or interviews with prisoners (Calhoun and Coleman 2002; Worley et al. 2003; Worley and Cheeseman 2006; Surrell and Johnson 2020) while one study was based on in-depth interviews with four ex-prison officers (Jones 2013). In addition, two mixed methods studies included surveys, an analysis of disciplinary records and interviews with prison staff (McCarthy 1981 and McIlwain 2005 – who also employed focus groups).

One of the aims of my research was to explore how wrongdoing is understood and perceived by prison staff. However, I also wanted to explore which factors the staff themselves thought increased vulnerability to wrongdoing and the barriers which staff perceived they faced in reporting wrongdoing. These aims necessitated the inclusion of semi-structured interviews in the research design as I wanted to interpret the participants' view of reality and to capture the 'voices from the ground'. Through combining both quantitative and qualitative data and triangulating the data I hoped to address the shortcomings of some of the earlier research and conduct a 'deep dive' into the subject of why prison staff engage in wrongdoing.

### **3.3 Researching prison staff wrongdoing**

As mentioned, there has been some research into American prison staff wrongdoing but the low levels of government funding and stringency of ethical approval committees has deterred researchers from conducting prison fieldwork in general. This has resulted in researchers relying on more easily available data such as re-offending rates and prison population trends (Crewe 2009). However, for my research, it was imperative I was able to obtain access to prison staff. My initial intention was to access serving staff as well as ex-staff who had been investigated or prosecuted for corruption based offences.

Undertaking prison research is unlike other forms of empirical fieldwork (Rainbow 2024). One of the most challenging aspects is gaining access to the research site, to potential participants and to the gatekeepers who have the power to grant or deny entry to the prisons (Crewe 2009; Souryal 2009; Sloan and Wright 2015; Jewkes and Wright 2016; Stevens 2019). In England and Wales the first step for academic researchers is to obtain ethics permission from the University or other research institution. This permission is then submitted with a lengthy application to HMPPS National Research Committee (NRC). Even after NRC permission is obtained, entry is not guaranteed as the final decision rests with the governing governor of the chosen prison who might be reluctant to give access to researchers, particularly if the questions are about staff wrongdoing as the findings might reflect negatively on their management. Once access has been granted, there is still the problem of recruiting survey respondents and interview participants. Despite these practical challenges some UK scholars have gained access to prisons to research sensitive subjects including drug use and dealing by prisoners (Crewe 2005), prisoner suicides (Liebling 1992; Crawley 2004), sexual assaults in male prisons (Wilkinson 2020) and the illicit economy in prison (Treadwell et al. 2019; Gooch and Treadwell 2024).

Having gained access to prisons, some researchers might spend months in one or more prisons conducting ethnographic studies, interviewing prisoners and/or staff and observing life in the prison. These researchers have specific problems concerning objectivity and neutrality, the effect of their presence in the prison, the ethical dilemmas of researching participants who might not be able to give informed

consent and the 'emotional labour' associated with undertaking fieldwork in prisons (Liebling 1999; Sloan and Wright 2015; Rainbow 2024). I did not anticipate facing these problems as I did not intend to conduct an ethnographic study and knew my visits (if permitted) would be of limited duration. Through my IMB experience I have spent hundreds of hours in a prison talking to prison staff and prisoners.

Furthermore, during my previous career as an employment lawyer, I have taken numerous witness statements, often dealing with sensitive work situations, where witnesses had become very upset while giving me their statements or when emotionally distraught clients gave me instructions. I therefore felt confident I would be able to interview prison staff in two prisons. However there were other obstacles which had to be overcome.

### **3.4 Initial planning**

Three years before joining the IMB in 2014 I completed my dissertation on policing for my Masters degree. One of the areas I had focussed on was police corruption. Within a year of working in my IMB prison I had realised staff corruption was a significant and ongoing problem and, as already mentioned, I decided to respond to the call for more work on the 'dark side' of prison staff and when 'things go wrong' (Liebling et al. 2012, p.120). Owing to my IMB membership I was able to engage in initial scoping exercises involving literature searches and meetings with a number of corruption experts. I had discussions with various prison governing governors and security governors about my proposed research; all were supportive but I was aware that obtaining access to conduct fieldwork would be problematic. I therefore submitted an outline application to the NRC to 'test the waters.' The NRC (unsurprisingly) rejected my application but acknowledged that prison staff corruption was a key priority for HMPPS. The NRC suggested I contacted the then Counter Corruption (CC) Policy Lead to discuss my research. The subsequent meeting and email communications were extremely helpful and encouraging. These scoping exercises demonstrated there was an acknowledged need for the empirical research I was proposing but there was very little literature which was directly relevant which I could draw on.

After commencing my PhD studies, I arranged a number of meetings (separately and together) with the CC Policy Lead and the Head of CC. They were both supportive of

my research. During the course of the meetings I explained I would like to interview ex-staff who were in custody for corruption based offences. However, I was told these offenders were thoroughly 'debriefed' by HMPPS and it was suggested I instead tried to interview ex-prison staff who had been dismissed but not prosecuted for corruption based reasons. I therefore included this potential data source in my first application to the NRC. I also suggested in the meetings that I would like to analyse disciplinary investigation files to identify the most problematic types of wrongdoing and/or apply for access to relevant investigatory reports. Unfortunately, I was told that access to disciplinary reports and intelligence reports would not be granted. Being mindful of the need to maximise the chances of obtaining NRC permission, I chose to omit these potential data sources from my application.

### **3.5 Research design and pragmatism as a methodological approach**

In the absence of any research on prison staff wrongdoing in England and Wales, my research was necessarily exploratory in nature. My aim was to increase the understanding around why staff engaged in wrongdoing; to identify the causes and correlates of wrongdoing; to explore staff vulnerabilities; and identify the barriers to reporting wrongdoing.

Although some prison researchers have highlighted the strengths of ethnographic research methods for exploring sensitive subjects such as drug use (Crewe 2006) I knew that obtaining permission from the NRC based on ethnographic methods to study staff wrongdoing would be unlikely to succeed. At the time I made my application the Covid 19 pandemic restrictions meant an application to conduct an ethnographic study would have almost certainly been rejected. I also knew that the chances of prison staff talking to me about corruption while we were within the prison walls was very low, if not non-existent. This belief was based on the fact that despite my IMB board colleagues being at the prison almost every day, at various times of the day and for hours at a time, there was much which was not seen, particularly with regard to staff wrongdoing. For example, in the 10 years I was on the IMB board neither I nor any of my colleagues witnessed staff being racist towards each other or towards prisoners. However, we were subsequently told by prison management that there was a cohort of prison officers who were overtly racist and whose behaviour was causing significant problems between the staff. As a result disciplinary action

was taken and some staff were dismissed. On the basis of this knowledge and the Covid restrictions, I knew from the outset that an ethnographic approach would not be appropriate.

As surveys are commonly used to answer questions about opinions and attitudes I decided to include a survey in my research design. Surveys can be a means of exploring perceptions and definitions around sensitive subjects, where 'sensitive' includes topics that might be difficult to discuss, are taboo or pose a level of potential risk to the participants (Deakin and Spencer 2018). A number of prison boundary violations studies in America and Australia (McCarthy 1981; McIlwain 2005; Worley and Worley 2011, 2013, 2016) had also employed surveys distributed to prison staff so for these reasons a survey was an integral part of my research design. Given the reliability of the Klockars et al. (1997, 2004) methodology, I developed my own survey instrument based on the Klockars et al. surveys using prison based wrongdoing scenarios. Through this approach I could test whether the same relationship between perceived seriousness and willingness to report would be observed; as had been found in the large number of policing studies which had employed Klockars et al. type surveys. This approach would also enable me to establish a typology of wrongdoing which could be built on in future research.

At the time of my NRC application, it was not certain whether I would be able to interview prison staff due to Covid 19 restrictions. However, I wanted to understand why respondents gave a particular response to provide an insight into the reasoning process. I also concurred with Liebling (1999) and McIlwain (2005) that qualitative data from interviews was necessary to address a phenomenon as complex as human misconduct, particularly where there was a paucity of research. I therefore included semi-structured interviews as part of my mixed methods research design.

I decided to conduct my fieldwork in two Category B male local prisons as they face significant ongoing problems of overcrowding, low staffing and are generally regarded as least fit for purpose (Jewkes 2011). These factors meant the staff were more likely to suffer from stress which is associated with wrongdoing (Armstrong and Griffin 2004; Lambert et al. 2009; Mahfood et al. 2013; Worley and Worley 2013, 2016; Worley et al. 2018). In addition, I had long experience of a Category B local prison from my IMB work and felt my familiarity with the culture and

challenges faced by the prison would assist me in building up a rapport with interview participants. Based on these factors I planned to conduct fieldwork in two prisons of different size and location, one in England and one in Wales. This would permit comparisons between the two prisons, while excluding variations such as prison category and prisoner gender.

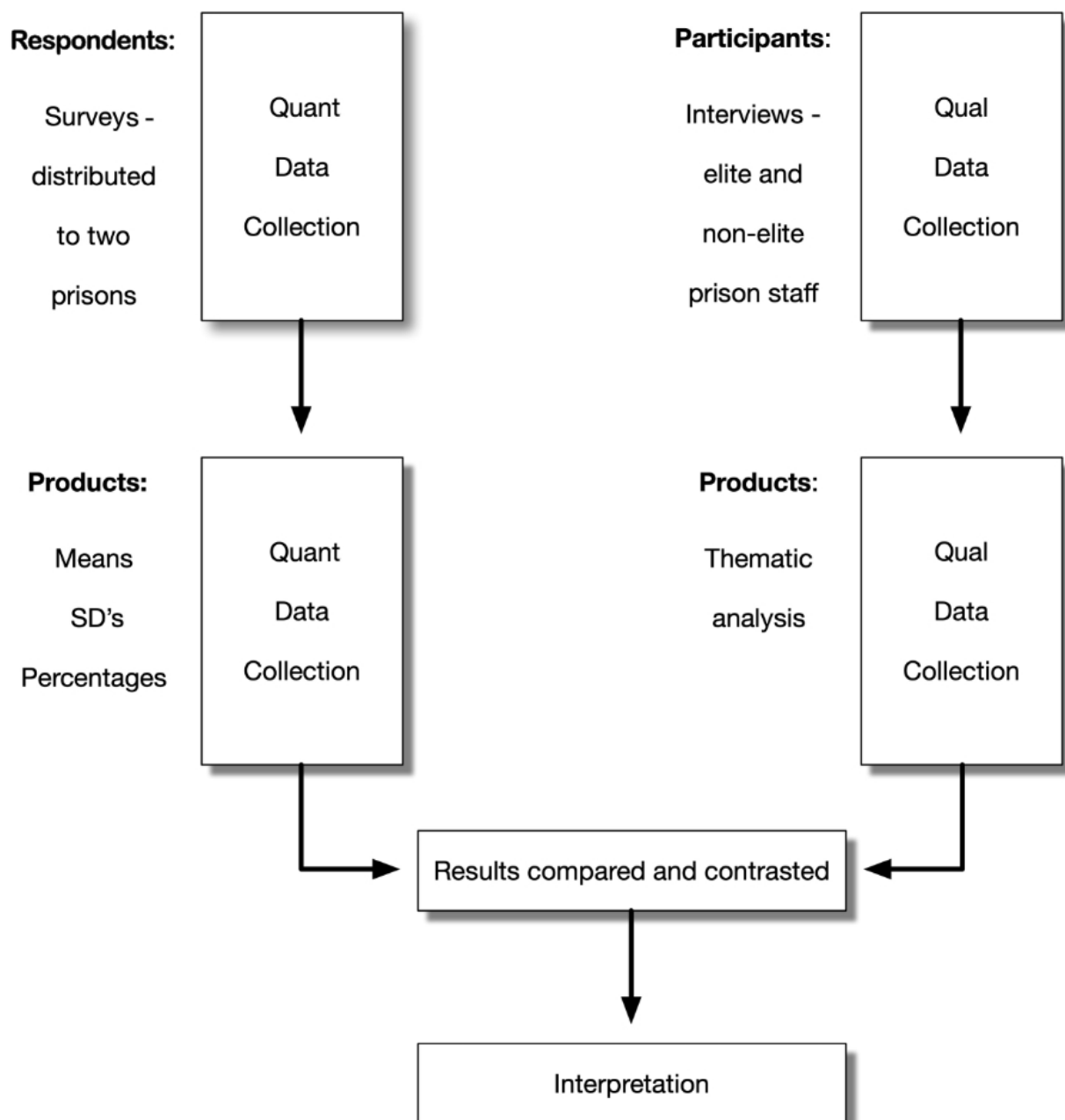
My decision to adopt a mixed methods research design is in line with the increasing use of this approach in criminological studies, as mixed methods designs can provide a better understanding of a multifaceted phenomenon (Bryman 2016; Heap and Waters 2018). Mixed methods research provides a way to harness strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research and permits the findings to be triangulated (Creswell and Plano Clark 2018). The research design would also enable me to use all of the tools of data collection I was permitted to access to study staff wrongdoing using both numbers and words.

There is a broad consensus in mixed methods research that the philosophical rationale should be a pragmatic one (Morgan 2007, 2014; Biesta 2010; Heap and Waters 2018). A pragmatic approach focusses on the aims of the research and how well the research addresses the topic it is investigating. The emphasis is on using strategies and methods that work best in practice. As such, it regards the research questions as more important than either the method or the philosophical worldview that underlies the method. Pragmatism also abandons the dichotomy between post-positivism and constructivism (Creswell and Plano Clark 2018). One interpretation of pragmatism for mixed methods research is not whether the research “accurately represents ‘reality’ but whether it has valuable external consequences in the context of the researcher’s own time and place” (Bishop 2015, p.7). My research aim was to enhance the understanding of why some prison staff engaged in wrongdoing with the hope my findings would have some impact on HMPPS Counter Corruption (CC) Policy. In practice, the pragmatic ‘what works’ approach was greatly influenced by what was permitted by the NRC and the prison authorities.

My application to the NRC is described in detail below in paragraph 3.6. As my application was made during a time of Covid 19 lockdowns I knew I would have to gather as much data as possible in a limited time period. I therefore adopted what Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) describe as a convergent parallel design, collecting

both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently but separately. Both data sets would then be separately analysed before comparing and contrasting the findings to permit a more complete response to the research questions. For the sake of clarity in presenting the findings, staff who answered the survey are referred to as 'respondents' while interview subjects are referred to as 'participants'. Figure 2 below presents the research design I employed based on Creswell and Plano Clark's (2018) model.

**Figure 2: Convergent parallel design**





This research design enabled findings to be triangulated through the use of different sources (staff in two prisons), different methods (survey and interviews) and data type (quantitative and qualitative data) (Meijer et al.2002). Employing a mixed methods design therefore enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings as well as offering the opportunity to explore any contradictions found between the survey and interview findings (Hesse-Biber 2010). Triangulation in my design was not intended to establish whether analysis from the interviews would replicate the survey findings. Instead, the data were interpreted to discuss how the findings related to each other to provide a more comprehensive account of prison staff wrongdoing.

### **3.6 Application to the NRC and access to prisons**

In March 2020 the first UK national lockdown was announced in response to the Covid 19 Pandemic and access to all prison sites were closed to researchers. When access was once more permitted, researchers were advised by HMPPS to consider how to gather data remotely to minimise the risk of Covid transmission. I had originally planned to visit each research site to establish working relationships with the senior management and to 'advertise' my research through presentations at various staff meetings or by dropping off information sheets in various departmental offices. Owing to the Covid lockdowns, this possibility was closed to me so I was unable to introduce myself to staff throughout the prison to build up rapport and credibility.

I was aware of the risks of alienating prison staff by researching a subject which might be perceived as reflecting badly on them during a period of unprecedented uncertainty and stress. However, even during the Covid lockdowns, the trafficking of contraband continued. The lockdowns and visiting restrictions meant the only trafficking routes were throwovers (including drones), mail and corrupt staff. Although it felt as though my timing could not have been worse, conversations with staff at my IMB location and the CC Leads encouraged me to continue. On balance, I decided that although my survey would have to be expanded, I should go ahead with my project. Before I could apply to the NRC I had to obtain ethical clearance from Cardiff University Ethics Committee. Owing to the sensitive subject of my research I was required to develop a Data Protection Plan which proved useful when I applied to the NRC as they were also concerned about how I proposed to ensure anonymity of

respondents, maintain confidentiality and securely store the data. Having obtained permission from the Ethics Committee I was able to apply to the NRC.

The NRC application is a detailed standardised 18 page form which requires the researcher to identify how the proposed research will benefit HMPPS, reflect its research priorities and how it will benefit academic knowledge. There are lengthy sections on previous research, proposed methodology, data protection and research ethics. While I was drafting my NRC application, I learned that the Government decision to spend £100 million on a Security Investment Programme (SIP) had been made subject to an evaluation by the Treasury Department to ensure the investment provided 'value for money'. This meant HMPPS would be conducting its own research into prison staff corruption at the same time as me. I therefore contacted one of the MoJ researchers and was told their evaluation was intended to focus on five strands – counter corruption, situational crime prevention measures, mobile phones, staff capability and the Multi-Agency Response to Serious Organised Crime (MARSOC). I was assured that the MoJ evaluation did not involve a 'deep delve' along the lines of my proposed research and that there should be very little, if any overlap.

After learning about the SIP evaluation, my application to the NRC made it clear my focus would be on staff perceptions and understandings of corruption, as well as exploring vulnerabilities and barriers to reporting corruption. In July 2021 my NRC application was rejected.<sup>11</sup> It was clear from the rejection letter that my proposal to interview ex-staff who had been investigated for misconduct was an insurmountable hurdle and I would not be permitted to focus solely on staff corruption due to the SIP measures which were being put in place. It transpired my application had been passed to the researchers on the SIP evaluation to provide their opinions on whether it should be granted. Fortunately, the researchers were willing to provide me with

---

<sup>11</sup> The reasons for the rejection were: too great a risk my research would duplicate the SIP evaluation and that obtaining data from ex-prison staff was too problematic. The NRC felt the demand on the third party which held staff data would be too great and was concerned that ex-staff might object to being identified and 'placed in contact with a member of the public'.

some guidance on what would be acceptable to the NRC. I therefore made the pragmatic decision to only collect data from serving prison staff and reframed my application to focus on staff wrongdoing to encompass a wide range of behaviours, from minor rule infringements to corruption.

The NRC application was resubmitted and was approved subject to a few additional requirements which included signposting staff to support services if they felt upset through participating in the research. Owing to my IMB contacts, it was then a straightforward matter to obtain permission from two governing governors to conduct fieldwork at their prisons. Contrary to expectations, both governing governors were fully supportive of my research proposal. To preserve anonymity, I called one prison Beechfield – a small prison in a small city and the other prison Chestnutwood which is a much larger prison in a large city. One prison is in Wales and one is in England.

### **3.7 Trying to access additional data sources**

When I realised I would not be able to access ex-staff, I tried to obtain additional data on the numbers of staff investigated and dismissed for various types of wrongdoing. My Freedom of Information Act requests to the MoJ produced statistics from 2015-2023 on the number of prison officers investigated and dismissed for misconduct (MoJ 2023b). I repeated the same request in 2024 to obtain up to date data during the writing up process of this thesis (MoJ 2024d). It is interesting that HMPPS statistical analysis distinguishes between corruption and a number of other types of wrongdoing including ‘trafficking’, inappropriate relationships and ‘unauthorised disclosure of official information’. However, all these behaviours fall within the HMPPS definition of ‘corruption’ and are given as examples of types of corruption in the CC Policy. If all forms of misconduct which fall within the CC Policy definition of corruption are included, the number of Band 3-5 officers investigated for ‘corruption’ in 2022/23 increases from 31 to 117. If inappropriate use of force is included, the figure jumps to 357 (MoJ 2024d). When I asked why these types of wrongdoing were not classified as ‘corruption’, I was told:

*When a manager registers a disciplinary case, they have a wide range of categories of misconduct to select from. The system is not based specifically on the Counter Corruption Framework. The decision under which category to*

*register the disciplinary case is made by the manager and the HR system does not provide a description of each type of misconduct. There is therefore no set definition of a corruption case when recording a misconduct case on the HR system (MoJ 2024e).*

Whichever way wrongdoing is registered on the HR system, these official figures only represent those cases of reported wrongdoing and it is reasonable to assume they are the 'tip of the iceberg'.

I also tried to access court records to go through transcripts with a view to analysing any themes which emerged. I searched a number of legal databases such as Westlaw but these only included Appeal Court Judgments which do not record the evidence given by the defendant in the original trial and only reflect the small number of cases which are appealed. As a result, these additional data sources were of little help to this study. Instead, I set up an alert for media reports using the search terms 'prison staff', 'prison officers', 'corruption' and 'inappropriate relationships'. These proved to be a useful source of information although the reports only captured those staff who had been prosecuted.

During the course of this research I was able to attend the updated CC training as part of my IMB role and was given copies of the training videos which were based on real examples of prison staff investigated for corruption based offences. The training provided additional information on the approach HMPPS had adopted in their updated CC Policy.

Although the SIP Evaluation report was due to be published at several points during the duration of my research, the process was repeatedly delayed. Eventually, the Overview and Outcome Study conducted by MoJ analysts was made available to the public on 5 September 2024 (Ramzan et al. 2024). On the same day a SIP Process Evaluation Report was published by the National Centre for Social Research (Kerr et al. 2024) and a Process Evaluation of the Multi-Agency Response to Serious Organised Crime (MARSOC) Early Adopter Phase was published by Ipsos UK (Craston et al. 2024). The relevant findings of these three reports are referred to in this thesis but due to their late publication, they have not informed or guided any data collection or analysis .

### 3.8 The survey

Owing to Covid restrictions there was uncertainty whether repeated lockdowns would mean I was unable to enter the research sites. I therefore made the decision to expand the survey to try to capture some of the information I had intended to cover in interviews. The additional sections meant the survey would take approximately 20 minutes to complete. I realised the length of the survey would be off-putting to some respondents but I felt I needed to take whatever opportunity was available to collect the additional information.

I anticipated the survey response rates from prison staff would be low. Prison staff have the dubious distinction of having the lowest response rates to the annual Civil Service People Survey. This survey is distributed to 110 organisations. In 2021 the overall median response rate was 75.44%, but only 23.25% of prison staff in England and Wales responded. The only group with a lower response rate was the Scottish Prison Service (Civil Service People Survey 2021). This unwillingness was not just due to the nature of the Civil Service Survey. During my collection period in the first half of 2022, HM Inspectorate of Prisons published six reports on Category B local prisons. The staff surveys distributed during the inspections obtained a response rate of between 8.9% and 21.7%. (HMIP 2022). I realised that a similarly low response rate from two prisons would not enable me to draw any conclusions which could be generalisable to the wider prison estate, although I hoped the comparison between the two prisons would enhance the analysis of the findings.

The survey was hosted online by Qualtrics™ via a Cardiff University account. The development of the survey questions is described below in paragraphs 3.8.1 and 3.8.2. The survey link was embedded in an information sheet (Appendix A) which emphasised that responses would be anonymous and I was not asking about personal experiences of wrongdoing. The survey was piloted on IMB colleagues (for which additional ethical permission was obtained from the University Ethics Committee). The feedback from the pilot study was encouraging as most respondents described it as an 'interesting exercise.' A couple of questions were identified as slightly ambivalent, so these were redrafted.

After data collection had commenced at Beechfield (the smaller prison) the trade union representatives of the Prison Officer Association (POA) instructed their members not to complete the survey as it had not been formally approved by the POA. Although this had not been considered as necessary by the NRC or the gatekeepers, I immediately sent all relevant information to the POA research department which, in turn, forwarded it to their National Executive Committee. While the POA considered my research proposal, the survey data collection came to a halt. After two months, the POA confirmed they had no objections to my research and wished me luck but refused to actively encourage their members to complete the survey.

During initial interviews, I was informed by the Head of Healthcare at one research site that, while she had no objections to completing the survey, she felt she could not distribute it to her staff without clearance from their health board. I therefore contacted the health boards for both research sites and submitted all relevant documents for their Research Committees to consider. One ethical committee gave their permission for the research within two months; the other health board took three months.

The validity of any survey results hinges on the honesty of the respondents and, in my survey which included scenarios, respondents also needed to be able to imagine their response if they had not experienced the situation portrayed in a scenario. Several steps were taken to increase the honesty of the respondents. First, respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in the information sheet. Secondly respondents were told in the survey they did not need to provide demographic information if they thought it could identify them. Thirdly, it was explained that only my doctoral supervisors and I would have access to responses. Finally, and most importantly, following the approach successfully employed by Klockars et al. (1997, 2004), respondents were only asked about their opinions, not about their actual behaviour or the actual behaviour of other prison staff.

### **3.8.1 The scenarios**

Critics of the Klockars et al. surveys note there is often little variation in perceptions of seriousness for each scenario (Hickman et al. 2016b) and the scenarios should be

updated to include behaviours such as social media transgressions (Goldsmith 2015). I therefore included a greater variation in types of wrongdoing and two social media transgressions. I also included more context in the scenarios to make them as realistic and as relatable as possible. Although the Klockars type surveys routinely included a question on the respondents' views on discipline, I omitted the question as it did not directly address the issues being considered in this thesis.

The first section of the survey asked respondents to answer questions in respect of 17 scenarios. Respondents were told to imagine the scenario behaviours took place in a Category B local male prison and that the hypothetical staff member in the scenarios had been working in prisons for five years and had never been investigated for a code of conduct offence. The choice of five years meant the hypothetical staff member was likely to have had more experience than many of the potential respondents.<sup>12</sup> However, I wanted to make it clear that the behaviour of the hypothetical officer was not due to inexperience. The questions were designed to elicit opinions on a wide range of wrongdoing, some of which seemed mundane while others were criminal offences. The CC Lead at Prison HQ checked the scenarios for realism and provided some valuable feedback to ensure the scenarios would be recognisable to prison staff.

With the exception of the theft scenario, none of the wrongdoings resulted in economic gain to the imaginary staff member. However, HMPPS definition of corruption is very wide and can include “emotional, sexual or other personal and/or other work related reasons or any other perceived actual gain or benefit” (HMPPS 2022a, p.7). The majority of the scenarios therefore fell within the CC definition of corruption. Those which did not fall within the CC definition of corruption were nevertheless against prison policy and portrayed different types of wrongdoing.

Perceptions of the seriousness of each scenario were measured on a Likert five-point scale from 1 = ‘definitely not serious’ through to 5 = ‘definitely serious’. Respondents were asked to rate how serious they considered the behaviour to be

---

<sup>12</sup> As at March 2022 when the survey was distributed over 50% of Band 2-5 prison officers had less than 5 years experience (HMPPS 2022a)

and how serious they believed most other staff would consider it, using the same scale. While the own perception score (self) measured a respondent's attitude, their perceptions of other staff (other) indicated the attitudes ascribed by the respondent to the broader prison staff culture.

The third question asked respondents whether the behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy. Responses were also measured on a five-point scale, from 1 = 'definitely not' to 5 = 'definitely yes'. This question measured staff understanding of expectations regarding behavioural standards. Respondents were also asked whether they would report another staff member who engaged in the behaviour (self) and whether they thought most other staff would report the same behaviour (other). Responses were again measured on a five-point scale from 1 = 'definitely not' to 5 = 'definitely yes'.

The full survey can be found at Appendix A. Table 2 below includes each of the scenarios in the survey and their abbreviations.

**Table 2: Scenarios**

Scenario number	Scenario	Abbreviation
1	A member of staff has come into contact with Alpha on a regular basis. Alpha is always friendly and helpful. One day the staff member misses their lunch break and comments to Alpha they are very hungry. Alpha offers a chocolate bar which the staff member accepts.	Choc bar
2	A staff member is having some relationship problems and is quite distracted at work. Bravo comments that they are looking tired. The staff member confides to Bravo that they think their marriage is breaking up. Bravo is sympathetic as his own relationship broke up	Confide



	a few months ago. The staff member tells Bravo all about their personal problems.	
3	A staff member has only recently started to work in the prison. Two of the prisoners are arguing and ignore the staff member's request to stop. Charlie steps in and tells the prisoners to be quiet so they stop arguing. After this Charlie takes it on himself to keep the other prisoners in order. A few weeks later Charlie explains he has missed the post and asks the staff member to pop a letter in the post box their way home. The staff member takes the letter and posts it.	Post
4	Delta is very friendly to a female member of staff. The female staff member starts to spend more time talking to Delta than anyone else. One day Delta pats the female staff member on the arm. She does not object and smiles at Delta.	Touch officer
5	Echo has enhanced status. He is never any trouble and appears to be trying hard to progress through his sentence plan. One day he is very upset as he has repeatedly asked for his Playstation to be retrieved from his property box. He says he has put in an app and a Comp 1 but he's had no response. All staff have recently been reminded that requests for property need to be made through the formal process. The staff member feels sorry for Echo and offers to go to property and collect the Playstation for Echo.	Collect prop

6	<p>A staff member has worked for some time with Foxtrot who is about to be released from prison. Foxtrot assures the staff member that he is determined not to re-offend and intends to get a job. A few weeks after his release, Foxtrot sends a Facebook/Instagram/WhatsApp friend request to the staff member who accepts it.</p>	Social media
7	<p>Golf has tried hard to do everything asked of him by the staff. He is an enhanced prisoner, has attended education classes and seems determined to turn his life around. Owing to a number of lock downs and illness he has missed a number of classes and his attendance rate isn't good enough for him to pass the course. Golf asks a staff member to alter the attendance register so he has a better chance of being re-categorised. The staff member feels sorry for Golf and adds in two attendances which is enough for him to pass the course.</p>	Alter register
8	<p>Hotel is a wing cleaner. His cell is in the middle of the wing. One day Hotel asks one of the staff to lock him up after everyone else as he wants to take a shower. The officer agrees to give Hotel an extra 15 minutes out of cell.</p>	Shower
9	<p>A young officer has recently been recruited. They realise that one of their friends from school is a prisoner on another wing. They used to smoke weed together when they both went to parties. The staff member decides not to say anything to their manager</p>	School friend

	as the prisoner is on a different wing and it is a short sentence.	
10	A staff member agrees that a close friend can give the staff member's mobile details to another friend (India) as they share the same music tastes. India then texts the staff member. After exchanging a few messages, the staff member realises India is a prisoner at the same prison the staff member works in. One day India shows the staff member the mobile he has been using and tells the staff member that communicating with a prisoner on a mobile device is illegal, so the staff member has broken the law. The staff member does not file a Corruption Prevention Intelligence Report or talk to the local counter corruption manager.	Phone
11	Julian is very upset about some serious family news. He is crying in his cell. The staff member is concerned as Julian is on an ACCT. Without telling any of their team, the staff member goes into the cell, sits on the bunk next to Julian and puts their arm around Julian to console him.	Hug
12	Kilo is a challenging prisoner. He has attacked several staff members and other prisoners. He is sent to segregation where he continues to be challenging and violent. On his way to the segregation shower he punches a female member of staff in the face. He is restrained and cuffed. While being taken back to his cell one of the other staff punches Kilo in the face saying 'Hurts, doesn't it'	Assault

13	Lima is a model prisoner. He has already served five years and has four years to go. He is helpful and has a full time job. One day he asks if he can move cells to share with a young offender (YO) who he has become friendly with. The officer agrees to do this without checking CSRA (Shared Cell Risk Assessment), NOMIS or with his SO.	Move prisoner
14	A prisoner is deported but he leaves a number of items in his cell. One of them is his X box. Two staff members clear the cell. They agree that one of the staff members can keep the X box as he was just about to buy one. Evaluate the behaviour of the staff member who takes the X box.	Theft
15	Mike tells a staff member that some of his property has been stolen from his cell. Mike makes complaints all the time and the staff member doesn't believe him. He tells Mike to give the Comp 1 to him. He then shreds it in the belief that Mike is lying and won't pursue his complaint.	Comp 1
16	A staff member joins a team which they want to fit into. All of the team get on. The staff member notices that one their managers is often seen talking to a prisoner who is known to be involved in organised crime. One day the staff member sees their manager give the prisoner a small package which they suspect are drugs. The staff member doesn't want to cause trouble so they don't tell anyone about it.	Witness

17	Oscar is on remand for child sex offences. He is waiting for a space on the VP wing. A staff member reads Oscar's file and is shocked by the offence, he tells another prisoner what the offence is. The staff member deliberately unlocks Oscar's cell door during association, knowing the other prisoners know his offence and are likely to assault him.	Unlock cell
----	--	-------------

### 3.8.2 Non scenario questions

The second section of the survey included 14 statements which explored the level of staff satisfaction and reasons why staff might engage in corruption. Five questions asked respondents about staff morale, whether they were satisfied with their salary, whether management were effective in controlling staff wrongdoing, whether the CC training covered everything necessary and whether it would protect the respondent if they reported wrongdoing. Question six asked about the perceived risk of being caught. Five questions identified different factors which might be regarded as reasons for staff to engage in wrongdoing: greed, threats, lack of management support, financial problems and personal problems. One question asked whether respondents considered over 25% of staff had formed inappropriate relationships with prisoners or their families and the last two questions asked respondents whether they would report wrongdoing to their line manager and/or file an intelligence report (IR). Respondents were asked to respond on a five point scale (1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree') with the statements; there was also an option to respond with 'neither agree nor disagree.'

Section three of the survey asked respondents for their opinion on how many uniformed staff and how many non-uniformed staff at their prison engaged in seven types of corrupt activities: smuggling in drugs, smuggling in phones, bringing in money for prisoners, accepting a gift of money from a prisoner, allowing prisoners to possess contraband, having an inappropriate relationship with a prisoner or turning a blind eye to any of these activities. For each type of corrupt activity, respondents were presented with six options: no staff involved; less than a quarter; more than a

quarter but less than a half; more than a half but less than three quarters; more than three quarters; and not sure.

The survey did not give examples of types of non-uniform staff but I knew from my IMB work that it is clear to anyone working in a prison that uniformed staff are prison officers and non-uniform includes all other categories such as healthcare staff but also includes management who do not normally wear a uniform. I did not use the terms 'prison officer' and 'non-prison' officer as this might have led to confusion as most prison management had worked as prison officers and to some staff who work in, for example, education, the term 'prison officers' could have encompassed prison management. Although there are some uniformed staff who do not work on the wings, they are still operational staff and might be required to work on the wings for a number of reasons (normally due to staff shortages).

Demographic information was collected in section four. This included age, gender, years of experience in the prison service and in current prison, whether uniformed or non-uniformed, current department, when respondents attended CC training and whether they were aware of the Security Investment Programme.

Survey respondents were asked whether they were willing to be interviewed. If so, they were asked to email a dedicated Cardiff University email address I had set up for the purposes of this study. If they declined to be interviewed, a textbox appeared asking a series of questions about professional boundaries, vulnerabilities to corruption, whether CC training could be improved and availability of support for staff who were worried they had compromised their position/violated professional boundaries.

Finally, respondents were asked whether most prison staff would give their honest opinion when completing the survey. This question was to assess the participant's level of cynicism which is known to influence orientations toward safety, control and the purpose of prison work (Liebling and Kant 2018).

### **3.8.3 Survey sample**

The number of HMPPS employed staff in both research sites during the data collection period was 782 (HMPPS March 2022). However, these figures did not

accurately reflect the actual number of staff present in each prison at that period of time. The HMPPS figures exclude non-HMPPS employed staff but includes staff absent from work for long term reasons such as: sickness; initial training; maternity leave; special leave without pay; unpaid leave; adoption leave; suspension; and secondments to non-governmental departments. I therefore asked senior management for figures on the number of staff who had been in each prison on one of the days I attended at each site. I was informed that the number of staff (including staff not employed by HMPPS) was 230 for Beechfield and 400 for Chestnutwood; a total of 630. I therefore used these figures as my target sample size.

I was advised by prison management that most staff would complete the survey from their workplace, rather than take up the option of forwarding it to their personal email address. As many staff shared computers, it was necessary to set up the survey to enable multiple responses from a single device. It is therefore possible—if highly unlikely – that some individuals may have completed the questionnaire more than once.

The survey produced 90 responses. This gave a response rate of 14.78% for Beechfield and 14% for Chestnutwood; a mean response rate of 14.39%. Although this was lower than hoped for, given the levels of staff absence and the stretched staff resources, the return rate was not unexpected. However, of the 90 responses, 20 respondents only completed the first page (i.e. the first 10 scenario questions) and left the remainder of the survey blank before submitting it. This was the foreseen risk of an overlong survey. However, the survey, even in its original iteration, would have been longer than one page and of those who continued beyond the first page, all respondents continued answering the questions to the end. An analysis of the responses to the first 10 scenarios in the incomplete surveys did not reveal any significant differences in responses, but to avoid skewing the rankings of the scenarios, these 20 respondents were excluded from analysis, giving an overall response rate of 11.11%. Of the 70 respondents who completed the survey, there was a significant amount of missing data from section four which collected demographic data, perhaps indicating a fear of being identified. Table 3 shows the demographic information which was provided. It is not possible to establish the

representativeness of the sample as HMPPS workforce statistics do not include non-HMPPS employees to whom the survey was distributed.

**Table 3: Demographic information for survey respondents**

Participant Demographics	
Variable	Valid %
Gender	
Male	55.90
Female	39.70
Prefer not to say	4.40
Age	
18-25	6.00
26-35	32.80
36-45	19.40
46-55	23.90
56+	17.90
How long worked for prison service	
0-12 months	9.00
1-2 years	4.50
3-5 years	28.40
6-10 years	20.90
11 years +	37.30
Uniformed	
Non-uniformed	43.30

Although the number of completed surveys was relatively low, respondents worked in a wide variety of roles. Uniformed officer respondents worked on the wings, in the dog section, in security, on the gate and in segregation. Non-uniformed staff included management, healthcare workers, administrative staff, teachers, learning and skills trainers, charity workers, volunteers and those on secondment from the MoJ. In addition 19 of the survey respondents provided detailed textual responses to the open-ended questions. These responses were analysed as part of the qualitative dataset.

After collecting the survey data, I considered whether to apply to the NRC to request permission to access further prisons to increase the number of survey responses. However, this application was not guaranteed to succeed and, even if it did succeed,



I would then have to obtain permission from other governing governors. This would have meant a further delay of several months. By this time my initial analysis had revealed similar survey and interview responses in both prisons. As my project was an exploratory study, I made the decision to limit my study to the data I had collected in the knowledge the findings would not be generalisable to other prisons and would be limited to the responses of prison staff from two prisons at a particular point in time.

#### **3.8.4 Survey dissemination**

The survey (Appendix A) was ready for distribution at Beechfield in December 2021 at a time when Covid outbreaks meant there was restricted access to anyone who did not work in the prison. The prison governors (the gatekeepers) who gave permission for the research to take place at their establishment were under considerable stress and I was conscious not to overburden them. I therefore endeavoured to place as little additional work on them as possible by communicating via cjsm (the criminal justice secure mailing system to which I had access due to my IMB role) and, once I had the gatekeepers' permission to do so, I then communicated directly with interview participants to arrange interviews. I was also given the email details for the head of healthcare so I could ask them to distribute the survey to their staff as healthcare staff use a separate email system from the rest of the prison.

Each gatekeeper agreed to send a global email to all staff in which they introduced me and endorsed my research. The information sheets about the research with embedded Qualtrics™ links to the survey were sent as attachments to these global emails. Staff were initially given 60 days to complete the survey. After the POA instructed members at Beechfield not to reply to the survey, I allowed a further 60 days for the survey to be completed from the time the POA instructed their members that the survey could be completed. After the POA consented to the research, the survey was then distributed in Chestnutwood and interviews were arranged.

At my request, each gatekeeper sent out 'chaser emails' with the intention of increasing response rates. I asked the gatekeeper at Beechfield whether I could use an incentive similar to those in previous studies (for example, Lambert et al.2015) by

offering a raffle prize, but was told this would not be permitted. Each 'chaser email' produced additional responses, but after the third email, the gatekeepers made it clear that no further emails could be sent out. I kept the survey open for a month after the final chaser emails were sent out. This resulted in an active collection period of approximately six months for each research site.

### **3.9 Interviews**

The interview guide (Appendix B) for the semi-structured interviews was based on a combination of probing the survey responses and addressing the gaps in the literature with a particular focus on the broader issues of boundary violations and the vastly under-researched subjects of staff vulnerabilities to wrongdoing and the perceived barriers to reporting wrongdoing. Permission was requested and given to record the interviews on an encrypted recording device. As taking recording devices into prisons is against the Prison Rules, I had to obtain written authorisation from the security governor in each prison to bring in the voice recorder on every visit to the prison.

#### **3.9.1 Interview sample**

Initial Interviews were facilitated by the gatekeepers who had given permission for the research to be conducted in their prison. These gatekeepers contacted the security governor in their prison to inform them about the research and asked the security team to be involved in the research project. Other senior managers were also asked by the gatekeepers whether they would be willing to be interviewed. The remaining interview participants responded to the interview request in the survey via a dedicated Cardiff University email address.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 participants across both sites. To minimise the risk of identification demographic information is not included here apart from gender (four women, 11 men) and the fact that all participants had over three years' experience of working in prisons and came from a number of different departments. In addition, 19 survey respondents provided detailed textual responses to the open ended questions. These survey respondents included five staff with under three years' experience. Although the textual responses included responses from less experienced staff, taken altogether, the qualitative responses cannot be

regarded as representative of the wider workforce where 30-42% of prison staff have less than three years' service (HMPPS workforce statistics 2022). However, the survey respondents who provided textual replies were drawn from different departments and therefore presented a range of views. Even those from the security departments offered different perspectives as they included participants within a wide age range and from both prison sites.

In advance of each interview, participants were emailed the survey information sheet (Appendix A) with embedded Qualtrics™ link and the participant information sheet with consent form (Appendix C). Consent forms were signed prior to the interview or, in the case of online interviews, soon afterwards. Participants were given a copy of the signed form and a copy was retained for my records.

Three participants were interviewed online and two were interviewed over the telephone. Most interview participants chose to have face to face interviews and, completed the survey before the interview commenced, while I sat quietly, occasionally reading prison leaflets or journals if they were available. I was conscious not to appear to be impatient as I did not want the participants to feel pressurised. Once home, I entered the survey replies into the Qualtrics™ database, so the results were anonymised and analysed as part of the quantitative dataset.

### **3.9.2 Interview guide**

The interview guide (Appendix B) was drafted to probe the scenario responses but, as already mentioned the questions were focussed on perceived vulnerabilities, how participants thought boundaries could become blurred, whether their job had become more challenging and the barriers to reporting wrongdoing. One topic which provoked a great deal of response was the issue of how wrongdoing, in particular corruption, could be reduced.

During the interviews I adopted a conversational approach to encourage the participants to 'open up'. The presence of the voice recorder and my notepad meant that participants remained aware they were being interviewed but my IMB knowledge and familiarity with prison jargon went some way to putting the participants at their ease. To this extent my approach was what Fujii (2017) described as 'relational interviewing' as the interviews were almost conversational, since I was familiar with

the language of prison staff (in particular the numerous acronyms which are a feature of prison work) and I shared some anecdotes about my IMB prison to increase rapport.

Interview participants were first asked questions about their background, their reasons for joining the prison service, how well they felt the training prepared them for the job and whether they enjoyed their work. These questions served as 'ice breakers' but also explored whether the participants had joined the service for idealistic reasons and whether their attitude towards their work had become more cynical or more detached over time. Although the questions in the interview guide provided a framework, I allowed digressions which often proved illuminating. For example, one early participant spent some time expressing his frustration at how he believed the police failed to prioritise prison staff corruption. I considered this was a valid issue to be covered and included questions about police support in subsequent interviews.

The interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Several participants commented that some of the questions were thought provoking and enjoyed talking about a subject which presented ongoing problems to the prison.

### **3.10 Ethics, anonymity, confidentiality and protection from harm**

Ethics approval from Cardiff University Ethics Committee was granted in January 2021 before my application to the NRC was submitted. In compliance with ethical requirements and best practice standards, all survey respondents were furnished with an explanation of the research project, an assurance of anonymity and confidentiality (Appendix A). All interview participants were given the same information as well as information about the arrangements for data collection and data storage together an interview consent form (Appendix C). This was sent via email to each participant before their interview.

The NRC required me to include signposting to support groups in case any respondent was distressed by the survey. I complied with this request by including the words: "If completing the survey has caused any distress, please access relevant support agencies such as your Care Team, TriM team or mental health allies' at the

end of the survey.”<sup>13</sup> The NRC refused to allow me to conduct interviews in cafes or other public spaces, so I suggested I could hire office space if the need arose. It transpired this was not necessary, as all interview participants were happy to be interviewed in the prison.

All interview participants were given a pseudonym. I chose pseudonyms which were common names in England and Wales and as neutral as possible in terms of age. I kept a separate coding sheet linking pseudonyms to real names to aid my recollection of the interview participants. Survey respondents who provided responses to the open ended questions were also given pseudonyms with ‘S’ after them so their responses could be identified in the findings’ chapters.

Consent forms were signed prior to each interview or sent to me shortly afterwards if the interview was online or over the telephone. The consent forms were kept in hard copy form separately from the interview transcripts. Where quotations used in this thesis could identify a participant, I modified the details to ensure anonymity could be preserved.

Interview participants were informed that everything they told me would remain confidential, unless they told me something which meant that they or another person were in imminent danger or that they had committed a serious criminal offence, in which case I would be legally obliged to inform the relevant authority. In addition, I was required by the NRC to inform the relevant authority if any participant admitted breaking any prison rules and/or their behaviour would bring the authority of the prison into question.

Permission was given by the gatekeepers to allow audio recording equipment into the prison. Each interview, including the online and phone interviews were recorded using an encrypted Olympus DS 9000 voice recorder. I manually transcribed the recordings as soon as practicable, generally on the same day as recording. This

---

<sup>13</sup> TriM -Trauma Risk Management. It is a trauma-focused peer support system for people who have experienced a traumatic event.

proved helpful as the interviews were fresh in my mind. I deleted the recordings from the voice recorder once they were transcribed.

### **3.11 Positionality**

A number of researchers into prison staff wrongdoing have previously been prison employees. One of the most prolific American prison scholars, Robert Worley (2003, 2006, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2021) acknowledged that his background knowledge as an officer informed his research and assisted his access to prisons. Although I have not been a prison employee, I have spent hundreds of hours in a large male Category B local prison as a member of the IMB, talking to and observing all types of staff and prisoners in all parts of the prison including segregation, the vulnerable persons wing and the health wing. I have attended meetings with management, custodial staff, non-custodial staff and security team meetings. My IMB visits took place during the week and at weekends during which time I witnessed mealtimes, freeflow (when prisoners move through the prison to attend education/workshops) and when the prison is in 'patrol state' after all prisoners have been locked up. I have also witnessed restraints, prisoner fights, planned interventions<sup>14</sup> and have also attended the prison at nighttime to observe the National Tornado Squad in action.<sup>15</sup> Through this I have developed an in-depth understanding of the roles of different prison staff and was therefore not what Sloan and Wright (2015) described as a 'green' researcher who might find entering a prison novel or shocking.

My experience and understanding of the challenges of working in Category B prisons necessarily influenced my approach to the staff as I was probably a good deal more sympathetic towards them than researchers who might have focussed on the considerable challenges faced by prisoners and regarded staff in a less than positive light. However, due to my IMB role, I also had extensive experience of talking to

---

<sup>14</sup> Planned interventions – moving a prisoner who does not want to be moved

<sup>15</sup> National Tornado Squad – specialist riot squads brought into prisons to deal with situations such as riots and incidents at height (when a prisoner climbs on to/up a structure and refuses to come down)

prisoners and helping them with various problems (which often revolved around lost property but also included personal challenges prisoners faced). I was also aware that a few prison staff, in particular officers, have a negative view of the IMB (nicknamed by some staff as interfering middle class busy bodies!). As a result I did not mention my IMB position on the information sheet but I did disclose my IMB membership to all interview participants in order to be open and transparent, to explain my email access on cjsm which I used to organise interviews, and to be able to draw on my IMB experience during the interviews.

Although my familiarity with prisons and prison jargon, particularly the (endless) use of acronyms, was of great assistance to me during interviews, I have never been employed as an officer so I realised I would still be regarded as an outsider. As a woman in her late fifties, I was also not the normal PhD student whom participants might have expected to meet. However, my age, gender and prison experience appeared to be advantageous as some of the interviews became conversations during which a few participants admitted they were telling me things about their own experiences which they had not shared with work colleagues. I have no way of knowing if a young male researcher would have obtained as much information from the interview participants as I did but, on the basis of my previous professional experience of taking witness statements as part of legal proceedings, I considered I had captured all the information the participants were willing to divulge while being cognisant that I did not want to appear to interrogate them as they had freely given up their time to meet me and assist with my research.

Probably due to my IMB background and the fact I was interviewing staff in private rooms (albeit it after having to go through some wings to access the rooms), I did not experience the emotional challenges reported by ethnographic researchers such as Liebling (1999, 2001), Crawley (2002, 2004) and Sloan and Wright (2015). Despite some of the interview participants describing frightening or disturbing incidents, there was very little I had not already seen or heard about. I was therefore able to take note of my positionality and maintain an emotional distance from the interview participants.

### **3.12 Data Analysis**

Data were collected for a period of approximately six months at each research site. There was a period of approximately two months when data, including interview data, was collected at both sites.

Although the data were analysed separately, I decided to move from one data set to the other to enable an ongoing 'compare and contrast' exercise. Once I was satisfied that I had completed my analysis of both data sets, I looked at the data as a whole before considering how they addressed the research questions.

#### **3.12.1 Quantitative analysis**

There is an ongoing academic debate as to whether Likert scale responses should be treated as ordinal data (where the responses can be ranked but the distances between the responses are not measurable) and therefore subjected to non-parametric tests or interval data (where the responses are equidistant) and subjected to parametric tests. However, on the basis "Parametric statistics can be used with Likert data, with small sample sizes, with unequal variances, and with non-normal distributions, with no fear of 'coming to the wrong conclusion'" (Norman, 2010, p. 631), I analysed both mean responses and percentages using SPSS<sup>TM</sup> software licenced through Cardiff University to conduct parametric and non-parametric tests.

My decision to analyse both mean responses and percentages was based on the data analysis employed in earlier policing studies which analysed mean scores of Likert responses (Klockars et al. 1997; Edelbacher and Kutnjak Ivkovic 2004; Punch et al. 2004; Kutnjak Ivkovic 2005b; and Kutnjak Ivkovic and Shelley 2008) and in more recent policing studies which analysed both mean responses and percentages or just percentages (Vito et al. 2011; Kutnjak Ivkovic and Khechumyan 2014; Porter and Prenzler 2016; Westmarland and Rowe 2018; Westmarland and Conway 2020). To avoid a profusion of tables within the findings chapters, the percentage results for the scenario findings are included in appendices D and E.

Section two of the survey asked for Likert responses ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' The responses 'strongly agree' and 'somewhat agree' and 'strongly disagree' and 'somewhat disagree' were merged to create two sets of



results – ‘agree’ and ‘disagree.’ The mean, median, standard deviation and range took ‘neither agree nor disagree’ into consideration as it represented the mid-point score of three. The same approach was adopted for the third section of the survey which measured perceptions of the extent of corruption.

I applied the Pearson Chi-square test to establish if there was a statistically significant relationship between respondent survey responses and respondent demographics of gender, age, length of service and whether respondents were uniform or non-uniform.

### **3.12.2 Qualitative analysis**

Following my manual transcription of the recordings, I read the transcripts to gain initial impressions. I then left the qualitative data to one side while I focussed on the quantitative analysis of the survey data. When I returned to the interviews, I listened to the recordings again and read through the transcriptions to re-immense myself in the qualitative data.

I adopted Clarke and Braun’s six phase approach of reflective thematic analysis developed in 2016 and expanded on in 2022. This is a technique “that emphasizes contextualized understandings ...(where) It is normal and acceptable for one researcher to code the data set” (Clarke and Braun, 2016, p.86). As the aim of this study was to explore the perspectives of the participants, the coding process was primarily inductive, leading to a descriptive and interpretative analysis, rather than a theoretical analysis. The starting point was to analyse the meanings of the data to ‘give voice’ to participants, while being conscious of my positionality.

Having completed the first stage of Clarke and Braun’s approach through familiarising myself with the data, I moved to the coding stage. To stay close to the data I manually coded all the interviews. The initial codes were semantic to capture the explicitly expressed meaning. The combined data set of the interviews and the textual responses to the open ended questions in the survey generated a large number of codes. While some were of great interest, they were not all relevant to the research questions so some of the codes were discarded. I then generated provisional themes by clustering codes which related to a particular issue, trying to ensure the themes addressed my research questions. These provisional themes

were: things have got worse since austerity cuts; no one cares or understands; on the wing – fighting for my life; friendly not friends; victims or villains; management are like politicians; why bother to report and what can be done? After reviewing the themes (stage four of Clarke and Braun's process) I defined and named four overarching themes: the forgotten service; boundary violations; distrust in management; and reporting wrongdoing. At this point, I had reached the final stage of the process – the writing up of my findings.

### **3.12.3 Reflections on survey fieldwork**

Having gained access to the two prisons during a time of Covid restrictions, I wanted to collect as much data as possible from the surveys as I was uncertain whether I would be able to collect interview data. As a result, the number of questions in the survey was ambitious, possibly too ambitious. I had hoped that those who started the survey would complete it. This hope was misplaced as I had to reject 20 incomplete surveys. I do not know whether these incomplete responses were due to the length of the survey, the interruption due to the POA instruction not to complete the survey, the pressure of work or IT difficulties in logging back into a partly completed survey.

The scenarios were based on my knowledge of prisons but were informed by the Klockars et al. ethical attitudinal surveys. Although it seems from the findings that the question 'would you file an IR' (an intelligence report for wrongdoing) was easily understood, I should, with hindsight, have included another question asking whether the participant would be willing to file a Counter Corruption report if they witnessed corruption. Several interview participants commented that their first response to minor wrongdoing would be to 'have a word;' this option was not included in my survey and should be in future studies.

The questions in section two concerning staff morale, trust in management and vulnerabilities to corruption produced more relevant data than those in section three which asked for perceptions of corruption. On reflection it would have been sufficient to ask one question about perceptions of the extent of uniformed staff corruption and one on non-uniformed corruption as this would have reduced the length of the survey.

It is possible that some respondents manipulated their answers to disrupt the study, but this is highly unlikely as the survey was voluntary. As discussed in chapter four, the rank order correlation between all five questions and between both prisons was very high, so it is reasonable to conclude that the survey responses are valid and the survey instrument could be employed on a larger sample. However, the low response rate in this study means the findings cannot be generalised.

#### **3.12.4 Reflections on interviews and qualitative survey data**

Nineteen survey respondents declined to be interviewed but gave detailed textual responses to open ended questions. This appeared to be a successful tactic which could be employed in future surveys. Several respondents said they would be willing to be interviewed but then did not email me to make direct contact. This might have been due to changing their minds or not having the time to send a separate email. Although I have no way of knowing for sure, I had hoped that if I had been able to attend one or more staff meetings, or been seen around the prison on a few occasions, those staff might have felt more confidence in the interview process or felt more able to contact me direct to arrange an interview time. This might be an overly optimistic hope as even prison researchers who have spent months inside a prison conducting ethnographic studies will never be regarded as 'insiders' and therefore privy to insider knowledge (Hammersley 2015). Furthermore, as Liebling (1999) noted staff can easily become suspicious about the motives of prison researchers who are spending time in the prison and, given the subject of my research, I might have been regarded as an HMPPS spy who intended to report back all that I had seen and been told about staff wrongdoing.

The interview participants were mostly management or security officers. This resulted in a biased sample. Some of the richest data came from officers so it would have been preferable to have been able to interview more wing officers. Although, after much communication, the POA consented to my research, more prison officers might have been willing to be interviewed if the POA had endorsed the research with an email sent out by the POA representatives at the same time as the survey information sheet was sent out by the gatekeepers. It is hoped that the POA might realise the potential benefits of this research for their members and feel able to encourage their members to participate in future research.

### 3.13 Validity and reliability

The key problem with an ethical attitudinal survey is that it measures attitudes, not recorded behaviour. As explained above, attempts to obtain direct measurements of the extent and nature of police misconduct have been met with limited success, hence the development of the Klockars et al. survey to measure perceptions. However, it remains the case that if a survey respondent came across the same situation as presented in a scenario, they might not respond in the way they thought they would. As Bowling et al. (2019, p.169) noted: “perspectives are complex and ambivalent ...But while the link between ideas and action is far from straightforward, this does not mean that people’s perspectives... bear no relation to their practices.” This can be for any number of reasons. For example, the ‘bystander effect’ refers to the phenomenon that bystanders do not intervene when they witness a crime and the probability of intervention decreases the more observers there are at a crime scene (Pohlmann 2018). Therefore, if other staff members witness the wrongdoing, the likelihood of any intervention or reporting might decrease.

The Klockars et al. surveys have been utilised in over 80 studies in 30 countries. The findings, particularly in respect to the ranking of seriousness and the positive relationship between perceived seriousness and willingness to report have been replicated in subsequent studies (for example, Kutnjak Ivkovic 2005b; Kutnjak Ivkovic and Shelley 2008; Prenzler 2009; Gottschalk 2010; Vito et al. 2011; Kutnjak Ivkovic and Khechumyan 2014; Porter et al. 2015). It was this high level of validity and reliability which informed my decision to adapt the Klockars et al. type surveys for use in prisons. As will be seen in chapter four, my findings replicated the Klockars et al. key findings so, although the number of survey responses were relatively low in my study, the validity of an ethical attitudinal survey to measure perceptions of wrongdoing and to create a typology of wrongdoing has been demonstrated.

Liebling and Kant (2016) have argued that prison staff might not be reliable evaluators of their orientation as they feel pressure to report how they should behave rather than how they would behave. However, by ensuring anonymity to survey respondents, I hoped social desirability biases would be minimised and respondents would provide an honest opinion, rather than try to portray themselves in a positive light. There was, of course, the risk of satisficing by some respondents who had

opted for easy answers, or the 'don't know' option without fully considering the full range of answers.

Similarly, I hoped the interview participants felt they could be honest as they were not asked about their direct experience of wrongdoing, just their perceptions of it. In fact, several participants did describe their personal observations of wrongdoing and their experience of retaliation due to reporting wrongdoing.

To endeavour to ensure qualitative validity I triangulated much of the interview data with the survey findings. I also conducted the research at two prison sites in order to compare and contrast the data obtained from each prison.

### **3.14 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a rationale for the methodological approach in this study. It has focussed on the challenges to obtain access to conduct prison fieldwork during a global pandemic and has provided a detailed explanation of the obstacles which had to be overcome. Through adopting a pragmatic approach to the research I was able to modify the research design to respond to the Security Investment Programme evaluation and the rejection of my application to the NRC. This meant I could remain focussed on the research questions rather than the methods employed to gather as much data as possible given the constraints placed on me. As this was an exploratory study, the methodology was previously untested in prisons in England and Wales. Despite the relatively low number of survey responses, there are grounds for believing that the survey instrument developed for this study could be employed in future research which, together with interview data can continue to enhance the understanding of prison staff wrongdoing.

The next three chapters collate and interpret the findings. Each chapter is broadly concerned with one research question. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition the introductory sections in these chapters will necessarily be brief but will include a short review of relevant literature which was only touched on in chapter two. The next chapter considers the findings with respect to how prison staff understand and perceive wrongdoing. Chapter five focusses on perceptions of staff vulnerabilities and the challenges of maintaining professional boundaries while chapter six discusses the barriers to reporting wrongdoing. These findings are then drawn

together and discussed in chapter seven which addresses the overriding question of why prison staff engage in wrongdoing.

## **Chapter Four :The contours of prison staff wrongdoing: how it is understood and perceived**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter described the methodological approach and the reasons for the decisions made during the development of the research design. The first section of the survey was modelled on the ethical attitudinal questionnaire developed by Klockars et al. (1997, 2004) and widely used in policing studies. The Klockars et al. survey included a number of scenarios to elicit responses on perceptions of wrongdoing. Their findings that there was a positive relationship between perceived seriousness and willingness to report have been widely replicated (for example, Kutnjak Ivkovic 2005b; Kutnjak Ivkovic and Shelley 2008; Prenzler 2009; Gottschalk 2010; Vito et al. 2011; Kutnjak Ivkovic and Khechumyan 2014; Porter et al. 2015). The same studies also found the rank order in which police officers in different forces rated seriousness and willingness to report was very high, even though the absolute degree of seriousness (ie. the mean scores) rankings differed hugely between different police forces, particularly when comparing forces from different countries. Through asking prison staff about their perceptions of wrongdoing in two different prisons, I hoped to replicate the Klockars et al. (1997, 2004) findings. I hypothesised that the ranking of seriousness of the types of wrongdoing in the scenarios would be similar across both prison sites and the more serious a behaviour was considered to be, the more the staff member would be willing to report the wrongdoing.

In theory all prison staff should recognise that behaviour such as trafficking of contraband constitutes wrongdoing so there would have been little point in including such a blatant example of wrongdoing in the scenario questions. Although some of the scenarios included serious wrongdoing, others were more concerned with the 'grey' areas where there might be ambiguity about what is and what is not wrongdoing. These 'grey' areas exist close to the borderline of professional boundaries where the wrong choices can lead to the proverbial slippery slope.

The concept that corruption starts off in a small way, triggering a descent down the slippery slope of more serious corruption has been the subject of much debate in the policing literature. As discussed in paragraph 2.11.2 of the literature review, one of

the police behaviours which has provoked discussion is whether the acceptance of gratuities (small, unsolicited gifts) which, despite being against police rules, should be, in practice, an acceptable perk for police officers. Kania (2004) argues that police officers are able to distinguish between a friendly mark of appreciation and a bribe and therefore gratuities are an acceptable perk of the job. This stance has been dismissed by other scholars on the basis that a free cup of coffee morally compromises an officer and if the gratuity becomes a regular occurrence those giving the gratuities expect special treatment (Sherman 1974; Ruiz and Bono 2004; Coleman 2004). Sherman (1974;1985) argued that most corrupt police officers are not pathological 'rotten apples', instead they go through a process of choices which starts with minor wrongdoing acts close to professional boundaries (such as the acceptance of gratuities) and inevitably progress to more serious offences. Other policing researchers have trodden a middle ground, asserting that police officers can distinguish between a gratuity and corruption, although the public might regard the acceptance of gratuities as evidence that the police are corruptible, paving the way for corrupting conduct in the future (Feldberg 1985; Kleinig 2008).

There are clearly differences between the police who operate in the community and are in regular contact with the public and prison staff who work out of sight of the public in close contact with convicted criminals or those remanded in custody. In prisons in England and Wales, it is against the Prison Rules to accept "any unauthorised fee, gratuity or other consideration in connection with his office" (Rule 63). There is no guidance in the Prison Rules or HMPPS Conduct and Discipline Policy as to what 'gratuity' means but it should be clear to staff that the acceptance of even one cup of coffee or a sweet is against the Prison Rules. However, in practice it might be very difficult for an inexperienced member of prison staff to refuse the offer of unsolicited help or a sweet from a prisoner who they work with every day as they might be concerned a refusal would undermine good staff-prisoner relations. The problem for prison staff is that although these gratuities might appear to be 'innocent' they could be a way for a prisoner to test to see if they can "extend the inch and gain peer status and contraband" (Allen and Bosta, 1981, p.13). Having violated a boundary and morally compromised themselves, the staff member may be more vulnerable to being manipulated and blackmailed by a prisoner to engage in corrupt behaviour (Allen and Bosta 1981; Worley et al. 2003; Elliot 2006).



As will be seen below, the scenario findings in my study replicated the Klockars et al. (1997, 2004) findings and found there is a positive correlation between perceived seriousness and expressed willingness to report wrongdoing. The questions which arise from these findings are: why is there any variation in response to scenarios which all represent a type of wrongdoing and why is there any difference in perceptions of seriousness and willingness to report?

This chapter focusses on the scenario findings and the responses to the questions concerning the perception of the extent of corruption. The interview data provide additional context to the quantitative findings and explores the reasons why the respondents gave the answers they did in the survey. The findings form the basis for a typology of seriousness of wrongdoing which assists in understanding how different types of wrongdoing are perceived. I complete the data analysis in this section with a discussion of the findings around respondents' perception of the extent of corrupt activities and conclude with a brief discussion on the risks of wrongdoing not being understood or perceived.

## **4.2 Staff perceptions of wrongdoing**

The guidance 'be friendly, not friends' is a mantra repeated throughout prison officer training and it is one which was repeated back to me when interview participants were asked about professional boundaries. In theory, the boundaries should be as clear as this mantra. As Laura pointed out: "if you worked in a pub as a professional bar person, you wouldn't constantly give people free beer." However, Laura went on to acknowledge, it is easy for boundaries to become blurred in prisons "because I don't think they [staff] sometimes understand what corruption is." Laura's statement went to the heart of this chapter – how do prison staff understand and perceive corruption and how do they maintain professional boundaries?

As described in chapter three, respondents were asked to complete an online survey. Survey respondents were asked to answer five questions in respect of 17 scenarios. The scenarios encompassed a wide range of behaviours, from rule bending which could facilitate the smooth running of the prison such as letting a prisoner have more time out of cell for a shower to altering prisoner records, theft, assault, inappropriate relationships and witnessing the passing of a suspect package

from a member of staff to a prisoner. The scenarios were used to assess the degree of homogeneity of prison staff evaluations of seriousness of wrongdoing and to establish if the findings in the policing literature would be replicated. Perceptions of the seriousness of each scenario were measured on a Likert five-point scale from 1 = 'definitely not serious' through to 5 = 'definitely serious'. Owing to the academic debate referred to in chapter three as to whether Likert scale responses should be treated as ordinal data or as interval data, both mean scores and percentage scores were used to create rankings of seriousness and willingness to report.

The number of completed survey responses was 70, this gave a response rate of 11.11%. The possible causes for the low response rate and the reasons for not increasing the number of research sites are described in paragraph 3.8. The low response rate meant it is not possible to provide the appropriate statistical power to discover whether there were generalisable significant differences between demographic factors and survey responses. However, as this is an exploratory study, I applied the Pearson Chi-square test to establish if there was a statistically significant relationship between survey responses and the respondents' gender, age, length of service and whether respondents were uniform or non-uniformed. This test revealed no significant differences in responses to the scenarios for gender but younger staff (under 25 years old) found a number of scenarios less serious than other respondents: failing to report a friend who was a prisoner; theft; and putting a sex offender at risk. In addition, younger, inexperienced uniformed staff were significantly less likely to consider assault as serious and were less willing to report such behaviour. These findings are consistent with previous research on prison boundary violations studies where younger officers were found to be more likely to support the mistreatment of prisoners (Worley et al. 2017, 2021) and that the first 12 months of employment was the riskiest period for boundary violations (Marquart et al. 2001; Cheeseman Dial and Worley 2008).

Beechfield (the smaller prison in a small city) had a greater proportion of experienced older staff (41.7% over 11 years of service, 20.2% over 56 years old) as opposed to Chestnutwood (30.8% over 11 years of service and 5.1% over 56 years old). Beechfield also had a lower incidence of violence against prisoners and staff and was a prison which had received a positive HM Inspectorate of Prisons report.

Although the absolute mean scores (Table 4) and percentage scores (Table 5) for each scenario question differed across both prisons, the relative evaluations for all the scenarios across both sites are remarkably consistent. For example, accepting a chocolate bar was ranked 16 in seriousness by Beechfield staff, 16 as likely to be against policy and 17 in willingness to report. For the same scenario, Chestnutwood rankings were 16, 14 and 16. Similarly, both prisons rated the failure to report a mobile phone communication as the most serious behaviour. Further comparisons with regard to the responses from each prison are considered below in paragraph 4.3.

The hypothesis expressed in paragraph 4.1 above, that there would be a high rank-order correlation across both prisons and across the responses to the survey questions has been proved. These findings suggests that all five questions for each scenario measured the same phenomenon – the degree of prison staff intolerance for wrongdoing. The results of this study therefore indicate that prison staff, despite working in different prisons, share a common understanding of the seriousness of different types of wrongdoing committed by prison staff.

As Table 4 below shows, on average, respondents viewed all scenarios as at least somewhat serious (the mean being at the scale midpoint of 3 or higher). Similarly, on average, respondents believed all the scenarios to be a violation of prison policy with only S11 (hugging a prisoner) and S8 (allowing a shower) achieving a mean below 4.

**Table 4: Mean scores and rank order of prison staff views by prison site**

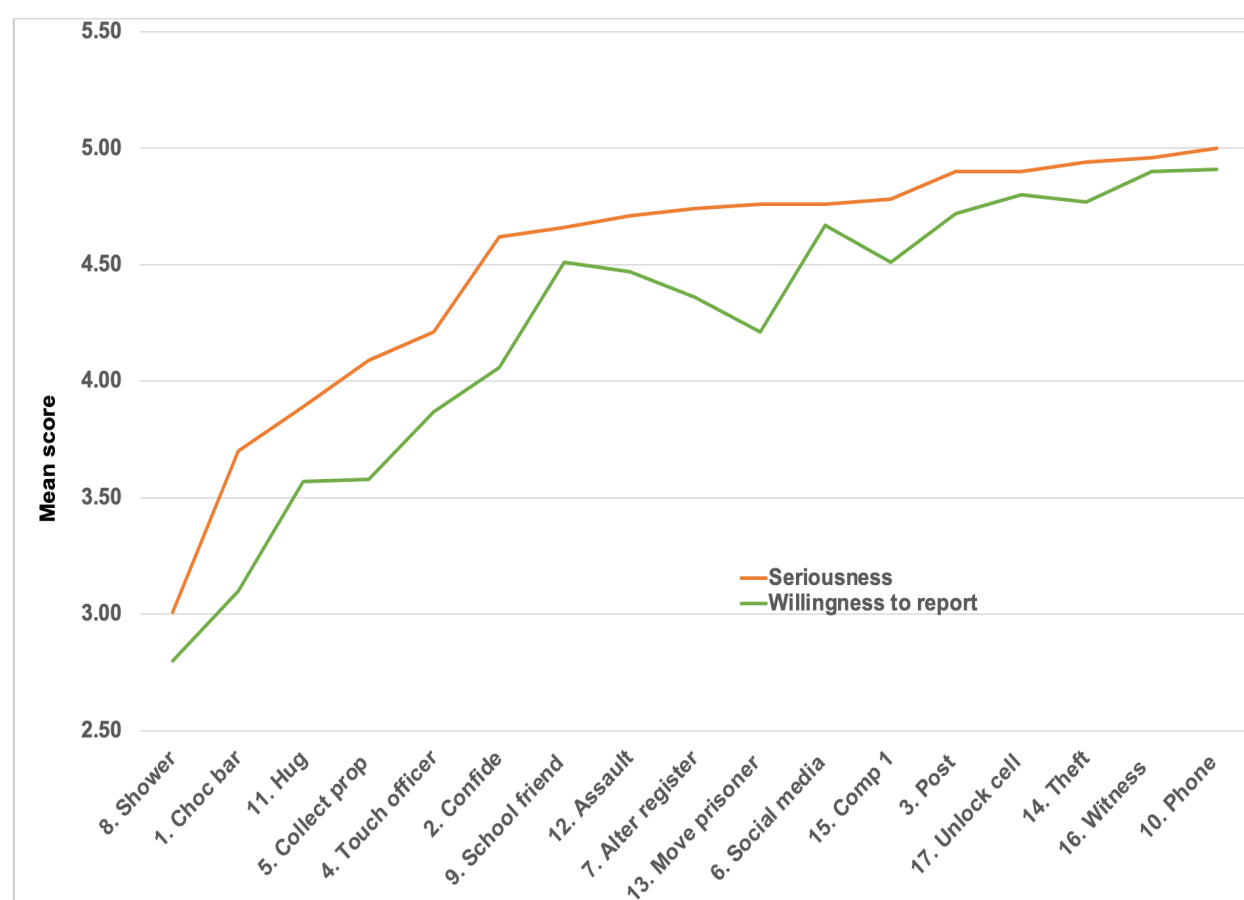
Scenarios	Seriousness				Against policy		Willingness to report			
	Own		Others		Score	Rank	Own		Others	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank			Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Beechfield										
Chestnutwood										
Choc bar - S1	3.84	16	2.09	17	4.06	16	3.03	17	2.58	17
	3.59	16	2.79	16	4.26	14	3.16	16	2.62	16
Confide personal problems -S2	4.60	11	3.97	12	4.57	12	4.07	11	3.30	14
	4.64	11	4.03	11	4.46	12	4.05	12	3.46	12
Post letter - S3	4.81	7	4.48	7	4.87	6	4.58	5	4.13	4
	4.97	3	4.32	6	4.97	2	4.84	3	4.13	5
Pat female staff member -S4	4.32	13	3.94	13	4.42	14	4.06	12	3.48	12
	4.13	13	3.54	13	4.10	15	3.72	13	3.31	13
Collect prisoner property -S5	4.20	14	3.67	15	4.43	13	3.77	15	3.23	15
	4.00	14	3.03	15	4.28	13	3.44	14	2.79	15
Accept social media friend -S6	4.61	10	4.16	10	4.74	9	4.47	8	3.84	6
	4.87	5	4.41	5	4.74	11	4.82	4	4.21	3
Alter attendance register -S7	4.81	7	4.29	9	4.77	8	4.42	10	3.81	7
	4.69	10	4.00	12	4.82	8	4.31	11	3.56	11
Allow extra time out for shower -S8	3.45	17	3.16	16	3.73	17	3.29	16	2.84	16
	2.66	17	2.24	17	2.84	17	2.39	17	2.18	17
Keep silent about school friend -S9	4.52	12	4.00	11	4.74	9	4.45	9	3.68	11
	4.77	7	4.10	10	4.82	8	4.56	7	3.85	7
Fail to report phone communication S10	5.00	1	4.84	2	4.90	4	4.87	3	4.43	3
	5.00	1	4.79	2	5.00	1	4.95	1	4.67	1
Go into cell to console prisoner -S11	4.19	15	3.77	14	4.23	15	3.81	14	3.39	13
	3.64	15	3.26	14	3.64	16	3.38	15	3.15	14
Assault on prisoner -S12	4.84	5	4.58	6	4.97	2	4.55	6	3.81	7
	4.62	12	4.28	8	4.85	7	4.41	9	3.79	9
Move prisoner to YO cell -S13	4.74	9	4.32	8	4.58	11	4.06	12	3.81	7
	4.77	7	4.31	7	4.77	10	4.33	10	3.82	8
Steal prisoner property -S14	4.97	3	4.71	3	4.90	4	4.77	4	4.06	5
	4.92	4	4.49	4	4.97	2	4.77	5	4.05	6
Rip up Comp 1 -S15	4.83	6	4.60	5	4.87	6	4.53	7	3.77	10
	4.74	9	4.28	8	4.87	6	4.49	8	3.74	10
Witness passing of suspect package S16	4.90	4	4.70	4	4.93	3	4.97	1	4.48	2
	5.00	1	4.82	1	4.97	2	4.85	2	4.46	2
Put sex offender at risk of assault -S17	5.00	1	4.87	1	5.00	1	4.97	1	4.55	1
	4.82	6	4.59	3	4.97	2	4.67	6	4.21	2

**Table 5: Percentages – seriousness and willingness to report by prison site**

Scenarios	Definitely not		Probably not		Not sure		Probably yes		Definitely yes		Rank of definitely yes	
	Beech	Chestnut	Beech	Chestnut	Beech	Chestnut	Beech	Chestnut	Beech	Chestnut	Beech	Chestnut
Choc bar -S1												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	6.50	5.10	16.10	25.60	6.50	7.70	29.00	28.20	41.90	33.30	16	16
Would you report a staff member? %	9.70	7.90	35.50	34.20	16.10	13.20	19.40	23.70	19.40	21.10	17	16
Confide personal problems -S2												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	3.30	2.60	3.30	5.10	0.00	0.00	16.70	10.30	76.70	82.10	10	11
Would you report a staff member? %	3.30	2.60	6.70	12.80	16.70	12.80	26.70	20.50	46.70	51.30	12	12
Post letter -S3												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	0.00	3.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.70	2.60	87.10	97.40	6	3
Would you report a staff member? %	3.20	0.00	3.20	0.00	0.00	2.60	19.40	10.50	74.20	86.80	6	3
Pat female staff member -S4												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	0.00	6.50	12.80	16.10	10.30	16.10	28.20	61.30	48.70	13	13
Would you report a staff member? %	3.20	2.60	0.00	20.50	25.80	17.90	29.00	20.50	41.90	38.50	13	13
Collect prisoner property -S5												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	5.10	16.70	15.40	6.70	2.60	16.70	28.20	60.00	48.70	14	13
Would you report a staff member? %	3.30	2.60	20.00	28.20	13.30	23.10	23.30	15.40	40.00	30.80	15	14
Accept social media friend -S6												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	0.00	6.50	0.00	3.20	0.00	12.90	12.80	77.40	87.20	9	7
Would you report a staff member? %	0.00	0.00	6.70	0.00	10.00	2.60	13.30	12.80	70.00	84.60	7	4
Alter attendance register -S7												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.10	0.00	2.60	19.40	10.30	80.60	86.10	8	9
Would you report a staff member? %	0.00	2.60	6.50	7.70	9.70	7.70	19.40	20.50	64.50	61.50	8	10
Allow extra time out for shower -S8												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	6.50	23.70	22.60	28.90	19.40	18.40	22.60	15.80	29.00	13.20	17	17
Would you report a staff member? %	9.70	28.90	29.00	28.90	16.10	21.10	12.90	15.80	32.30	5.30	16	17
Keep silent about school friend -S9												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	2.60	6.50	0.00	0.00	2.60	29.00	7.70	64.50	87.20	12	7
Would you report a staff member? %	0.00	2.60	0.00	2.60	19.40	2.60	16.10	20.50	64.50	71.80	8	8
Fail to report phone communication -S10												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	1	1
Would you report a staff member? %	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.20	2.60	6.50	0.00	90.30	97.40	3	1
Go into cell to console prisoner -S11												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	0.00	9.70	33.30	12.90	5.10	25.80	25.60	51.60	35.90	15	15
Would you report a staff member? %	3.20	0.00	16.10	33.30	19.40	23.10	19.40	15.40	41.90	28.20	13	15
Assault on prisoner -S12												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	3.20	7.70	0.00	2.60	0.00	0.00	3.20	0.00	93.50	89.70	4	6
Would you report a staff member? %	6.50	7.70	3.20	7.70	0.00	0.00	9.70	5.10	80.60	79.50	4	6
Move prisoner to YO cell -S13												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.70	25.80	7.70	74.20	84.60	11	10
Would you report a staff member? %	0.00	0.00	12.90	10.30	16.10	10.30	22.60	15.40	48.40	64.10	11	11
Steal prisoner property -S14												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.20	7.70	96.80	92.30	3	4
Would you report a staff member? %	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.20	5.10	16.10	12.80	80.60	82.10	4	5
Rip up Comp 1 -S15												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.60	3.30	2.60	10.00	12.80	86.70	82.10	7	11
Would you report a staff member? %	0.00	2.60	0.00	2.60	10.00	10.30	26.70	12.80	63.30	71.80	10	8
Witness passing of suspect package -S16												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.30	0.00	89.70	100.00	5	1
Would you report a staff member? %	0.00	2.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.40	5.10	96.60	92.30	2	2
Put sex offender at risk of assault -S17												
Do you consider the behaviour to be serious? %	0.00	2.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.60	0.00	2.60	100.00	92.30	1	4
Would you report a staff member? %	0.00	2.60	0.00	2.60	0.00	0.00	3.20	15.40	96.80	79.50	1	6

Figure 3 below represents the mean findings for both prisons in graphical form. It shows the positive correlation between perceived seriousness and willingness to report. The percentage scores evidence the same relationship between perceived seriousness and willingness to report (Appendix E). These findings permitted the development of a typology of seriousness before the scenarios were then categorised into types of wrongdoing.

**Figure 3: Respondents' perception of seriousness and willingness to report - mean scores**



### 4.3 Classifying the types of wrongdoing

Given the similarity and consistency in ranking scores for both percentages and means, I used the mean scores for the whole sample to create a typology of seriousness (Table 6), permitting a classification of the scenarios and showing the consistency in the ranking across all five questions. Table 6 identifies those types of behaviour which were not perceived as serious as the others. The five lowest

ranking scenarios for seriousness (allowing a shower, accepting a choc bar, hugging a distraught prisoner, collecting property and patting a female officer) all had the greatest range of responses ( $SD > 1$ ). The three most serious rated scenarios (phone communication, witness suspect package and theft) reflected a strong consensus amongst respondents ( $SD < 0.25$ ) (Appendix D). These patterns were, again, consistent with the policing findings and are discussed in detail below.

**Table 6: Typology of seriousness: mean scores and rank order of prison staff views of wrongdoing**

Scenarios	Own view	Rank	Other staff	Rank	Against policy?	Rank	Report	Rank	Others report	Rank
Phone communication - S10	5.00	1	4.81	1	4.96	2	4.91	1	4.57	1
Witness passing of package - S16	4.96	2	4.77	2	4.96	2	4.90	2	4.47	2
Steal prisoner X box - S14	4.94	3	4.59	4	4.94	4	4.77	4	4.06	5
Unlock sex offender's cell - S17	4.90	4	4.71	3	4.99	1	4.80	3	4.36	3
Post letter - S3	4.90	4	4.39	7	4.93	5	4.72	5	4.13	4
Rip up Comp 1- S15	4.78	6	4.42	5	4.87	7	4.51	7	3.75	10
Social media - S6	4.76	7	4.30	9	4.74	10	4.67	6	4.04	6
Move prisoner to YO's cell - S13	4.76	7	4.31	8	4.69	11	4.21	11	3.81	7
Alter attendance reg - S7	4.74	9	4.13	10	4.80	8	4.36	10	3.67	11
Excess force - S12	4.71	10	4.41	6	4.90	6	4.47	9	3.80	8
School friend prisoner - S9	4.66	11	4.06	11	4.79	9	4.51	7	3.77	9
Personal Prob - S2	4.62	12	4.00	12	4.51	12	4.06	12	3.39	12
Pat female - S4	4.21	13	3.71	13	4.24	14	3.87	13	3.39	12
Collect prop - S5	4.09	14	3.30	15	4.35	13	3.58	14	2.99	15
Go into cell to give a hug - S11	3.89	15	3.49	14	3.90	16	3.57	14	3.26	14
Choc bar -S1	3.70	16	2.84	16	4.17	15	3.10	16	2.60	16
Allow shower - S8	3.01	17	2.65	17	3.24	17	2.80	17	2.48	17

The typology of seriousness was then broken down into six categories of wrongdoing. The quantitative findings were compared and contrasted with the qualitative data.

#### *Minor low harm infringements – Scenarios 1, 5, 8 and 11*

As anticipated, allowing a prisoner extra time out of cell for a shower (S8) was rated the least serious behaviour for both prisons and there was little willingness to report

another staff member for this behaviour. Only 29% of Beechfield (the smaller prison) and 13.2% of Chestnutwood respondents considered this was definitely serious, with 32.3% of Beechfield and only 5.3% of Chestnutwood expressing willingness to report. There was some uncertainty about whether allowing extra time for a shower or hugging a distraught prisoner in his cell (S11) was against policy. Respondents in Chestnutwood which had the younger, less experienced staff cohort displayed less certainty as to whether allowing a shower was serious or against prison policy than did those in Beechfield.

Prisoners are meant to have access to showers at set times. However, exceptions might be necessary for the smooth running of the prison to ensure that a prisoner who had a genuine reason for missing his shower at the allocated time was not denied his right to a shower. The problem being that allowing one prisoner extra time out of his cell to have a shower would mean treating that prisoner differently from other prisoners and could be regarded as favouritism. Manager Dave was aware of the risks of favouritism and how it could become normalised behaviour:

*I think we are quite slow to react to strong attachments or those scenarios where the officer is routinely unlocking the same two or three prisoners in the evening ...and it's always the same guys, to let them have a shower because they are workers, but there are plenty of other workers and but it's the same three guys who are unlocked. So those sorts of scenarios are less unchallenged and unchanged for probably too long.*

There should not be uncertainty around these behaviours. The need to avoid favouritism is meant to part of staff training, not only to avoid the risk of some prisoners forming friendships with staff but also to avoid jealousy and resentment from prisoners who were not the beneficiaries of favourable staff discretion (Jones 2013). Owing to my IMB experience, I am aware that, in practice, letting some prisoners out of cell for a shower as they missed the opportunity to take a shower during the scheduled time is one of the rules which are frequently bent. But it is also the subject of many complaints to the IMB from other prisoners who are not given the same preferential treatment. As Dave said, it is often the same prisoners who are unlocked to have a shower during the evening when all other prisoners are



locked up. It does not take much imagination to realise why having a shower when most prisoners are locked up would be considered a desirable outcome.

Several interview participants referred to the 'no touching of prisoners' rule<sup>16</sup> and were aware they should not enter a cell alone to hug a distraught prisoner (S11). However, some interview participants explained how there were situations where physical contact was considered necessary to maintain good staff-prisoner relations. In the extract below, officer Maurice explained how he decided to exercise his discretion to bend the rules:

*So the other day I had an argument with a prisoner and the next day he came up to apologise and to say he was bang out order and wanted to shake hands, so I shook hands. So that's touching a prisoner... by the textbook you shouldn't allow any touch... We are all humans but you can't hug a prisoner, it's against policy but it can help as it can show you care and you can support them. It's not just locking or unlocking them and providing a regime; they need help.*

Supervising officer Yvette was a woman in her early thirties with 12 years' experience of working in prisons. Yvette had sufficient confidence and experience to be clear that she would have no hesitation in breaking the no touch policy if she felt an upset prisoner needed a hug.

*I will tell officers on the landing that I'm going to sit alone with him in that cell, I will make a risk assessment. Some members of staff think ....I shouldn't be doing that, but for me some instances need a more human approach, he needs that personal contact because he's a human being as well.*

No other interview participant referred directly to the hugging scenario so it is not possible to explore whether a male officer would make the same risk assessment

---

<sup>16</sup> There is no formal written rule forbidding touching between prisoners and staff. However, during Counter Prevention Awareness training, staff should be told that no touching is permitted between staff and prisoners apart from administering first aid, preventing escape and using force.

and whether they would enter a cell to hug a distraught prisoner. The Pearson Chi-square test revealed no statistically significant gender difference across any of the scenarios so it is reasonable to infer that both male and female staff regarded this scenario as one of the least serious and it might not have been recognised as wrongdoing. And while a male officer might not hug a distraught prisoner, they might enter a cell alone to offer support in some other way which is also against prison policy due to the risk of being taken hostage or being attacked.

If staff do not perceive some types of behaviour as wrongdoing, the behaviours may become embedded in the organisational structure and mindlessly repeated (Ashforth and Anand 2003). As Crewe et al. (2015a) noted, even minor rule bending can come at the expense of safety and control while Jones (2013) observed that treating just one prisoner more favourably than others can also result in negative consequences. Returning to the two excerpts above where experienced staff justified ignoring prison policies they knew about: Maurice's handshake could lead to increasing informality with the prisoner and seen as favouritism resulting in resentment from other prisoners and/or an increasingly friendly relationship between the two men; Yvette's decision to enter a cell alone to console a distraught prisoner for humane and compassionate reasons could result in a physical attack on her or her being held hostage.

By co-incidence my own IMB work provided an salutary reminder of how rule bending, however well-intentioned, can result in serious harm. A few months after I completed my data analysis, scenario 11 – entering a cell to comfort a prisoner was played out in my IMB prison. An experienced non-custodial member of staff ignored prison policy to never enter a prisoner's cell without an officer present. The prisoner was upset and she wanted to help him. Unbeknownst to the member of staff, the prisoner was suffering a psychotic episode. He brutally attacked the member of staff, inflicting serious injuries.

There was greater recognition that collecting prisoner property (S5) and accepting a chocolate bar (S1) were against prison policy. Nevertheless, there was low expressed willingness to report the behaviours. The collecting property scenario specifically mentioned that all staff had been recently reminded that requests for property had to be made through the formal process, but this behaviour was still

perceived as less serious than most of the other behaviours. Sharing food with prisoners is also against prison policy. Some interview participants even referred to it as being a well-known policy, but again, it was not considered as a serious type of wrongdoing. Breaking the rule against accepting food from a prisoner was only considered definitely serious by 41.9% of Beechfield and 33.3% of Chestnutwood, while only 60% of Beechfield and 48.7% of Chestnutwood considered that failing to follow the formal process for collecting property was definitely serious.

These minor rule infringement scenarios all represented the lower end of the wrongdoing continuum. All four behaviours could all be regarded as examples of the discretionary under-enforcement of rules to ensure the smooth running of the prison (Sykes 1958). However, bending these rules can lead to a lack of clear professional boundaries which might place inexperienced staff and/or those lacking 'jailcraft' at risk of further boundary violations and increase prisoner expectations that the behaviour will be repeated. As Blackburn et al. (2011), concluded, even minor rule infringements have the possibility of undermining staff authority while friendships could be a gateway to boundary violations. Blurred boundaries can also result in staff finding themselves close to the slippery slope or what Westmarland (2004, p.83) describes as the 'invitational edge' where the first boundary violation can lead to more serious wrongdoing.

#### *Miscellaneous infringements – Scenarios 7 and 15*

Misuse of information to alter prison records to help a prisoner (S7) and ripping up a complaint form (a Comp 1<sup>17</sup>) about a prisoner's lost property (S15) were midway in the mean and percentage rankings. Both were types of administrative wrongdoing. Over 80% of all respondents considered both behaviours definitely serious but ripping up a Comp 1 was perceived as more serious (ranked sixth) than altering an

---

<sup>17</sup> Comp 1s are complaints forms used when prisoners want to raise issues such as the loss of property. More serious allegations are raised on 'Comp 2s' which are sent in sealed envelopes to the governing governor. Prisoners can also send complaints to the IMB and to healthcare administrators.

attendance record (ranked ninth) with Chestnutwood respondents ranking both behaviours as less serious than Beechwood. However, altering an attendance record to help a prisoner to be re-categorised has potentially more serious consequences than ripping up a Comp 1. If a complaints form about lost property (as in the scenario) is destroyed or lost, a prisoner can submit another Comp 1 without difficulty and ripping up the Comp 1 would be unlikely to increase the risk to that prisoner, or to others. However, falsifying an attendance record to facilitate re-categorisation could mean a prisoner is transferred to a lower security prison despite having failed to complete the requirements for re-categorisation. This could present a safety risk to staff and prisoners and, if the re-categorisation resulted in a transfer to an open prison, members of the public could be put at risk as the prisoner would be given access to the local community. These findings suggest a deficiency in staff understanding as to the risks of altering attendance registers.

#### *Inappropriate relationships – Scenarios 2 and 4*

As discussed in paragraph 2.6 of the literature review, inappropriate relationships between prisoners and prison staff have been identified as a security risk, can undermine the integrity of prison staff and are regarded as being at the core of corruption in prisons (Marquart et al. 2001; Calhoun and Coleman 2002; Worley et al. 2003; Cheeseman Dial and Worley 2008; Blackburn et al. 2011; Crime and Corruption Commission 2018). Inappropriate relationships have also been regularly reported in the media (for example, Bazaraa 2020; Press Association 2021; Gibson 2022; Rogers 2023; Sales 2023; Inside Time 2023b; Odling and Hale 2024; Butler 2024; Goodwin 2024).

Replies to Freedom of Information Act requests reveal that from 2014/15 to 2022/23 the number of Band 2-5 officers investigated for an inappropriate relationship with a prisoner or ex-prisoner has ranged from 28-47 each year (MoJ 2023a). This is clearly an under-estimate of those staff who have engaged in inappropriate relationships as it only represents those who are caught and then subject to a disciplinary investigation, but they are an indication of ongoing problem.

The risk of inappropriate relationships and their potential route to corruption should, in theory, be clear to all prison staff through training and guidance from experienced

staff. The CC Policy 2022 highlights the importance of not sharing personal information with a prisoner and CC training instructs staff that prisoners and staff can only make physical contact with prisoners in limited situations. This made the findings for S4 (a female member of staff being regularly over-familiar with a prisoner and who is seen smiling in response to the prisoner patting her arm) and S2 (an officer confiding personal problems to a prisoner) surprising.

I had anticipated the scenarios would be recognised as serious behaviour. However, they were ranked twelfth and thirteenth (out of 17) for seriousness and received an equally low ranking for willingness to report. Only 48.7% of Chestnutwood staff considered S4 as definitely serious with less than 40% willing to report. Similarly, confiding personal problems such as a marriage breakdown to a prisoner should have been regarded as 'definitely serious' as it places the officer in a position where he could be blackmailed for breaching the CC Policy through sharing personal information.

These findings indicate that prison staff do not understand the risks of inappropriate relationships despite being the focus of CC training videos and the many high profile prosecutions of (mostly) female members of staff for inappropriate relationships with prisoners. These types of prosecutions had been prior to the research (and still are) widely reported by the media (for example Nottingham Post 2018; Bazaraa 2020; Press Association 2021; Lavery 2021; Gibson 2022; Russell 2022).

Interview participants had more than three years' experience and the majority worked in the security department or were management. Most were confident they recognised the risks of inappropriate relationships between prisoners and staff but many of them admitted they were aware of inappropriate relationships in their prisons, particularly between female officers and male prisoners. Tom recalled an inexperienced female member of staff who succumbed to the over friendliness of a prisoner:

*...and that developed into a sexual relationship and she ended up getting sacked.*

Officer Maurice recalled a new female officer who:

*Spent 90% of her time ... with the same prisoner. She was following him like a puppy dog. And everybody could tell... She didn't last long. She was gone and everyone know why. And she wasn't the only one. In the last four years just on my unit I can think of four female officers that happened to.*

When asked about inappropriate relationships, Dave commented:

*Cos you know, what they do is condition them, test them and try to get to a stage where they can think 'right I've got you now'.*

One of the problems for staff in judging what is friendly enough to facilitate good staff-prisoner relationships and what constitutes inappropriate behaviour is the fact boundaries are not static and can vary according to the prisoner and the member of staff (Liebling et al. 2011). Yvette gave an example of how she was confused when, as a young officer, she saw an older female officer call other staff and prisoners 'babe' (which was not a frequent form of address in her prison):

*[I] looked at the prisoners' reaction to her calling them babe and they were appropriate in their responses to her, none of them took the opportunity to flirt with her or anything, they were all quite used to her calling them babe, they all kept appropriate boundaries ....I realised this was a case of someone who's been here for so long, in an age bracket where she feels she can mother or whatever you want to call it, these young men, and use this word without her feeling it's inappropriate and without them thinking it's inappropriate, boundaries were kept.*

Yvette had enough common sense to realise that, as a young female officer, she should not emulate this behaviour, as the prisoners would have reacted differently to her and interpreted her behaviour as over familiar. Yvette also told me she had stopped wearing perfume to the prison when she realised the number of comments from prisoners it provoked as it proved a distraction to her job.

Through my IMB work I have witnessed many young (and not so young) female staff members with false nails, false eyelashes, lots of make-up and long hair tied in a ponytail and not a bun (as is required) having long chatty conversations with young male prisoners. These young women did not seem to be exercising the same

common sense as Yvette, seemingly unaware that their behaviour and appearance might cross professional boundaries where 'friendly' with a prisoner becomes 'friends' with a prisoner. There are no studies in England and Wales as to whether male officers are similarly flirtatious with female prisoners so it is impossible to make any assumptions about the risk of inappropriate relationships in female prisons so this is an area which could be the subject of future research.

### *Potentially harmful infringements – Scenarios 9,13 and 17*

Although these wrongdoings did not include actual harm, all had the potential to cause harm to staff or prisoners. Respondents in both prisons recognised the seriousness of behaviour in scenario 17 where an officer informed prisoners in the main part of the prison that a prisoner awaiting trial for sexual offences against children was being housed on their wing and not on the Vulnerable Persons wing.<sup>18</sup> However, although this behaviour was ranked joint first by smaller Beechfield where 100% of staff agreed it was 'definitely serious', it was ranked sixth by Chestnutwood where 92% considered it was 'definitely serious'. By contrast, moving a young offender at the request of an older prisoner into their cell, without assessing whether it was safe for the young offender to share a cell with an older prisoner (a shared cell risk assessment) (S13), was considered less serious by Beechfield staff (74.2% definitely serious) than by Chestnutwood staff (84.6% definitely serious).<sup>19</sup> Whether these findings reflected the attitudes of the older more experienced Beechfield staff cohort as opposed to the younger less experienced staff at Chestnutwood cannot be established from this study but would be of interest in future research.

There was a clear difference between the two prisons in attitudes towards the failure of an officer to tell their manager that an old school friend (with whom they smoked

---

<sup>18</sup> People convicted of sexual offences are often vilified by other prisoners (Crewe 2009). Those convicted of sexual offences against children are considered even lower in the prisoner hierarchy than offenders who assaulted an adult (Sapp and Vaugh 1990). They are normally housed on separate Vulnerable Persons wings.

<sup>19</sup> Young offenders are prisoners aged 15-21 years old. They are normally housed in young offender institutions but males aged 18-21 may be sent to an adult prison.

cannabis in the past) was a prisoner on another wing (S9). Only 64.2% of Beechfield prison staff considered it definitely serious as opposed to the larger, metropolitan Chestnutwood staff, of whom, 87.2% considered it definitely serious. Personal connections between staff and prisoners should be disclosed as 'conflicts' to the CC department to minimise the risk of the staff member being blackmailed. However, this scenario added a complication as it required the staff member to disclose previous criminal behaviour which might result in a disciplinary investigation if the staff member had lied during the recruitment process. Nevertheless, the seriousness of the failure to disclose the personal connection was potentially a serious security risk and should have been recognised as such by the respondents.

One explanation for the difference in responses to the failure to disclose that a prisoner was an old school friend could be that Beechfield is a prison in a small city. Consequently, staff and former prisoners were more likely than Chestnutwood staff and prisoners to encounter each other outside the prison and frequent the same social areas. The probability of Beechfield staff discovering an old school friend was a prisoner was therefore higher and, as a result, it might be considered less serious as it was a common occurrence.

The other element of the scenario was the fact that through disclosing a personal connection with a prisoner, the imaginary staff member would also have to admit to previously using cannabis. Several of the older interview participants expressed concern about younger staff taking recreational drugs and the potential for boundaries to become blurred. As Phil said:

*There are a lot (of staff) who potentially go off from here to somewhere where they don't take it (drugs) but be with a friend who consumes cannabis. And that's the sort of blurring of that sort of personal moral threshold and then they come in here...And they go past a cell and smell cannabis and think 'shall I do anything about it'?*

If Phil's fears were well founded and younger staff were more accepting of drug use and less likely to consider it necessary to disclose their previous drug taking to their manager, the findings should have shown Beechfield staff regarding the wrongdoing as more serious than Chestnutwood. However the opposite was true - Chestnutwood



staff regarded this scenario as more serious. The findings might be due to the small survey sample or it might be for the reasons suggested above. Further research would be necessary to ascertain if the findings were replicated in different prisons.

### *Assault – Scenario 12*

This scenario should have been perceived as a major infringement as it described a staff member punching a prisoner in the face while the prisoner was restrained by other staff. The assault was therefore not ‘in the heat of the moment’ or in defence and the prisoner could not respond. Although the prisoner was described as someone who had attacked a number of staff over a period of time, the assault by the staff member was in response to the prisoner punching a female member of staff. To reinforce the scenario as one of retaliation (as opposed to authorised use of force), the staff member says ‘Hurts, doesn’t it?’ as he punches the restrained prisoner in the face. This scenario had the greatest discrepancy in seriousness ranking between the two prison sites, although perceptions of whether it was against prison policy and willingness to report were similar. The scenario was ranked as fifth most serious by Beechwood respondents but twelfth by Chestnutwood, giving an overall ranking of tenth most serious. Although it was recognised as against prison policy, over 10% of Chestnutwood staff said they did not consider this was serious behaviour and over 15% stated they would not report it.

The issue of staff assaults on prisoners was discussed during the interviews. Manager John described the difficulty of establishing if excess force was used during a restraint:

*I’ve seen staff get the red mist in an incident. I’ve never seen an out-and-out assault but I have seen staff under the effects of adrenaline and the red mist. It’s always been that grey area that it was a legitimate use of force but the subjective element of whether it was proportionate, it was in that grey area.*

However, Chestnutwood officer Maurice was more forthright about his views on whether retaliation by an officer on a prisoner who had assaulted a member of staff could be justified:

*If that prisoner has assaulted an officer and is then punched [by an officer], ... it would be nothing wrong for me.*

Unlawful assault is specifically excluded from HMPPS definition of corruption. Instead, it is regarded purely as a criminal offence on the basis “it is not motivated by gain ... actual or perceived” (HMPPS 2022a, p.8). However, excessive use of force is specifically identified as a type of wrongdoing. Use of Force is a core part of staff basic training and is detailed in a 20 page Use of Force Policy.<sup>20</sup> Whether or not punching a restrained prisoner in the face is perceived as a type of corruption (which Officer Maurice didn’t, although Goldsmith et al. (2016) do), it is clearly a type of wrongdoing as the force was not necessary and was excessive in the circumstances.

Excessive use of force against prisoners by staff is not unusual and is still documented in many countries. The Queensland Crime Commission (2018) found that 58% of prisoners and 20% of staff had seen a staff member physically assault or use excessive force against a prisoner in the six months prior to completing the Commission’s survey. In England and Wales, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2020) highlighted the “unjustified violence by staff on prisoners” in two of the prisons they visited, in particular “punching compliant prisoners whom staff perceived might, at some point in the future, become a threat” (Council of Europe 2020, p.22). The official figures for the number of staff investigated for assault/unnecessary force on a prisoner has been rising. In 2014/15 it was 104, by 2020/21 it was 288 (MoJ 2023a). These official figures only include those staff who were reported and who remained long enough in the prison service to be subject to a disciplinary investigation so they are not a true reflection of the extent of assaults on prisoners by staff.

The academic literature on officer brutality is scarce. Worley et al. (2021) relied on press reports and settlement figures paid to prisoners victimised by officers to provide some context to their study on the mistreatment of prisoners by staff. As a

---

<sup>20</sup> HMPPS Use of Force Policy Framework (2023) distinguishes between force used in self-defence and force because a prisoner refused to obey a lawful order. The force has to be ‘proportionate to the threat posed’ and ‘no more force than is necessary shall be used’ (p5).

result of their findings, Worley et al. concluded that “the excessive use of force by correctional officers against inmates continues to persist” (2021, p.506). Worley et al.(2021) acknowledge that staff use of excessive force on prisoners is no longer as prevalent as it was when Marquart conducted his study in 1986 when physical aggression towards prisoners was not only encouraged but rewarded.

Worley et al. (2021) found that job dissatisfaction, perceived boundary violations of colleagues, lack of supervisor support and lack of family support were all positively correlated with officers ignoring prisoner mistreatment. Older, female officers were least likely to support mistreatment, as were experienced male officers. This research was based on data from one officer training workshop in Texas so the findings may lack generalisability but, as will be seen in the next chapter, the factors identified by Worley et al. (2021) are similar to the factors associated with staff wrongdoing found in this study.

The use of force against prisoners is related to the need to demonstrate dominance of the staff group over the prisoner, it can be a situation where legitimate use of force becomes excessive or unreasonable, it can include sexual assault and it can arise from turning a ‘blind eye’ to assault between prisoners (Goldsmith et al. 2016). The scenario in this study falls into the first category – to demonstrate dominance and to exact retribution for the assault on a colleague. The assault on a member of staff by a prisoner is perceived as a challenge to authority which needs to be punished both to reinstate control over the perpetrator and to reinforce working solidarity (Holdaway 1983; Kauffman 1988). The use of force in these circumstances is therefore both instrumental and symbolic.

Another relevant factor in considering the difference in the responses between Beechfield and Chestnutwood staff could be the levels of violence in each prison. In the last 12 years prisoner assaults on staff have increased by over 250%.<sup>21</sup> Half of Band 3-5 staff do not feel safe at work (Justice Committee 2023). This huge increase

---

<sup>21</sup> In 2010 there were 2,848 assaults on prison staff of which 302 were classified as serious. In the 12 months prior to September 2022, there were 7,356 assaults on staff of which 721 were serious (HMPPS Jan 2023).

has not been experienced at all prisons. The 2023 HMIP report for Beechfield described the levels of violence as 'low' as against staff (less than 20), as opposed to the 2021 Chestnutwood HMIP report where over 130 assaults had been reported against staff in the previous 12 months. As Chestnutwood holds three times as many prisoners as Beechfield, the greater levels of violence cannot be solely accounted for by the difference in size of each establishment. Where prison staff fear for their physical safety, there can be a greater need to use force to control conditions and to deter prisoners from assaulting staff (Ben-David et al. 1996). On the basis of the findings in this survey it appears that where rates of violence in a prison are high, staff are more likely to use force to reinstate control and authority, and assertions of control are, as Maurice believed, regarded as morally acceptable even if *prima facie* unlawful.

#### *Major infringements- Scenarios 3,6,10,14 and 16*

These scenarios were perceived as serious wrongdoings for different reasons. All of the behaviours were recognised as against prison policy. Posting a letter for a prisoner (S3) is an example of wrongdoing used widely in initial counter corruption training. It was ranked fourth across both prisons although more Chestnutwood staff (97.40%) than Beechfield staff (87.10%) considered it was definitely serious. This might be due to the greater proportion of recently recruited staff in Chestnutwood who should more easily recall the initial training. The risks of accepting an ex-prisoner as a social media 'friend' (S6) was also recognised by more Chestnutwood staff (87.20%), possibly for the same reason or because the Chestnutwood sample was younger and more likely to be 'tech savvy'.

Stealing a prisoner's property (S14) was ranked third most serious. This behaviour is not just violating professional boundaries, it is a criminal offence and (given their professional experience working with prisoners convicted of theft) should be recognised as a criminal offence by all respondents. This scenario was drafted to reflect the Klockars et al. (1997, 2004) 'theft from a wallet' scenario where an officer finds a wallet in a parking lot, takes the money but hands the wallet into lost property. My equivalent prison situation was where a prisoner had been deported leaving an X-box behind him and the officer clearing the cell kept the X-box for himself. In theory, the X-box should have been parcelled up with the prisoner's other property

and deported with him. In reality, property belonging to prisoners often fails to catch up with their owner, the chances of this happening to a deportee would be even higher. So this scenario presented a situation where keeping the X-box was clearly theft but the behaviour could be more easily justified by the officer on the basis the X-box would probably never be reunited with the prisoner.

I had predicted that the failure to report the passing of a suspicious package from a prison manager to a prisoner known to be connected to organised crime would be considered the most serious of the scenarios, especially as the manager had been seen talking with the prisoner on a regular basis (S16). However, although 100% of Chestnutwood staff perceived it as serious, only 89.7% of Beechfield considered it definitely serious. A tentative theory for this difference between the prisons could be due to the fact that illegal drugs are not considered a major problem in Beechfield so staff might be less suspicious about the contents of the package than in Chestnutwood.

One unexpected result was that the failure to self-report an unintentional mobile phone communication with a prisoner (S10) was ranked most serious by both prisons. The behaviour the respondent was asked to evaluate was not the mobile phone communication (which is illegal, even if unintentional); it was the failure to inform CC when the staff member discovered who they were messaging.<sup>22</sup> Despite this, 100% of staff in both prisons considered the behaviour 'definitely serious' with a correspondingly high willingness to report. In the scenario, the prisoner retained the mobile phone, so it is therefore possible that respondents considered it was likely the failure to self-report would be discovered and the consequences for the imaginary

---

<sup>22</sup> It is an offence under S40D of the Prison Act 1952 (as amended by the Crime and Security Act 2010) for a person to transmit any image, sound or information from inside a prison by electronic device. This includes text messages. S40D could be interpreted to include a person outside the prison calling a mobile phone in the possession of a prisoner as they have caused the prisoner to transmit a message. It is also possible that criminal liability as an accessory could apply to the person outside the prison. This has resulted in prison sentences for law staff who communicated with their client who was using an illegal mobile phone in prison (BBC News 2013; Yip 2020).

officer would be serious. However, the majority of the scenarios included the possibility that the prisoner could have reported on the staff member. Another possible explanation could be that the failure to self-report the phone communication necessarily represented a failure to report on the location of a mobile phone in a cell which could present an ongoing risk of the phone being used to commit crimes.

#### **4.4 Perceptions of the extent of corruption**

Section three of the survey asked about the perceptions of the extent of corruption of uniformed and non-uniformed staff. The types of behaviour listed in section three were serious types of wrongdoing. They included trafficking of phones and drugs, bringing in money for prisoners, accepting a gift from a prisoner, allowing prisoners to possess contraband, inappropriate relationships and turning a blind eye to any of these behaviours. Despite the seriousness of these behaviours, there was widespread recognition that prison staff were actively engaged in corrupt activities (Table 7).<sup>23</sup>

As with the other sections of the survey, there were no demographic differences in response as between gender, age, length of service, but there was a difference between the research sites. As the results in Table 7 show, all Chestnutwood (the larger prison in a large city) respondents believed a proportion of uniformed staff were engaged in corrupt activities. The majority of those who provided a response considered that less than one quarter of uniformed staff were corrupt although almost 20% believed more than one quarter had smuggled in drugs and 23% believed more than a quarter of uniformed staff had smuggled in phones. The figures were very similar for non-uniformed staff (Appendix F). These opinions were not shared by Beechfield respondents who perceived a lower level of corruption in their prison. However, even in Beechfield, only 30% of respondents believed no staff smuggled in drugs and the percentage was even lower for the other forms of corruption.

---

<sup>23</sup> Findings for non-uniformed staff are very similar and can be found at Appendix F.

During the interview Dan, a security officer at Chestnutwood told me that, in his opinion, for every 100 staff in the prison that day, 20 would have turned a blind eye to corruption or transferred money for a prisoner although he believed fewer staff were engaged in trafficking. Maurice, a Chestnutwood officer who still worked on the wings was more pessimistic. He explained how:

*When I joined, they were talking about corrupt officers and they said I'd know when they were corrupt and I thought how would I know? I didn't know how I could tell ... Then after I got used to the environment, now it's really obvious. ...if you add in drugs, the steroids, the phones [and inappropriate relationships] then it [the number of corrupt officers] could easily go over 25%.*

This pessimistic view was shared by officer Yvette, also based at Chestnutwood. Yvette believed that more than one quarter of uniformed staff smuggled in phones. She thought the number of staff engaged in drug trafficking would be lower as phones were not illegal outside prison. Yvette also estimated that more than half of staff had accepted a gift from a prisoner or their family which she believed “used to be quite common.”

Freedom of Information Act replies from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ 2023a) reveal that in 2020/21 a total of 394 out of approximately 27,158 prison operational staff Bands 2-5 were investigated for types of misconduct studied in this research (assault on a prisoner, corruption, inappropriate relationship with prisoner/ex-prisoner, trafficking, unauthorised disclosure of official information), with a further 693 investigated for ‘unprofessional conduct’ which excluded misconduct such as lateness or abuse of sick leave. This figure fell slightly to 342 in 2021/22 with a further 621 investigated for ‘unprofessional conduct’ but rose again to 380 in 2022/23 with 582 investigated for ‘unprofessional conduct’ out of a workforce of 28,717 Band 2-5 officers (HMPPS 2023f).

There is clearly a huge disparity between the number of staff subject to a formal investigation and the opinion of serving prison staff as to the extent of wrongdoing, leading to the conclusion that either a great many corrupt staff are not caught or they are dealt with informally, or they are allowed to resign before an investigation is completed. It is argued that the findings in this study are a more accurate

representation of the perception of the extent of corruption as the respondents had nothing to gain by inflating the figures.

**Table 7: Perceptions of the extent of corruption of uniformed staff**

<b>All staff</b>						
<b>Beechfield</b>						
<b>Chestnutwood</b>						
How many uniformed staff have engaged in these activities?			Valid	Percentages		
	None	Less than 1/4	1/4-1/2	1/2-3/4	More than 3/4	Not sure
Smuggled in drugs	<b>13.00</b>	<b>47.80</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>5.80</b>	<b>26.10</b>
	30.00	40.00	0.00	3.30	0.00	26.70
	<b>0.00</b>	<b>53.80</b>	<b>7.70</b>	<b>1.80</b>	<b>10.30</b>	<b>25.60</b>
Smuggled in phones	<b>10.10</b>	<b>47.80</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>5.80</b>	<b>27.50</b>
	23.30	46.70	0.00	3.30	0.00	26.70
	<b>0.00</b>	<b>48.70</b>	<b>7.70</b>	<b>5.10</b>	<b>10.30</b>	<b>28.20</b>
Brought in money for prisoners	<b>15.90</b>	<b>39.10</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>34.80</b>
	33.30	30.00	0.00	3.30	0.00	33.30
	<b>2.60</b>	<b>46.20</b>	<b>7.70</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>5.10</b>	<b>35.90</b>
Accepted a gift from prisoners/their family	<b>11.60</b>	<b>33.30</b>	<b>11.60</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>34.80</b>
	26.70	26.70	6.70	3.30	0.00	36.70
	<b>0.00</b>	<b>38.50</b>	<b>15.40</b>	<b>5.10</b>	<b>7.70</b>	<b>33.30</b>
Allowed prisoners to possess contraband	<b>10.10</b>	<b>33.30</b>	<b>10.10</b>	<b>8.70</b>	<b>7.20</b>	<b>30.40</b>
	23.30	33.30	6.70	3.30	0.00	33.30
	<b>0.00</b>	<b>33.30</b>	<b>12.80</b>	<b>12.80</b>	<b>12.80</b>	<b>28.20</b>
Formed inappropriate relationship	<b>8.70</b>	<b>49.30</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>5.80</b>	<b>27.50</b>
	20.00	50.00	0.00	3.30	0.00	26.70
	<b>0.00</b>	<b>48.70</b>	<b>7.70</b>	<b>5.10</b>	<b>10.30</b>	<b>28.20</b>
Turned a blind eye to the above	<b>11.60</b>	<b>27.50</b>	<b>13.00</b>	<b>11.60</b>	<b>5.80</b>	<b>30.40</b>
	23.30	30.00	6.70	6.70	0.00	33.30
	<b>2.60</b>	<b>25.60</b>	<b>17.90</b>	<b>15.40</b>	<b>10.30</b>	<b>28.20</b>

Although all interview participants were confident in their ability to recognise corrupt behaviours, they were experienced staff and most of them worked in the security department or were management. They are therefore not representative of the whole workforce in either prison. Although there is no way of proving whether or not the survey respondents had engaged in corruption, it would be reasonable to assume that those who were knowingly engaged in corruption would not have completed the



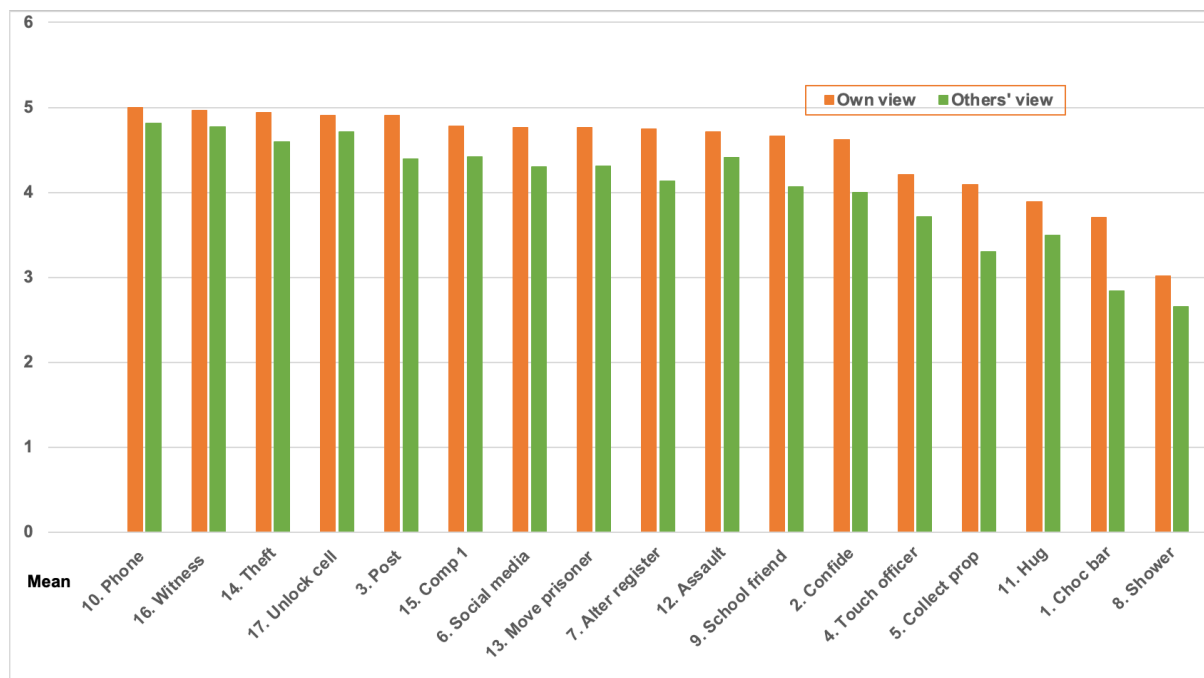
survey. As the findings are likely to represent the views of non-corrupt staff, it is significant that they nevertheless believe corruption is widespread.

#### **4.5 How respondents view other staff**

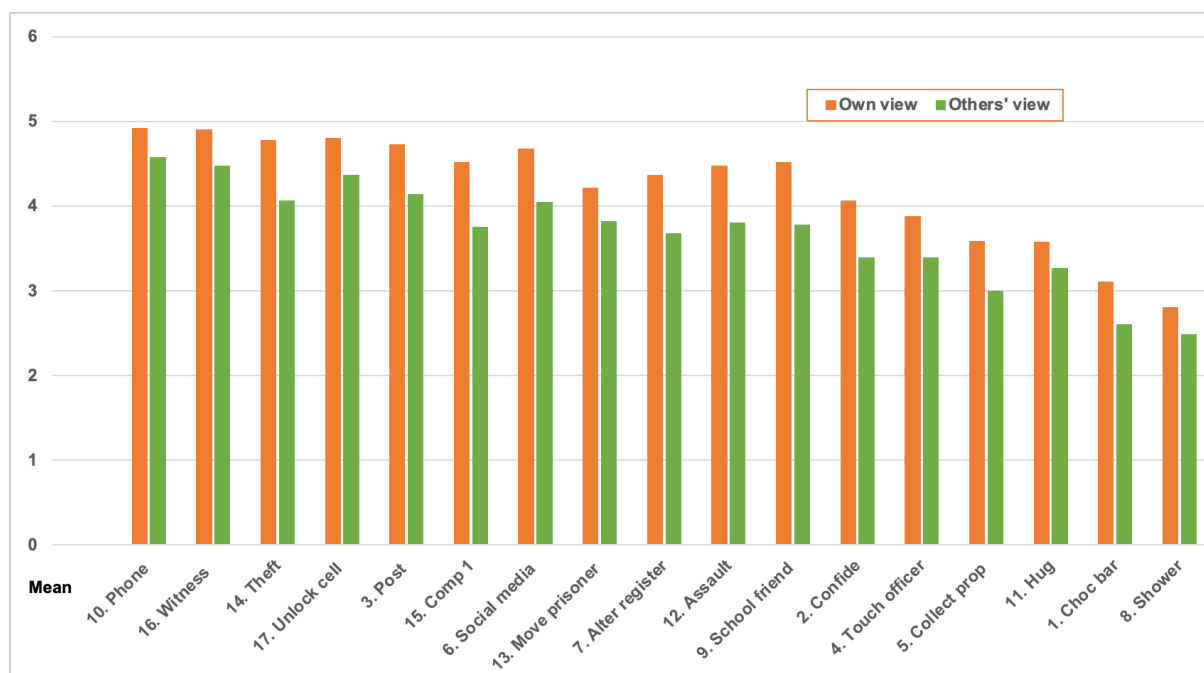
Klockars et al.(2004) explained that they included questions about how respondents thought their colleagues would respond in order to test the respondents' knowledge of the police rules, as opposed to asking respondents to imagine how they themselves would respond. These 'other view' questions have consistently been included in subsequent policing research (for example, Kutnjak Ivkovic 2005b; Kutnjak Ivkovic and Shelley 2008; Prenzler 2009; Vito et al. 2011; Gottschalk 2010; Kutnjak Ivkovic and Khechumyan 2014; Porter et al. 2015). Even recent researchers who sought to test the validity of the Klockars et al. approach continued to include the 'other view' questions (Hickman 2016a; Alain et al. 2018). One consistent finding from the Klockars et al. approach has been that respondents believed other staff would consider the scenarios less serious and would be less willing to report wrongdoing than the respondents themselves. As can be seen from Figures 4 (perceptions of seriousness) and 5 (willingness to report) these findings were replicated on every scenario in this study. Although Figures 4 and 5 show the mean scores across both prisons, a close examination of Table 4 in paragraph 4.2 above reveals that these discrepancies were found in both prisons on every scenario.

The reasons for respondents believing themselves to be more likely to perceive a scenario as serious and be more willing to report it than their colleagues have not been discussed in any detail in the policing studies. Some scholars have theorised that respondents believe they are more ethical than their colleagues (Klockars et al. 2004b; Porter et al. 2015; Kutnjak Ivkovic et al. 2015). Or, as Porter et al. (2015) argue, the difference in willingness to report could also suggest respondents feel that while other staff might subscribe to a 'code of silence', they themselves would be less likely to do so (Porter et al. 2015).

**Figure 4. Mean scores for respondents' perception of seriousness and opinion of colleagues' perception of seriousness**



**Figure 5: Mean scores for respondents' willingness to report and opinion of colleagues' willingness to report**



It is possible that as the survey respondents in this study were unlikely to have engaged in corruption, they would consider themselves as more ethical than their colleagues. However, they would still be aware of the levels of corruption in their establishment and attribute corrupt behaviour to their colleagues, hence the finding that they perceived corruption was widespread (Table 7).

Maurice was one of the few interview participants who worked on the wings. He felt that corruption was widespread and that new staff in particular were willing to openly engage in corruption. Our exchange was revealing:

*Maurice: And I feel the newer officers don't even attempt to hide it. It's blatant.*

*Me: Really? Bringing in drugs and phones?*

*Maurice: Anything, being corrupt, like you might not know they brought it in today but you know they are corrupt, or they are the one to watch.*

If wrongdoing is 'blatant' and officers 'don't attempt to hide it', one conclusion which could be drawn is that some types of wrongdoing have become accepted behaviour and have been normalised. The other conclusion is the newer officers assume the other staff will ignore what they are doing and turn a blind eye. It is not possible for any theory to be drawn from one participant in this study but this is an area which should be the subject of further research.

The findings suggest that corruption is perceived to be widespread and respondents believe their colleagues less ethical than they are themselves. This is a problem for prison management. If individuals believe that wrongdoing in their workplace is systemic, they are more likely to engage in corruption themselves (Tavits 2010). Furthermore, the perception that colleagues engage in wrongdoing helps to normalise these acts in the prison and makes them more acceptable to other staff (Worley and Worley 2013). Wrongdoing can also be more easily neutralised as 'everyone else is doing it' (Coleman 1994) and 'no one cares' (Shigihara 2013). In countries such as Pakistan and India where police corruption is described as 'endemic' (Chattha and Kutnjak Ivkovic 2004), corruption is not recognised as a violation of official rules, instead there are unofficial rules where corrupt behaviour flourishes and is not reported on. In these police forces, although corruption is

recognised and condemned, the condemnation is in the abstract as the reality is there appears to be no choice but to participate in corrupt acts due to workplace norms (Jauregui 2014).

Although the findings in this study do not suggest that prison staff corruption in England and Wales is endemic to the same extent police corruption is in India and Pakistan, the findings do suggest that some wrongdoing behaviours are not understood or perceived to be serious. Nor is it understood by prison staff how such behaviours can lead to more serious wrongdoing. Even if only low level wrongdoing becomes normalised, there is potential for it to become embedded to the point it is not recognised as wrongdoing and for the integrity of the prison to be undermined. Turning around an organisation where corrupt behaviour is normalised is a huge task for any institution, particularly where there are seemingly so few resources to address the underlying causes and senior management might not want to publicly acknowledge the extent of corruption amongst their staff.

#### **4.6 The dangers of failing to recognise where minor wrongdoing can lead**

The findings from the scenario questions have been used to create a typology of wrongdoing. On average respondents recognised that all the scenarios were a type of wrongdoing but the range of responses varied from a mean of below 4 for the least serious through to a maximum score of 5 for the most serious. It is understandable that some prison staff might ignore what they regard as minor boundary violations to secure compliance in other areas and to maintain the flow of prison life (Sykes 1958). However, these concessions (or corruptions as Sykes called them) can lead to the slippery slope of more serious forms of wrongdoing. (Marquart et al. 2001; Worley and Cheeseman 2006; Worley and Worley 2013).

If the slippery slope argument propounded by police researchers (for example Sherman, 1974; Ruiz and Bono; 2004; Coleman, 2004a) is applicable to prisons, the question is why some staff are willing to engage in even minor wrongdoing, seemingly unaware of the dangers of the slippery slope. One of the reasons (discussed in detail in the next chapter) identified through this study is naivety – where the individual staff member lacks the knowledge and training to realise that what they were doing amounted to a boundary violation. However, not all staff are

naïve and most survey respondents knew the types of wrongdoing were against prison policy. The respondents realised the hypothetical officer was breaking or, at the very least, bending the rules. In real life situations, a staff member who breaks or bends prison rules needs to be able to justify or 'neutralise' their actions to themselves. The five techniques of neutralisation originally identified by Sykes and Matza (1957) have been expanded by subsequent scholars including Minor (1981), Coleman (1994) and Shigihara (2013) and have been described in paragraph 2.11.3 in chapter two. In terms of minor wrongdoings, the most likely justifications employed by individuals would be the denial of responsibility (the prison is badly managed and I have to bend the rules to get things done) and the justification that 'everyone else is doing it'. Whichever neutralisations are employed, if a staff member is able to justify their behaviour without considering the impact of their actions, their professional boundary has not just been blurred, it has been crossed.

More serious wrongdoing can also be neutralised through denying responsibility for the outcome. John gave an example of how he thought some staff justified smuggling in tobacco which, while still legal in wider society, is now against prison rules for staff and prisoners:

*They (staff traffickers) still see people being beaten up in prison over a cigarette so it boggles my mind that they bring it in and think they are dissociated from the result of that. Like, 'I'm just bringing it in, it's their responsibility if they fight over it or kill each other over it, it's not my problem'.*

Other participants realised that some individuals might justify their wrongdoing for different reasons, for example to protect their family. Officer Yvette strongly articulated her loathing of corruption and her awareness of the damage it could cause but she realised that:

*Some people say they would never become corrupt but everyone has their price and the capacity. Whether it is because their family are held at gunpoint ... it's about those people who have lower thresholds.*

On the basis of the findings in this study, it appears that the under-enforcement of rules might mean crossing professional boundaries to offer support to a vulnerable prisoner by giving them a hug or shaking hands to accept an apology, but sometimes

it can mean neutralising the effects of more serious wrongdoing, of justifying an assault or turning a blind eye to drug use. In the end, staff have to balance on the seesaw pivot between control and care. This feat is challenging for any prison staff, particularly for staff who are young and inexperienced. It takes years of jailcraft knowledge for staff to have the confidence to be able to:

*....sit in here and ... rely on your experience, your intelligence, your rapport with prisoners, your own personal sense of morality and ... make your own personal threshold of where you draw the line (Yvette).*

One of the problems for HMPPS which is repeatedly referred to throughout this thesis is the lack of experienced staff, the failure to retain staff and the low age of new recruits. As an officer in her thirties with 12 years' experience, Yvette felt able to rely on her experience and her sense of personal morality. However, it is highly unlikely that an 18 year old in their first year of service has the knowledge or experience of working in the prison, or even in life, to know how to establish and maintain professional boundaries in the challenging workplace they find themselves in. As George S noted:

*A newer staff member may not be aware of the dangers [of going into a cell alone].*

With the percentage of prison officers with less than three years' experience constantly increasing while the percentage of officers with over 10 years' experience decreases, the number of staff being unaware of the dangers of engaging in wrongdoing is also likely to increase.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> As at June 2024, the percentage of Band 3-5 prison officers with less than three years' experience rose to 41.5% from 36.3% at 30 June 2023. This was due to a high number of new joiners. The percentage of Band 3-5 officers with 10 years plus experience decreased to 25% compared to 29.8% in June 2023 (HMPPS 2024d).

## 4.7 Conclusion

The police integrity methodology employed by Klockars et al. (1997, 2004) has been repeatedly tested for validity and/or reliability. Comparative studies provide consistent findings in terms of relative evaluations of seriousness and willingness to report (Kutnjak Ivkovic and Haberfeld 2019). Despite the relatively small sample size in this study and the considerable differences between the two prisons in terms of size, location, levels of violence and staff demographics, the findings evidence there was a common understanding of the hierarchy of the seriousness of wrongdoing in both Chestnutwood and Beechfield. Furthermore, the perceptions of seriousness and willingness to report were positively correlated on every scenario. The high rank-order correlation in responses to the survey questions across all five questions suggests that the survey instrument measured prison staff intolerance for wrongdoing. However, respondents in smaller Beechfield rated 11 out of the 17 scenarios as more serious than Chestnutwood and rated the assault scenario as fifth most serious as opposed to twelfth by Chestnutwood respondents. I suggested that one reason for this was the greater levels of violence in Chestnutwood. A greater percentage of Chestnutwood staff also perceived that corruption was more prevalent than Beechfield staff. These findings are consistent with other studies which have established that larger prisons tend to be more violent and more corrupt (Goldsmith 2020).

Willingness to report was lower than perceived seriousness on every scenario. This might be due to a 'code of silence and solidarity' amongst staff but, as I will argue in chapter six, there appear to be more significant barriers to reporting wrongdoing in prisons. Regardless, of the reasons for a lack of willingness to report wrongdoing, the reticence of staff to report on colleagues inevitably leads to an underestimation of the prevalence of wrongdoing in prisons. The only information concerning HMPPS statistics as to the extent of wrongdoing were from replies to the Freedom of Information requests. These figures represent the 'tip of the iceberg' as they only include those staff who were caught and were then subjected to a disciplinary investigation. It would be necessary to conduct an analysis of counter corruption and intelligence reports over a set period of time in order to gain more in depth knowledge on the true extent of wrongdoing in prisons. In the meantime, the findings

in this study suggest that prison staff believe corruption is widespread and even 'blatant.'

The findings from the survey data were used to create a typology of seriousness of wrongdoing which assists in identifying types of behaviours which were most likely and least likely to be perceived and understood as wrongdoing. Through measuring perceptions of wrongdoing using an ethical attitudinal survey in other prisons, it would be possible to compare findings between different prisons within the prison estate. Future research could make comparisons between private and public sector prisons, male and female prisons, youth offender institutions and prisons with different functions. Once these findings have been collated, it would be possible to measure changes in perceptions over time and in response to new counter corruption initiatives. Specific policies could then be formulated to target types of wrongdoing which are currently ignored by the CC Policy as well as identify types of wrongdoing where there was a low willingness to report.

Despite the findings that staff perceive corruption in their prisons to be widespread and believe that their colleagues are less ethical than they themselves are, it is not plausible or alleged that all staff are corrupt. One key question is what makes one person engage in corruption and another one resist it. The next chapter will explore the factors which influence this decision making.



## **Chapter Five: Crossing professional boundaries: victims or villains?**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter analysed how prison staff understand and perceive different types of wrongdoing. Based on the findings, a typology of seriousness was developed. In theory, all of the prison scenarios in the survey should have been recognised by staff as boundary violations. As discussed, even minor boundary violations have the potential to lead to more serious wrongdoing. Jones (2013) gives an example where sharing food with a prisoner can create jealousy between different prisoner groups because of perceived favouritism. Preferential treatment can also lead to friendship and/or it can compromise the staff member's position if, as is the case in some prisons in England and Wales, sharing food with prisoners is against prison policy.

In his seminal work on prisons Sykes (1958) argued that the day-to-day realities of prison life encourages a norm of reciprocity in which officers overlook minor violations in exchange for compliance in major areas. He also argued that prison officers hold conflicting loyalties and pressures: wanting to be seen as 'nice' while maintaining authority but also finding a sympathetic prisoner to express their dissatisfaction about management. Modern prisons in England and Wales are very different to the New Jersey State maximum security prison in which Sykes conducted his fieldwork over fifty years ago, but the problems of maintaining professional boundaries and conflicting roles have still not been resolved.

The questions addressed in this chapter are: Why and how are some prison staff willing to blur or violate professional boundaries and which factors make an individual more likely to engage in wrongdoing? The findings identify a number of individual, organisational and societal, factors which influence individual decision making. The chapter concludes with the proposal of a new framework in which to understand the different motivating factors for different types of prison staff wrongdoers. One of the first issues to consider is whether prison staff know where the boundary lines should be drawn and identifying the factors which increase the likelihood they will be violated.

## 5.2 Boundary violations

The interview participants in this study all had over three years' experience and the majority either worked in the security department or were management. It was not unexpected that most of them considered it should be straightforward to know where professional boundaries should be drawn. However, they acknowledged that less experienced staff might be less certain of where the boundaries lay and agreed it would be easy for professional boundaries to be violated. Despite years of experience working in prisons, John admitted:

*It's really easy for the boundaries to become blurred ... I think it's just human nature where people are working and living together in close proximity for periods of time. And it can be quite innocent, with no malice or intent, that over time those boundaries become eroded.*

This proximity is one reason why staff-prisoner relationships can go wrong – they can be too close, too informal, lack boundaries and professional distance (Liebling 2011a). Some survey respondents were willing to admit that:

*I feel it is difficult to know what the boundaries are because not every staff member has the same training (Alison S).*

The theme of lack of training came up repeatedly in the findings of my research. It was not just lack of initial training, it was also the lack of ongoing training and the lack of experienced staff to provide guidance and advice for the everyday situations new staff would find themselves in. One problem for staff without knowledge and experience is the way the close working proximity between prison staff and prisoners can lead to over familiarity with prisoners. This can, in turn, be associated with an increased risk of grooming and conditioning of staff. In their book *Games Criminals Play* Allen and Bosta (1981) identified steps which prisoners use to 'set-up' a member of staff for corruption through first blurring professional boundaries, then violating them. The first steps are observations of body language, listening to staff conversations and watching which staff violate minor rules. The next steps involve putting a distance between the victim and their colleagues because once a staff member is isolated and talking to prisoners more than their colleagues, they are easier to corrupt. This risk was noted in my study by Dave:

*... That [isolation] makes them more likely to be disillusioned and confide and trust in prisoners and that takes them down that path and that gets more and more serious.*

Once the prisoner has isolated the staff member and built up their trust, they then move on to test limits through small infractions like minor physical contacts before going on to request a larger favour.

This grooming process takes time. In theory, there should be less opportunity for prisoners to be able to groom prison staff in local prisons holding a predominantly remand population than in prisons with a longer term population. However, the number of remand prisoners awaiting trial is at the highest level it has been for 50 years and they are being held for longer periods of time, often beyond the statutory limit (Justice Committee 2023). Consequently, some prisoners will work alongside the same staff for months even in local prisons, giving them the same opportunities to groom staff as those found in prisons with more settled prisoner populations.

The fact that the personal problems of staff (financial and emotional) become known to prisoners was not a surprise to participants, as prisoners have plenty of time to observe staff and to listen to staff talking, a point noted by several participants:

*Prisoners are incredibly adept at identifying vulnerabilities in staff (Phil).*

*A prisoner has a lot of time to watch staff actions and pick up on weak spots. Staff like to talk about personal stuff in public spaces that prisoners can hear them, this includes places like staff offices and the wing landing (Julie S).*

During my IMB visits I regularly saw prisoner cleaners out of their cells while the rest of the wing was locked up. During these periods it was often easy to hear conversations between staff from one end of the landing to the other and it would be very easy for prisoners to listen in on conversations and obtain personal information about staff. The risk of prisoners eavesdropping on staff conversations is something healthcare worker Helen commented on about the prisoners who worked in the healthcare centre as cleaners:

*So they [cleaners] can overhear staff talking to each other ...they can hear someone asking about where someone else lives ... So staff think ... they are just talking to each other and they are unawares [of eavesdroppers].*

As discussed in paragraph 5.6.1 below, it is also easy for prisoners to access staff social media accounts to obtain personal information. Through obtaining personal information, prisoners can identify staff vulnerabilities, personal problems and those who seemed isolated from their team. This information can be used by prisoners to become more friendly towards staff through apparently sharing common interests and/or the information can be used to blackmail or threaten staff. Both tactics can lead to a blurring of boundaries.

Obtaining enhanced positions which allows greater time out of cell and therefore maximises contact time with staff was the aim of many prisoners, both for *bona fide* reasons to make serving time more bearable but also for more nefarious reasons. After working in prisons for over 10 years, including several years as a security governor, Dave knew that some of the best behaved and trusted prisoners might have ulterior motives and be positioning themselves in order to manipulate staff in the future. This manipulation could even extend to 'manufacturing' a fight so the prisoner could appear to break it up, thereby increasing the staff trust in the prisoner and instil a sense of obligation:

*If prisoners are helpful or make you feel a bit safer at work then I think that can really sway your perception of them and lead you to becoming compromised (Dave).*

Although not all enhanced prisoners try to corrupt staff, it has long been recognised that the main drug dealers are rarely troublemakers, instead they are polite and compliant. Consequently, staff are sometimes willing to turn a blind eye to their activities in return for keeping the wing quiet (Crewe 2005; Gooch and Treadwell 2024). Interview participants in my study also recognised that many of the 'big players' managed to obtain enhanced positions of trust in order to blur professional boundaries with a view to violating boundaries:

*The prisoners who are probably the most influential in the establishment for dealing drugs tend to get on with staff the most. They get themselves into*

*those positions that they can condition staff; they do everything they are told to get themselves into positions where they can do things they shouldn't be doing ....I suppose it's human nature, you end up trusting people you get on well with and you're shocked when you find out that it's not what they are really like (Dan).*

I was able to experience this first hand at the prison where I was on the IMB. During rota visits I would often talk to a friendly prisoner cleaner working in reception. Needless to say, this role requires a high level of security clearance due to proximity with prisoners entering and leaving the prison. He would assure me how much he appreciated his role, describing it as the 'best job in the prison' as it meant being out of cell from first thing in the morning until the evening, including Saturdays. One day the prisoner was no longer in reception as it had been discovered he was trafficking drugs into the prison. On another occasion I had a long conversation with a young man who worked in the kitchen. He was polite, articulate and well presented. He told me it was easy to gain a trusted job if you were helpful and no trouble to officers. A month later he escaped by holding on to the bottom of a delivery van leading to a national police search.

### **5.3 Which factors increase staff vulnerabilities to engage in wrongdoing?**

It is in the interest of organisations to blame deviant individuals for serious wrongdoing rather than to admit to organisational failures and/or that deviance had become systemic. Through removing the individual, the problem can be presented as 'solved'. This approach has been consistently applied in situations involving prison and police wrongdoing. As Punch (2003. p.172) noted, police forces employed a 'rotten apple' metaphor where blame for wrongdoing was attributed to "the deviant cop who slips into bad ways and contaminates the other essentially good officers.". However, as discussed in chapter two, academics have described this approach as inadequate and have argued it is instead necessary to recognise the role played by broader systemic factors which create the conditions for corruption to flourish (Albanese and Artello 2018). To return to Punch's metaphor, the impact of the organisational 'barrel' and societal 'orchard' is essential to understand how organisational wrongdoing can become systemic (Punch 2003; Goldsmith et al. 2016). However, the culture of blaming individuals for wrongdoing

has persisted in police forces as a substitute for examining wider organisational failings (Farrow 2024) and appears to continue to underpin HMPPS's Counter Corruption (CC) Policy. The findings in this study identified individual vulnerability factors but also organisational and societal factors which are equally if not more important in influencing an individual's propensity to wrongdoing. Each of these factors will be considered.

## **5.4 Individual factors**

People are not '*tabulae rasae*' when they become prison staff. They have experiences which shape their personalities and their responses to external situations. Some might actively pursue money making opportunities, others might be vulnerable or become vulnerable to wrongdoing for different reasons. This section will first consider which factors increase vulnerability and then the extent to which staff wrongdoers can be regarded as 'victims' or 'villains'.

### **5.4.1 Vulnerability factors**

The survey in this study asked respondents to identify potential vulnerability factors which could motivate corrupt behaviour. These factors included non-shareable problems identified by Worley and Cheeseman (2006) in their study of prison corruption<sup>25</sup> and those included in counter corruption training – for example, personal or financial problems. However, as Table 8 below shows, fewer than 20% of respondents believed corrupt staff have personal problems, 24.6% believed corrupt staff have financial problems and 24.2% believed corrupt staff were under duress. The main reason survey respondents thought other staff engaged in corruption was to make money (60%). Whether this motivation was due primarily to personal greed, personal connections with Organised Criminal Gangs (OCGs) or financial difficulties is an issue which could be explored in future research.

---

<sup>25</sup> Factors which were based on Cressey's 1955 theory that all financial trust violators have non-shareable financial problems

With staff being offered up to £3,000 to smuggle iphones into prisons, equivalent to almost two months wages (Cassidy 2022), it is unsurprising that the temptation to make 'easy money' is too great for some. Survey respondents were particularly candid in their opinions on why staff engaged in corruption:

*It is greed that makes someone vulnerable to wrongdoing (Charlie S).*

*Financial gain opportunity, low risk and low consequences (Emma S).*

*We are paid pennies for the work that we do..., I could see why staff would get their heads turned by earning extra money (Alison S).*

Despite Worley and Worley's (2013) finding that there was a link between perception of higher levels of prison staff deviance and lack of supervisor support (any rank above that of officer), the majority of respondents (69.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed that corrupt staff feel they have enough support from their managers. This could indicate uncertainty about this issue, a concern about expressing a negative opinion about management, or that respondents thought corruption was more likely to be motivated by factors independent of support from management.

Once again, Chestnutwood staff were more cynical than those working at Beechfield. More Chestnutwood respondents considered the main reason for corruption was to make money and fewer believed corrupt staff were vulnerable for any of the suggested options. Despite the belief that corruption was widespread, there was some faith that corrupt staff would be caught: 61% of Beechfield participants disagreed with the statement that the risk of being caught was low and even in more cynical Chestnutwood, 48.7% disagreed with the statement.

Although the CC Policy and training specifically highlights the dangers of inappropriate relationships and is the subject of extensive media coverage on staff inappropriate relationships, only 12.8% of survey respondents agreed that over 25% of staff had engaged in this behaviour. However, the question about the percentage of staff perceived to be in an inappropriate relationship is in a section asking specifically about corruption and vulnerability factors. It is therefore possible that respondents were only thinking about the most serious forms of inappropriate relationships which lead to corruption when providing their answer. Or it could be, as

the findings in chapter four suggest, that staff only regard inappropriate relationships, as those at the ‘serious end’ of the spectrum which involve sexual relations, while failing to recognise that inappropriate relationships can be at the point where being friendly becomes being friends.

**Table 8: Perceived corruption risk and vulnerability factors**

<b>All Staff</b>							
Beechfield							
Chestnutwood							
1 = Strongly Disagree							
5 = Strongly Agree							

Corruption risks/vulnerabilities	Mean	Median	SD	Range		Disagree %	Agree % *
Risk of being caught engaging in corruption is low	2.61	2.00	1.34	4.00		54.3	31.4
	2.29	2.00	1.37	4.00		61.3	25.9
	2.87	3.00	1.28	4.00		48.7	35.9
Main reason for corruption is to make money	3.71	4.00	0.96	4.00		10.0	60.0
	3.52	4.00	1.03	4.00		16.1	54.8
	3.87	4.00	0.89	3.00		5.1	64.1
Most corrupt staff are under duress	2.86	3.00	1.05	4.00		35.7	24.2
	3.19	3.00	0.95	4.00		19.4	32.6
	2.59	3.00	1.07	4.00		48.7	17.9
Over 25% of staff have formed inappropriate relationships	2.26	2.00	1.89	4.00		57.1	12.8
	1.97	2.00	1.05	4.00		71.0	6.4
	2.49	3.00	1.25	4.00		46.2	18.0
Corrupt staff feel not enough management support	2.74	3.00	0.74	3.00		23.2	7.2
	2.90	3.00	0.74	3.00		16.1	12.9
	2.61	3.00	0.76	3.00		28.9	2.6
Corrupt staff have financial problems	3.06	3.00	0.80	4.00		17.4	24.6
	3.29	3.00	0.74	3.00		9.7	32.3
	2.87	3.00	0.81	3.00		23.7	18.4
Corrupt staff have personal problems	3.00	3.00	0.80	4.00		18.8	18.8
	3.26	3.00	0.63	3.00		6.5	29.0
	2.79	3.00	0.88	4.00		28.9	10.6
* Percentages are of those participants who expressed an opinion							



### 5.4.2 Victims or villains?

Several participants, especially those in smaller Beechfield, believed that corrupt staff were more likely to be victims than villains and identified naivety as the main reason for wrongdoing. Naivety could be one way of describing inexperienced staff who lack knowledge and experience. They are vulnerable for no reason apart from their naivety. What these staff need is training, guidance and support from their managers and their colleagues. If they are untrained and unsupervised, inexperienced staff become increasingly vulnerable to crossing professional boundaries through behaviour which might seem innocuous but can lead to boundary violations. Naivety can also influence decision making if a professional boundary is unintentionally violated. If a staff member is unaware of the support which could be offered to them if they have crossed a boundary or if they lack trust in the support system which is available, it is sometimes easier for them to continue over the line rather than seek help or guidance. As Laura noted, the problem is that:

*Every step they take over that line, it just puts them in a position where it gets harder and harder for us to help them, when someone gets into a position where there's no coming back from.*

Naivety was not the only reason which increased staff vulnerability to wrongdoing. Interview participants recognised that 'need as well as greed' could be the motivating factors. Financial problems due to low salaries, demands of family life, the increased cost of living, holidays and the withdrawal of overtime opportunities were all identified as potential triggers to seize an opportunity to make 'easy' money:

*If someone's got themselves in a bit of a hole financially perhaps, doesn't feel able to do the right thing and speak to people at work or outside to get themselves outside the hole, then an opportunity comes up and they stupidly take it. So that's the two things really, naivety and stupidity (Tom).*

There was also an awareness of other factors which could increase staff vulnerability:

*Low self-esteem, financial problems, relationship problems, drugs and/or alcohol issues, the list is endless (Julie S).*

There was considerable sympathy from two female interview participants for staff who were emotionally vulnerable and an understanding of how emotional vulnerability could lead some staff into inappropriate relationships:

*You see where staff have relationships with prisoners, where somebody is giving you the attention you're not having but somebody is giving you that and that's what you crave, then you're already into that spiral before you realise you can't go anywhere (Laura).*

*One of the triggers is being in an abusive relationship as that breaks down your ability to create healthy relationships and it leaves you wanting attention and if you think the only place you feel you can get it is here then you fall into the trap... Sometimes you're not really thinking about what you're doing and what it means if you're in a broken place and a state of psychological fog (Yvette).*

Increased vulnerability due to personal difficulties form the basis of CC training videos which, due to my IMB role, I was able to view as part of the refresher CC training sessions. One of the videos (which are apparently drawn from real life examples) focusses on how a female member of staff who was suffering a marriage breakdown started to drink heavily and due to these problems, formed an inappropriate relationship with two prisoners before smuggling in contraband for the prisoners. A second video describes how a different female member of staff also experienced marriage breakdown and formed an inappropriate relationship with a prisoner who started to blackmail her. Each video referred to the problems coming to light as a result of corruption intelligence reports. The message in the videos is clear – you need to report your own wrongdoing and CC staff can support you. However, as will be discussed in chapter six, several participants expressed their belief that any contact with the CC team would only have negative consequences and there was an unwillingness to report own wrongdoing.

The CC refresher training also identified organisational and situational factors such as the culture of blame, lone working, fear of making mistakes, lack of training and working one to one with prisoners. These inclusions demonstrate that HMPPS is aware that wrongdoing is not due solely to the actions of one 'rotten' individual.

Despite this knowledge it remains the case that the majority of the £100 million funding to 'tackle corruption' appears to have been directed towards the reduction of trafficking contraband through expensive situational crime prevention methods. The CC training also fails to consider the motivational factors which might drive some prisoners to initiate boundary violations which may lead to an inappropriate relationship and/or manipulation and grooming of staff. These prisoner motivational factors include relieving the 'pains of imprisonment' (Sykes 1958) to obtain access to goods and sexual relationships. Or, as an American prison psychologist has argued, some prisoners have a "sole mission in life (which) appeared to be the domination, exploitation and/or humiliation of staff members" (Elliott 2006, p.45). If staff understand the possible motivations behind a prisoner's friendliness/over familiarity, they might be more wary of the 'easy' prisoner who is helpful, communicative and willing to offer a 'sympathetic ear' and the staff member consequently be more conscious of the need to maintain professional boundaries.

Although this thesis has not included an analysis of media coverage of staff wrongdoing, it is worth noting that most of the media coverage about inappropriate relationships seek to attract reader attention with photographs of the (predominantly) young women on trial with no attempt to analyse how the women ended up having sex with a prisoner (for example, Lucas 2019; Kindred 2022; Rogers 2023). An exception to this general trend was when ex-prison officer Ruth Shmylo was acquitted of the offence of Misconduct in a Public Office. Ms Shmylo had been accused of having phone sex with one prisoner. The initial media reports included several photographs of Ms Shmylo with headlines in the Daily Mail, the Mirror, The Sun and The Telegraph describing her as "very pretty" and commenting on her "tight trousers" (Haigh and Elliott 2023; Charsely 2023; Mazzoni 2023; Telegraph newspaper 2023). When Ms Shmylo was acquitted, some media outlets reported on the reasons for her acquittal. It transpired Ms Shmylo had been threatened by the prisoner but she failed to file a report about the threats as she had previously made corruption reports about other staff which resulted in retaliation from her colleagues. This retaliation included being called a 'grass' and being humiliated by other staff. Ms Shmylo's barrister described HMP Parc prison as "rife with corruption and unable to protect either prisoners or staff" (Fahey 2023). This outcome has mixed messages for prison staff: there is hope of exoneration if there are compelling reasons for

entering into an inappropriate relationship but the fear of retaliation for reporting on the wrongdoing of colleagues is based on fact and is not imaginary. This fear is discussed in greater detail in chapter six.

Some staff were vulnerable simply because of where they lived. Since 1998 prison officers have been recruited locally instead of nationally (eliminating the need to provide prison accommodation for staff). In this extract, Yvette explained the impossible situation an officer faced when prisoners realised he came from the same housing estate as them. On the estate, 'grassing' about crimes to police would result in severe repercussions to the officer and/or his family so he agreed to smuggle in contraband, was caught and received a custodial sentence:

*This young man, because he'd grown up in that area and was known by the criminals in there, his family were known, so everyone knows where you live, who your family are and he was the subject of intimidation and threats...So in his world, going to the police wasn't an option. So he did what he felt he needed to do to keep his family safe and he did his time for it and he's out now.*

Staff who find themselves in this invidious situation are, in theory, meant to report the threat to CC staff. However, not only was there a perceived risk to their families and the threat of violence to consider, but, as discussed in paragraph 5.6.1 below, there was also concern the prison would fail to take any action against the prisoner to move them elsewhere or fail in ensuring the prisoner did not return to the same establishment where the member of staff was working.

Despite the traditional narrative that prison staff are innocent victims who are groomed, manipulated and exploited (Allen and Bosta, 1981; Corneilius, 2001; Elliott 2006; Shively 2015; Cooke et al. 2019), recent research has recognised that some prison staff are 'villains' who actively participate in wrongdoing, either by being 'persuaded' by OCGs to join the service or looking for money making opportunities of their own volition (Calhoun and Coleman 2002; Ross 2013; Ross et al. 2016; Treadwell et al. 2019; McCarthy 2019).

Although some 'villains' might decide to engage in corrupt activities to make money as a 'one off', believing there would be a low chance of being caught, they might not

realise they could then be blackmailed into regular wrongdoing. Interview participants explained how being paid to engage in corrupt behaviour as a 'one off' was not an option for staff who 'crossed the line'.

*It won't just be once because people will know you've done it and they'll get their hooks into you and intimidate you into doing more, or you're doing it for emotional, relationship reasons ... that's not going to stop with just one pass but so invariably people do multiple passes and get embroiled in a long term affair (Dave).*

Bert, who had CC experience, knew that:

*Once they've crossed that line, the blackmail, and everything else comes from there. They can't stop, so either we catch them or they go off sick and they finish. They are coming under pressure so they go on the sick long term and then resign. We know they are being blackmailed as it's part of the modus operandi.*

This research did not focus on whether staff were 'villains' from the outset or how 'victims' began their journey towards corruption. Such research would require data from staff who had been investigated for wrongdoing or prosecuted for wrongdoing based offences. Unfortunately, as discussed in chapter three, I was told at the outset of this research that I would not be granted access to serving prisoners who had been convicted of wrongdoing type offences and the NRC refused to allow me to access members of staff investigated for wrongdoing, however illuminating the results might have been. Hence the findings from this study are limited to the opinions of those survey respondents and interview participants, who participated in the research and are unlikely to have engaged in corrupt activities themselves.

## **5.5 Organisational factors**

The findings of this study highlight a number of organisational factors which increase staff vulnerability to wrongdoing, in particular the lack of trust between staff and management. Although staff regarded management as caring more about prison statistics than their staff, the findings revealed how the prison management also felt ignored by those above them in the prison hierarchy.

### 5.5.1 The gulf between management and staff

One key issue highlighted by this research is the hierarchical gulf between those staff working directly with prisoners and governors who are the senior management in each prison. Officer Maurice expressed his feeling very clearly:

*All they [managers] care about is delivering the regime, they don't care about staff safety, they just care about looking good on paper... There's a huge rift between the governors and the uniformed staff because we feel they are pro prisoners and they do not care for staff, they don't think they are here to protect us, so when a member of staff gets assaulted and (the prisoner) is then restrained the first thing the governor will ask is whether the prisoner is alright... I think it's an insult, the governor should be asking how their staff is doing, not how is the prisoner.*

The rift and distrust between governors and staff is not new. In 2009 the House of Commons Justice Committee reported on the role of prison officers, noting that “historically, the relationship between the uniformed prison officer and management has been assessed as poor” (Justice Committee 2009, p.36). This relationship has not been improved by the continuing ‘managerialist’ approach adopted by the prison service from the 1980s, as part of the wider ‘turn’ towards New Public Management. This approach emphasises setting objectives, measuring achievements in relation to the objectives, raising standards and stringent financial control (Liebling et al. 2012). The governing governor has authority over their governors to achieve these objectives but, in turn is answerable to the Regional Prison Group Director who reports to HMPPS Head Office (Prison HQ). This can result in a perception by prison staff, particularly officers, that managers are more interested in form filling and collating statistics than supporting the staff who work day-to-day with prisoners. Officer Yvette articulated her feelings in the following way:

*Governors ... are more like politicians who care more about appearances and what we look like as a prison, our use of force numbers and statistics, and who care more about what the public think.*

This concept of prison management focussed on service delivery, targets and audits leaves little time or space for individuality and autonomy (Bennett 2019). Or, indeed, for support and guidance for staff.

The distrust between management and staff had a number of flashpoints, in particular, where force was used on prisoners. As the above extract from Maurice evidenced, staff feel that management are 'pro-prisoner' and do not care about staff safety. If force is used on a prisoner, staff have to comply with the Use of Force Policy which requires a great deal of form filing.<sup>26</sup> Management not only read the Use of Force Reports but, at the IMB prison I was at, the Deputy Governor would also spend hours each week watching video footage from body worn cameras and CCTV to assess whether the officers had behaved within the policy guidelines. An officer who is deemed to have used excess force may be subject to questioning from their manager and even face a disciplinary investigation. With this level of scrutiny and the possible negative consequences for an officer who uses force on a prisoner if it is deemed not to be necessary, it is unsurprising officers can cynically conclude that management are more interested in completing the administrative process instead of supporting their staff on the wings.

Yvette described a frightening and dramatic incident in which she was the only member of staff on a landing when a serious fight involving knives broke out. Even in this dangerous situation, she found herself worrying about being criticised by management for using force on prisoners:

*...it was the first time I withdrew my baton and I thought 'I'm going to lose my job today'.... Cos they make you feel like if you withdraw your baton, there's*

---

<sup>26</sup> Whenever a member of staff uses force on a prisoner, the SO in charge at the scene of the incident must complete an eight page report. These reports have to be logged by the Orderly Officer (the CM with overall responsibility for the running of the prison that day) and can be used as part of internal or external investigations. All prisons have to monitor use of force and have to provide information about use of force to Prison Service Headquarters, consequently, the Governing Governor will need to ensure all the procedures are correctly followed.

*loads of paperwork... So that's the sort of fear you live in - from management and from prisoners.*

Yvette went on to describe her relief when she saw her supervising officer rushing up the stairs to support her, not because it meant she was at less risk of being hurt but because she felt she would be less likely to be subject to a disciplinary investigation.

The consequences of using excessive force on a prisoner were not limited to the possibility of the officer being disciplined, it also meant the prisoner might face a 'nicking' and possible sanctions for their behaviour. During the prisoner's adjudication the governor will hear evidence, including that of the staff member. However, if the case is dismissed for any reason (which could be due to incorrect paperwork or the officer not being available to give evidence) staff members might interpret the governor's decision to mean they have taken the prisoner's word against theirs and feel unsupported by management. This belief that governors failed to support their staff and dismissed cases during adjudications was voiced by officer Maurice who described how pointless it was to 'nick' a prisoner for breaching the Prison Rules:

*It would be waste of time for me to do the paperwork. You don't have time to do it on shift, you have to stay half an hour over your shift, so why would I sacrifice my personal time to do something which is going to get thrown out by the governor?*

The distrust between management and staff is an ongoing problem for the Prison Service. If staff believe work processes and rules are not distributed fairly, their perception of organisational justice can be undermined, leading to lower job satisfaction, higher stress levels and a greater propensity towards misconduct (Boateng and Hsieh 2019). The guidance and training for staff, particularly inexperienced staff, should be the responsibility of prison management to create an ethical work environment, which requires "the presence of an "alert and conscientious management group that not only forbids mediocre performance but also shuns corruption of all sorts at all levels" (Souryal 2009, p.32). However, management themselves also feel stressed and overworked, limiting their time and ability to offer support to their staff.



### **5.5.2 Management – caught in the middle**

Although many prison staff feel managers and wider society do not understand or care, managers also feel overworked and undervalued (Smith 2023; Harrison and Nichols 2023). While managers may have more power than subordinates, they lack the ability to address resource-related challenges such as understaffing, the numbers of inexperienced staff and prison over-crowding. All managers based in prisons are answerable to managers above them in the hierarchy. The operational managers are the supervising officers and custodial managers who report to the managing governors, who in turn report to either the deputy governor and/or the governing governor, who is answerable to Prison HQ.

Governing governors have to balance four key functions: custodial function (prevent escapes), restorative function (rehabilitation), controlling function (ensure safety and maintain order) and the maintenance function (provide decent and humane conditions) (Bryans 2008). As a governing governor Bennett (2015) observed how the development of managerialism from the 1980s and the endless target setting and monitoring by Prison HQ intensified control but eroded the professional discretion of prison governors. Governing governors have to do what they are told by Prison HQ. They are told what their budgets will be, how their resources should be used, which contractor has been appointed as service provider for areas such as education and healthcare: but they are also held to account for the performance of their prison.

Despite their lack of control, governing governors are often criticised in areas over which they have limited authority such as recruitment which increases their sense of frustration and resentment towards Prison HQ which maintains central control (Taylor 2023). This culture of public service accountability has continued to the current day, resulting in a “deranged performance culture” which means “governors spend ever more time managing ‘upwards’ – feeding a proliferating corporate structure that subordinated them and their prisons to increasingly crazy levels of micromanagement and abstraction” (Acheson 2024, p.30).

The demands of managerialism have not only been felt by governing governors, they have also been felt amongst all prison managers. Managerial roles, including

the uniformed grades of senior officer and principal officer were abolished in 2012 as part of the new pay and grading systems, Fair and Sustainable. In their place were two new grades, supervisory officer and custodial manager with new and wider responsibilities which often did not reflect the skills and knowledge held by experienced staff so the “spectre of uselessness loomed over the managers navigating change” (Bennett 2015, p.22). Although managers at all levels might feel ‘stuck in the middle’ and experience their own stresses and challenges, the importance of supportive ethical leadership cannot be underestimated. Where large proportions of staff feel undervalued or are distrustful of managers, they are less likely to implement new policies (Liebling 2008) and a lack of management support can lead to higher stress levels, lower organisational commitment and more wrongdoing (Lambert 2004; Lambert et al. 2009).

Many of the manager participants in this study referred to the rules, policies and regulations imposed on them by Prison HQ. One issue in particular raised by several interview participants, was that of recruitment and vetting and how it is controlled by Prison HQ.

The CC Policy (HMPPS 2022a, p.12) describes vetting as “the first line of defence against corruption.” Despite this requirement

*They are so desperate for boots on the ground. There is a problem with vetting in that it isn't thorough enough (Dave).*

Recruitment and vetting processes for prison officers are “notoriously weak: prison officers are not interviewed prior to employment, training is short and vetting checks do not always identify associations” (Gooch and Treadwell 2024, p.13). If staff are not properly vetted, some staff might be recruited who have links to OCGs or who have close contacts with other prisoners. This problem was highlighted by Treadwell et al (2019) in their study into drugs in prison but to the frustration of the participants in this study, the problem had not been recognised by Prison HQ. This frustration was articulated very clearly by several participants who had in-depth knowledge of prison security:

*You've got people recruited by OCGs before they've even joined, so they come into the prison service with the intention of servicing OCGs (Adrian).*

*...recently, there have been staff who, there's been talk around them that they were recruited by others to bring stuff in. They joined the service to bring things in as part of OCG outside and they joined because of their [clean] record so they could get past vetting etc. (Rob).*

*No doubt in my mind that OCG out there recruiting staff to do exactly just that [become a prison officer trafficking contraband] (Chris).*

In 2023, about a year after conducting the interviews in this study I attended a refresher course in Counter Corruption which was part of the Security Investment Programme (SIP) measures introduced into prisons. I asked the trainer about the risks of OCGs 'persuading' people to join the prison service with the intention of trafficking contraband. I was surprised to be told that Prison HQ does not consider this to be a major threat, so it is not dealt with during CC training. This remark was consistent with Dave's opinion that:

*I think there is a percentage of people coming in with criminal intentions from the get-go with the view to making money or supporting a friend or community contact and that's much, much higher than the Prison Service has yet been grasped.*

In September 2023 the Guardian newspaper reported on the warning issued by the Prison Officers Association that OCGs are "sending associates to train as prison officers with the 'sole purpose' of smuggling in drugs and phones into jail" (Pidd and Syal 2023). In Spring 2024 both ex-prison chief inspector Nick Hardwick and the current Chief Inspector of Prisons Charlie Taylor highlighted the same problem (Sylvester 2024; Tingle 2024). It remains to be seen whether Prison HQ's view on the infiltration of OCGs into prisons will be highlighted in future CC training.

Prison managers are not immune from wrongdoing and alleged wrongdoing. Over the last two years the media have reported on: a former prison governor jailed for two years for having an inappropriate relationship with a prisoner (Russell 2022); the prosecution, trial and acquittal of a corruption prevention manager and his wife, also a prison governor who were charged with illegally accessing confidential information from prison computer systems (Crowson 2023; BBC news 2024); and a female

former prison governor awaiting trial for an inappropriate relationship with a prisoner (Gleaves 2023).

Prison staff are aware that management wrongdoing is not limited to corruption which warrants a custodial sentence. Participants also referred to managerial favouritism and their power to block wrongdoing investigations. The concerns about 'who guards the guards' and the fear of repercussions for reporting wrongdoing was highlighted by Yvette:

*If you've got people in high places who are corrupt, all that happens is that the intel goes walkabout, missing, whatever else and obviously it won't be acted on or it will be pretended to be acted upon ... and that person is cleared on all charges and the limelight will be on you. And you will be constantly hounded and watched. I've had that happen to me.*

In this extract, Tom recognised that it was not just managers who could engage in favouritism; administration staff also had the power to treat some staff more favourably than others:

*Yes, a bit of cronyism and nepotism, that's the sort of thing that goes on here. Corruption isn't just about prisoners, is it? It's .... like doing favours for people, some people getting overtime 'cos I'm in with the right people.*

Tom's insightful observation highlights the fact that corruption is not just about trafficking of contraband, or even staff entering into inappropriate relationships with prisoners, instead it can permeate through all aspects of an organisation, undermining the integrity of the prison as a whole.

The final theme identified from the findings as being essential when considering which factors increase staff vulnerability to wrongdoing was the influence of the societal 'orchard'.

## **5.6 Societal factors**

Historically prison staff have seen themselves as under-valued, under-resourced, neglected, unappreciated and misunderstood by wider society (Crawley 2000; Crawley 2004; Crewe et al. 2008; Crawley and Crawley 2008; Howard League for

Penal Reform 2009, 2017). This perception is not unique to the United Kingdom and has continued to persist. In 2023 the Justice Committee investigating the problem of prison staff retention sent out a survey to 6,582 prison workforce staff in the UK. The Chair of the Committee, Sir Bob Neill MP summarised the results as ‘shocking’ with, amongst other findings, that three quarters of Band 3-5 prison officers felt undervalued (Justice Committee 2023). The findings in my research that prison staff feel they have been and still are ‘the forgotten service’ are therefore unsurprising.

#### **5.6.1 No one cares or understands**

I asked respondents for their opinions on staff satisfaction. There was a wide range of replies (Table 9 below). Respondents rated staff morale higher in smaller Beechfield (58.1%) than in larger Chestnutwood (48.8%). Beechfield staff also had more faith in management’s ability to control corruption. The difference in the two prisons is not surprising as prison staff in smaller prisons tend to have a more positive relationships with management and colleagues and express a higher level of trust in management (Johnsen et al. 2011). However, over 25% of respondents in both prisons disagreed with the statements that morale was good and management were effective at controlling corruption, indicating some staff were very dissatisfied regardless of where they worked.

The majority of respondents in both prisons were dissatisfied with their compensation (salary and overtime) (54.8% Beechfield; 71.8% Chestnutwood). Only a small majority of respondents considered their corruption training covered all they needed to know about corruption risks. There was also low trust in the CC Policy, with less than 50% of staff in both prisons believing it would protect them if they reported wrongdoing by others.

The findings of my study are more positive than those of the Justice Committee survey. Only nine percent of Band 2-5 staff in the Justice Committee survey considered their salary reflected the roles and responsibilities of the job. Over 70% said that staff morale was not good, 75% said they did not receive appropriate training, and 50% did not feel safe at the prison they worked in.

Although there has been a recent increase in starting salaries for prison officers, the salaries for the two bands above Band 3 prison officers - supervising officers (Band 4) and custodial managers (Band 5) are still significantly less than their counterparts in equivalent occupations, such as the police (Police Remuneration Review 2023, HMPPS 2024b).<sup>27</sup> The Justice Committee 2023 survey found that the longer staff spent in the prison service, the less satisfied they were with their salary package while 51% felt their salary was not in line with other similar public sector jobs. Tom had over 30 years in the prison service and was a custodial manager. He commented:

*When I joined the job our pay was somewhere on a par with the police, not a great deal of difference at all. [Now] I know ... [X – a young man] who is a police officer and is on slightly more than me as a custodial manager. So it's not parallel. I understand the police training is longer but ... I don't think we have been well looked after. The job's far more difficult than when I started... so looking at the whole picture and the rate of pay now, which I think does have a link with corruption, then I would say it's not pitched at the right level. I think it should be more.*

It was not just the failure of prison staff salaries to keep pace with other public sector services which made respondents feel forgotten, it was also Government failure to provide sufficient funding to run the prisons. As Rachel, a healthcare worker, noted:

*There are staffing shortages, not enough money, not enough programmes, not enough vocational kind of opportunities.*

The bitterness felt by staff about how they had been treated and the link with corruption was articulated by Grace S:

*Being a prison officer used to be a well-paid, secure career with a good pension and reasonable retirement age... it was something that people were*

---

<sup>27</sup> Supervising officer national salary as at January 2024: £38,542, police sergeant: £49,077; custodial manager: £41,872, inspector: £58,422; deputy governor of prison (Band 8): £60,475, chief superintendent: £88,872.

*proud to do and would do throughout their working life. Now, pay barely keeps up with the cost of living and inflation ... conditions are so dire people do not stay in the job long enough for any experience to build up ...I am not surprised staff corruption is at an all-time high; the way the prisons are run at the moment has provided a perfect storm for it to thrive.*

As Grace provided her response via the survey text box, it was impossible to ask her why she considered staff corruption 'is at an all-time high'. However, she did reveal she had over 11 years' experience and was a dog handler at Chestnutwood. As such, she would have had access to information regarding the regularity of contraband finds on visitors and in prisoner cells, so her opinion on the extent of corruption is concerning.

The sense of being undervalued was not limited to a perception of how staff were treated by the prison service. The feeling that wider society not only failed to understand the nature of prison work but also did not care about prison staff was a recurrent complaint:

*Yeah, we are the forgotten service. I don't want to sound negative but what we actually do is such a broad spectrum of life skills, like roles, care worker one minute and restraining the same prisoner the next minute and the next minute maybe doing the care worker again. That does take a lot of professionalism (Tom).*

Officer Dan enjoyed his job but he recognised that many people outside the prison walls had a negative opinion about prison officers:

*Unfortunately, a lot of the public perceive you as being like a thug. Not all, but you know, people outside the prison, no one really understands what actually goes on inside a prison. It's all kept behind closed doors and people think that all the officers are mean but that's not the case at all. They are just normal people.*

The perception of being regarded by the general public as 'thugs' has been a constant theme for decades. In 2000 Crawley noted the negative media portrayals of prisons and the feeling expressed by officers of being undervalued by the public who

regarded officers as “mindless morons” (Crawley 2000, p.203). Researchers have argued that media representations of prison officers as violent, brutal and corrupt has shaped understandings and attitudes towards prisons (Surette 1998; Vickovic et al. 2013). More recently Bennett (2024) suggests there has been a shift towards a more humanising representation of officers within the media which portrays prison staff as normal people doing a difficult job but the predominant media narrative still reinforces the stereotype that prison officers are violent and corrupt. It is therefore unsurprising that the feelings of being undervalued, misunderstood and unappreciated by society and by those who run the prison service do not appear to have changed.

**Table 9: Staff satisfaction**

<b>All Staff</b>							
Beechfield							
Chestnutwood							
1 = Strongly Disagree							
5 = Strongly Agree							
<b>Staff Satisfaction</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Range</b>		<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>
						<b>%</b>	<b>% *</b>
Staff morale is good	3.14	4.00	1.24	4.00		28.6	52.8
	3.29	4.00	1.30	4.00		25.8	58.1
	3.03	3.00	1.20	4.00		30.8	48.8
Management is effective in controlling corruption	3.20	4.00	1.34	4.00		31.8	52.1
	3.35	4.00	1.25	4.00		25.8	54.8
	3.03	3.00	1.42	4.00		36.8	50.0
Compensation is satisfactory	2.20	2.00	1.25	4.00		64.3	20.0
	2.48	2.00	1.37	4.00		54.8	25.8
	1.97	2.00	1.10	3.00		71.8	15.4
Corruption Training is thorough	3.55	4.00	1.22	4.00		20.3	56.5
	3.52	4.00	1.30	4.00		22.6	54.8
	3.58	4.00	1.15	4.00		18.4	57.9
Counter Corruption policy will protect me	3.23	3.00	1.16	4.00		22.9	41.4
	3.26	3.00	1.32	4.00		22.6	45.2
	3.21	3.00	1.03	4.00		23.1	38.5
* Percentages are of those participants who expressed an opinion							



Feeling undervalued and isolated from wider society were not the only societal factors identified from the data which could increase vulnerability to wrongdoing. Access to staff social media accounts offers a way for prisoners to find out personal information about staff which could be used to befriend staff or to manipulate them. In order to update the Klockars et al. (1997, 2004) scenarios, one of my survey scenarios (S6) asked respondents to assess the seriousness of a prison officer accepting an ex-prisoner as a 'friend' on social media. Surprisingly, the younger less experienced staff in Chestnutwood ranked the social media scenario as more serious than the older Beechfield staff. As I discussed in paragraph 4.3 above, this might be due to the younger cohort in Chestnutwood being more media 'savvy' or it could be that more respondents had recently completed their initial training which highlighted the risks of social media. However, the survey findings contradicted the qualitative findings as the more experienced interview participants considered it would be younger staff who would be less concerned about accepting an ex-prisoner as a social media 'friend':

*We've got a lot of younger staff who use social media, they have hundreds, thousands of followers and I'm sure if you scrolled through and picked out a name they wouldn't know who they are (Rob).*

This is an interesting conflict between the qualitative and quantitative data. A larger scale survey and additional interviews could usefully explore this dichotomy.

It is not just social media which can increase the risk of prisoners knowing about the personal lives of staff. The Prison Service policy of local recruitment means staff might come from the same community, geographical location or even friendship group as prisoners. As Beechfield is located in a small city, participants commented on the frequency of 'bumping' into released prisoners in the community. However, as Helen in Beechfield explained, staff tended to live in different areas from the prisoners, as housing was relatively cheap so they could afford to live away from the poorer housing area. Chestnutwood, by contrast, was in a large city where accommodation was expensive, so staff who lived locally to the prison often lived in the same estates as the prisoners. If staff and prisoners come from the same geographical area and share common interests, cultural and social values, the gap

between them can narrow leading to concessions, inter-dependence and a greater vulnerability to corruption (Shapira and Navon 1985).

Although staff are instructed to disclose any previous contacts (known as 'conflicts') with prisoners, this can lead to logistical difficulties to ensure staff are not assigned to work on the same wing as someone they know or, if necessary, the staff member is moved to another prison, or the prisoner is moved to another prison. Phil worked at Chestnutwood and had this to say about the problems of local recruitment:

*I'm not saying we shouldn't have local recruitment and that staff who have grown up with people who are now in custody should be excluded...but there are an awful lot who are joining who have a number of conflicts... because (they) grew up round the corner from them (prisoners).*

Even if staff did report a conflict and the prisoner was moved to another prison, there was no guarantee that the 'revolving door' prisoner would not reappear in the same prison at a future date:

*I can think of one member of staff in particular who has...done the right thing and reported it, and the prisoner has come back repeatedly and the same issue has surfaced again - and I don't think we have supported that person in the best way (Tom).*

The prevalence of social drug taking was another concern raised by interview participants. Not only could this place staff in a compromising position vis-a-vis prisoners who were aware of some staff drug taking but it could also mean that some staff who used recreational drugs would accept drug-taking as a societal norm. John's view was echoed by several older staff members:

*It's more socially acceptable in their minds...because they have been exposed to things on social media...because everyone they know smokes weed, they've seen people openly smoking weed, the celebrities they see on social media are smoking weed.*

Bert had years of experience in security and knew that staff drug taking was not limited to cannabis:

*We have a lot of young staff...Everyone seems to be on cocaine now, it just seems to be rife.... we did searches through the National Crime Agency and the police; we were getting indications of cocaine from people being away for the weekend. It's so much more prevalent now. We don't always understand that and how much people take recreational drugs when they go out... So there's clearly a risk around that.*

The risk of banning substances in prisons which are easily available and acceptable by some people in wider society were highlighted by Lankenau's (2001) research on tobacco trafficking after it had been made illegal in American prisons. Lankenau found that prison officers viewed tobacco differently from other forms of contraband as they did not view cigarettes as immoral or dangerous. As a result, officers actively engaged in tobacco smuggling partly to make money and partly stimulated by disapproval of the tobacco ban.

Turning a blind eye to drug taking, particularly cannabis, as a result of drug taking being normalised in wider society, was one way boundaries could be blurred. As Bert said, it can lead to:

*To a blurring of a personal moral threshold .. [which means] they go past a cell and smell cannabis and think 'shall I do anything about it?'*

Ignoring the smell of cannabis from a cell where a prisoner is sleeping could also make the life of an officer easier - although participants drew a distinction between drugs which made prisoners quieter such as cannabis and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) known as Spice which can cause aggression, bizarre behaviour and psychosis (Public Health England 2015). Maurice explained why staff drew this distinction:

*I'd say about 90% of staff would rather have prisoners on weed in the jail 'cos all they do is sleep and eat, they aren't causing any trouble, weed calms them down. Whereas the alternative is harder drugs and Spice. And Spice can lead them to death, paralysis, health complications compared to weed. Spice makes them aggressive; it makes them fight, smash their cell up.*

The problems associated with Spice and the increased prevalence of illicit drugs in prisons came up frequently during interviews. However, this factor was just one of the reasons given by participants who believed the working lives of prison staff had become more difficult in the last 14 years.

### **5.6.2 The increasing challenges facing prison staff**

Nearly all participants referred to the adverse impact the Government's austerity measures implemented in 2010 have had on the prison service. These measures resulted in a 26% reduction in prison officer numbers over the following six years. Although in 2016 the Government committed to recruit 2,500 officers to reverse the decline in staff numbers (MoJ 2017), the greatest number of staff losses had occurred among the most experienced staff, resulting in a collective loss of not just 'boots on the wing' but also jailcraft. The impact was recognised by all participants who had started working in the prison before the staffing cuts:

*When the government offered voluntary early departure of all the experienced expensive staff, they decimated a massive source of support. All of a sudden there were very few staff on the landings with little experience [leaving us] feeling increasing isolated and unsupported (Grace S).*

The lack of experienced officers also meant:

*We are having to do everything from scratch and making the same mistakes we made 20 years ago, to eventually arrive at the same process. And doing that with a really high staff turnover, is really difficult. It feels like you can't get on top of it, you can't implement a process that works, that's embedded and will survive you walking away from it and ....you can't guarantee you'll get the same staff for a week, never mind six months or a year (John).*

During the same period, while prisoner numbers remained at the high level of 85,000-88,000, prisoner self-harm doubled and assaults by prisoners on prison staff

in England and Wales increased by over 250%<sup>28</sup> (Bromley Briefings 2016; MoJ 2023d). The increase in assaults on staff was attributed to inexperienced staff and low staff numbers, combined with increased drug misuse and lack of purposeful activity for prisoners (HMIP 2022). The higher assaults on staff and lack of staff created a downward spiral with staff illness due to stress accounting for 31.1% of staff absences (HMPPS 2022) and a failure to retain staff. This has led to a situation where the rate of leaving is so great there is a constant recruitment of staff resulting in the proportion of staff with less than three years' service rising to 41.5% in March 2024 (HMPPS 2024c) while the number of staff with 10 years or more years' experience has decreased to 25.8% (HMPPS 2024c).

The problems of an imbalance between experienced staff and inexperienced staff are considerable. Not only do inexperienced staff have little or no jailcraft, they lack the guidance, advice and knowledge provided by experienced staff. This has an impact on wrongdoing as inexperienced staff are more naïve and, consequently are more vulnerable to grooming and corruption (Goldsmith and Halsey 2018; Treadwell et al. 2019). These staffing problems have created a vicious circle where the lack of experienced officers has enabled OCGs to become embedded into prison life and “take advantage of the market opportunities created by a flourishing prison illicit economy” (Gooch and Treadwell 2021, p.16).

It is not just the lack of experienced staff which has created a more challenging environment in which to work. There has also been a huge increase in the level of drug use and the prevalence of illegal mobile phones (Ellison et al. 2018; HMPPS Prison Drugs Strategy 2019; Ismail 2022). From the 2010s the prison drug market has flourished. Gooch and Treadwell (2024) describe how knowledge, associations, commodities and finances are transported into, within and out of the prison estate, facilitated through technological advancements such as mobile phones and bank transfers. Prisoners are able to exploit the new market created by the sale of Spice

---

<sup>28</sup> In 2010 there were 2,848 assaults on staff of which 302 were classified as serious. In the 12 months prior to September 2022, there were 7,356 assaults on staff of which 721 were serious (HMPPS Jan 2023).

which is easier to traffic into and around the prison while prisoners are locked in their cells for longer periods of time due to staff shortages (Gooch and Treadwell 2024). As mentioned above, Spice was identified in this study as a major reason for the increased violence:

*...you can have a prisoner you know for years, in and out, never had a problem with and I've seen them change over the years, they assault staff and when they come round (from taking Spice) they don't even know they have assaulted a member of staff.... So yeah,... I do think it's more difficult, mainly down to substance misuse ... NPS has ruined the service to a certain extent (Adrian).*

*...the assaults shoot up if someone brings in a load of Spice, or if Spice gets on the wing, there's a safety issue (Dan).*

Dave was a very experienced manager who commented that over the last decade:

*... the prison population has become more difficult to manage, it's more violent, they are carrying more baggage, whether that's mental health issues or community conflicts spilling into the jail or just other needs they are more aware of and more willing to ask for and I think that puts pressure on officers.*

The societal factors identified in this study therefore contributed to the expressed feelings of being the forgotten service which wider society neither cared about nor understood.

## **5.7 The drive to recruit – an organisational and societal problem**

By 2016, the Government realised prisons were in crisis with rates of violence and self-harm significantly increasing. The Government's response was to reverse the staff cuts and recruit new staff.

However, as Bert reflected, the need to rapidly recruit staff who thought they were going to 'help vulnerable people' led to further problems:

*Then they started a fast and furious recruitment campaign. And [they] just recruited people, some good, but for a lot it was a first job, they [developed]*

*mental health problems, stress and anxiety and they came into our arena and they started to explode when they came in.*

This concern about the type of people being recruited was echoed by Dave:

*The recruitment isn't realistic enough and it doesn't tell people what they are walking into. We are essentially campaigning [recruiting] for social workers rather than prison staff. Obviously, we don't want to go too far the other way but it is alarming what people think they are walking into.*

Adrian described the side of the job which was not mentioned in the advertisements and not properly covered in the seven weeks of prison officer training at college:

*They [the Prison Service] don't prepare you for death in custody and violent incidents. You get a feel for it but it's nothing like the real thing, they don't teach you in college that you could open a door and find someone who's cut their stomach from one end to another, they don't prepare you for someone sticking a pencil through their eye, they don't prepare you for finding a body which has been hanging there for six hours and the mess that goes with that. So you don't get none of that, it's on the job experience.*

For new recruits who had responded to online information in the belief they were helping vulnerable people, witnessing such horrors could easily result in new staff leaving. As Carl Davies, Prison Governors Association Chair, told the Justice Committee during their 2023 investigation:

*If I was new to the Prison Service, would it be the role I expected it to be? Probably not. Would I feel I had been properly equipped and trained ....I would probably say I had not been trained enough.*

Recruiting unsuitable staff who quickly realised that the job was not for them triggered a Justice Committee investigation in 2023 into the problem of prison officer retention. Although the evidence from the Committee is available online and the survey findings have been made public, the final report was not published due to the general election in June 2024.

After the fieldwork in this research was completed, HMPPS launched new recruitment campaigns in 2023 which was intended to 'not sugarcoat' the role. The description on HMPPS website described working in a prison as "fast-paced and varied" where officers will "experience good days and tough days" and "as a prison officer, you'll have responsibility for around six prisoners (who) you'll meet with regularly to support their rehabilitation" (HMPPS 2023a). Later that year a new recruitment film meant to show the 'realities' faced by prison officers was released. This film emphasised the various skills required to become a prison officer, which is described as a 'varied job' (HMPPS 2023b).<sup>29</sup> Although the job role is described as "challenging" it also refers to the "good pay, training .. and the support of a strong team." Despite these changes recent research by Chamberlan (2024) found that prison officer leavers described the advertisements as 'misleading'. Chamberlan's finding is not unexpected in the context of this study where the majority of survey respondents were dissatisfied with their salaries, complained about low staff levels, felt unsupported by management and misunderstood by wider society which failed to appreciate the increasing challenges faced by prison staff over the last 14 years. A job advertisement which showed the true reality of stressed staff working in dangerous conditions where so many other staff were either off sick or were inexperienced would be unlikely to attract many applicants.

Staff who are stressed and cannot cope with their job either go sick or leave. The statistics confirm this to be the case.<sup>30</sup> The staff who leave are replaced by inexperienced staff, the staff on sick leave remain employed but their absence from the wings means there are fewer staff there. Low staff numbers and inexperienced staff increases opportunities for staff wrongdoing. Not only are inexperienced staff more vulnerable to corruption but low staff numbers mean there are fewer staff

---

<sup>29</sup> As from September 2023 the new tagline was "An extraordinary job . Done by someone like you."

<sup>30</sup> Justice Committee 2023 Survey – over 40% of Band 3-5 intend to leave the prison service within five years; In the year ending 30 September 2023 37% of working days lost due to sickness was because of mental and behavioural disorders.



observing their colleagues. In the following extract, Yvette connected the decrease in staff numbers with an increase in corruption due to the perception there was a lower risk of being caught:

*I think a reduction in staffing levels helps to increase corruption as staff can be more easily targeted...,there's more opportunity for staff to become corrupt, to be more incentivised from the beginning as more chances to get away with it more as less eyes on them.*

For many prison staff, particularly officers on the wings, the feeling that no one cared or understood was particularly acute when discussing the stress and dangerousness of their job. These dangers were from the unpleasant, "If someone says 'good morning to me' and doesn't spit at me then that's a good day" (Laura), to the constant stress of being on a wing with few staff surrounded by prisoners, many of whom were violent, had mental health and/or drug problems. John pointed out that:

*In the police you are dealing with a not very nice person for an hour or two and then they are someone else's problem. In here you've got a wing of 300 people who you don't know and you don't know who is the one who will assault you and you are with them 12 hours a day.*

As officer Yvette expressed it, being on the wings:

*Felt like I was fighting for my life every day.*

John and Yvette both expressed the need to remain alert to potential dangers throughout their time on the wings. This level of hypervigilance is linked to exhaustion and ill-health (Clements and Kinman 2023). Furthermore, prison staff who regard their jobs as dangerous and are stressed at work are more likely to distrust their colleagues and feel that other staff were engaging in inappropriate behaviours with prisoners (Worley 2018).

## **5.8 A new framework**

At the outset of this research I sought to align the Knapp Commission's (1972) categorisation of corrupt police as 'meat eaters' (individuals who actively pursue money making opportunities and/or sexual relationships) or 'grass eaters' (who

passively accept opportunities which come their way) with prison staff being either 'villains' or 'victims'. However, after analysing the qualitative data, I concluded that the binary distinction of villains or victims did not fully capture the various motivational factors revealed through the data. The inductive approach employed during the qualitative data analysis led me to propose an alternative framework in which to place staff wrongdoers. The framework takes into consideration the individual, organisational and societal influencing factors developed from the data. I argue that these themes can be conceived as different motivational factors which influence three types of staff wrongdoer. These are:

- a. The predatory offender who joins the prison or soon after joining actively pursues money making opportunities through corruption;
- b. The disillusioned offender who has no initial intention of wrongdoing but who becomes cynical and realises there are money making opportunities which can be exploited; and
- c. The unintentional offender, who due to naivety, lack of training and skills or personal difficulties finds themselves in a position where they have violated professional boundaries but feels unable to report their own wrongdoing and as a result slides down the slippery slope towards more serious wrongdoing.

The following sections expand on this framework and considers the motivational factors which influence the decision making of these types of offenders. The wrongdoing reduction techniques most applicable to address the different motivational factors are discussed in chapter seven, together with a brief analysis of whether the CC approach adopted by HMPPS successfully targets all three of these offender types.

### **5.8.1 Predatory offenders**

The predatory offender is the proverbial 'rotten apple' whose aim is to make money through corrupt activities. These offenders may also be more inclined to engage in other types of wrongdoing such as assaulting prisoners or entering into inappropriate relationships but for the purpose of this discussion, I have focussed on the desire to make money which 60% of respondents believed was the main motivation for corrupt staff. Staff who fall into this category are typically the type of offender which has

driven efforts at situational crime prevention techniques. They are assumed to be anti-social, mostly free from moral scruples, with the knowledge and skills to commit crime with minimal risk to themselves (Cornish and Clarke 2010).

New staff who, of their own volition, decide to engage in corruption will need to identify the situations and potential corruption opportunities via what Cohen and Felson (1979) described as the routine activities of day-to-day life. Once the staff member has gained this knowledge, they will be ready to commit the offence when the conditions are most favourable. This may take some time during which the predatory offender learns how to maximise their monetary gain while facing the least possible risk. The staff recruited by OCGs may have willingly agreed to join the prison service or they may have been coerced, either way, they will actively pursue money making opportunities. Some will have to go through the same learning process as other predatory offenders once they have started work at the prison but, as supervisory officer Yvette explained some will:

*Get an induction on how to successfully bring in drugs. And criminals will go to a lot of effort as there's a lot of money there for them... They are sold this idea of 'we know how to get you in and out, you're going to earn a salary plus you're going to earn this much from us, just do it for six months and get out', it's a no brainer.*

Yvette's claim that OCGs are providing an 'induction' on how to convey drugs into prison may seem extreme, but she is not alone in believing that OCGs are actively recruiting prison staff. Other participants in this study and academics (Gooch and Treadwell 2021, 2024) have also highlighted the increasing influence of OCGs within prisons and the fact that some prison staff join the service with the aim of engaging in criminal activity. It is therefore far from fanciful to imagine that some recruits are trained by OCGs on how to maximise their benefit while minimising their risk.

The behaviour of predatory offenders can be partially explained in terms of Cornish and Clarke's Rational Choice Perspective (1986): that staff make a rational decision based on the costs and benefits of their action. Applying this approach, it follows that situational crime prevention methods can interrupt the criminal-decision making processes to reduce corruption. As discussed in chapter two, this rationale appears

to have been the one adopted by HMPPS's CC policy and the decisions made by HMPPS on where to direct most funding for the Security Investment Programme (SIP).

Some predatory offenders may have no moral inhibition against committing criminal offences and their decision making will be solely based on the perceived costs and benefits. However, for other predatory offenders, particularly those under duress from OCGs, rational considerations may not apply if their emotions are driven more by fear than reason (Fredrichs 2007). Some of these staff may seek to justify their behaviour through neutralisation techniques, for example, that they owe their allegiance to a social group outside the prison (Sykes and Matza 1957) or that what they are doing is necessary to protect themselves or their family (Minor 1981). For these staff, once they have justified their behaviour to themselves, the need to make money from corruption might be so compelling that the increased risk of being caught is mitigated by the cost of failure.

The recently published SIP evaluation report noted that where trafficking of contraband is reduced due to the SIP measures (which target staff, visitors and prisoners), staff are put under increased pressure to bring in contraband. These staff are then able to charge more for bringing in contraband so their financial incentive is increased (Ramzan et al. 2024). So, although the risk factor may have increased, so has the reward. This means that, regardless of whether situational crime prevention methods are installed, predatory offenders will be motivated to either find another viable route of conveyance or they will use concealment methods (plugging) which cannot be detected by X-ray machines or normal searching in order to fulfil their financial rewards and/or comply with OCG demands.

### **5.8.2 Disillusioned offenders**

The disillusioned offenders are those staff who join the prison service as law-abiding people with intact social morals and who have no initial intention of engaging in corruption. However, due to stressful and dangerous working conditions, together with a lack of support from management these offenders start to feel unappreciated, ignored and overlooked. Many of them become more cynical

in outlook and some of them, having realised there are money making opportunities, may decide to engage in corrupt activities.

The journey to disillusionment for some staff may start early when individuals who had no realistic idea of what working in a prison would be like are recruited. Participants in this study repeatedly referred to the job advertisements which, they believed, recruited the 'wrong sort of people' who were attracted to the idea of 'helping disadvantaged people' but who had no concept of what working in a prison entailed. Owing to the absence of in-depth training during the seven week initial training course these recruits remain completely unprepared for the challenges of working in a prison. Once new staff start work in a prison, they will soon discover that working in prisons is stressful, challenging and dangerous (Armstrong and Griffin 2004; Lambert et al. 2010; Garland et al. 2012; Clements and 2021). The excerpt from Grace S at paragraph 5.6.1 expressed her bitterness of how being a prison officer used to be a well-paid, secure job with a good pension and was something people were proud to do, but now working conditions and pay are so bad, people do not want to stay in the job and that she is not surprised corruption is at an "all time high."

Not all disillusioned prison staff will engage in serious wrongdoing; their personal moral scruples and the fear of being caught might deter them from becoming corrupt. Instead they may become 'jobsworths' and decide to complete their work duties with minimum effort and minimum input. Although these staff members might never decide to actively engage in criminal activities, their behaviour can still amount to wrongdoing. Turning a blind eye to prisoner rule-breaking or being unwilling to intervene on wings and abdicating responsibility through doing as little as possible is as much a type of corruption as trafficking (Gooch and Treadwell 2021). As already discussed in paragraph 4.3 above, even some behaviours which were not considered serious by participants, such as going into a cell to console an upset prisoner or shaking a prisoner's hand can have serious consequences.

Some disillusioned staff might experience what Worley and Cheeseman (2006) described as 'non-shareable' problems which make them more vulnerable to corruption. For example, those with financial problems might be tempted to engage in corruption to make money while those who suffer relationship breakdowns might

be more vulnerable to the risk of entering into inappropriate relationships. Although these offenders could be classified in a group of their own, I suggest they form a sub-group of disillusioned offenders. They do not join the service to engage in corruption nor do they cross professional boundaries through naivety. Instead they decide to 'cross over' in an attempt to solve their personal problems. In paragraph 5.4.2 above I describe how HMPPS CC training videos include examples of this type of offender with the message that support is available. Unfortunately, participants expressed an unwillingness to share their problems with the CC team as it meant they would 'get in trouble'. Although this sub-group of offenders may or may not share all of the characteristics of the disillusioned offender, it can be inferred that some of them decide to engage in corruption because they feel isolated, lack management support and do not trust other staff enough to share their problems. When staff find themselves in this situation, they may turn to prisoners as a way of solving their problems, either through passively accepting offers made by prisoners to engage in corruption and/or crossing professional boundaries and becoming friends with prisoners.

Instead of deliberately seeking out corrupt opportunities at the outset, individuals who become disillusioned may be 'primed' to put aside their moral reservations when they encounter situations in which they can engage in wrongdoing. Consequently, disillusioned offenders react to the situation they find themselves in after being exposed to the realities of working in a prison and/or they believe that their personal problems can be solved through wrongdoing. Disillusioned offenders can justify their decision to 'cross over' through rationalising their actions to themselves. These rationalisation techniques can include, for example, the justification that they (the individual) are not responsible for any injury to prisoner due to smuggling in drugs, or that everyone else is doing it and/or that no one cares what happens to prisoners or to staff (Sykes and Matza 1957; Minor 1981; Coleman 1994; Shigihara 2013).

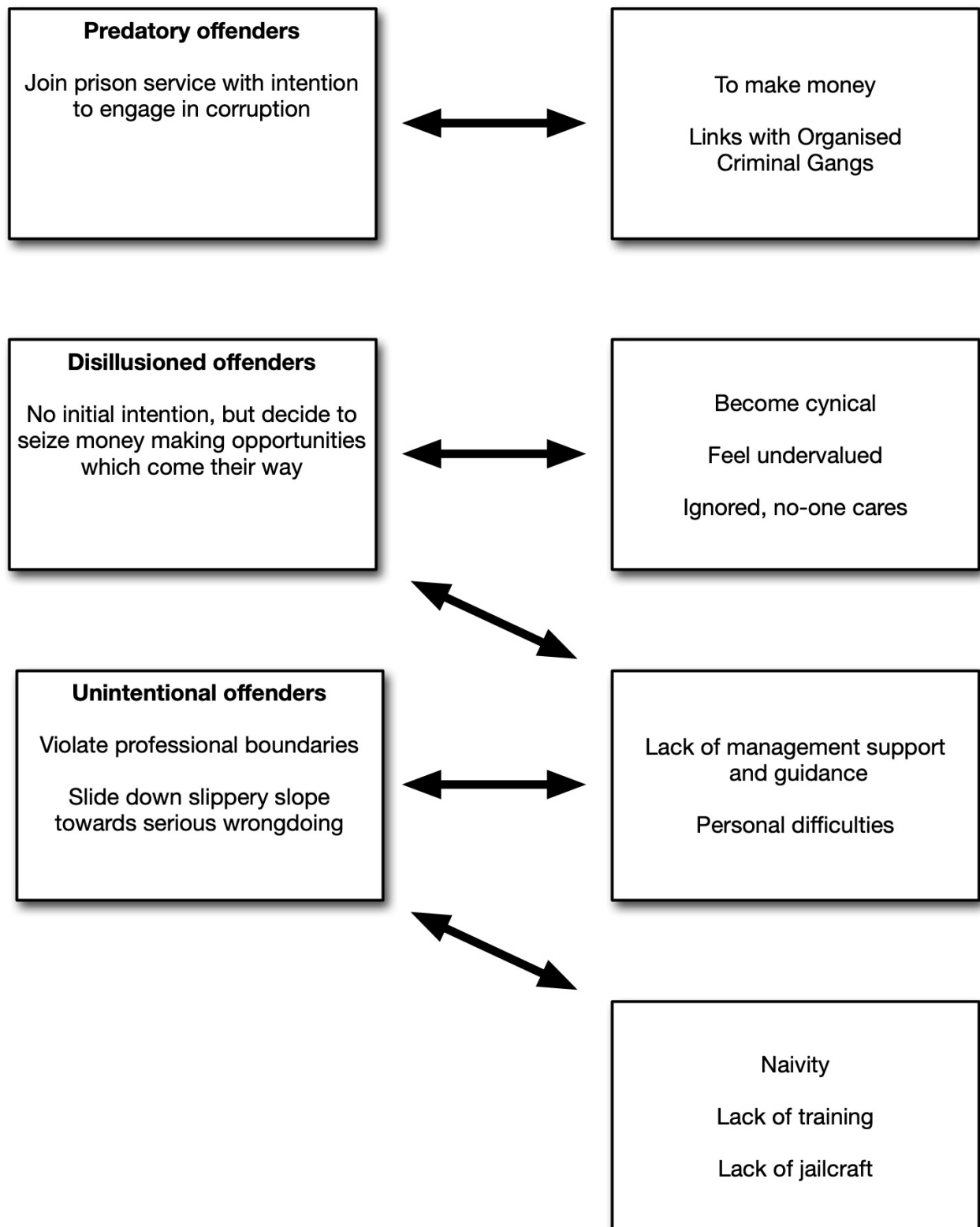
### **5.8.3 Unintentional offenders**

The last category of offenders proposed on the basis of the findings in this study are the unintentional offenders; those staff who due to naivety, lack of training and skills or personal difficulties find themselves in a position where they have violated professional boundaries. These unintentional offenders had no initial intention of

engaging in corruption and despite personal problems or struggling with the realities of working in a prison, they do not make a conscious decision to engage in corruption. These staff might 'bend' the rules from ignorance or because they have seen another more experienced member of staff engage in the same behaviour and believe that 'this is the way things are done round here'. The majority of these staff are unlikely to decide to actively engage in more serious wrongdoing and to commit a criminal offence. However, they can be groomed and manipulated by prisoners. As interview participants acknowledged, the most vulnerable staff who fall into this category are inexperienced staff, who through naivety, lack of training, knowledge or experience, violate a professional boundary. Participants commented how once a staff member crossed a professional boundary, they could find themselves on a slippery slope heading towards serious wrongdoing through prisoner manipulation (Allen and Bosta 1981; Worley et al. 2003). Having violated or crossed professional boundaries the unintentional offender might feel unable to report their own wrongdoing for fear of being disciplined or judged as inadequate by their manager. Despite the emphasis in the CC policy that support can be offered to those staff who had crossed professional boundaries, there was still the perception the CC team were "unapproachable and something you would rather avoid getting involved with" (Alex S).

As Figure 6 below shows, disillusioned offenders with personal problems share some of the risk factors with unintentional offenders who may turn to prisoners instead of their colleagues to resolve a problem. However, their motivations are more due to naivety than disillusionment. They are not bitter and cynical, they are instead unaware of the possible consequences of their behaviour. The inexperienced female officer who positively responds to the prisoner who bestows compliments and attention is unlikely to realise the prisoner has an ulterior motive until it becomes too difficult to say 'no' to his requests for her to engage in minor wrongdoing. Nor will she realise the risks of how minor wrongdoing can lead to further grooming and manipulation, leading to serious wrongdoing. What is needed is proactive management and guidance from experienced staff to notice the woman's behaviour and to correct it.

**Figure 6: Types of wrongdoing offenders and motivational factors**





Whether the staff member crosses the professional boundary line as a predatory offender, a disillusioned offender or as an unintentional offender, they will, at some point, calculate the rewards and punishments associated with their decision. The reward might include financial or personal gain, protecting self and family, or simply the validation of being seemingly appreciated by a prisoner and entering into an inappropriate relationship. The punishment might be losing their job, imprisonment or harm to themselves or their family and poor employment prospects. It is unlikely to be an impulsive or aggressive crime and, for minor boundary violations, there should be available opportunities to seek help and support before the behaviour reaches the bar of a serious disciplinary offence. To this extent, corrupt prison staff are rational criminals. However, the degree of rational decision-making will vary from person to person and the existing situational variables (Cornish and Clarke 1986, 2017).

## **5.9 Conclusion**

The challenges of reducing staff wrongdoing in prisons are considerable. Suedfeld and Steel (2000) describe prisons as a 'capsule environment' – isolated and confined. This is the working world of prison staff. In prisons there are prisoners who have ample opportunity to meet and form relationships with each other and with staff. As discussed above, prison staff need to govern by cooperation and reciprocity and maintain professional boundaries. Treading the line between 'friendly and friends', and between 'turnkey' and 'carebear' while balancing on the pivot point of a seesaw requires staff experience and 'jailcraft' which most inexperienced officers lack. The data in this study shows that prison staff sometimes struggle to establish where professional boundaries should be drawn and there is uncertainty about identifying serious wrongdoing. The close working proximity between staff and prisoners can lead to boundaries becoming blurred, a situation which some prisoners are willing to exploit.

Participants expressed their concerns about the low staffing levels, the lack of experienced staff, the lack of training, the lack of management support, high prisoner numbers and increasingly challenging prisoners who could be violent towards staff. These perceptions are backed up with HMPPS's own statistics. During the duration of this research the prisoner population in England and Wales increased from 79,146 in 2022 to 81,822 in 2023 while the crowding rate of prisons

increased by 23% in the 12 months to March 2023.<sup>31</sup> Protesting behaviour such as barricading/hostage taking, concerted indiscipline and incidents at height is regarded by HMPPS as an indication of disorder and prisoner distress. All of these indicators increased in the 12 months to March 2023 (HMPPS 2023c).

Although my study did not directly address job stress, the high levels of staff dissatisfaction expressed by the staff should not be under-estimated. Scholars have established a correlation between low job satisfaction and an increase in misconduct and job stress (Boateng and Hsieh 2019). Furthermore, high levels of job stress have been associated with job dissatisfaction, boundary violations which may lead to corruption, inappropriate relationships with prisoners, high turnover, absenteeism, low staff morale and lower organisational commitment (Armstrong and Griffin 2004; Lambert et al. 2009; Mahfood et al. 2013; Worley and Worley 2013; Worley and Worley 2016 Worley et al. 2018).

The variables identified in this study include individual, organisational and societal factors which influence an individual's propensity to corruption. I asked respondents which individual factors they considered affected propensity or vulnerability to corruption. A quarter of respondents identified relationship problems, financial difficulties and being under duress but the majority considered that the main reason for corruption was to make money. The risks faced by staff who came from the same geographical locations as prisoners were also highlighted – not only might they know a prisoner from a friendship group but the potential harm to self and family for reporting wrongdoing might be too great to refuse engaging in corrupt activities.

Despite the fact that most of the interview participants were managers, or based in the security department, the expressed level of distrust between managers and staff was considerable. Participants expressed frustration with inadequate recruitment and vetting processes and the lack of resources provided to prison staff. In summary, the prison staff in this study believed they worked in a dangerous and

---

<sup>31</sup> Crowding is measure as the number of prisoners held in a cell, room or dormitory where the number of occupants exceeds the uncrowded capacity eg. three prisoners in a cell designed for two.

stressful environment, which was understaffed. Staff felt undervalued, unsupported by management who themselves were struggling with the demands of their workload, while society turned a blind eye to the problems experienced by those working behind prison walls. Any approach to reduce staff wrongdoing needs to take into consideration that these factors influence individuals in various ways. I propose that in order to recognise the different motivational factors and to offer targeted interventions to reduce wrongdoing, offenders could be classified as predatory, disillusioned and/or unintentional.

Although the majority of survey respondents and interview participants claimed they would report wrongdoing, there was little belief that the prison would take any action to stop the wrongdoing. There was also a considerable lack of trust in the reporting system and, as will be seen in chapter six, there were well-founded fears of retaliation from other staff.

## **Chapter Six: Barriers to reporting wrongdoing**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The two previous findings chapters have focussed on the perceptions, causes and correlates of wrongdoing. The data drawn from the survey found that the perception of seriousness of wrongdoing is positively correlated with willingness to report wrongdoing and there is a common understanding of the seriousness of different types of wrongdoing. The qualitative data developed themes which identified societal, organisational and individual factors which increase staff vulnerability to wrongdoing, increase the risks of boundary violations and increase the risks of staff engaging in more serious wrongdoing. The identification of three types of offender who have different motivating factors highlights the need for HMPPS to have a multi-pronged approach to reduce wrongdoing.

In paragraph 2.8 I discussed the tension between the need to ensure the smooth operation of the prison and the need to maintain clear professional boundaries. Low level wrongdoing can be perceived as justifiable rule bending rather than behaviour which had the potential to lead to more serious wrongdoing. The resultant 'drift' is rationalised if the prison regime benefited and no harm is experienced at the time. However, in the absence of effective management controls, wrongdoing can become embedded in the organisational structure and is no longer recognised as wrongdoing. This type of embedded wrongdoing may not have major consequences at any point but if minor wrongdoing is not reported, there is no opportunity for reflection and learning. Instead, the wrongdoing is mindlessly re-enacted, leading to an erosion of professional boundaries and a lack of guidance as to why some prison policies and rules (which might appear to be unimportant to inexperienced staff) are necessary to reduce the risk of harm and how some forms of discretionary rule bending are acceptable.

This chapter considers the barriers to reporting wrongdoing. Willingness to report should not be limited to reporting on the behaviour of others, staff should also feel able to report on their own wrongdoing – both intentional and unintentional. Clearly, the predatory offender who makes the deliberate decision to smuggle in drugs or phones for financial gain is very unlikely to want to report their own wrongdoing. But

even in this situation, there may be mitigating reasons for the predatory offender's behaviour and an admission of guilt might lessen their potential punishment. There are also a number of less serious behaviours where a staff member has either intentionally or unintentionally violated professional boundaries and found themselves at the edge, or even part way down, the slippery slope. These staff should feel able to report their own wrongdoing and to ask for help. However, staff who want to report wrongdoing face a number of barriers.

Although some prison scholars believe there is still a code of silence amongst prison officers (Worley 2021) there is also acknowledgement that prison officers' solidarity in England and Wales has been undermined due to a more individualised culture and the increasing pressures of working in a prison environment (Arnold 2016). As a result, the feelings of staff solidarity noted by Crawley and Crawley (2008) which can resist acts of reporting has arguably lessened in recent years. There are two additional factors not yet fully discussed in prison literature which might have eroded the code of silence and further undermined the culture of loyalty and solidarity amongst prison officers. One is the exodus of experienced staff between 2010-2016, leaving behind a growing percentage of inexperienced staff.<sup>32</sup> The other is the Counter Corruption Policy (HMPPS 2022a, p.16) which mandates the reporting of wrongdoing, warning staff that "failure to report corruption or serious wrongdoing may itself be a disciplinary matter [for HMPPS staff] and in some circumstances, may constitute a criminal offence." Although the CC Policy is unlikely to have been read in detail by many prison staff, participants in both research sites and in different roles referred to this requirement, suggesting a general awareness of the consequences of failure to report wrongdoing.

As described in chapter two there is an extensive literature on whistleblowing (for example, Miceli and Near 1988; Near and Miceli 1996; Rothschild and Miethe 1999;

---

<sup>32</sup> The proportion of band 3-5 prison officers with less than three years' service at 31 December 2023 rose to 40.6% while the proportion of those with 10 years or more experience decreased to 26%. (HMPPS 2023c)

Near et al. 2004; Rothwell and Baldwin 2007; Gottschalk and Holgersson 2011; Taylor et al. 2024). However, there is very little focussed on whistleblowing by prison staff, the exceptions being Dryburgh's (2009) case study, McIlwain's (2005) research on non-custodial staff and Wells et al. (2021) study examining how different factors relate to individual whistleblowing propensity. There is, once again, a richer policing literature to draw on. In 2024 Taylor et al. reviewed 118 studies into police whistleblowing with the aim of identifying to whom officers were likely to report misconduct, the barriers to reporting misconduct and the solutions which had been proposed to improve reporting behaviour. As with prison literature, the majority of whistleblowing studies were conducted in the United States of America and the volume of research (as there is with prison literature into staff wrongdoing) is inflated by researchers publishing multiple papers using the same dataset.

Despite these drawbacks, Taylor et al. (2024) were able to identify the main barriers to police reporting of wrongdoing. These are: a lack of knowledge of the rules; fear of repercussions; interpersonal relations (the need to fit in and maintain good relations with other officers); and police culture, in particular the code of silence. Over 40 papers included in the Taylor et al. review proposed implications for how to address issues in police whistleblowing, most of which advocated for improved training, better supervisory support and improved vetting.

This chapter explores the barriers to reporting wrongdoing faced by prison staff who want to admit to their mistakes or report on the behaviour of other staff. As will be seen, the findings of this study identify very similar barriers as those found by Taylor et al. (2024). Not only were the perceived barriers similar, but the ways to reduce wrongdoing suggested by participants in this study mirrored Taylor et al's recommendations to reduce wrongdoing - improve training, recruitment and staffing numbers. The first of the barriers to reporting wrongdoing to be discussed is the lack of knowledge of the rules.

## **6.2 The knowledge gap**

Since the roll out of HMPPS's new Counter Corruption (CC) Policy in 2019 (reissued 2022) there has been an increased emphasis on preventing staff from engaging in corruption rather than just pursuing those involved in corruption *ex post facto*. As

described in chapter one, the CC Policy adopted a ‘four Ps’ strategic approach drawn from the then Government’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism and the Serious Organised Crime Strategy (2018): **p**rotect against corruption; **p**revent staff from engaging in corruption; **p**ursue those involved in corruption and **p**repare for the consequences of corrupt behaviour. Specialist CC staff are now located in every prison and all staff are meant to receive CC training. However, although 56.5% of respondents in this study considered CC training was thorough (Table 9), only 41.5% thought they would be protected if they reported wrongdoing. The survey question did not specify what type of ‘protection’ staff should expect as a result of reporting wrongdoing but the CC Policy refers to protection ‘from any form of discrimination or victimisation’ (HMPPS 2022a, p.16).

The CC guidance, by necessity, addresses wrongdoing and how to prevent it. But some participants felt the policy did not consider the day-to-day reality of working in the prisons, in particular the need to maintain staff-prisoner relationships. One of the rules which several participants mentioned was the ‘no touch rule’ - that prisoners should not be touched except in limited circumstances such as administering first aid or having to use force on a prisoner. But as Alex S pointed out:

*A fist bump or high five is regarded corrupt during the counter corruption training. In reality it is a way of greeting and expression of respect.*

This excerpt appears likely to be from a younger member of staff where ‘high fives’ and ‘fist bumps’ are a normal way of greeting and perhaps indicates the need for the CC Policy to be either updated or clarified.

Prison staff are meant to report the wrongdoing of prisoners, self-harm or security breaches such as an unlocked gate or missing tools through filing a Security Intelligence Report (SIR), usually referred to as an Intelligence Report (IR). This is a matter of routine for prison staff. In a large prison, the number of IRs can be in the hundreds each week.<sup>33</sup> IRs go to security analysts and the wider security team and

---

<sup>33</sup> In 2023 a total of 907,972 IRs were submitted by prison staff in England and Wales (MoJ 2024b)

there is little stigma attached to filing reports. Allegations of corruption, breach of professional standards, conflicts of interest and conditioning behaviours are made through filing a Corruption Prevention Intelligence Report (CPIR).<sup>34</sup> The CPIRs go to a smaller number of people – the head of CC, the governor responsible for CC (sometimes the deputy governor, or the security governor, depending on prison size) and, if the prison is large, other specialist CC staff. Alternatively staff can call or email an independent 24/7 integrity line, or email national or regional units.

HMPPS “strongly encourages” reporters to identify themselves when making a CPIR (HMPPS 2022a, p.16) but it is possible for the reporter to withhold their name, although they are informed that their identify may need to be disclosed in the event there is a disciplinary investigation. A Freedom of Information request established that in the three years from April 2019 - March 2023 the number of reports via the integrity hotline were 200 or less per year. This number increased in April 2022-March 2023 to 318 then jumped to 764 in the year April 2023-March 2024 as a result of funded campaign to increase awareness of the hotline (MoJ 2024a).

It is impossible to draw firm conclusions from these figures as reports include proven, disproven and uncorroborated allegations. Furthermore, high reporting levels may be indicative of high confidence in the reporting system and staff awareness of what and how to report wrongdoing. However, it should be noted that the number of prison staff employed by HMPPS in public sector prisons as at March 2024 was 37,202, a figure which excludes staff who work in prisons but are not employed by HMPPS (HMPPS 2024c), so although the number of reports via the integrity hotline has increased, it is still relatively low and is negligible compared to the 98,062 CPIRs submitted by prison staff (a number which includes those not directly employed by HMPPS) in 2023. Future research could analyse the number of wrongdoing reports in different prisons across the estate to establish whether there are any differences in the type and size of prisons.

---

<sup>34</sup> In 2023 a total of 98,062 CPIRs were submitted by prison staff in England and Wales (MoJ 2024b)



With the exception of very inexperienced staff, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of staff know how to submit an IR or CPIR. Even volunteers like the IMB are instructed on how to submit IRs as they cover routine occurrences such as prisoner threats to staff or other prisoners. The MoJ figures on the high number of CPIRs submitted seems to conflict with the significant barriers to whistleblowing perceived by the participants in this study and the wider whistleblowing literature. Without access to IR and CPIR data, it is impossible to conduct an analysis of the type of wrongdoing which is reported and the type of wrongdoing which is not reported. Until this access is granted, the contradiction between the quantitative data supplied by the MoJ and the qualitative data found in this study cannot be explored.

The prison where I was on the IMB and both research sites had notices instructing staff to report wrongdoing and to ask if they were unsure about any behaviour they witnessed. These notices included a phone number and email address for the 24/7 integrity hotline. Staff are also warned that failure to report corruption or serious wrongdoing may be a disciplinary matter and/or a criminal offence (HMPPS 2022a p.15). These notices have been part of the additional CC training provided as part of the Security Investment Programme. Freedom of Information Act requests reveal that every year a number of staff are investigated for failure to report misconduct by others although there have been no dismissals as yet.<sup>35</sup>

Officer Maurice explained how, even if a report was made anonymously, there were ways of finding out the identity of the whistleblower:

*I can think of an easy way to reveal someone's identity. Just check the date stamp on the IR and check who was on shift at that particular time, then to narrow it down, look at what they said. So, if someone IRs something in the evening, there's probably around 15 officers in the jail and they are split either two or three in every unit, so if you've got someone IR ing [reporting on]*

---

<sup>35</sup> Number of investigations for failing to report misconduct by others: 68 (2019/20), 93 (2020/21), 83 (2021/22) and 43 (2022/23). MoJ (2024d).

*someone, all I have to do is check the detail, check the time, who was on shift and see what they say and I can find out.*

The survey findings showed that the majority of staff believed they would report wrongdoing, particularly serious wrongdoing but, as discussed below, there are reasons why some might be unwilling to do it.

As Rothwell and Baldwin (2007) found in their policing study, mandating whistleblowing increases whistleblowing intentions but not the frequency of blowing the whistle. The findings in this study appear to confirm this. Table 10 shows over 87% of respondents in both prisons agreed they would report wrongdoing to a manager (overall mean 4.40) and 98.6% would file an Intelligence Report (IR) (overall mean 4.77). However, these figures are only consistent with willingness to report on the four most serious scenarios (Table 6 above) and are higher than expressed willingness to report on the other thirteen scenarios. This could indicate respondents did not consider most of the scenario behaviours to be so serious that they should be reported on; or it could indicate that respondents were aware of what they *should* do as a general rule, as opposed to predicting what they *would* do in a specific scenario.

**Table 10: Willingness to report**

<b>All Staff</b>							
<b>Beechfield</b>							
<i>Chestnutwood</i>							
1 = Strongly Disagree							
5 = Strongly Agree							

Willingness to report	Mean	Median	SD	Range		Disagree %	Agree % *
I would report wrongdoing to my manager	<b>4.40</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>4.00</b>		<b>7.1</b>	<b>88.6</b>
	<b>4.42</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>4.00</b>		<b>9.7</b>	<b>90.3</b>
	4.38	5.00	0.94	4.00		5.1	87.2
I would file an IR	<b>4.77</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>3.00</b>		<b>1.4</b>	<b>98.6</b>
	<b>4.77</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>1.00</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	4.77	5.00	0.58	3.00		2.6	97.5
* Percentages are of those participants who expressed an opinion							

Contrary to the survey data which evidences the intended willingness of respondents to report wrongdoing and the MoJ data on the number of corruption reports submitted each year, the qualitative data identified a number of barriers to reporting wrongdoing. Not only was there was a reluctance to report an individual's own wrongdoing; there was an even greater reluctance to report on colleagues. The themes running through both situations were a lack of trust and the fear of repercussions.

### **6.3 Owning up to own wrongdoing**

The reluctance to report own wrongdoing was predominantly attributed to two reasons: a fear of being judged by management and/or colleagues as incapable of doing the job; and the fear of facing disciplinary action rather than receiving support or understanding.

John explained how, as an officer on the wings, it was the fear of being judged as being inadequate which would have driven his decision not to report his own wrongdoing:

*If I had bypassed the censors and put something in the post then realised two days later that actually, there is a reason I shouldn't have done that and completely forgot, I don't think I'd have been comfortable telling my line manager that I've bypassed the post and sent something out for someone... I would have been reluctant and thinking that they are going to judge me.*

The more common fear of not receiving support was voiced by Alex S:

*I believe there is not enough support for staff who are worried that their position might be compromised or fear they have violated professional boundaries.*

Yvette had 12 years' experience working in operational roles and had reached the rank of custodial manager. Yvette gave an example of a female colleague who had entered into an inappropriate relationship with a prisoner after leaving an abusive relationship. The colleague had been interviewed by the CC team, had admitted to her own wrongdoing, while explaining her personal problems and how:

*She fell prey for that [the attention given by the prisoner] as she was pinning for that and because she had been so damaged in her relationship.*

Despite the fact her colleague had felt able to make a confession to the CC team, Yvette went on to say:

*There isn't enough of 'we can help you' if you're getting drawn into corruption before it's too late or goes any further. It's always like, 'we will have to punish you first'. There's not enough understanding of what a person is going through that might lead them to make the wrong decisions. It's straight away criticisms and punishment. ... I feel like there should be training for managers as well, to spot colleagues and staff falling prey to that sort of thing.*

Interview participants working in the security department talked about CC staff making more effort to be on the wings, ensuring that Prison Officer Entry Level Trainees (POELTs) knew who they were and having 'check in' conversations with POELTs during their first year in the prison. Despite these initiatives, security manager Laura admitted frustration with staff continuing to believe they would face disciplinary action if they admitted to stepping over the professional boundary lines:

*I think sometimes there's still that culture that where people think 'I've done something wrong, they are going to sack me'.*

The new CC training has attempted to reassure staff that vulnerabilities are understood. The CC trainers use case studies to provide examples of how staff can be drawn into serious wrongdoing through manipulation, grooming and/or personal difficulties. The repeated message is 'if you are in difficulties, tell us and we can support you'. However, the following excerpts from survey respondents indicate these messages are not believed by all staff:

*They [CC ] lack empathy/understanding and are focused on the wrongdoing and the consequences. The counter corruption team feels unapproachable and something you rather avoid getting involved with, because it will mean you are in trouble (Alex S).*

*The only thing outlined in corruption [training] is basically the possible punishment (Liam S).*

Staff who realised they should report their own wrongdoing faced a moral dilemma; do the right thing and admit wrongdoing and risk disciplinary action or keep quiet. This dilemma could be whether to report a minor breach of rules, such as accepting a bar of chocolate from a prisoner, revealing too many personal details, through to more serious behaviours such as being persuaded to alter prison records or having an inappropriate relationship. However, the situation became more complicated for staff when trying to decide whether to report the wrongdoing of others, particularly colleagues.

#### **6.4 Why it is so hard to report on colleagues – staff culture and consequences**

All custodial staff interviewed in this study said they would report serious wrongdoing providing they knew and trusted the person to whom they reported wrongdoing. The non-custodial staff said they would first tell their manager and then tell security staff if the wrongdoing was serious. However, as discussed in paragraph 6.5 below, there is considerable distrust in the reporting system.

Although staff might believe they would be willing to report on the wrongdoing of others, the findings in chapter four show there is a positive correlation between perception of seriousness and willingness to report - with a low willingness to report behaviours perceived as minor wrongdoing. Furthermore, what was perceived as 'serious' and what was not could be open to interpretation. As Table 7 shows, only 11.6% of survey respondents believed that no staff turned a blind eye to corrupt activities. This suggests that where there is any ambiguity or uncertainty, it might be easier for staff to avoid the ethical dilemma of reporting on a colleague by failing to do so. In this extract manager Dave explains how whistleblowers need to waive their anonymity and how reporting on low level wrongdoing is, in some ways, even more challenging than serious wrongdoing as there is an increased risk that no action will be taken against the wrongdoer who then returns to work:

*If we want to sack people, we normally need someone to go on the record or we need hard evidence to be apparent so again we do need people to open themselves up to exposure but it's a lot easier when it's phones and drugs.*

*When it's low level stuff, professional standards stuff, it's really difficult and I think staff are really scared of being caught up in a dispute where colleagues are turning on them and where the member of staff doesn't get sacked.*

John also commented on the stigma attached to being a whistleblower, one which could be very difficult to cope with if the member of staff they reported on came back to work.

*Because if that member of staff gets cleared and comes back to work, they have to live with that stigma that they reported that member of staff.*

In 1988 Kauffman identified nine norms of prison officer culture in the United States. Although it is questionable whether her findings are generalisable to prisons in England and Wales in the 2020s (or even at the time), two of the norms appear to be still relevant: never make a fellow officer look bad in front of prisoners, and always support an officer in a dispute with a prisoner. As officer Yvette explained:

*Most staff will be united with their colleagues even if they are being overhanded [using excess force] because they don't want to show division and show the prisoner that staff can be split apart, so they will show a united front even if they don't like what their colleague has done.*

The findings indicate there is a distinction between a sense of solidarity and failing to report wrongdoing due to a code of silence. The link between these two factors has been referred to by several policing researchers. Reiner (2010) suggested that the origins of camaraderie and team solidarity is due to the unpredictable and potential danger of police work which is very similar to the reality of working in prisons. Researchers have argued that police solidarity prevents police officers from reporting on their colleagues' misbehaviour (Miller 2003) and still exists in police forces in England and Wales (Westmarland and Conway 2020). However, as discussed in paragraph 2.10 in chapter two, whilst solidarity might be a core component of the role of prison officer, there is less certainty whether the code of silence is still a key element of prison staff culture. Some researchers still argue the code of silence is part of prison staff culture (Worley 2021; Garrihy 2024) but it is likely to have been undermined by concerns such as fear of disciplinary action due to the mandatory

reporting policy, as well as a more individualised culture which is “more about watching your own back than others” (Arnold 2016, p.279).

This need to ‘watch your own back’ was referred to by Bert, a senior manager, who acknowledged there was a culture of staff solidarity but pointed out there could be damaging consequences for the person who failed to comply with the mandatory requirement to report wrongdoing:

*Staff want to stick together, look after each other, they have a difficult job but ....not reporting has got people into trouble, got them into prison for not reporting wrongdoing.*

Dan was adamant he would report corruption but admitted that staff solidarity or friendship could mean that not everybody would do it and to that extent he believed there was a code of silence between friends:

*I think because of the nature of the job, we form close relationships with our colleagues. So I do think there are people who would, say, witness excessive use of force and would potentially cover it up because they are friends.*

However, Dan also distinguished between the code of silence which used to be prevalent in prisons when colleagues had worked together for 20 or 30 years and new staff who had only worked for a few years who would be less likely to adhere to a code of silence:

*And when I think when you're talking about silence and stuff, back then, they would have been more likely to have had silence then than now. Now with the new staff, they would have no qualms to say, he's done this, he's done that, they would do it now more, than those older staff.*

Laura had extensive experience in the security department. She also dismissed the idea that new staff would be aware of a code of silence, instead, their failure to report was more due to a lack of knowledge:

*I just don't think that the new staff coming in think of it as grassing. I just think they don't understand that somebody has done something wrong.*

Yvette was aware of the requirement under the CC Policy to report any suspicions of staff wrongdoing, and the risk of facing disciplinary or criminal sanctions if she failed to report wrongdoing. Nevertheless, she still felt conflicted about whether to report on a colleague:

*.....you feel like you're already fighting for your life so you don't want to be fighting with your colleagues, you need to band together and not stab each other in the back...because there are so few of us and we need to feel together....I think sometimes you do feel guilty reporting on a colleague, especially if it's just hearsay...you still feel terrible writing about your colleague.*

Yvette's description of feeling guilty when reporting on colleagues and the need to 'feel together' describes the pressure to conform to the solidarity norm and is what Garrihy (2024) describes as the 'darker side of solidarity'. Officers who do not comply with the solidarity norm face "potentially stark" consequences such as colleagues not coming to their aid, ostracism and/or physical violence (Garrihy 2024, p.179). The fear of consequences could mean that a staff member who wanted to report the wrongdoing of a colleague might decide the risk of retaliation was too great. This fear is one which has been found in the wider literature. In an extensive (though now ageing) study, Rothschild and Miethe (1999) found that two thirds of whistleblowers from all of the various occupational categories included in their research (which did not include prisons) experienced severe retaliation from their employer or co-workers as a result of their disclosures. Furthermore, just the threat of retaliation greatly reduces the likelihood of whistleblowing (Rothschild and Miethe 1999; Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran 2005; Nicholls et al. 2021; Gottschalk 2022).

In prisons, these retaliations could be from prisoners or from other staff and range from being ostracised to damage to personal property and threats:

*It puts staff in a precarious position. I've been in that position many years ago, when as an officer, you do get ostracised. You do get left alone and unsupported (Bert).*



Maurice described what happened to him after he reported on another member of staff:

*Managers will only speak to you if they have to speak to you about work, it's like you don't exist. And the staff who supported that person also don't speak to us. You can feel the tension, you can cut it like a knife.*

Retaliations are not limited to social ostracism. Adrian reported a serious attack on a prisoner. His family were settled in the area and he chose not to apply for a transfer. Instead he suffered severe retaliation for several years until a new governing governor acted:

*I got absolutely tortured. I had my locker broken into, I had threats written on my locker, I had threats sent to my home, my house and car was vandalised, I went to the then dep and gov about it but nothing was done.*

Rob recalled an incident when a staff member made a CPIR report which led to an investigation – at which point the staff member's identity was revealed:

*That particular incident got quite nasty, there was a lot of name calling, victimisation which carried on for close to two years...The member of staff who was doing the victimisation of them was never challenged, no investigation, nothing done.*

Another form of retaliation referred to by participants involved the alleged wrongdoer filing false corruption reports, both as a form of attack and defence against the person who had made the wrongdoing report. As a result, staff members who challenged other staff about minor wrongdoing could find themselves the subject of endless investigations. These tactics were noted by several participants:

*...their colleagues constantly put in false IRs against them and they constantly feel harassed. And their colleagues do this because they are being constantly challenged by this individual about what they are doing and the dangerousness of what they are doing (Yvette).*

*They made allegations against me during the investigation [instigated as a result of his whistleblowing]... I spent two and a half years under investigation for one thing or another (Adrian).*

Maurice was hypervigilant about being 'set up' as a result of his reporting on a colleague. He talked about never leaving his bag unattended and ensuring that what he brought into the prison was seen by the gate staff:

*In those types of situations, they could set you up, they could come in and put things in your locker .... If I leave a jacket in an office, how do I know that someone might not put something in my jacket? And it's something that has happened in the past. They tried to set up an officer...Because this is a really nasty place, for you to have corruption in this place, the officers need to be corrupt themselves. ...these people are not good people; they are bad and nasty people. I call them cons with keys.*

Even if these barriers were overcome and the staff member was brave enough to participate in an investigation into corruption, the reality was:

*It's really hard to catch them [corrupt staff] as there's so many opportunities to bring stuff into the jail...People work around us, in the same way that prisoners will circumvent the security, the management. Responses around the police are poor. Outcomes for corruption is poor. I've had a few disappointments with the police around corrupt staff as it takes ages and ages to run an operation through to fruition around corruption (Bert).*

Given these opinions, it is not surprising that many staff would be tempted to respond in the way Beth S, admitted she would:

*I think if I witnessed something not quite right it would be easy to justify in my mind why this instance was not that serious so as not to become involved...I think there should be more emphasis on confidence around reporting something because I'd be very nervous about the backlash for me if I had to report something.*

## 6.5 Lack of confidentiality and distrust

The procedure for reporting wrongdoing, in particular whether it is anonymised and whether reporting is to an internal or external organisation, is strongly associated with willingness to report (Nicholls et al. 2021). The lack of trust in the confidentiality of the reporting system was evident in the participant responses in this study. Vince had experience of witnessing wrongdoing but decided not to report it as he was worried about confidentiality and believed the report would be dismissed. He understood why others would act in the same way:

*Power can be abused and in the prison service more than anywhere else. They are still human beings. The processes need to be better. I don't think the processes are strong enough to be trusted. So an ordinary officer will find it easier to walk away and say they didn't see.*

Although IRs and CPIRs are meant to be confidential and only accessible by security staff, there was very little faith in the confidentiality of reporting system. Phil had previously been a security governor and commented that:

*I've had a couple of conversations here with different members of staff who have got very blinkered views around the reporting process and how that intelligence is managed. I've gone through the system to the nth degree with them [to say the system is confidential] and they will still say, well, no, you're wrong.*

The belief that the system wasn't confidential was widespread. Not only was there a fear that the reporter's name would become known, but the name of the person being investigated would also become known. Both situations could result in negative consequences for the person(s) identified:

*Although it's meant to be confidential, everyone knows if you're being investigated and there's lots of gossip about what they are meant to have done (Yvette).*

*I have had some staff say, no, I'm not putting one of them in [CPIR] and when I've asked them why, they've said 'I don't trust the managers with it'. They have a perception that it's going to be leaked (Dan).*

*The suspicion that nothing is kept confidential in the Prison Service is too high. People fear the consequences of expressing their opinion if it is not deemed to be the correct one or an appropriate one (Ella S).*

*That's the thing about the service, everyone knows everyone's business in this place and everyone talks about everyone's business. So there's no confidentiality (Maurice).*

The external 24/7 integrity hotline is meant to offer staff a way to maintain anonymity. Staff can choose not to provide their details although there is a proviso that anonymity is permitted: “unless it is necessary for the staff member to provide evidence to support disciplinary proceedings ... and/or a criminal investigation” (HMPPS 2022a, para 4.57). The option to remain anonymous should, in theory, increase staff faith in the reporting system. However, the level of distrust and cynicism was so deep that some staff such as officer Yvette interpreted the installation of the integrity hotline as an admission by the Prison Service that the internal reporting systems were not confidential: “If it wasn't an issue, why is there an anonymous anti-corruption reporting line that you can call?” HMPPS have taken action to promote the integrity hotline and funded campaign to increase awareness and trust in the hotline. As mentioned in paragraph 6.2 above, this has resulted in an increase in the number of reports but it still remains low with only 764 reports from April 2023-March 2024 (MoJ 2024a).

As with many of the other findings in this study, there was a significant level of distrust between staff, between staff and management and in the reporting system itself. There was also distrust between custodial HMPPS staff and non-HMPPS staff such as healthcare and teaching staff. Custodial staff commented that non-operational staff saw security as something uniformed staff had to deal with and were less likely to report wrongdoing:

*Some of the partner agencies are less cynical and less suspicious. And they need to be for the job they are doing but it makes them vulnerable [to*

*wrongdoing]...when they do come across an incident or an issue it's not at the forefront of their minds, or how to spot wrongdoing (John).*

Non-custodial participants agreed they would be more likely to raise wrongdoing concerns with their own managers before sharing them with prison security and there could be conflict between the prison and the partner agencies. When asked about who would investigate wrongdoing by healthcare staff, Helen, a healthcare worker, described how there could be a conflict between the two organisations as the member of staff might be investigated by both the health board and the prison security department. This could lead to a situation where:

*The prison might have one agenda and the health board another. Or they could agree. It depends what it is.*

Helen went on to express her frustration that although healthcare was meant to report wrongdoing to prison security, the security department was unwilling to share information about her staff in return:

*But what I find frustrating is that they won't share security information...So I've asked for stuff [information about healthcare staff] but they haven't shared that.*

This study only included two interviews with healthcare staff so it is not possible to generalise about the conflict of loyalties voiced by both participants. However, despite the participants holding different roles in different prisons, they both commented on the need to discuss wrongdoing with their own managers before sharing it with prison security – unless it was something they judged as serious enough to justify reporting it immediately to security.

The level of distrust in the reporting system was matched by the belief that nothing would be done. The following excerpts are a few examples of the experiences of some participants in both prisons:

*Because I knew it would go nowhere because the person in charge washed it off and said there was nothing to report, thank you, you've done your bit but no action was taken (Vince).*

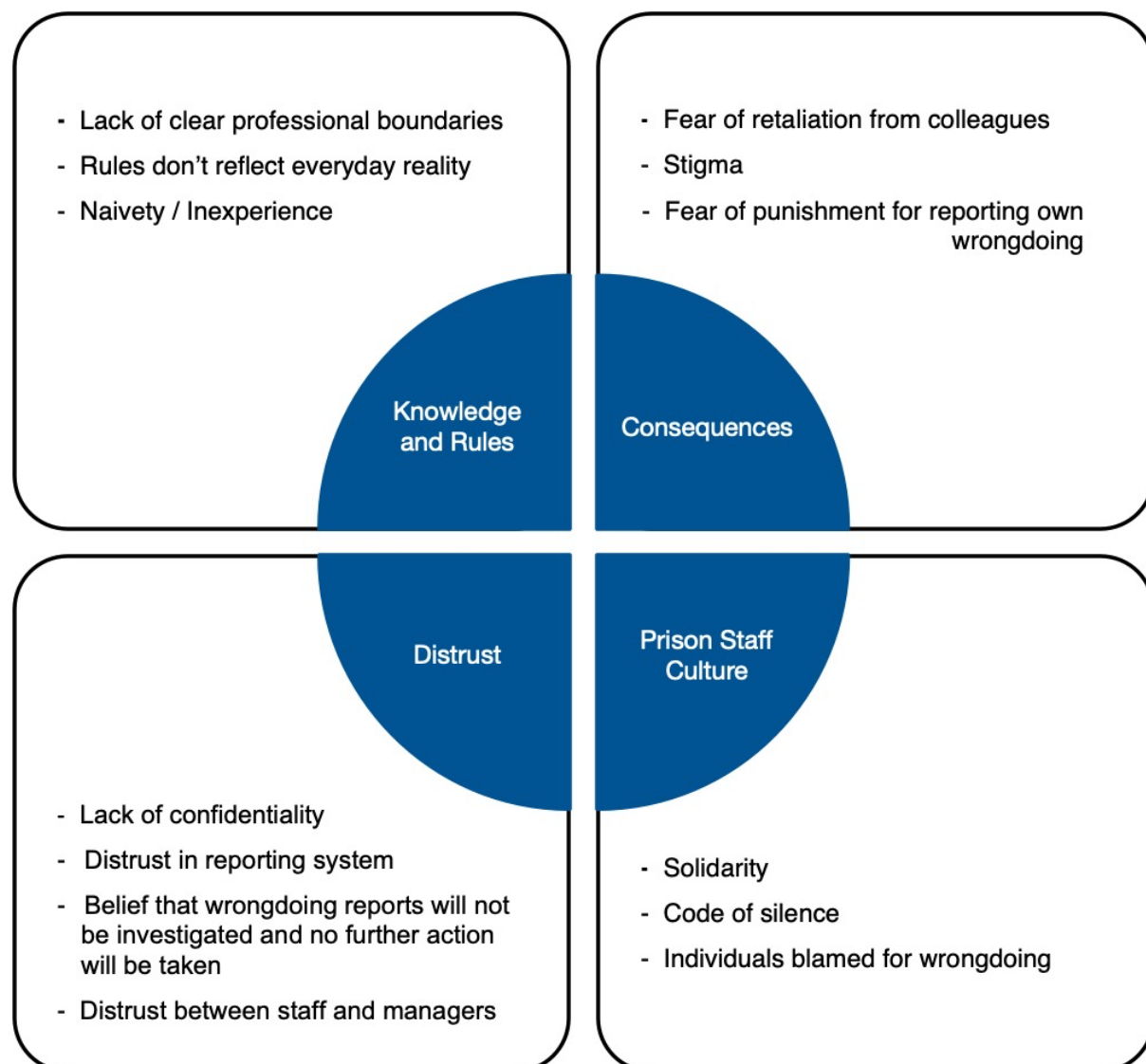
*I have submitted multiple CPIR's against staff, nothing is done (Will S).*

*The officers are the ones who are worried about the anonymity and quite cynical ... they often think that nothing will get done ...so what's the point [of reporting wrongdoing] (John).*

After suffering severe retaliation for reporting on colleagues, Adrian decided several years later to make a report on the integrity hotline to avoid being identified but to his dismay “nothing was done”.

Figure 7 illustrates how the barriers to reporting wrongdoing appear to consist of four key factors which explain staff unwillingness to report and the wider ramifications if an individual did blow the whistle. These factors are the lack of knowledge and rules, the possible adverse consequences of reporting on others or reporting own wrongdoing, the high level of distrust, including the belief that no action would be taken by managers and the prison staff culture. Whether or not there is a code of silence between prison staff may be the subject of disagreement between academics but the participants in this study referred to a sense of solidarity and camaraderie between officers on the wing despite the high levels of distrust within the prison. One aspect of prison staff culture which has not been the subject of focussed academic thought but which has been found in this study, is the culture of blame. The fear of being blamed for being inadequate was a barrier to reporting own wrongdoing and the fear of being blamed rather than supported by management proved to be another obstacle to reporting wrongdoing.

**Figure 7: Barriers to reporting wrongdoing**



## 6.6 What can be done?

HMPPS have invested a great deal of money into the Security Investment Programme (SIP) to reduce crime in prisons.<sup>36</sup> One aspect of SIP was to reduce the

---

<sup>36</sup> In March 2022 the then Secretary of State of Justice, Victoria Atkins, told the House of Commons that the SIP programme had been completed in March 2022 at a cost of £100 million (Atkins 2022).

conveyance of illicit contraband through the installation of more X-ray machines, metal detectors, body scanners, drug detection machines for mail and searching at the gate entrance into the prison for staff and visitors. However, staff are not subjected to body scanning and there is very little (if any) searching at the gate for staff who enter the prison during the night shift. Although these sorts of situational crime prevention methods might alter the risk, effort and reward ratio (Cornish and Clarke 1986) and therefore serve as a deterrent for some staff, they have not stopped the trafficking of contraband and they do not target other forms of wrongdoing. These methods also require a sufficient number of trained staff to operate them which, given the staffing crisis, means the machines are not always used. In this excerpt, John explains how situational methods can reduce trafficking but they are not the solution to all wrongdoing:

*The situational stuff, for me is a big help. Not in terms of catching staff doing the wrongdoing - the searches at the gate, you never find anything on staff - but if someone is having pressure put on them, it gives them an excuse to say no, 'I can't bring it in as everyone is being searched at the gate'. We rarely find anything on a random staff search but for me it's about the culture of things don't come into the jail and putting staff in that frame of mind.*

However, Tom was fairly cynical about the effectiveness of the machinery and increased staff searches:

*Yeah, I think they will help but it's not going to stop it. You know what I mean when a prisoner says they are plugged, well staff can bring in things plugged, the best enhanced gate in the world isn't going to stop that happening.*

Dave had extensive experience of working in the security team. He thought that increasing situational prevention methods could potentially change the methods of trafficking, but he was not convinced:

*Because where there's a will there a way, just as we have always said prisoners are very capable of pivoting when one security measure is introduced to stop a particular threat, they will find another way to exploit a gap in our defences and corrupt staff will do the same. Yeah, it obviously helps, having more staff searching at the gate, having X-rays and scanners*



*and better structures at gate areas, all of that helps ... but long term it's about the people we are employing, how we are vetting, training then supervising them, rather than any physical stuff at the gate.*

Dave's opinion that "it's about the people we are employing" and the need for training was echoed by other interview participants who thought there were more effective measures reduce wrongdoing: employing the right people, at the right salary, with better management support and deliver better training on a frequent basis, or as Helen put it, one solution was: "Learning innit." These suggestions are consistent with the factors identified in the policing literature (Taylor et al. 2024).

As manager Adrian said:

*We've got all the physical measures in place we can reasonably use ..... for me it's about the interactions, the training, the mentoring which needs to get better ... we don't have anti-corruption training and the softer type of training which would keep staff on track to make them think about whether something they are doing is wrong. For me, anti-corruption training should be mandatory and if I had my way, I'd put it on monthly.*

Security manager Phil agreed that:

*The situational tools are great but they don't come without a risk of those systems being negated. I think the real thing comes around culture and giving staff support and encouragement, mentoring and the like.*

Non-uniformed staff member Sharon S gave a forthright response in the survey text box:

*There are no clear guidelines for staff but if the corruption training was more regular staff would have the chance to ask questions in a safe environment. Help for staff who are feeling vulnerable would be better if the people that are trying to help don't actually work in the establishment. We need an outside agency. Most staff would not feel comfortable talking about issues within the prison or personal to someone they work with. PEOPLE TALK.*

There are a multitude of reasons why people engage in wrongdoing, so no one approach is going to succeed. Although there was great dissatisfaction with salaries, officer Yvette gave an insightful explanation of how pay increases might improve morale and possibly reduce staff turnover but they were not a panacea to stop staff corruption. Instead, what was needed was more support from management and colleagues to address individual problems:

*[It depends on] the reason you're getting into corruption ...if you have the same mentality as a criminal, and would rather earn like, £1,000 a week selling drugs instead of making £400 a week in an office job. ...[or] If you're doing it cos you're under duress, those reasons won't go away if you're earning more money [ salary]. Or if you're forming inappropriate relationships because you've come out of a bad relationship, that's a social and psychological issue you need support with, money isn't going to solve it.*

One approach suggested by several participants was to increase trust in managers. This would involve changing the staff culture of blame, distrust and fear of disciplinary action. Some managers felt they were endeavouring to do this:

*I was very clear at [team] meetings that there was no blame, if one of us made a mistake then as a team we had all made a mistake and we need to put that right. And that's the type of culture we need to foster along with anti-corruption training on a regular basis... It's about OK you've done something wrong, what can we do about it, how to put it right, how do we support that member of staff (Adrian).*

Changes in the perception of consequences of (minor) wrongdoing appear to have already been achieved in healthcare. Rachel, a healthcare worker, frequently referred to 'boundaried relationships' with prisoners, of being supportive to prisoners who needed healthcare but not becoming friends with them by sharing personal details. Rachel had the confidence and experience to answer prisoner questions about personal events such as her holiday through letting them know she had been on holiday but then maintaining her professional boundaries by drawing the questions to a close if the prisoner asked for further details. Rachel spoke of regular meetings between managers and the staff dealing with prisoners and how there

were opportunities to discuss boundaries and conditioning. In this excerpt, Rachel explained the healthcare approach and the emphasis on training new staff:

*There has to be a professional boundary and what I find important is trying to give my trainee the confidence to be able to challenge things when they feel a prisoner might be overstepping the boundaries.*

It should be noted that although healthcare staff might feel more able to talk to their managers about wrongdoing and have open discussions on how to deal with difficult situations, it does not mean that non-custodial staff do not engage in wrongdoing. McIlwain's 2004 study into non-custodial staff in Australia found a wide range of types of misconduct which included corruption, information misuse, sexual harassment, inappropriate relationships and physical assaults. There has been no similar study in England and Wales, although there have been a number of high-profile cases reporting inappropriate relationships between non-custodial staff and prisoners as well as drug trafficking (Hammersmith Today 2014; BBC News 2017; Warburton 2019; Inside Time 2023a; Cotterill 2023; Baynes 2023; Thornton 2023).

Although the police already investigate corruption which could lead to a prosecution, there was frustration with the slowness of the process, giving suspects time to resign and leave the prison service to avoid the disciplinary process. There was even more frustration with the investigatory investigations which were not referred to the police. One possible way of dealing with this problem and to address the distrust in the reporting system could be for an external body to be appointed to investigate wrongdoing. I asked all interview participants about their opinions on an external investigatory body. Out of 15 participants, 13 agreed that an external investigatory body could increase trust and increase the number of reports. Tom's reply was echoed in many of the other replies in response to the question whether he thought an external body should investigate wrongdoing allegations:

*110% yes .... Because when you have relationships with people you don't always look at things with clarity. Whereas if you are independent of a relationship, you have no prior knowledge or vested interest at all.*

Several participants provided detailed answers, indicating they had already thought about this point. The reasons advanced for the need for an external body ranged

from reducing workloads on security staff and managers who have to conduct internal investigations, to increasing legitimacy and trust in investigation outcomes.

There were also perceived benefits of increased transparency:

*I think if it's done that way and it's passed over to someone else externally then there's more transparency as well. So, from the public's point of view, the prison service aren't seen as hiding something cos if someone is doing wrongdoing, they have access to it (Chris).*

Some participants had clearly given the matter some thought. Adrian suggested:

*There should be a body like from prison service staff, governors, who maybe are retired who sit outside the actual service itself, like the IPCC, and then come in to do the investigations ... someone independent coming in would improve the outcome and the situation. And I think it would also be another deterrent, knowing you're going to be investigated by someone completely independent.*

While Bert suggested:

*We could do with some people being trained in the region and have some dedicated people who were trained in investigation techniques, especially around corruption.*

Maurice also expressed his opinion that not only should there be a separate investigatory body, but the security teams themselves should be moved around on a frequent basis. (Given the amount of training necessary to join the security team, this might not be a practical suggestion):

*The security team should be mobile, it should be a temporary role and they get moved around. ...So you don't have enough time to start sleeping with your colleagues and building that relationship and building networks where you could be compromising investigations. So I definitely think that should be a separate group investigating.*

Dan saw the practical benefits of outsourcing wrongdoing investigations:

*If you had an independent body, not only would it help with the perception of the prison service but also help the staff who have to deal with the investigations. It would be so much easier for me to get on with my own work if I didn't have to be taken away to do other things.*

It is not suggested that an external investigatory body could bring about all these hoped for changes. The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) was established in 2002 to address shortcomings of the Police Complaints Board and the perceived lack of independent investigative powers (Reiner 2010). Unfortunately, the IPCC failed to increase public confidence or to secure public legitimacy (Gilmore and Tufail 2015). This failure led to the creation of the Independent Office for Police Conduct in 2018 to increase independence from the police. Despite these problems, there has been a trend towards external corruption investigatory bodies in Western countries in the last 20 years to give individuals greater confidence to report acts of corruption (Goldsmith 2020). An independent body to investigate prison staff wrongdoing would be in line with this trend. What is clear from the findings of this study is that the current reporting and investigation methods employed by HMPPS are not as effective or as trusted as they should be. They need to be seen to work in practice and need to be proactive, rather than reactive.

The final question of the survey asked respondents whether they thought other staff would answer the survey honestly. As the survey was independent, anonymous and voluntary, I had expected that all respondents would agree their colleagues would be honest – if only because they had nothing to gain by being dishonest. Instead, eleven respondents said they thought other respondents would not be honest. The reasons given by some of the respondents revealed a considerable level of cynicism.

*Fear of persecution (Sam S).*

*Worried about the repercussions (Rachel).*

*People fear the consequences of expressing their opinion if it is not deemed to be the correct one or an appropriate one. People also fear being criticised and accused of being corrupt themselves if they take a less than 'strict' approach to staff wrongdoing (Ella S).*

*Nothing will change. We get surveys all the time told to fill them in then things will change. Guess what nothing changes it all stays the same but their numbers look good because staff have filled them in (Hannah S).*

## **6.7 Conclusion**

The findings in this study support the argument there is a blame culture within prisons which has an impact on how staff respond to wrongdoing. The growing body of policing literature has evidenced that where organisational culture attributes blame to an individual rather than to organisational shortcomings, the ability of staff to do their job effectively is reduced as is the willingness of officers to admit to their own mistakes or report on others (Farrow 2024). The perception that individuals will be blamed and punished increases mistrust, leading staff to become more cautious with what they document and record (Metcalf 2017). Furthermore, where less serious wrongdoing remains hidden, it cannot be used as an organisational learning opportunity (Westmarland and Rowe 2018). Although, as has been noted throughout this research, police and prison roles are not identical, they are similar enough to permit drawing on the policing findings to assist in an explanation of the findings in this study.

Interview participants in this study were all aware of the CC Policy and the requirement to report wrongdoing. Most of the survey respondents who gave textual answers about the CC Policy were also aware of the policy but felt they had received inadequate training and there was a lack of support from management and from the CC staff. The majority of interview participants stated they would report wrongdoing regardless of who the wrongdoer was. This was an unsurprising result as the interview participants were predominantly management or security staff. However, as discussed in chapter four, the survey findings showed that the less serious the behaviour was perceived to be, the less willing participants were to report it. Several interview participants admitted that instead of reporting a staff member for wrongdoing, they would 'have a word'— particularly where they considered the wrongdoing to be minor.

Interview participants referred to staff solidarity due to being outnumbered and reliant on colleagues to provide support in potentially dangerous situations. As Yvette

commented, there is a need to “not stab each other in the back .. because there are so few of us.” The findings were ambivalent as to whether or not a code of silence is still part of prison staff culture and whether it was a barrier to reporting wrongdoing. What was less ambivalent was that fear of retaliation was a major barrier together with lack of trust in the reporting system and a belief that nothing would be done. This led most participants to admit that they could understand why staff would ‘turn a blind eye’.

Whistleblowers decide whether to act on the basis of the perceived (or expected) costs and benefits of reporting wrongdoing (Miceili and Near 1988). A significant cost faced by whistleblowers – even if their disclosures are true - is the risk of organisational retaliation such as ostracism by co-workers, long term economic harm and psychological injury (Rothschild and Miethe 1999). The findings in this study included first-hand accounts of participants who had suffered different types of retaliation from being subjected to investigations due to false intelligence and corruption reports, to intimidation, physical threats, ostracism and reputational damage.

Although situational crime prevention measures were acknowledged to be helpful to reduce trafficking, a more holistic approach was suggested by the data and from previous research which concluded that as whistleblowing is multifaceted, a multipronged approach is required to encourage whistleblowing (Nicholls et al. 2021). Apart from situational crime prevention methods, the factors which could reduce wrongdoing identified by participants in this study were: increasing CC training, guidance and support, both internally and externally; increasing staff pay and numbers; increasing staff support and communication; greater management involvement with staff; and improved trust in the reporting system, specifically by introducing an external body to investigate wrongdoing.

The findings in this chapter combined with the low levels of job satisfaction, lack of organisational commitment, the feeling of being undervalued, and feeling unsafe at work expressed in both in my study and the Justice Committee (2023) survey findings should serve as a warning for HMPPS and suggests a new way forward should be devised. The next chapter discusses the overall findings and considers how the data have increased understanding of how prison staff wrongdoing is

perceived, individual propensity to wrongdoing and willingness to report wrongdoing. The chapter concludes with policy implications for HMPPS and makes suggestions for additional research.



## Chapter Seven: Discussion and Conclusions

### 7.1 Introduction

In chapter one of this thesis, I described how my interest in prison staff corruption arose due to my personal experience and observation as a member of the Independent Monitoring Board at one of the most challenging prisons in England and Wales. Having tried to locate relevant academic literature I realised there was very little to be found even though prison staff corruption “puts the safety of offenders, staff and visitors to prisons at risk; damages the reputation of the organisation; reduces workforce morale and performance” (HMPPS 2022a, p.4).

Owing to my IMB membership, I spent a few years on the initial planning and was able to discuss my proposed research with a number of prison staff, both within the prison and at Prison HQ. Chapter three describes the scoping exercises and the rejection of my first application to the National Research Council to research prison staff corruption. This set back became a positive as I reframed my research to encompass prison staff wrongdoing. The term ‘wrongdoing’ is defined by HMPPS as behaviour which “falls short of the professional standards expected of staff” (HMPPS 2022a, p.6) and therefore includes corruption but also more minor wrongdoing as well as some types of behaviour such as assault and theft which might not be regarded as ‘corruption’ by prison staff. Being pushed in the direction of researching staff wrongdoing rather than limiting my study to staff corruption has, I hope, resulted in a more nuanced appreciation that wrongdoing needs to be understood as a continuum from rule bending to criminal offences. The wrongdoings which fall within the continuum all need to be addressed, and policies which only seek to reduce serious corruption such as trafficking fail to offer the support and guidance to prison staff which is needed on a day to day basis.

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first independent academic research in England and Wales which set out to confront the question of why prison staff engage in wrongdoing. Since the commencement of this research in 2020 there have been a number of high profile prosecutions and arrests of prison staff for wrongdoing. These have included: custodial and non-custodial staff convicted for trafficking contraband (Busby and Allison 2020; Cobham 2023; Cole-Lomas 2024; Mills 2024) and

convictions of prison staff including prison governors engaging in inappropriate relationships (Russell 2022; Brooke 2023; Odling and Hale 2024). There have also been media reports on the increasing number of prison officers convicted of corruption and sexual misconduct (Ryan 2022; Spril and Dathan 2023). During the final stages of writing up this thesis, newspapers were reporting on the arrest of a female prison officer who allowed herself to be filmed in a prison cell having sex with a prisoner (Butler 2024; Goodwin 2024). The film was uploaded to TikTok and quickly gained over a million views. After her arrest, the female prison officer, Linda De Sousa Abreu, pleaded guilty to Misconduct in Public Office but said in mitigation that she was having problems in her marriage and was being blackmailed by the prisoner who threatened to expose her career as an amateur porn star (Chaudhary and McGuidan 2024). These ongoing scandals are despite HMPPS launching their Counter Corruption Policy in 2019 and the Government's Security Investment Programme (SIP) spending over £100 million in the last four years on security measures to 'tackle' crime in prisons.

No single study can fill the knowledge chasm to explore all aspects of this complex problem. Instead, this thesis focuses on three related research questions to create the foundational blocks on which further research can be built. Owing to the paucity of relevant prison literature, I drew heavily on policing integrity studies to develop an ethical attitudinal survey based on the questionnaires employed by Klockars et al. (1997, 2004). My survey formed one element of the mixed methods design which also included semi-structured interviews with serving prison staff in two Category B male local prisons.

The findings in this study are both quantitative and qualitative. The findings from the survey form the basis of a new typology of prison staff wrongdoing, identify a broad range of vulnerability factors, highlight areas of staff dissatisfaction and include respondent perceptions of the extent of corruption in their prisons. In-depth interviews with serving prison staff probed the reasons given for the survey responses but also explored the challenges of maintaining professional boundaries and the motivating factors which influence staff propensity to wrongdoing. On the basis of these findings, I propose there are (at least) three types of staff offender: the predatory offender, the disillusioned offender and the unintentional offender. Each

type of offender has different, albeit interrelated, reasons for engaging in wrongdoing which necessitates different approaches to reduce the extent of wrongdoing. In order to help control wrongdoing in workplaces, staff need to feel able to report on wrongdoing. However, the qualitative data in this study found significant barriers to reporting wrongdoing. These barriers are consistent with those identified in the wider whistleblowing literature although the findings suggest there are specific challenges to reducing wrongdoing in prisons.

The data in this study suggest that some vulnerability factors are specific to individuals but there are also organisational and societal factors which influence individual decision making. The findings therefore support the arguments of other scholars that prison staff wrongdoing does not take place in a vacuum. In order to understand staff wrongdoing, it is necessary to go beyond the characteristics of individual offenders (the 'bad apples'); instead, we need to look at the organisational 'barrel' as well as the societal 'orchard' – those organisational climates, structures and cultures which provide motivations and opportunities for wrongdoing (Punch 2003; Punch and Gilmore 2010; Goldsmith et al. 2016; Goldsmith and Halsey 2018).

I have argued throughout this thesis that HMPPS's Security Investment Programme (SIP) has focussed too heavily on their aim to reduce the trafficking of contraband through situational crime prevention methods to deter individual offenders (both staff and prisoners) from bringing in illicit items through the gate (where staff and visitors enter), reception (where prisoners enter) and through the post. The second strand of SIP was to increase illegal mobile phone detection, the third strand was intended to strengthen staff resilience to corruption through increased training and increased funding for CC staff and the fourth strand aimed to increase targeted disruptions against corrupt staff and Serious Organised Crime offenders. The question for HMPPS to address is whether these measures have decreased staff wrongdoing and whether reducing the trafficking of contraband should be regarded as the most important security issue facing prisons in England and Wales.

On reading the SIP evaluation reports (Ramzan et al. 2024; Kerr et al. 2024), it appears there have been mixed findings. Staff corruption was identified as one of the main conveyancing routes into prisons. The other targeted routes included via visitors, prisoners and the prison mail. The approaches to reduce staff corruption

were the Enhanced Gate Security (EGS), more training and awareness and increased resource to investigate and prosecute corrupt staff. The evaluation findings showed that although staff and prisoners believed the situational crime prevention methods had decreased the trafficking of contraband through the gate and reception, the lack of staff at a number of prisons meant the machinery was not being used consistently or effectively. It was also reported that EGS is less effective at stopping drugs getting into prisons as non-metal items do not trigger the metal detector and can be easily concealed. However, although the EGS measures were intended to reduce staff pressure to bring in contraband, some staff felt it had the opposite effect – that the reduction in trafficking through the gate and through the reception by visitors and prisoners had increased the pressure on staff who were being offered higher financial payments to bring in contraband. Some participants also noted that a corrupt prison staff member could be working on the EGS and allow illicit items through (Kerr et al. 2024). In addition, the high rate of staff turnover meant that those who had been trained to use the equipment often left the prison service and the level of experience of Band 2 staff employed to operate the machinery at the gate and in the mailroom has continued to fall in each of the last four years (Ramzan et al. 2024).

The SIP evaluation also looked at the aim to equip staff to better understand and manage corruption. Again, the findings on this strand were mixed. Once again, the shortage of trained staff and the fact the CC training was not compulsory limited the number of staff who accessed corruption training. The evaluation findings found that over 60% but less than 70% of survey participants agreed that since SIP measures had been rolled out over the last two years their understanding of the behaviour and actions that constituted corruption had improved as well as their ability to identify corruption and how to protect themselves from corruption. Although the majority of survey participants felt confident corruption reports would be taken seriously the evaluation identified some barriers to reporting corruption. These included the feeling that reports were not investigated properly and the consequences for those engaging in corruption were not severe enough. Some participants also felt that investigating and prosecuting corruption was less efficient than prior to the SIP measures. Other reported barriers were identical to those found in my research: concerns about lack of confidentiality; the belief that reporting corruption was

'snitching' on colleagues and feeling that reports were not properly investigated so there was no point in submitting them (Kerr et al. 2024).

The SIP evaluators highlighted the absence of any longitudinal studies which could have usefully assessed the impact of the SIP measures. There was also no opportunity to evaluate the impact of the reduced Covid 19 prison regimes on the conveyancing of contraband due to the lack of visitors which increased the financial opportunities for staff to bring in items. Although the report endeavours to be positive, it states:

*There is evidence to suggest that SIP has not completely stopped corruption. NIAC [National Intelligence Assessment Centre] has reported that conveyance still occurs, and staff are using similar concealment methods as pre-SIP, although it is impossible to know the extent of this.*

*Multiple barriers were identified which ... erode organisational resilience to corruption ... [These are:] staff turnover [loss of knowledge], Covid 19 ... larger financial benefit for staff bringing in items which made corruption more attractive, [and] rises in the cost of living for prison staff ... it is a realistic possibility that this will make some staff more susceptible to corruption to increase their income, particularly staff on lower pay (Ramzan et al. 2024, p. 80).*

The data in my research was collected in the first half of 2022 at two Category B local male prisons, the SIP evaluation research was far more extensive in both scope and timescale and the researchers were given greater access to confidential information. Nevertheless, the evaluation findings are in line with the findings in this thesis. Participants in my research recognised how EGS could both reduce and deter trafficking but they also identified ways which individuals could employ to reduce detection. Participants in the SIP evaluation and my research highlighted the problems of low staff numbers, high staff turnover and the failure of salaries to retain parity with other criminal justice sectors such as the police.

Despite £100 million investment, I argue that HMPPS has missed opportunities to address all forms of wrongdoing, to recognise how wrongdoing can become embedded within prisons and how minor wrongdoing can lead to more serious

wrongdoing. Although some participants in the SIP research believed that the “increased investigative capabilities following SIP investment had facilitated the investigation of less serious corruption cases” (Ramzan et al. 2024, p. 27) other staff still felt there was little impact and there was a lack of communication regarding actions or outcome of cases.

Having participated in the non-compulsory SIP CC refresher training, I am aware that the risks of inappropriate relationships, grooming, blackmail and different types of vulnerability factors including the prison staff blame culture are covered in the two hour training session. The participants in the SIP evaluation study who attended the refresher training sessions reported that they found them very helpful but the researchers found there was great variation in the quality and content of the training which was delivered. Although I too found the training session interesting, it did not deal with behaviours which fall within the ‘grey zone’ of boundary violations which I explored in my research or those types of wrongdoing which HMPPS do not regard as ‘corruption’, such as assault on prisoners by staff. The training I attended did not cover numerous types of wrongdoing including the sale of confidential information, the alteration of formal records, favouritism or putting some vulnerable prisoners at risk due to personal dislike of the prisoner’s offence or failing to make risk assessments. Based on the findings of my research, I identify seven policy implications and offer suggestions for how HMPPS’s Counter Corruption Policy could be improved.

This chapter returns to the research questions to briefly summarise the findings in chapters four-six, before drawing the findings together to address the overarching question of why prison staff engage in wrongdoing. The final sections of the chapter identify the contributions to academic knowledge and suggests possible avenues for future research.

## **7.2 How do prison staff at two Category B male local prisons perceive and understand the relative seriousness of different types of prison wrongdoing?**

The findings in chapter four are based on the survey responses to the scenario questions, the qualitative data which explore some of the reasons for the survey responses and perceptions of the extent of corruption in each prison. I hypothesised

that an ethical attitudinal survey modelled on the Klockars et al. (1997, 2004) methodology which has been employed in over 80 policing studies would produce similar findings when administered to prison staff. There was little point in including scenarios of blatant serious wrongdoing such as trafficking contraband or selling confidential information. Instead, I wanted to explore the 'greyer' areas where boundary violations would be less clear cut. I also aimed to address the shortcomings of the Klockars et al. (1997, 2004) scenarios identified by Gottschalk (2010) and Hickman et al. (2016a and b) through including a wider range of behaviours and updating them to include social media based dilemmas. The resultant survey instrument was distributed to all staff in two Category B male local prisons. The findings confirmed my hypothesis: there is a strong positive correlation between perceptions of seriousness of wrongdoing and willingness to report. Furthermore, although there is a difference in absolute scores in both prisons, there is an almost identical ranking of seriousness across the two prisons and across all five questions. These findings suggest that, despite working in prisons of different size, with demographic differences between the staff cohorts and geographically remote from each other, there is a common understanding amongst prison staff of the seriousness of different types of wrongdoing. The replication of the policing findings suggest that the survey instrument developed for this study is a valid means to measure staff perceptions of wrongdoing and willingness to report wrongdoing.

The scenario findings permitted the development of a typology of seriousness (Table 6). This typology forms the basis of a new framework to understand which behaviours prison staff perceive as wrongdoing and, just as importantly, which behaviours are not regarded as serious wrongdoing and are unlikely to be reported. Despite the variation in perceptions of seriousness, all scenarios were regarded as at least somewhat serious, and all scenarios were understood to be a violation of prison policy (although there was greater uncertainty around those behaviours not considered as serious). The types of wrongdoing were classified into different categories. I identified a number of behaviours - in particular perceptions of assault and inappropriate relationships - which should serve as warnings to HMPPS. These findings are discussed in detail in paragraph 7.5 below.

One survey finding, again consistent with the studies by Klockars et al. was that for every scenario, the participants thought their colleagues would consider the wrongdoing as less serious and would be less willing to report the behaviour than they themselves would be. The same findings in policing studies have not been the subject of any extensive consideration although it has been theorised that respondents believe they are more ethical than their colleagues (Klockars et al. 2004b). This is a problem for prison management. If individuals believe that wrongdoing in their workplace is systemic and that their colleagues are less ethical than they are, the wrongdoing can become normalised and staff, in turn, are then more likely to engage in corruption themselves (Tavits 2010; Worley and Worley 2013).

### **7.3 What are the factors believed by prison staff which make prison staff vulnerable to different forms of wrongdoing?**

As discussed in chapters four and five, prison staff need to maintain professional boundaries. Boundary violations and crossings can encompass a wide range of behaviours from minor wrongdoing to criminal behaviour; but they all have the potential to undermine prison stability (Worley and Cheeseman 2006; Worley 2011; Worley and Worley 2013; Worley and Worley 2016). The ability to maintain good staff-prisoner relationships without violating boundaries is therefore a key skill for prison staff, which generally only comes with experience and knowledge of jailcraft.

One problem for prison staff is that the boundaries between staff and prisoners are not clear cut and vary according to the prisoner and the member of staff (Liebling et al. 2011). The findings in this study showed that participants recognised how boundaries could become blurred due to working in such close proximity to prisoners and how, over time professional boundaries can become eroded. This close proximity also means that prisoners can obtain personal information about staff through listening to staff conversations and use that knowledge to attempt to strike up friendships with staff as the first steps towards grooming and manipulation of staff (Allen and Bosta 1981).

The findings showed that only a quarter or less of respondents believed personal problems or being under duress were the main reason why staff engaged in



corruption. The majority (60%) of respondents identified a desire to make money as the most significant individual factor. Even participants who had worked in the security department acknowledged that a large number of corrupt staff were 'doing it for the money' and corrupt staff were 'pleasantly surprised' at how easy trafficking was if it was only done a few times. However, there was also recognition of how relationship difficulties could increase the risk of staff entering into inappropriate relationships and how low salaries and the cost of living crisis could incentivise some staff to engage in corruption.

The organisational themes which influence wrongdoing decision making identified in this study were centred around low staff numbers, distrust of management and lack of support provided by management. The dearth of experienced staff, inadequate staffing and more challenging prisoners meant participants felt they had to be constantly on alert to potential violence from prisoners, leading to high stress levels and a feeling that being on the wings was like "fighting for my life every day" (Yvette). If staff suffer high levels of job stress and feel they lack management support they are more likely to experience job dissatisfaction, leave their job, go sick, have low morale and lower organisational commitment. They are also more likely to engage in boundary violations and have inappropriate relationships with prisoners (Armstrong and Griffin 2004; Lambert et al. 2009; Mahfood et al. 2013; Worley and Worley 2013, 2016; Worley et al. 2018).

The findings show high levels of distrust between staff and management and the hierarchical gulf between the two groups. Officer participants expressed forthright opinions on how governors were like politicians who were more interested in form filling for Prison HQ than caring about their staff. This lack of trust in management has ramifications for the Prison Service. Strong ethical leadership can reduce staff wrongdoing and increase organisational commitment (Lambert 2004; Lambert et al. 2009; Lambert et al. 2018; Worley and Worley 2013). But it is not enough to have a code of conduct, rules and policies. Instead, managers in an organisation need to embody and visibly enact the importance of the codes of conduct and to be seen to impose sanctions on those who breach ethics guidelines so that staff feel safe to confront and correct individuals (Steenbergen and Ellemers 2021).

One of the problems for the Prison Service which I described in chapter five is that management feel 'stuck in the middle' as they also feel overworked, undervalued and exhausted (Smith 2023; Harrison and Nichols 2023). All of the managers I interviewed are answerable to managers above them in the prison hierarchy. The findings highlighted two areas which epitomised the problems experienced by prison managers where they felt ignored and not heard by Prison HQ. These were the policies governing recruitment and vetting of prison officers.

Participants felt frustrated that the HMPPS advertisements for prison officers gave a misleading impression of what it was really like working in a prison resulting in the 'wrong sort' of people being employed. A new advertising campaign released after my fieldwork was completed was intended to show the 'realities' of prison work but recent research by Chamberlan (2024) revealed that prison leavers believed that the advertisements were still misleading.

The lack of proper vetting was another issue raised by management and security department participants who were forthright in their opinions about the involvement of Organised Criminal Gangs (OCGs) in staff recruitment. In 2019 Treadwell et al. highlighted the risk of inadequate vetting. More recently there has been a media exposé where an undercover journalist started work as a Band 2 officer support grade in a prison with no background checks (Morgan-Bentley 2024). It is also questionable how Linda Da Sousa Abreu passed security vetting for Wandsworth prison having appeared on a television programme about wife swapping and running an 'Only Fans' webpage (Butler 2024; Goodwin 2024). It remains to be seen whether the warnings given by the POA, the ex- Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nick Hardwick and the current Chief Inspector of Prisons, Charlie Taylor (Pidd and Syal 2023; Sylvester 2024; Tingle 2024) 'exposing' the recruitment of prison staff by OCGs will influence HMPPS policies. Although the people recruited by OCGs people might (rightly) be regarded as 'villains' who joined the prison service to make money, there is, as yet, no research exploring how many of them felt they had no choice due to threats or blackmail from the OCGs.

The societal factors identified in the findings centred on the perception that society does not care about prison staff who feel undervalued and ignored. These are not novel findings but the loss of 26% of prison staff from 2010-2015 due to the then

Government's politically motivated financial cuts to the prison service has exacerbated the sense of being undervalued. Participants referred to feeling they are the 'forgotten service' and how society thinks they are 'all thugs' instead of normal people doing a difficult job. The failure of salaries to keep abreast with police salaries and the more challenging prisoner population were cited as examples of how society does not care what happens to staff. The negative effects of the introduction of Spice into the prison system and the greater number of prisoners with severe mental health problems were highlighted by participants. The Government's decision in 2016 to reverse the staff losses has produced a workforce of predominantly inexperienced staff, many of whom leave in the first year, while the problems faced by staff have continued.

On the basis of the findings discussed in chapter five I proposed a new framework to foreground the different motivational factors for prison staff wrongdoers. Through conceptualising staff wrongdoers as either predatory offenders, disillusioned offenders or unintentional offenders, more effective interventions could be employed to reduce the risk of their engagement in wrongdoing. I return to this framework below.

#### **7.4 What are the barriers prison staff face in reporting wrongdoing of themselves and others?**

There is a mandatory policy that all prison staff should report corruption or serious wrongdoing and a failure to do so may be a disciplinary matter and/or a criminal offence (HMPPS 2022a, p.15). All staff should receive CC instruction as part of their initial training and also receive refresher training. The process for reporting through the security intelligence (IR) or corruption reporting (CPIR) systems should be familiar to all staff. It was therefore not unexpected that 88.6% of survey respondents said they would report wrongdoing to their manager and 98.6% said they would file an IR. However, this high level of willingness to report was only replicated in the four highest ranked survey scenarios. I suggested this could indicate respondents did not consider the thirteen other scenarios as serious enough to warrant a high level of reporting or that there was a difference between *knowing* what *should* be done rather than what *would* be done. This suggestion is consistent with Rothwell and Baldwin's

(2007) findings; that mandating whistleblowing in police forces increases whistleblowing intentions but not the frequency of actually blowing the whistle.

Despite the reporting rules, there was uncertainty about which behaviours in the scenarios should be reported, particularly behaviours which were perceived to be less serious wrongdoing. The rules around, for example not touching a prisoner and not sharing food with prisoners, were felt by some participants not to reflect the reality of working in a prison. There was also concern that some prison staff were naïve and did not know or understand the rules. Strong, ethical leadership is necessary to provide guidance on professional boundaries and to provide what Liebling et al. (2012, p.150) described as the “big picture vision” to give prison officers the values, rules and practices to best perform their role but, as discussed in chapter five, management often feel too stressed and overworked to provide this guidance.

Freedom of Information Act replies revealed a high number of both IRs and CPIRs submitted each year. Although IRs refer to a wide range of issues which are routinely reported about prisoners, for example threats made to staff or to other prisoners as well as relatively minor security breaches, CPIRs are meant to only capture suspected corruption activity. Some of this activity will be due to the behaviour of prisoners but it is also the method by which staff report on the wrongdoing of others. Despite the high number of CPIRs, interview participants gave detailed replies describing the barriers to reporting wrongdoing which align with the findings in the wider literature (for example, Miceli and Near 1988; Near and Miceli 1996; Rothschild and Miethe 1999; Rothwell and Baldwin 2006; 2007; Gottschalk and Holgersson 2011; Taylor et al. 2024). Without being able to access the CPIR data, it is not possible to explain the apparent discrepancy between the figure of 98,062 CPIRs being submitted in 2023 and staff members describing their concerns about the risks to them of reporting the wrongdoing of others.

The survey questions did not distinguish between reporting own wrongdoing and reporting the wrongdoing of others; but during interviews, participants admitted they would not report their own wrongdoing due to a to fear of being judged as inadequate. There was also the perception there was not enough understanding by management of what might have led to someone making the wrong decisions.

Instead it was perceived that management and the CC team response would blame the individual for their behaviour and punish them through the disciplinary process. This 'blame culture' was referred to in the CC training I attended and although it has been the subject of policing research (Metcalf 2017; Farrow 2024), it has not been identified in the literature on prison staff culture.

Staff who realised they should report their own wrongdoing faced the dilemma of complying with the CC policy, admit wrongdoing and risk disciplinary action; or keep quiet. This dilemma became more complicated for staff when trying to decide whether to report the wrongdoing of their colleagues due to the perceived barriers of staff solidarity and loyalty. Although some participants referred to a reluctance to report the wrongdoing of friends, the main barrier was a fear of retaliation. This fear was expressed by several participants in this study, some of whom had suffered ostracism, threats to physical safety and damage to personal property as a result of reporting the wrongdoing of others. This fear of retaliation has been noted by scholars researching whistleblowing in other sectors (Rothschild and Miethe 1999; Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran 2005; Nicholls et al. 2021; Gottschalk 2022).

One form of retaliation which the findings in this study highlighted and might be unique to prisons was the misuse of the reporting system to subject reporters of wrongdoing to false wrongdoing claims. This tactic served two purposes: the resources of the investigation team are diverted towards the false claims; and the reporter would be punished via the humiliation, stress and uncertainty of being investigated.

A recurring theme which was manifest when analysing the data was the high level of distrust in the prisons. This distrust was between custodial staff, between staff and managers, between managers and Prison HQ and in the reporting process itself. Even managers and security staff recognised that staff believed their name would become known if they reported the wrongdoing of their colleagues. This breach of confidentiality could either be through the prison gossip grapevine or if the investigation proceeded to a disciplinary hearing, the whistleblower would be required to give evidence so their identity would become known. The risk of being identified as a wrongdoer reporter and hence face retaliations was a significant deterrent to reporting.

Even if these barriers could be overcome, and staff reported wrongdoing, there was a belief that nothing would be done about it, so it would be pain (or risk of pain) without gain. Given all these barriers, it was not surprising that staff might be tempted to turn a blind eye. Beth was one of the survey respondents who admitted that even if she witnessed wrongdoing, she would be tempted to convince herself it was not serious enough to be reported due to her fear of the 'backlash'.

Interview participants were asked what methods they thought could reduce corruption. Participants agreed that the situational crime prevention methods employed by HMPPS to reduce the level of trafficking of contraband could deter trafficking as it gave staff who were being blackmailed an excuse not to bring in contraband. However, participants pointed out that random staff searches were rarely successful and staff could still 'plug' contraband in the same way prisoners did. At present staff are required to go through a metal detector and have their bags pass through an X-ray machine (if one has been installed at the prison) but this would not identify drugs which had been plugged. The only way to detect plugged items would be to either carry out a strip search or to use the body scanners. Both options would be completely impractical given the number of times staff leave and enter prisons during the day and, no doubt, would be an unacceptable infringement of privacy for the staff themselves. Furthermore, searches on entering the prison cease at night due to current staffing levels, so night staff would still have an opportunity to come in unsearched.

The need to treat minor wrongdoing as a learning opportunity and for staff to feel able to raise their concerns in a safe environment was a suggestion made by participants. As one manager participant commented, what needs to be done is not to blame individuals for a mistake, instead it should be recognised it was the team who had made the mistake which and the mistake should be regarded as a learning opportunity.

Interview participants were also forthright in their opinions that a more effective use of HMPPS funds would be to ensure the correct people were recruited, that more stringent vetting procedures were put in place, followed by more thorough initial training and regular refresher training. As one participant said in response to the question on how corruption could be reduced, "it's learning innit".

The suggestion of establishing an independent external body responsible for investigating staff wrongdoing was greeted positively by nearly all the interview participants. At present the police investigate serious corruption where criminal offences are alleged, but the majority of wrongdoing disciplinary investigations remain 'in house' and add to the work of security staff and managers. Participants felt that an independent investigatory body, possibly staffed by ex-prison staff and managers, would increase transparency and trust in the reporting system and thereby encourage the reporting of wrongdoing. It is not suggested that an external investigatory body is a panacea to breakdown all the barriers to reporting wrongdoing. Indeed, paragraph 6.6 refers to some of the problems faced by the evolving police complaints processes. But there appears to be no valid reason why investigating prison staff wrongdoing should not be part of the general trend in Western countries to establish external corruption investigatory bodies if they increase confidence in the system (Goldsmith 2020).

## **7.5 Why do prison staff engage in wrongdoing?**

This section synthesises the findings from chapters four to six to address the research question which inspired this research. It was a question to which I had no answer before I began my PhD. I could not understand why prison staff who knew (more than most members of the public) what serving a prison sentence involved, would risk their job, their reputation and their freedom in order to engage in corruption. What would also be known to prison officers would be the fact that the challenges of a custodial sentence are even greater for ex-prison staff (as they are for ex-police officers), as much of their sentence is either served in segregation or on the Vulnerable Persons wing to reduce the risk of being attacked by other prisoners.

Although I do not suggest I now have all the answers to my original question, I am able to appreciate that prison staff wrongdoing needs to be understood as part of a continuum from minor boundary violations through to corruption serious enough to warrant a custodial sentence. The findings in this study have evidenced there are many reasons why staff engage in wrongdoing and it is necessary to adopt a holistic approach to address this ongoing problem. Rather than repeat all the findings, this final section focuses on the key issues identified in this research.

### **7.5.1 Why low level wrongdoing should not be ignored**

Prison staff discretion is central to prison work. The area between the Prison Rules and 'how things are done' is framed by staff occupational cultures and is where staff exercise discretion in their interpretation of rules in their work (Garrihy 2024). The findings in this study show how discretion can be exercised in order to distinguish between those behaviours considered least serious and most serious. The least serious behaviours (favouritism, accepting a chocolate bar from a prisoner or going into a cell to hug an upset prisoner) were regarded as minor rule infringements which interview participants sought to justify on the basis that bending the rules was necessary to facilitate good staff-prisoner relationships. Staff were aware these behaviours were against prison policy but were prepared to breach prison policy to facilitate their work.

As discussed in chapter two, there is a rich literature on the use of prison staff discretion as it would be impossible for all prison rules to be enforced all of the time while maintaining the smooth running of the prison (Sykes 1958; McCarthy 1984 a and b; Crawley 2000; Liebling 2000; Stohr et al. 2000; Liebling et al. 2012; Liebling and Kant 2016). Interview participants (all of whom had over three years' experience) were confident in their ability to correctly exercise their discretion and to judge where professional boundaries lay as they could rely on their experience, personal sense of morality and rapport with prisoners in order, as Yvette said, to exercise your own "personal threshold of where you draw the line." However, participants acknowledged that in the absence of experience and training, newer staff would find drawing the correct boundary line more challenging.

Crawley (2000) notes, that the rigidity of professional boundaries and rules are often bent in an effort to be more efficient and to make life easier for the staff. Participants in this study were able to justify to themselves the situations where it was appropriate to exercise their discretion to bend the rules. For example, the 'no touching' rule was identified by some staff as a rule which should be bent to accept an offered handshake from a prisoner apologising for their behaviour or giving a high five to a prisoner as a greeting. However, discretionary decisions have to be exercised in a fair and consistent manner as they contribute to the perceived legitimacy of staff (Ryan and Bergin 2022). The fact that some staff might high five a



prisoner as a greeting could cause resentment and insult if other staff refuse the offer of what was meant to be a friendly gesture. It could also lead to friendship and inappropriate relationships between prisoners and staff.

Participants referred to the close working proximity between staff and prisoners and how that could lead to a blurring of boundaries through low level violations being ignored or condoned. Prisoners who are able to obtain jobs out of cell, often through achieving enhanced status are best placed to increase their proximity with staff. Enhanced prisoners can obtain jobs in reception, the kitchen, the healthcare centre, become wing cleaners or even work in prison gardens. These roles give prisoners greater access to staff which in turn can facilitate information gathering about staff and sometimes lead to friendships. Participants were aware of how some of the most influential drug dealers in the prisons had ulterior motives in obtaining enhanced positions. Not only do they have the greatest freedom of movement around the prison, but these prisoners also have greater opportunities to observe staff and to test which staff are willing to bend the rules. Through identifying staff who are vulnerable to minor wrongdoing (whether due to, for example, naivety, personal difficulties or disillusionment with their job), prisoners can then groom and manipulate staff to engage in more serious wrongdoing (Allen and Bosta 1981; Cornelius 2009; Elliott 2006).

Although staff need to be able to exercise discretionary decision making, it is for senior managers to provide guidance on how discretion can be exercised so all staff know the 'right reasons' for bending the rules (Liebling et al. 2012). In the absence of this guidance, staff may be too willing to bend rules they consider are minor or unnecessary in order to achieve prisoner compliance with rules the staff member considers are more important. To return to the high five example, staff should be made aware of why the 'no touching' rule is not based on an arbitrary decision they do not agree with. The rule is there to ensure prisoners are treated consistently and fairly by all staff. Enforcing the no high five greeting rule for all staff means that prisoners are less likely to be insulted if a staff member refuses to high five them, it also avoids the situation where some staff might feel happy to high five a prisoner and others do not. It is for managers to encourage professionalism and to provide

ethical leadership so staff understand why rules they might not agree with have been put in place.

Interview participants expressed concern that inexperienced staff would struggle with recognising and maintaining boundaries. The word 'naïve' was used by several participants to describe the actions of inexperienced staff who incorrectly exercised their discretion and unintentionally violated boundaries. These staff also lacked the knowledge of what to do once they had realised their position had been compromised - often leading to a further erosion of professional boundaries. I describe these naïve prison staff as unintentional offenders whose minor wrongdoing can lead to more serious wrongdoing such as inappropriate relationships, which have been described as being at the 'core' of corruption (Marquart et al. 2001; Worley et al. 2003; Cheeseman and Worley 2006; Worley and Worley 2013; Goldsmith and Halsey 2018; Crime and Corruption Commission 2018).

Inexperienced staff understandably lack knowledge of rules and policies but due to a lack of experienced staff and 'eyes on the wing' they have no one to guide them and no one to challenge their errors of judgement. Some participants referred how they would 'have a word' with a colleague who they had observed engaging in minor wrongdoing but the interview participants in this study all had over three years' experience and the percentage of staff with this level of experience is constantly decreasing. With almost 42% of Band 3-5 prison officers having less than three years' experience and fewer than 26% of officers having over 10 years' experience (HMPPS 2024c), there is a lack of leadership on the wings, while governors are unable to provide the support their staff need as they also feel stressed and overworked. This means that an officer who has just completed their probation year might be the most experienced officer on a wing while their supervising officer is buried in paperwork.

Although participants realised how inexperienced staff were vulnerable to wrongdoing, they did not seem to appreciate that naïve staff observing how 'things are done' by more experienced staff might repeat the rule bending – but without the necessary jailcraft to ensure the boundary crossings did not become boundary violations. Furthermore, there appeared to be no understanding that the low level wrongdoing which experienced participants were able to justify to themselves can

become embedded into daily structures and practices so it is no longer recognised as wrongdoing. This collective enacting of wrongdoing can become institutionalised over time, and although the slide into what Ashforth and Anand (2003) describe as the slippery slope of 'collective corruption' is not inevitable, it requires proactive intervention.

### **7.5.2 Justifying assault**

I drafted the assault scenario to make it clear that although the imaginary prisoner in the scenario had assaulted a female member of staff, the prisoner had been put under restraint and had been handcuffed. He was therefore unable to defend himself. The imaginary prison officer punched the prisoner in the face saying 'Hurts, doesn't it'. I had predicted this should be regarded as serious wrongdoing. However, it was ranked twelfth by Chestnutwood staff and fifth by Beechfield staff. This was one of the few scenarios where there was a demographic difference between respondents. Younger, inexperienced uniformed staff were significantly less likely to consider assault as serious and were less willing to report such behaviour. These findings are in line with previous research on prison boundary violations studies where younger officers were found to be more likely to support the mistreatment of prisoners (Worley et al. 2017, 2021). As larger Chestnutwood had a higher number of younger inexperienced staff, this finding was not unexpected.

I suggested in chapter four that the assault findings could also be linked with the levels of violence and staff dissatisfaction in each prison as Chestnutwood has a disproportionately higher level of prisoner violence, lower morale and lower faith in management than Beechfield. This hypothesis is consistent with the (somewhat out dated) prison literature: where prison staff fear for their safety, there is a greater need to assert authority through the use of force to control conditions and to deter prisoners from future assaults on staff (Kauffman 1988; Ben-David et al. 1996). Prison staff who assault prisoners might also neutralise their actions on the basis that the prisoner 'had it coming to them', thereby denying that the prisoner was a victim (Sykes and Matza 1957).

Chapter five discussed the findings of low staff satisfaction levels. The majority of survey respondents felt they were not paid enough and only 53% considered staff

morale was good. Corruption was perceived to be widespread. There was considerable distrust in management and a feeling that no one in the Prison Service or in wider society appreciated the enormous challenges faced by prison staff – challenges which have become worse over the last 14 years. Participants expressed strong feelings that prison staff are the undervalued and unheard ‘forgotten service’. These factors have been identified in the literature as being indicative of a greater acceptance of staff violence on prisoners (Worley et al. 2021) and can lead to a willingness to engage in misconduct (Armstrong and Griffin 2004; Lambert et al. 2009; Mahfood et al. 2013; Worley et al. 2018; Boateng and Hsieh 2019).

Willingness to report the assault scenario was also found to be lower than willingness to report other forms of wrongdoing (Table 6). I theorised that the reason for this could be due to the fact that Counter Corruption and Intelligence Reports can be made anonymously (although reporters are encouraged to provide their name). However, where force is used on a prisoner, the Use of Force documentation has to be completed. This is meant to include all the details of the incident including the names of the staff concerned and those who witnessed the incident. A failure to support a colleague for an assault on a prisoner would therefore be immediately known to other staff. During interviews some participants explained how there was a need not to show division in front of a prisoner. This meant that even if a member of staff disagreed with a colleague’s behaviour involving force on a prisoner, they needed to show a united front to avoid prisoners being made aware of a difference of opinion between staff.

One of the main barriers to reporting wrongdoing discussed in chapter six is the fear of retaliation. This fear is particularly acute where the wrongdoing is an assault on a prisoner due to the inability to make an anonymous report. Participants described their personal experiences of being ostracised, being called names, suffering damage to their property and threats made against them. In his autobiography, ex-prison officer Neil Samworth (2018) described witnessing a supervising officer punch a restrained prisoner in the face and the consequences he experienced for telling the truth instead of saying he saw nothing wrong. He was falsely accused of the assault and suspended during a 10 month investigation. After

being cleared and returning to work, he was ostracised and name called. He resigned a few months later.

### **7.5.3 Becoming too friendly – inappropriate relationships**

One particular area of concern are the findings in respect of the inappropriate relationship scenarios. The two scenarios received relatively low rankings (twelfth and thirteenth) for seriousness and even lower willingness to report. Scenario two described the imaginary prison officer confiding all his personal problems to a prisoner and scenario four described how a female member of staff was observed being overly friendly toward a prisoner, spending more time with him and smiling at him after he openly patted her on the arm. These scenarios did not involve sexual acts between prisoners and staff, but they should have been recognised as boundary violations which could lead to boundary crossings in a slippery slope model of corruption. Both types of behaviour are included as examples of corruption in counter corruption training, but respondents seemingly failed to appreciate the actual or potential seriousness of the behaviour.

Although only a minority (15%) of survey respondents believed that more than a quarter of staff had engaged in inappropriate relationships, several interview participants admitted they were aware of inappropriate relationships in their own prisons. One participant described how “everyone could tell” when a member of staff was in an inappropriate relationship as they were observed spending too long with a prisoner and “followed him like a puppy dog.” This comment is consistent with the narrative in much of the prison literature that it is the prisoners who hold power over some members of staff and deliberately target vulnerable members of staff to groom and manipulate them (Allen and Bosta 1981; Worley et al. 2003; McIlwain 2004; Worley and Cheeseman 2006; Elliott 2006; Cornelius 2009; Cooke et al. 2019). However, other researchers have highlighted the sexual abuse of female prisoners by male staff (Marquart et al. 2001; Calhoun and Coleman 2002; National Prison Rape Commission 2009; Beck et al. 2014). In her in-depth study of why four experienced female staff entered into relationships with male prisoners, Jones (2013) identified several common themes. These included: lack of knowledge of appropriate boundaries, personal vulnerability and the prison culture which the staff believed prevented them from seeking help. Jones concluded that it is not always

easy to identify the perpetrator in these situations and there needs to be “a full exploration of the less serious boundary violations ...to reduce the numbers of boundary violations within correctional facilities” (2013, p.265).

The findings in this study build on these earlier studies and offer some suggestions for why prison staff might enter into inappropriate relationships. Participants referred to vulnerability factors such as financial problems and relationship problems where prisoners give staff “the attention you’re not having ... and that’s what you crave.” Participants also described how some people become vulnerable due to being in an abusive relationship which can lead to them seeking attention from prisoners, as their life outside the prison had broken down their ability to create healthy relationships. Although the scenarios represent behaviours which were perceived as not serious and were therefore at the top of the slippery slope, once boundary violations begin, they can increase in frequency and severity, and those at greatest risk are staff who have relationship problems, are isolated and lack supervision (Cooke et al. 2019).

The media have regularly reported on the criminal prosecution of prison staff due to inappropriate relationships. Some of these cases involved relationships which staff thought were romantic (Spillet 2017; Bazarra 2020; Press Association 2021; Gibson 2022; Raemason 2023); others were inappropriate relationships which led to smuggling of contraband (Brooke 2023; Pope 2023). Given the extent of the media coverage and (hopefully some) CC training, the respondents in this study should have recognised that both inappropriate relationship scenarios were ‘definitely serious’ and that inappropriate relationships can manifest non-sexually yet still result in boundary violations. The failure to do so might indicate the inherent difficulties faced by staff in knowing where professional boundaries should be drawn and distinguishing between being ‘friendly’ but not ‘friends’. Furthermore, the staff member might not think they are harming anyone and believe they are entering into romantic, consensual relationships. These individuals might realise they have become too friendly with a prisoner but not understand the risks of becoming emotionally attached, where the friendship could lead and the possibility they are being manipulated by prisoners who have ulterior motives.

The failure of participants to recognise the inappropriate scenarios as serious wrongdoing raises questions about the adequacy of the training. Although many staff might not recognise the behaviour in the scenarios as 'serious', most staff would readily agree that becoming friends with a prisoner and, certainly having a sexual relationship with a prisoner, was serious wrongdoing. However, the findings suggest there is little awareness that inappropriate relationships are often the starting point for various forms of prison corruption and are considered to lie at the core of corruption (Marquart et al. 2001; Worley et al. 2003; Cheeseman and Worley 2006; Worley and Worley 2013; Goldsmith and Halsey 2018; Australian Crime and Corruption Commission 2018).

The fieldwork for this research was completed before the new CC training was rolled out, which now includes training videos featuring inappropriate relationships. Further research should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of these videos and to interview ex-staff who were investigated and/or prosecuted for inappropriate relationships to fully understand their reasons for stepping over the line from 'friendly' to 'friends.'

#### **7.5.4 Different motives require different approaches**

Throughout this thesis I have referred to the metaphors used by Punch (2000) and Goldsmith et al. (2016) to argue that prison staff wrongdoing cannot be understood solely as the actions of individual rotten apples. Instead it must be understood as behaviours which occur in the context of the organisational barrel and the societal orchard. The findings discussed in chapter five foregrounded these different motivational factors. They included individual vulnerabilities such as personal problems with relationships, alcohol, drugs or finance, as well as naivety due to lack of training and experience; organisational factors due to inadequate supervision, distrust between staff and managers, high levels of job stress and a failure in both vetting and recruitment policies; and societal factors which focussed on feeling misunderstood by wider society, the increasingly challenging prisoner population, prison over-crowding, staff shortages, the influence of social media on staff and the acceptance of drug use in wider society.

On the basis of my findings, I propose there needs to be a greater awareness that the individual 'apples' had become 'rotten' for different reasons and even factors which might be considered as individual factors are affected by organisational and societal factors. For example, a staff member experiencing relationship difficulties might be less susceptible to the attentions offered by a prisoner if they felt supported, understood and valued by their manager. In chapter five I proposed that instead of adopting a 'one size fits all' wrongdoing model of deterrence, wrongdoers could be categorised in three ways: the predatory offender, the disillusioned offender and the unintentional offender. This conceptualisation of different types of offenders can shine a light on the different motivational factors and hence the approaches which could be adopted to reduce the reasons why some staff engage in wrongdoing.

I have argued that HMPPS Counter Corruption Policy has focussed on predatory offenders who actively pursue money making opportunities, predominantly from trafficking contraband. However, even these predatory offenders might not as free from moral scruples as imagined by HMPPS; some may be under duress from OCGs and feel they have no choice. Cornish and Clarke (2010) suggest that if predatory type offenders lack social morals and are motivated to actively pursue opportunities to make money, the only techniques with any chance of preventing their criminal behaviour is to try to disrupt the crime-commission process. This can be done through increasing the perceived effort, increasing the perceived risks and reducing the potential rewards. As discussed in chapter two, it seems likely that this is the approach which forms the basis of HMPPS's Security Investment Programme (SIP) which appears to regard all corrupt staff as predatory offenders. A significant amount of the funding for SIP is likely to have been directed towards reducing trafficking opportunities through the introduction of Enhanced Gate Systems (EGS) to which staff and visitors are subjected. The measures include body scanners, baggage X-rays machines, metal detectors, increasing the number of staff searches and limiting the items which can be brought into prison by staff and visitors. These measures were designed not only to increase the risk of being caught but also to give staff under duress a reason to explain to those placing them under pressure as to why they could not smuggle in contraband.



Although the EGS might increase the risk of being caught and reduce potential reward the participants in this study explained how contraband can still be brought in through 'plugging' as staff are not subjected to body scanners. Alternatively (or additionally) staff can enter the prison in the late evening after the Enhanced Gate checks have ceased. Staff can also be paid to facilitate the collection of contraband flown in by drones which land in exercise yards or be paid for other types of wrongdoing such as disclosure of confidential information. Furthermore, as Friedrichs (2007) points out, rational considerations may not apply where individuals are driven by emotions such as fear. Consequently, increasing the risks of being caught might not deter those staff who face greater costs to their personal safety or the safety of their family from OCG's if they do not comply with OCG instructions.

Tackling disillusioned offenders requires a holistic approach. Situational crime prevention methods might deter some staff from 'crossing over' regardless of how disillusioned they feel. Reducing excuses and inducing shame through clarifying consequences and highlighting the impact of wrongdoing on others might also assist in keeping moral scruples in place, thereby reducing the risk of serious wrongdoing. However, the challenge of stopping staff from becoming disillusioned is more complicated. Changing societal attitudes is a Herculean task but one way to increase the feeling of being valued and appreciated by society, as well as improve staff retention rates is to recruit the right people to the job, conduct more thorough vetting, and increase staffing levels, salaries and training. There also needs to be incentives for experienced staff to remain in post through increasing salaries and career structure. This should help to boost standards of professionalism, reduce job stress and staff dissatisfaction thereby increasing organisational commitment and staff morale (Lambert et al. 2009; Blackburn et al. 2011; Mahfood et al. 2013; Worley and Worley 2016; Boateng and Hsieh 2019).

Strong ethical leadership is essential to provide guidance and for staff to feel supported. However, one of the themes which were developed from the findings was the high level of distrust between staff and management. As noted in the literature, a lack of managerial support can lead to higher stress levels and more wrongdoing (Lambert 2004; Lambert et al. 2009) so this is a problem which HMPPS needs to address. One of the key problems is that managers also feel stressed and

overworked (Harrison and Nichols 2023) so are unable to provide the support and guidance their staff require. Managers need to have sufficient time on the wings to offer visible supportive leadership so their staff feel looked after and valued to reduce the risk of staff becoming disillusioned. As Souryal (2009, p.32) observed, managers need to create an ethical work environment which “shuns corruption of all sorts at all levels.”

In a recent study, Horowitz et al. (2021) compared wellbeing scores between Norwegian and American prison officers as Norwegian prison officers receive greater education, more training, higher salaries and more benefits than American prison staff. Horowitz et al. (2021) found that Norwegian officers experience higher levels of morale, lower stress levels, perceive their job as less dangerous, had better communication between staff and better staff-prisoner relationships. It has not been possible to locate any Norwegian research on levels of prison staff wrongdoing. Given the greater prison staff wellness factors in Norway, it would be relevant to conduct a comparative study between staff wrongdoing in Norwegian prisons and staff wrongdoing in prisons in England and Wales.

There are motivational overlaps between disillusioned and unintentional offenders, particularly with regard to the impact of personal problems which can increase vulnerability. As a result, many of the strategies for reducing wrongdoing for disillusioned offenders apply to unintentional offenders. Some disillusioned and unintentional offenders may engage in serious wrongdoing, others may bend the rules in a way which is inconsistent with legitimate authority. Others may find themselves on the slippery slope without the knowledge of how to halt their descent. But even the most stringent gate security will not stop staff from entering into inappropriate relationships, or from assaulting a prisoner, or engaging in the majority of the wrongdoing behaviours in the survey scenarios.

Staff need to be able to understand the rules and prison policies so they can clearly identify types of wrongdoing, particularly corruption. They need to fully understand how prisoners groom and condition staff as well as the risks of how violating professional boundaries can expose staff to the risk of being blackmailed and/or threatened. This knowledge should be compounded with an understanding of the potential or actual harm caused by wrongdoing to prevent ethical sliding. As noted in

chapter two “experienced and/or cautious skiers are capable of stopping on quite steep slopes” (Kleinig 2008, p.611). One of the problems faced by inexperienced staff is that they might be too naïve to realise they are being manoeuvred towards the slippery slope by a prisoner and, once there, lack the knowledge of what to do to save themselves from the abyss below.

## **7.6 Contributions to knowledge**

The findings detailed above contribute to the limited research in regard to prison staff corruption (McCarthy 1981), non-custodial staff wrongdoing (McIlwain 2005), boundary violations (Marquart et al. 2001; Calhoun and Coleman 2002; Worley and Cheeseman 2006; Cheeseman Dial and Worley 2008; Worley and Worley 2011; Blackburn et al. 2011; Worley and Worley 2013; Jones 2013; Worley and Worley 2016) and the barriers to reporting wrongdoing in prisons (Dryburgh 2009; Wells et al. 2021).

This research addresses some of the gaps in prison literature identified by scholars including Goldsmith et al.(2016), Barrington et al. 2021 and Kelly and Potter (2022) and examines what Liebling et al. (2012) described as ‘the dark side’ of prison officer work. The study has generated new data and demonstrated it is possible to gain access to research staff wrongdoing in prisons in England and Wales.

Through using the highly replicated Klockars et al.(1997, 2004) ethical attitudinal survey as a starting point, I have developed a survey instrument to measure prison staff perceptions and understandings of different types of wrongdoing. The survey findings show that prison staff perceptions of seriousness are positively correlated with willingness to report. Furthermore, despite differences in absolute scores between the two prisons the rank order in which staff evaluated the seriousness of the wrongdoing was remarkably similar. This similarity in rank order is also reflected across the questions concerning perceptions of seriousness, whether the behaviour was against prison policy and willingness to report. These findings replicate the key findings of the policing integrity studies (which have been subjected to repeated validity and reliability testing) and therefore suggests that the survey instrument is a valid and reliable way to measure perceptions of wrongdoing.

Through asking prison staff to give opinions on scenarios which they might encounter during their normal working lives, I have created a typology of wrongdoing. As this research was necessarily exploratory in nature it was limited to two Category B male local prisons. The findings therefore reflect the opinions of staff at those prisons at a particular point in time. Although I do not claim that perceptions or beliefs translate simply into actual behaviour, some of the findings of what prison staff do not consider to be particularly serious, namely assault on prisoners and inappropriate relationships should give the prison service cause for concern.

Employing a mixed methods design enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings and gave me the opportunity to explore any contradictions found between the survey and interview findings. Freedom of Information requests and official statistics supplemented the research findings but are very likely to represent the 'tip of the iceberg' and cannot be relied on as an accurate measurement of the extent of staff corruption. My hope is that this study may provide a framework for analysis which can be employed across the prison estate, to include all categories of prisons including the youth estate and female prisons.

My research has refuted the 'rotten apple' theory which blames deviant individuals for corruption, and which still appears to underpin HMPPS's approach to staff corruption. If this theory was correct, situational crime prevention methods would almost eliminate the problem, as the potential cost of being caught should greatly outweigh the potential gain. Instead, my findings are strongly supportive of the argument that although individual factors such as a desire to make money relationship and financial problems, duress and blackmail play an important role, prison wrongdoing needs to be understood as encompassing the prison workplace, the wider societal environment as well as individual 'rotten apples' (Goldsmith et al. 2016). I have also argued that even the 'rotten apples' are not simply predatory individuals who actively seek and seize opportunities to engage in corruption. Some are recruited by OCGs and may feel they have no choice about joining the prison service to engage in corruption. Others may have had joined the prison service with no initial intention of engaging in corruption but become disillusioned offenders due to individual, organisational or societal reasons and realise there are money making

opportunities. There are also staff members who unintentionally find themselves at the edge of a slippery slope, lacking the knowledge or training to stop themselves from sliding down the slope and are fearful about the consequences if they admit to their own wrongdoing, while those who observe what has happened decide to turn a blind eye rather than report the wrongdoing and risk facing negative consequences for themselves.

Finally, the findings highlight the significant barriers faced by staff in reporting their own wrongdoing or that of their colleagues. If staff do not report wrongdoing, there is limited opportunity for individuals to learn from their mistakes and for their colleagues to learn how to avoid making the same mistakes. Participants referred to the blame culture and how admitting to wrongdoing would lead to disciplinary sanctions, rather than any recognition of organisational shortcomings.

## **7.7 Policy implications and recommendations**

There are seven key policy implications raised by this study for the future of counter corruption delivery in prisons.

### ***Improve recruitment and vetting***

The improvement of recruitment and vetting of prison staff was a repeated suggestion by participants. Following the Justice Committee recommendation of 2009, the minimum age of prison staff should be at least 21, so more staff have the life skills, personal confidence and maturity required to deal with the adverse conditions and challenging prisoners they will encounter.

### ***Improve training***

The need for longer initial training and ongoing training was identified by the interview participants. These findings were in accordance with Kelly and Potter's (2023) literature review of boundary violations in prisons which identified improved training as the most effective way to reduce wrongdoing. Staff need to know what the rules are and understand why they are important. They also need to have a greater understanding of the risks and potential harm of wrongdoing, and how even minor infractions can undermine legitimacy leading to the slippery

slope. There will always be some people who are willing or feel compelled to engage in serious wrongdoing, and many of them will find a way to do so. But by reducing the potential pool of wrongdoers, the extent of wrongdoing can be reduced.

### ***Increase staff support***

Prison staff need to feel valued, appreciated and understood – by their managers and society. They need to be supported through having a sufficient number of colleagues and managers so they feel safe in their work, to have greater staffing experience on the wings to offer guidance and they need to be suitably reimbursed.

### ***Increase manager support***

Strong ethical leadership is essential in any organisation. Leaders need to display integrity, communicate and emphasise ethical standards and be trusted. However, prison managers (including uniformed managers) are the ‘squeezed middle’. Officer participants in this study perceived managers as being more interested in targets and ‘looking good’ than caring about their staff. But if the number of managers was increased or their administrative workload decreased, they could spend more time with their staff to offer guidance and support and to establish better working relations with the staff they manage.

As at December 2023 there were 5,861 staff working in HMPPS HQ and Area Services (HMPPS 2023d). In his book ‘Screwed’, Acheson (2024) questions what these 5,861 staff do as their number far exceeds the number of governing governors running the 105 HMPPS prisons in England and Wales. Perhaps some of the staff in Prison HQ could be deployed to offer support to the stretched prison managers, so they can relinquish some of their administrative functions and focus on improving conditions for staff and prisoners.

### ***Focus on reducing all types of wrongdoing***

Situational crime prevention methods for both prison staff and visitors give a clear message that trafficking of contraband is being ‘dealt with’ and may increase

accountability but it can also send the message that prison staff cannot be trusted and create further divisions (Kelly and Potter 2023). HMPPS's focus on trafficking ignores the reality that staff wrongdoing is a continuum and ignores the different motivating factors which drive staff wrongdoing. Instead, a more strategic approach should focus on reducing all types of wrongdoing so that early indicators of wrongdoing can be addressed to reduce the risk of minor wrongdoing progressing to more serious wrongdoing.

### ***Increase trust in the wrongdoing reporting system***

Staff have to feel able to report on conditioning and corruption, of themselves and others. This study identified significant barriers which need to be overcome including a lack of confidence in the confidentiality of the system, the fear of retaliation and the belief that nothing will be done. These barriers will require a cultural shift in how reporting is regarded. However, regular, even weekly meetings, to promote dialogue between staff and managers in a 'safe place' would enable staff to share concerns so they were treated as learning opportunities, rather than potential reasons for disciplinary action. If managers attended these meetings to offer strong, ethical and supportive leadership (and were believed to be doing that), positive effects such as reduced staff stress levels and improved organisational commitment might follow (Lambert 2004; Lambert et al. 2009).

### ***Appoint an external body to investigate wrongdoing***

As the findings in this study highlighted, there are significant barriers to the reporting of wrongdoing. Although independent investigatory bodies are not without their critics, the great majority of interview participants supported the establishment of an independent investigatory body to deal with serious wrongdoing which is not dealt with by police. Participants believed this would improve trust in the system and offer greater transparency for the public.

## **7.8 Implications for further research**

The benefits of employing a mixed method approach have been demonstrated in this study. Having a solid empirical foundation about the extent, location and types

of wrongdoing might raise awareness inside and outside prisons to inform policy discussions. Future research should therefore seek to include multiple sources of information, (including those to which I was denied access to) and be drawn from a range of prisons to permit comparisons between them. Data sources should include an analysis of misconduct investigations as this would allow a greater overview of the type of reported wrongdoing which staff engage in and the prevalence of different types of wrongdoing. This could, as McIlwain (2004) was able to do, provide the starting point to generate a more concise survey focussed on the most problematic forms of wrongdoing.

Qualitative data from staff subject to disciplinary investigations and those who received custodial sentences would increase the understanding of the specific personal circumstances of offenders and their motivational reasons. In short, there needs to be a focus on the 'corruption journey,' to explore the decision-making of offenders, their evaluative processes, and to empirically test through longitudinal studies which factors successfully reduce wrongdoing in different types of prisons.

## **7.9 Final comments**

This chapter has presented and discussed the most pertinent findings from the thesis. Taken collectively, the findings highlight the need to understand staff wrongdoing as a multi-faceted problem which requires a holistic approach. This thesis includes a great deal of disheartening information, and it may feel that reducing staff wrongdoing is an insurmountable problem, but I hope and believe it has gone some way to increase the understanding of why staff engage in wrongdoing.

It was never my intention to 'expose' the fact there is staff corruption in prisons. It is a known problem, and one where the current approach is not working. Nor was it my intention to create a 'stick' with which to berate prison staff. I have too much respect for their work and the enormous challenges they face on a day-to-day basis to want to do this. Instead, I wanted to try to understand why and how individuals make the decision to risk their jobs, their reputations and their freedom. Most of all I wanted to offer a more focussed and informed approach to support those who work in some of the most challenging workplaces in England and Wales today.



## References

- Acheson, I. 2024. *Screwed*. London: Biteback Publishing.
- Alain, M., Rousseau, M and Carrer, F. 2018. Measuring police integrity: futile exercise or worthwhile effort in personnel management? Revisiting survey data from two previous studies in order to assess the psychometric qualities of the Klockars questionnaire. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* 35, pp. 274-286.
- Albanese, J. and Artello, K. 2018. Focussing anti-corruption efforts more effectively: an empirical look at offender motivation – positive, classical, structural and ethical approaches. *Advances in Applied Sociology* 8, pp. 471-485. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4236/aasoci.2018.86028> [Accessed: 13 September 2021].
- Allen, B. and Bosta, D. 1981. *Games criminals play: how you can profit by knowing them*. United States: Rae John Publishers.
- Andersson, S. and Heywood, P. 2009. The politics of perception: use and abuse of transparency international's approach to measuring corruption. *Political Studies* 57(4) pp. 746-767.
- Armstrong, G. and Griffin, M. 2004. Does doing the job matter? Comparing correlates of stress among treatment and correctional staff in prisons. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 32(6) pp. 577-592.
- Arnold, H. 2016. The prison officer. In: Jewkes, Y., Bennett, J. and Crewe, B. eds. *Handbook on prisons*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxfordshire: Routledge, pp. 265-283.
- Ashforth, B. and Mael, F. 1989. Social identify theory and the organisation. *The Academy of Management Review* 14(1), pp. 20-39.
- Ashforth, B. and Anand, V. 2003. The normalization of corruption in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behaviour* 25, pp. 1-52.
- Atkins, V. 2022. *Statement to the House of Commons about Security Investment Programme*. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-06-17/20293/> [Accessed: 10 May 2024].

Austin, J. 2023. Prison governor and his wife appear in court over drugs and misuse of information charges. *Daily Express*. 14 April 2023. Available at: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1758435/Pete-Nicols-Jessica-nichols-prison-court-latest> [Accessed: 20 April 2023].

Bardsley, A. 2021. Prison officer who brought paper laced with Spice into Forest Bank jail had “unexplained” £50,000 in bank account. *Manchester Evening News*. 22 January 2021. Available at: <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/brian-massey-forest-bank-prison-19656462> [Accessed: 22 April 2021].

Barragan, M., Augustine, D., Gonzalez, G. and Reiter, K. 2023. Deconstructing the power dynamics of prison research. *The Prison Journal* 103(6), pp. 769-790.

Barrington, R., Silverman, J. and Hutton, M. 2021. Corruption in UK prisons: a critical evaluation of the evidence base. *The Prison Service Journal* 252, pp. 46-57.

Bayliss, P. and Hughes, S. 2008. Teachers and instructors in prisons. In Bennett, J., Crewe, B. and Wahidin, A. eds. *Understanding prison staff*. Devon: Willan Publishing, pp.298-313.

Baynes, C. 2023. HMP Lindholme nurse and inmate lover ‘flooded’ prison with drugs – court. *BBC News* 18 October 2023. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-67124131> [Accessed: 19 October 2023].

Bazaraa, D. 2020. Female prison guard arrested after being ‘caught having sex with rapist inmate’. *The Mirror*. 7 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/female-prison-guard-arrested-after-22641666> [Accessed: 19 October 2023].

BBC News. 2006. Many jail staff corrupt – report. *BBC News* 31 July 2006. Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5230126.stm> [Accessed: 3 January 2024].

BBC News. 2013. Sara McCabe: Salford solicitor’s clerk jailed for texting inmate. *BBC News* 1 November 2013. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-24775176>. [Accessed: 16 October 2023]

BBC News. 2017. Wakefield nurse jailed for HMP Moorland inmate relationship. *BBC News* 10 July 2017. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-40558689> [Accessed: 5 January 2024].

BBC News. 2024. Prison manager cleared of illegal computer searches. *BBC News* 20 September 2024. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx24y9gee19o>. [Accessed: 23 September 2024].

Beck, A., Rantala, R. and Rexroat, J. 2014. Sexual victimization reported by adult correctional authorities 2009-11. *Special Report: Bureau of Justice Statistics*. Washington: U.S. Department of Justice.

Ben-David, S., Silfen, P. and Cohne, D. 1996. Fearful custodial or fearless personal relations: prison guards' fear shaping staff-inmate relation prototype. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 40(2), pp. 94-104.

Bennett, J. 2015. Managing prisons in an age of austerity. *Prison Service Journal* 222, pp. 15-24.

Bennett, J. 2016. *The working lives of prison managers*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bennett, J. 2019. Against prison management. *The Prison Service Journal* 247, pp. 4-13.

Bennett, J. 2024. Dirty work and beyond: representations of prison officers in films. In: Arnold, H., Maycock, M. and Ricciardelli, R. eds. *Prison officers: international perspectives on prison work*. Palgrave Macmillan (electronic), pp. 141-162.

Biesta, G. 2010. 'This is my truth, tell me yours'. deconstructive pragmatism as a philosophy for education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 42(7), pp. 710-727. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2008.00422.x>

Bishop, F. 2015. Using mixed methods research designs in health psychology: an Illustrated Discussion from a Pragmatist Perspective. *British Journal of Health Psychology* 20, pp. 5-20.

Blackburn, A., Fowler, S., Mullings, J and Marquart, J. 2011. When boundaries are

broken: inmate perception of correctional staff boundary violations. *Deviant Behaviour* 32(4), pp. 351-378.

Blakey, D. 2008. *Disrupting the supply of illicit drugs into prisons: a report for the director general of national offender management service*. Available at: [www.drugslibrary.wordpress.stir.ac.uk](http://www.drugslibrary.wordpress.stir.ac.uk) [Accessed: 24 February 2019].

Boateng, F. and Hsie, ML 2019. Misconduct withing the 'four walls': does organisational justice matter in explaining prison officers' misconduct and job stress? *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 63(2), pp. 289-308.

Bowling, B., Reiner, R. and Sheptycki, J. 2019. *The politics of the police*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi-org.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/10.1093/he/9780198769255.003.0008>.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2022. *Thematic analysis: a practical guide*. London: Sage Publishing.

Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile. 2016. Prison Reform Trust. Available at: [http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/old\\_files/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/old%20editions/Autumn%202016%20Factfile.pdf](http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/old_files/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/old%20editions/Autumn%202016%20Factfile.pdf) [Accessed: 17 April 2023].

Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile. 2023. Prison Reform Trust. Available at: <https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/publication/bromley-briefings-prison-factfile-january-2023/> [Accessed: 20 May 2023].

Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile. 2024. Prison Reform Trust. Available at: <https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Winter-2024-factfile.pdf> [Accessed: 21 June 2024].

Brooke, C. 2023. Infatuated prison nurse who had sexual relationship with inmate is among 16 people jailed for Britain's largest ever jail drugs smuggling ring. *MailOnline*. 27 October 2023. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12680573/Infatuated-prison-nurse-sexual-relationship-inmate-16-people-jailed-Britains-largest-jail-drugs-smuggling-ring.html> [Accessed: 24 June 2024].

Brookes, S., Smith, K. and Bennett, J. 2008. The role of middle and first-line managers. In Bennett, J., Crewe, B. and Wahidin, A. eds. *Understanding prison staff*. Devon: Willan Publishing, pp. 262-274.

Bryans, S. 2008. Prison governors: new public managers? In Bennett, J., Crewe, B. and Wahidin, A. eds. *Understanding prison staff*. Devon: Willan Publishing, pp. 213-228.

Bryman, A. 2016. *Social research methods*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Busby, M. and Allison, E. 2020. Dozens of prison staff sacked over prohibited items, MoJ figures show. *The Guardian* 24 December 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/dec/24/dozens-of-prison-staff-sacked-over-prohibited-items-moj-figures-show> [Accessed: 14 June 2024].

Bussell, J. 2015. Typologies of corruption: A pragmatic approach. In: Rose-Ackerman, S and Lagunes, P. eds. *Greed, Corruption and the Modern State*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 21-45.

Butler, A. 2024. Woman arrested over Wandsworth Prison 'inmate and officer sex video'. *Independent* 29 June 2024. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/wandsworth-prison-sex-tape-arrest-met-b2571061.html> [Accessed: 30 June 2024].

Calhoun, A. and Coleman, H. 2002. Female inmates' perspectives on sexual abuse by correctional personnel: An exploratory study. *Women & Criminal Justice* 13 (2-3), pp. 101-124.

Cardwell, S. and Copes, H. 2021. Neutralisation. In: Rooij, B. and Sokol, D. eds. *The Cambridge handbook of compliance*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi-org.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/10.1017/9781108759458>.

Cassidy, R. 2022. Gangster offering prison staff £3,000 bribes to smuggle iPhones into jail. *Daily Record* 25 January 2022. Available at: <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/gangsters-offering-prison-staff-3000-26037051#> [Accessed: 29 August 2022].

Chamberlen, A. 2024. Iconic prisoncraft: cultural representations of state power in prison staff recruitment campaigns. *The British Society of Criminology Conference*. 10-12 July 2024.

Charsely, M. 2023. 'Phone sex' prison officers insisted on wearing skin-tight trousers to work amid 'affair'. *The Mirror* 14 December 2023. Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/phone-sex-prison-officer-insisted-31671163> [Accessed: 17 January 2024].

Chatta, Z. and Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. 2004. Police misconduct: the Pakistani paradigm. In: Klockars, C.B., Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. and Haberfeld, M. eds. *The contours of police integrity*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, pp. 175-194.

Chaudhary, V. and McGuidan, S. 2024. Married HMP Wandsworth prison officer Linda De Sousa Abreu who had sex with inmate on video 'was having problems in her marriage' when she carried out illegal act behind bars. *Mailonline* 2 August 2024. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13702429/married-hmp-wandsworth-prison-officer-sex-inmate-video-problems-marriage.html> [Accessed: 8 August 2024].

Cheeseman, K. and Worley, R. 2006. Women on the wing: inmate perceptions about female correction officer job competency in a Southern prison system. *Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice* 3(2), pp. 86-106.

Cheeseman Dial, K. and Worley R. 2008. Crossing the line: a quantitative analysis of inmate boundary violators in a southern prison system. *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 33(1), pp. 69-84.

Civil Service People Survey. 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2021-results>. [Accessed: 10 May 2022].

Clarke, R. and Felson, M. 1993. In Clarke, R. and Felson, M. eds. *Routine activity and rational choice. Advances in criminological theory. Volume 5*. London: Transaction Publishers, pp. 1-14.

Clarke, V. and Braun, V. 2016. Thematic analysis. In Lyons, E. and Coyle, A. eds

*Analysing Qualitative Data in Psychology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage Publishing, pp. 86-103.

Clements, A. and Kinman, G. 2021. Job demands, organisational justice and emotional exhaustion in prison officers. *Criminal Justice Studies* 34(4), pp. 441-458.

Clements, A. and Kinman, G. 2023. Wellbeing in UK prison officers: key factors. *Prison Service Journal* 268, pp. 17-22.

Cobham, T. 2023. Prison nurse and inmate lover among 16 jailed for 'flooding' jail with drugs. *Independent* 27 October 2023. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/hmp-lindholme-prison-court-sentencing-amy-hatfield-b2437049.html> [Accessed: 1 December 2023].

Cockcroft, T. 2016. On the relevance of police organisational culture approaches to the prison context. *Prison Service Journal* 223, pp. 30-35.

Cohen, L. and Felson, M. 1979. Social change and crime rates and trends: a routine activity approach *American Sociological Review* 44, pp. 588-608.

Cohen, H. and Feldberg, M. 1983 cited in Kleinig, J. 1996 Gratuities and corruption. In: Newburn, T. ed. 2008. *Policing: key readings*. Willan Publishing, pp. 596-623.

Cole-Lomas, L. 2023. Prison officer sentenced after smuggling phone into Surrey's HMP Bronzefield. *Surrey News* 29 January 2023. Available at: <https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/prison-officer-sentenced-after-smuggling-26101706#> [Accessed: 2 February 2023].

Coleman, J. 1987. Toward an integrated theory of white-collar crime. *American Journal of Sociology* 93, pp. 406-439.

Coleman, J. 1994. *The criminal elite*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: St Martin's Press.

Coleman, S. 2004a. When police should say "no!" to gratuities. *Criminal Justice Ethics* 23(1), pp. 33-44.

Coleman, S. 2004b. Police, Gratuities, and professionalism : a response to Kania. *Criminal Justice Ethics* 23(1), pp. 63-65.

Conway, S. and Westmarland, L. 2021. The blue wall of silence: police integrity and corruption. In Starystach, S. and Holy, K. eds. *Silence of organisations: how organisations cover up wrongdoings*. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, pp. 105-132. <https://doi.org10.11588/heibooks.592.c11620>.

Cooke, B., Ryan, M., Hall, W., Hatters Friedman, S., Abhishek, J., and Wagoner, R. 2019. Professional boundaries in corrections. *American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* 47(1), pp. 1-8.

Cornelius, G. 2009. *The art of the con: avoiding offender manipulation*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. United States: American Correctional Association.

Cornish, D. 1993. Theories of action in criminology: learning theory and rational choice approaches. In Clarke, R. and Felson, M. eds. *Routine activity and rational choice. Advances in criminological theory. Volume 5*. London: Transaction Publishers, pp. 351-382.

Cornish, D. and Clarke, R. 1986. *The reasoning criminal: rational choice perspectives on offending*. Available at: <https://www.taylorfrancis-com.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/books/reasoning-criminal-derek-cornish-ronald-cl Clarke/e/10.4324/9781315134482> [Accessed: 5 February 2021].

Cornish, D. and Clarke, R. 2003. Opportunities, precipitators and criminal decisions: a reply to Wortley's critique of situational crime prevention. In Smith, M. and Cornish, D. eds. *Theory for practices in situational crime prevention. Crime prevention studies. Volume 16*. London: Lynne Rienner, pp. 41-96.

Cornish, D. and Clarke, R. 2017. The rational choice perspective. In Wortley, R. and Townsley, M. eds. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. *Environmental criminology and crime analysis*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 29-61.

Cotterill, T. 2023. Prison health worker, 20, breaks down in tears as she is jailed for six years for smuggling ketamine to drugs kingpin behind bars and using her home as cocaine safe house. *Mailonline* 11 January 2023. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11622619/Prison-worker-30-smuggled-ketamine-jailed-drugs-kingpin-used-home-coke-safehouse.html> [Accessed: 28



September 2023].

Council of Europe. 2020. *Report to the United Kingdom Government on the visit to the United Kingdom carried out by the European for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*. 30 April 2020. Available at <https://rm.coe.int/16809e4404>. [Accessed: 6 May 2024].

Craston, M., Bierman, R., Baker, C., Ceresco, I. and Akhurst, E. 2024. *Process evaluation of the multi-agency response to serious organised crime (MARSOC) early adopter phase: final evaluation report*. Ipos UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/security-investment-programme-evaluation>. [Accessed: 6 September 2024].

Crawley, E. 2000. *The social world of the English prison officer: a study in occupational culture*. PhD Thesis. Keele University.

Crawley, E. 2004. *Doing prison work: the public and private lives of prison officers*. Cullompton: Devon. Willan Publishing.

Crawley, E. and Crawley, P. 2008. Understanding prison officers' culture, cohesion and conflicts. In: Bennett, J., Crewe, B. and Wahidin, A. eds. *Understanding prison staff*. Devon: Willan Publishing, pp. 134-150.

Cressey, D. 1973. *Other people's money*. New Jersey: Patterson Smith. (Originally published 1953).

Creswell, J. and Plano Clark, V. 2018. *Conducting mixed methods research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Sage Publishing.

Crewe, B. 2005. Prisoner society in the era of hard drugs. *Punishment and Society* 7(4), pp. 457-481.

Crewe, B. 2006. Prison drug dealing and the ethnographic lens. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 45(4), pp. 347-368.

Crewe, B. 2008. Concluding comments on the social world of prison staff. In: Bennett, J., Crewe, B. and Wahidin, A. eds. *Understanding prison staff*. Devon: Willan Publishing, pp. 421-433.

Crewe, B. 2009. *The prisoner society: power, adaptation and social life in an English prison*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crewe, B. 2011. Soft power in prison: Implications for staff-prisoner relationships, liberty and legitimacy. *European Journal of Criminology* 8(6), pp. 455-468.

Crewe, B., Bennet, J. and Wahidin, A. 2008. Introduction. In: Bennett, J., Crewe, B. and Wahidin, A. eds. *Understanding prison staff*. Devon: Willan publishing, pp. 1-11.

Crewe, B., Liebling, A. and Hulley, S. 2011. Staff culture, use of authority and prisoner quality of life in public and private sector prisons. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 44(1), pp.94-115.

Crewe, B., Liebling, A. and Hulley, S. 2015. Staff-prisoner relationships, staff professionalism and the use of authority in public and private sector prisons. *Law and Social Inquiry* 40(2), pp. 309-344.

Crewe, B. and Liebling, A. 2015a. Staff culture, authority and prison violence. *Prison Service Journal* 221, pp. 9-14.

Crewe, B. and Liebling, A. 2015b. Governing Governors. *Prison Service Journal* 222, pp. 3-10.

Criminal Justice Commission. 2000. *Queensland prison industries: review of corruption risks*. Brisbane: Criminal Justice Commission.

Crime and Misconduct Commission. 2009. *Perceptions of misconduct in Queensland correctional institutions: a survey of custodial officers*. Brisbane: Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Crime and Corruption Commission. 2018. *Taskforce Flaxton: an examination of corruption risks and corruption in Queensland prisons*. Brisbane: Crime and Corruption Commission.

Crowson, I. 2023. Prison chiefs nicked: Governor at prison and his wife charged after 'being paid by crime gangs for secret information'. *The Sun* 2 April 2023. Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/21912017/governor-wormwood-scrubs-prison-charged-criminal-gangs/> [Accessed: 2 September 2023].

Davies, P. and Francis, P. 2018. *Doing criminological research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Sage Publications.

Deakin, J. and Spencer, J. 2018. Using social surveys in criminological research. In Davies, P. and Francis, P. eds. *Doing criminological research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Sage Publications.

Dyrburgh, M. 2009. Personal and policy implications of whistle-blowing: the case of Concoran State Prison. *Public Integrity* 11(2), pp. 155-170.

Dudley, S. and Bargent, J. 2017. *The prison dilemma: Latin America's incubators of organized crime*. Insight Crime. Available at: <https://www.insightcrime.org/investigations/prison-dilemma-latin-america-incubators-organized-crime> [Accessed: 9 October 2018].

Dupuy, K. and Neset, S. 2018. *The cognitive psychology of corruption*. U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. Available at: <https://www.u4.no/publications/the-cognitive-psychology-of-corruption/fullversion> [Accessed: 25 August 2024].

Earle, R. 2014. Insider and out: making sense of a prison experience and a research experience. *Qualitative Inquiry* 20(4), pp. 429-438.

Edlebacher, M. and Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. 2004. Ethics and the police: studying police integrity in Austria. In Klockars, C.B., Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. and Haberfeld, M. eds. *The contours of police integrity*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, pp. 19-36.

Ekblom, P. and Tilley, N. 2000. Going equipped: Criminology, situational crime prevention and the resourceful offender. *British Journal of Criminology* 40, pp. 376-398.

Ellison, A., Coats, M., Pike, S., Smith-Yau, W. and Moore, R. 2018. The demand for and use of illicit phones in prison. *Ministry of Justice Analytical Series*. HM Prison & Probation Service.

Elliott, W. 2006. Power and control tactics employed by prison inmates: a case study. *Federal Probation* 70(1), pp. 45-48.

Fahey, R. 2023. Prison officer who admitted phone sex with inmate cleared of misconduct. *The Mirror*. 21 December 2023. Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/breaking-prison-officer-cleared-illegal-31726547> [Accessed: 17 January 2024].

Farrow, K. 2024. Blame culture: the line between blame and accountability in policing. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* 18, pp. 1-7.

Feldberg, M. 1985. Gratuities, corruption and the democratic ethos of policing: the case of the free cup of coffee. In: Ellison, F. and Feldberg, M. eds. *Moral issues in police work*. New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld, pp. 267-277.

Felson, M. 2017. The Routine activity approach. In Wortley, R. and Townsley, M. eds. *Environmental criminology and crime analysis*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge, pp. 87-97.

Franke, D., Bierie, D. and Mackenzie, D. 2010. Legitimacy in corrections. *Criminology & Public Policy* 9(1), p.89-117.

Friedrichs, D. 2007. *Trusted criminals: white collar crime in contemporary society*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. United States of America: Thomson Wadsworth.

Fujii, L.A. 2017. What is relational interviewing? *Interviewing in social science research*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203756065>.

Fyfe, J. and Kane, R. 2006. *Bad cops: a study of career-ending misconduct among new York city police officers*. Submitted to the United States Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.

Gardiner, J. 2002. Defining Corruption. In: Heidenheimer, A. and Johnston, M. eds. *Political corruption: concepts & contexts*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Transaction Publishers.

Garland, B., Hogan N. and Lambert, E. 2012. Antecedents of role stress among correctional staff: a replication and expansion. *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 24(5), pp. 527-550.

Garrihy, J. 2024. 'It's a very clannish type of a job': entitativity and identity in prison officers' occupational cultures and identities. In: Arnold, H., Maycock, M. and

Ricciardelli, R. eds. *Prison officers: international perspectives on prison work*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 163-188. .

Gibson, S. 2022. Woman prison officer caught in relationship with killer inmate – who stabbed his wife 58 times. *Leicester Mercury* 20 May 2022. Available at: <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/local-news/woman-prison-officer-caught-relationship-7110320#> [Accessed: 24 May 2023].

Gilmore, J. and Tufail, W. 2015. Justice denied: police accountability and the killing of Mark Duggan. In: Whyte, D. ed. *How corrupt is Britain*. London: Pluto Press, pp. 94-102.

Gleaves, S. 2023. Trial fixed for former HMP Kirham prison governor accused of relationship with inmate and accepting Mercedes. *Lancashire Post* 28 July 2023. Available at: <https://www.lep.co.uk/news/crime/trial-date-fixed-for-former-hmp-kirkham-prison-governor-accused-of-relationship-with-inmate-and-accepting-mercedes-gift-4236334> [Accessed: 2 September 2023].

Goldsmith, A. 2015. Disgracebook policing: social media and the rise of police indiscretion. *Policing and Society* 25(3), pp. 249-267.

Goldsmith, A. 2020. Prison corruption: an ecological framework. In: Graycar, A. ed. *Handbook on corruption, ethics and integrity in public administration*. Gloucestershire: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 201-214.

Goldsmith, A. 2022. Sykes's "corruption of authority" and the sociology of prison corruption. In: Crewe, B., Goldsmith, A. and Halsey, M. eds. *Power and pain in the modern prison. The society of captives revisited*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 272-289.

Goldsmith, A., Halsey, M. and Groves, A. 2016a. *Tackling correctional corruption: an integrity promoting approach*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Goldsmith, A., Halsey, M. and Groves, A. 2016b. *Uncovering and reporting corruption*. Available at [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/978-1-137-49007-0\\_8#Sec4](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/978-1-137-49007-0_8#Sec4) [Accessed: 30 October 2023].

Goldsmith, A. and Halsey, M. 2018. *Literature review: correctional corruption*. Flinders University: Centre for Crime and Policy Research Flinders University: Centre for Crime and Policy Research.

Gooch, K. and Treadwell, J. 2019. The illicit economy and recovery: what we need to understand. *Prison Service Journal* 242, pp. 56-63.

Gooch, K. and Treadwell, J. 2020. Prisoner society in an era of psychoactive substances, organized crime, new drug markets and austerity. *The British Journal of Criminology* 60, pp. 1260-1281.

Gooch, K. and Treadwell, J. 2021. 'It doesn't stop at the prison gate': understanding organised crime in prison. *Prison Service Journal* 252, pp. 15-30.

Gooch, K. and Treadwell, J. 2024. The Prison Firm" the 'transportation' of organised crime, the evolution of criminal markets and contemporary prisoner society. *Criminology and Criminal Justice. Special issue: new geographies of organised crime* pp. 1-20.

Goodwin, H. 2024. Female HMP Wandsworth prison officer who had sex with inmate on camera is married swinger who appeared in Channel 4 doc. *The Sun* 29 June 2024. Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/28836772/wandsworth-prison-officer-sex-tape-married/> [Accessed: 30 June 2024].

Gottschalk, P. 2010. Crime-based survey instrument for police integrity measurement. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 3(1), pp. 52-68.

Gottschalk, P. and Holgersson, S. 2011. Whistle-blowing in the police. *Police Practice and Research* 12(5), pp. 397-409.

Gottschalk, P. 2022. Suspicion of white-collar crime: a case study of retaliation against whistle-blowers. *International Criminal Justice Review* 32(4), pp. 457-468.

Gov.UK Justice Data 2024. *Assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners*. Available at: <https://data.justice.gov.uk/prisons/safety-and-order/assaults-rate-staff> [Accessed: 22 June 2024].

Grace, S. 2024. Police misconduct – exploring motivations for disclosure of colleagues' misconduct. *British Society of Criminology Conference*. Glasgow, 10-13 July 2024.

Grierson, J. 2019. More than 2,500 prison staff disciplined in five years, MoJ figures show. *The Guardian* 29 April 2019. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/apr/29/more-than-2500-prison-staff-disciplined-in-five-years-moj-figures-show> [Accessed: 1 May 2019].

Gutheil, T. and Gabbard, G. 1998. Misuses and misunderstandings of boundary theory in clinical and regulatory settings. *American Journal of Psychiatry* 155(3), pp. 409-414.

Haigh, E. and Elliott, F. 2023. 'Very pretty' female prison officer's tight trousers 'left very little to the imagination', court hears – as she is accused of having phone sex with one inmate, a relationship with another and blowing a kiss to a third. *Mailonline* 14 December 2023. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12863295/prison-officers-tight-trousers-phone-sex-inmate-relationship.html> [Accessed: 5 January 2024].

Hamilton, L. 2010. The boundary seesaw model: good fences make for good neighbours. In: Tennant, A. and Howells, K. eds. *Using time, not doing time*. Chichester: Willey-Blackwell, pp. 181-193.

Hammersley, M. 2015. Research 'inside' viewed from 'outside': reflections on prison ethnography. In: Drake, D., Earle, R. and Sloan, J. eds. *The Palgrave handbook of prison ethnography*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 21-39.

Hammersmith Today. 2014. Three jailed for smuggling drugs into Wormwood Scrubs prison. *Hammersmith Today* 28 November 2014. Available at: <https://www.hammersmithtoday.co.uk/#!/pages/shared:common:hfc crime167> [Accessed: 9 May 2024].

Harrison, K. and Nichols, H. 2023. The health and wellbeing of prison governors in England and Wales. *Prison Service Journal* 268, pp. 4-10.

Hay, W. and Sparks, R. 1991. What is a Prison Officer? *Prison Service Journal* Summer 1991, pp. 2-7.

Heap, V and Waters, J. 2018 Using mixed methods in criminological research. In Davies, P. and Francis, P. eds. *Doing criminological research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Sage Publishing, pp. 114-136.

Heidenheimer, A. and Johnston, M. 2002. *Political corruption: concepts & contexts*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Transaction Publishers.

Heinrich, F. and Hodess R. 2011. Measuring corruption in Graycar, A. and Smith, R. eds. *Handbook of global research and practice in corruption*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 18-33.

Hemmens, C and Stohr, M. 2001. Correctional staff attitudes regarding the use of force in corrections. *Corrections Management Quarterly* 5(2), pp. 27-40.

Hesse-Biber, S. 2010. Qualitative approaches to mixed methods practice. *Qualitative Inquiry* 16(6), pp. 455-468.

His Majesty's (HM) Government. 2017. *United Kingdom anti-corruption strategy 2017-2022*. Available at:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/667221/6\\_3323\\_Anti-Corruption\\_Strategy\\_WEB.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/667221/6_3323_Anti-Corruption_Strategy_WEB.pdf) [Accessed: 26 March 2022].

HM Government. 2018. *Serious and organised crime strategy*. Available at:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/752850/SOC-2018-web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/752850/SOC-2018-web.pdf). [Accessed: 26 March 2022].

HM Government. 2024. *Urgent notification process*. Available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/urgent-notification-process> [Accessed: 25 March 2024].

HM Inspectorate of Prisons. 2022. *Inspection reports*. Available at:  
<https://hmiprisons.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk> [Accessed: 18 June 2024].

HM Inspectorate of Prisons. 2024. *Urgent notifications*. Available at:



[<https://hmiprisons.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/> Accessed: 14 August 2024].

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). 2019. *Prison drugs strategy*. Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/792125/prison-drugs-strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/792125/prison-drugs-strategy.pdf) [Accessed: 11 April 2023].

HMPPS. 2019. *Counter corruption and reporting wrongdoing policy framework*.

Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/799523/counter-corruption-pf.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/799523/counter-corruption-pf.pdf) [Accessed: 15 September 2020].

HMPPS. 2021. *Workforce statistics December 2021*. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hm-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-december-2021> [Accessed: 11 April 2023].

HMPPS. 2022a. *Counter corruption and reporting wrongdoing policy framework*.

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-corruption-and-reporting-wrongdoing> [Accessed: 11 April 2023].

HMPPS. 2022b. *Workforce statistics December 2022*. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hm-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-december-2022/hm-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-december-2022> [Accessed: 17 April 2023]

HMPPS. 2023a. *Life as a prison officer – job advertisement*. Available at:

<https://prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk/prison-officer/life-as-a-prison-officer/> [Accessed: 17 April 2023].

HMPPS. 2023b. *Prison officer job advertisement film*. Available at: ”

<https://www.thedrum.com/news/2023/09/28/hm-prison-and-probation-service-shows-the-varied-life-officer-recruitment-ad>. [Accessed: 24 August 2024].

HMPPS. 2023c. *Annual Digest*. Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/651d3a76bef21800156ded1a/HMPPS-annual-digest-2022-23\\_FINAL1\\_RevisedSept23.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/651d3a76bef21800156ded1a/HMPPS-annual-digest-2022-23_FINAL1_RevisedSept23.pdf) [Accessed: 19 January 2024].

HMPPS. 2023d. *Workforce statistics June 2023*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hm-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-june-2023/hm-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-june-2023> [Accessed: 26 January 2024].

HMPPS. 2023e. *Workforce statistics December 2023*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hm-prison-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-december-2023/hm-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-december-2023> [Accessed: 20 April 2024].

HMPPS 2024a. *Prisons data*. Available at: <https://data.justice.gov.uk/prisons> [Accessed: 15 April 2024].

HMPPS. 2024b. *Prison and Probation Jobs*. Available at: <https://prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk/roles-at-hmpps/prison-officer/> [Accessed: 15 January 2024].

HMPPS. 2024c. *Workforce statistics March 2024*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hm-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-march-2024/hm-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-march-2024> [Accessed: 28 July 2024].

Hickman, M., Piquero, A., Powell, Z. and Greene, J. 2016(a). Expanding the measurement of police integrity. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* 39(2), pp. 246-267.

Hickman, M., Powell, Z., Piquero, A. and Greene, J. 2016 (b). Exploring the viability of an attitudes toward ethical behaviour scale in understanding police integrity outcomes. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 39(2), pp. 319-33.

Hill, G. 2015. *Corruption risks in the criminal justice chain and tools for assessment, chapter 5: detention and corrections*. U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. Available at: <https://www.u4.no/publications/corruption-risks-in-the-criminal-justice-chain-and-tools-for-assessment-chapter-5-detention-and-corrections> [Accessed: 19 November 2020].

- Hogg, M. 2016. Social identify theory. In: McKeown, S., Haji, R. and Ferguson, N. eds. *Understanding peace and conflict thorough social identify theory*. Switzerland: Springer, pp. 3-18.
- Holdaway, S. 1983. *Inside the British police: a force at work*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Horowitz, V., Greberman, E., Nolan, P., Hyatt, J., Uggen, C., Andersen, S. and Chanenson, S. 2021. A comparative perspective on officer wellness: American reflections from Norwegian prisons. *Criminal Justice Studies* 34(4), pp. 477-497.
- Howard League for Penal Reform. 2009. *Turnkeys or professionals: A vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century prison officer*. Available at: <https://howardleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Turnkeys-or-professionals-print-final.pdf> [Accessed: 28 May 2023].
- Howard League for Penal Reform. 2017. *The role of the prison officer*. Available at: <https://howardleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/The-role-of-the-prison-officer.pdf> [Accessed: 28 May 2023].
- Inside Time. 2023a. Prisons: the good, the bad and the ugly. *Inside Time Reports*. 31.January 2023. Available at: <https://insidetime.org/prisons-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly-31/> [Accessed: 27 April 2023].
- Inside Time. 2023b. Officer kissed and cuddled female prisoner. *Inside Time Reports*. 24 March 2023. Available at: <https://insidetime.org/officer-kissed-and-cuddled-female-prisoner/> [Accessed: 4 January 2024].
- Ismail, N. 2022. After a decade of austerity, urgent changes are needed to improve prison services. *Police Bristol Policy Report* 79. Available at: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/policybristol/policy-briefings/prison-funding-austerity/> [Accessed: 20 April 2023].
- Jauregui, B. 2014. Provisional agency in India: jugaad and legitimation of corruption. *American Ethnologist* 41(1), pp. 77-91.
- Jewkes, Y. 2011. Local prisons. In: Jewkes, Y. and Bennett, J. eds. *Dictionary of prisons and punishment*. London: Routledge, pp. 156-157.

Jewkes, Y. and Wright, S. 2016. Researching the prison. In: Jewkes, Y., Crewe, B. and Bennett, J. eds. *Handbook of prisons*. London: Routledge, pp. 659-676.

Jones, S. 2013. *A portrait of boundary violations: former female employees of corrections who have established a relationship with an inmate*. PhD Thesis, University of Colorado. Available at: <https://mountainscholar.org/bitstream/handle/10976/261/CUCS2013100001ETDSEL RP.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> [Accessed: 2 February 2021].

Justice Committee. 2009. *Role of the prison officer. Twelfth report of session 2008-09*. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/102/justice-committee/publications/reports-responses/?> [Accessed: 19 June 2023].

Justice Committee. 2022/23. *The prison operational workforce*. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/12953/pdf/> [Accessed: 1 May 2023].

Justice Committee. 2023. *Prison operational workforce survey results*. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/122073/default/>. [Accessed: 1 May 2023].

Kalinich, D. 1981. *The inmate economy*. Lexington, Toronto: Lexington Books.

Kania, R. 2004. The ethical acceptability of gratuities: still saying “yes” after all these years. *Criminal Justice Ethics* 23(1), pp. 54-63.

Kauffman, K. 1988. *Prison officers and their world*. London: Harvard University Press.

Kelly, D. and Potter, J. 2023. Professional boundary violations in prisons: a scoping review of the literature. *Journal of Criminal Psychology* 13(3), pp. 190-208.

Kerr, J. et al. 2024. *Security investment programme: process evaluation report*. The National Centre for Social Research. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/security-investment-programme-evaluation>. [Accessed: 6 September 2024].

Kindred, A. 2022. Prison officer who sent inmate nude photos just months into job is jailed. *The Mirror* 26 October 2022. Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/prison-officer-who-sent-inmates-28334547> [Accessed: 10 May 2024].

Kinman, G., Clements, A. and Hart, J. 2016. Work-related wellbeing in UK prison officers: a benchmarking approach. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management* 9(3), pp. 290-307.

Kleinig, J. 2008. Gratuities and corruption. In: Newburn, T. ed. *Policing: Key Readings*. Devon: Willan Publishing, pp. 596-623.

Klockars, C. 1979. Dirty hands and deviant subjects. In: Klockars, C. and O'Connor, F. eds. *Deviance and Decency: the ethics of research with human subjects*. Sage Publications.

Klockars, C. 2008. The dirty Harry problem. In: Newburn, T. ed. *Policing: key readings*, Devon: Willan Publishing, pp. 581-595.

Klockars, C., Kutnjak Ivkovic, S., Harver, W.E. and Haberfeld, M.R. 1997. *The measurement of police integrity*. Washington D.C.: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programmes.

Klockars, C.B., Haberfeld, M. and Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. 2004. The contours of police integrity. In: Klockars, C.B., Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. and Haberfeld, M. eds. *The contours of police integrity*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, pp. 1-18.

Klockars, C., Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. and Haberfeld, M.R. 2007. *Enhancing police integrity*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Knapp, W. 1972. *The Knapp Commission report on police corruption*. New York: George Braziller.

Kolind, T., Frank, V., Lindberg, O. and Tourunen, J. 2015. Officers and drug counsellors; new occupational identities in Nordic prisons. *British Journal of Criminology* 55, pp. 303-320.

Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. 2003. To serve and collect: measuring police corruption. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 93, pp. 593-650.

- Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. 2005a. *Fallen blue knights: controlling police corruption*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. 2005b. Police (mis) behaviour: a cross-cultural study of corruption seriousness. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*. 28(3), pp. 546-566.
- Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. and Shelley, T. 2008. The contours of police integrity across Eastern Europe. *International Criminal Justice Review* 18(1), pp. 59-82.
- Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. and Khuchumyan, A. 2014. Measuring police integrity among urban and rural police in Armenia: from local results to global implications. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 38(1), pp. 39-61.
- Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. Haberfeld, M. and Peacock, R. 2018. Decoding the code of . *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 29(2), pp. 172-189.
- Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. and Haberfeld, M. 2019. *Exploring police integrity: novel approaches to police integrity theory and methodology*. Switzerland: Springer Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-29065-8>.
- LaDbible TV. 2023. *Corrupt prison guards on the crimes they've committed*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mtpbahxuu4>. [Accessed: 14 February 2024].
- Lambert, E. 2004. The impact of job characteristics on correctional staff members. *The Prison Journal* 84, pp. 208-227.
- Lambert, E., Hogan N. and Tucker, K. 2009. Problems at work: exploring the correlates of role stress among correctional staff. *The Prison Journal* 89(4), pp. 460-481.
- Lambert, E., Griffin, M., Hogan, N. and Kelley, T. 2015. The ties that bind: organisational commitment and its effect on correctional orientation. *The Prison Journal* 95(1), pp. 135-158.
- Lambert, E., Worley, R. and Worley, V. 2018. The effects of perceptions of staff-inmate boundary violations and willingness to follow rules upon work stress. *Security Journal* 31(2), pp. 618-644.

Lankenau, S. 2001. Smoke 'em if you got 'em: cigarette black markets in U.S. prisons and jails. *The Prison Journal* 81(2), pp. 142-161.

Lavery, M. 2021. Prison officer who sent sexual images of herself to teenage inmates and smuggled in parcels is jailed. *Yorkshire Evening Post* 16 January 2021. Available at: <https://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/crime/prison-officer-who-sent-sexual-images-herself-teenage-inmates-and-smuggled-parcels-jailed-3102671> [Accessed: 19 January 2021].

Liebling, A. 1992. *Suicides in prison*. London: Routledge.

Liebling, A. 1999. Doing prison research: breaking the silence? *Theoretical Criminology* 3(2), pp. 147-173.

Liebling, A. 2000. Prison officers, policing and the use of discretion. *Theoretical Criminology* 4(3), pp. 333-357.

Liebling, A. 2001. Whose side are we on? Theory, practice and allegiances in prisons research. *British Journal of Criminology* 41, pp. 472-284.

Liebling, A. 2008. Why prison staff culture matters. In: Byrne J., Hummer, D. and Taxman, F. eds. *The culture of prison violence*. New York: Pearson, pp. 105-122.

Liebling, A. 2011a. Distinctions and distinctiveness in the work of prison officers: legitimacy and authority revisited. *European Journal of Criminology* 8(6), pp. 484-499.

Liebling, A. 2011b. Moral performance, inhuman and degrading treatment and prison pain. *Punishment and Society* 13(5), pp. 530–550. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1462474511422159>.

Liebling, A. 2014. Postscript: integrity and emotion in prisons research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 20(4), pp. 481-486.

Liebling, A. and Arnold, H. 2004. *Prisons and their moral performance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Liebling, A., Arnold, H. and Straub, C. 2011. *An exploration of staff-prisoner relationships at HMP Whitemoor: 12 years on. Revised final report.* Cambridge Institute of Criminology, Prisons Research Centre.

Liebling, A., Price, D. and Shefer, G. 2012. *The prison officer.* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Abingdon: Routledge.

Liebling, A. and Kant, D. 2016. The two cultures: correctional officers and key differences in institutional climate. In: Wooldredge, J. and Smith, P. eds. *The Oxford handbook of prison and imprisonment.* doi:  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199948154.001.0001>

Lombardo, L. 1989. *Guards imprisoned: correctional officers at work.* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing Company.

Loucks, N. 2000. *Prison rules: a working guide.* London: Prison Reform Trust.

Loughran, T., Paternoster, R., Chaflin, A. and Wilson, T. 2016. Can rational choice be considered a general theory of crime: evidence from individual-level panel data. *Criminology* 54(1), pp. 86-112.

Lucas, J. 2019. Screwed by texts: Prison officer sent 300 texts to drug dealer and formed 'emotional' bond. Mum-of-two Paula Radley destroyed ten-year career with soppy messages. *The Sun* 24 May 2019. Available at:  
<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/9151164/prison-officer-drug-dealer-texts-relationship/>  
[Accessed: 10 May 2024].

MacDonald, M. and Fallon, P. 2008. Health professionals in prison. In: Bennett, J., Crewe, B. and Wahidin, A. eds. *Understanding prison staff.* Devon: Willan Publishing, pp. 349-368.

Mahfood, V., Pollock, W. and Longmire, D. 2013. Leave it at the gate: job stress and satisfaction in correctional staff. *Criminal Justice Studies* 26(3), pp. 308-325.

Marquart, J. 1986. Prison guards and the use of physical coercion as a mechanism of prisoner control. *Criminology* 24(2), pp. 347-366.

Marquart, J., Barnhill, M. and Balshaw-Biddle, K. 2001. Fatal attraction: an analysis



of employee boundary violations in a southern prison system 1995–1998. *Justice Quarterly* 18(4), pp. 877–910.

Maruna, S. and Copes, H. 2005. What have we learned from five decades of neutralisation research? *Crime and Justice* 32, pp. 221-320.

Mazzoni, Al. 2023. Prison romance. Prison officer, 26, 'in affair with inmate wore inappropriate skin-tight trousers to work and refused uniform'. *The Sun* 14 December 2023. Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/25054393/prison-officer-cardiff-affair-inmate-tight-trousers/> [Accessed: 17 January 2024].

McCarthy, B. 1981. *An exploratory study of corruption in corrections*. PhD Thesis, The Florida State University. Available at: <https://www-proquest-com.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/docview/303108910?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true> [Accessed: 5 October 2020].

McCarthy, B. 1984(a). Keeping an eye on the keeper: prison corruption and its control. *The Prison Journal* 64, pp. 113-125.

McCarthy, B. 1984(b). Patterns of prison corruption. *Corrections Today* 46, pp. 88-108.

McCarthy, B. 2019. Prison corruption. In Braswell, M., McCarthy, B and McCarthy, B. *Justice crime and ethics*. 10<sup>th</sup> edition. London: Routledge, pp. 320-348.

McIlwain, G. 2005. *Professional misconduct between non-custodial staff and inmates: a study of Queensland's correctional centres*. PhD Thesis, Griffith University, Queensland. Available at: <https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/bitstream/handle/10072/365609/02Whole.pdf?sequence=1>. [Accessed: 12 December 2020].

Meijer, P. C., Verloop, N., and Beijaard, D. 2002. Multi-method triangulation in a qualitative study on teachers' practical knowledge: An attempt to increase internal validity. *Quality and Quantity* 36, pp. 145-167.

Mesmer-Magnus, J. and Viswesvaran, C. 2005. Whistleblowing in organisations: an examination of correlates of whistleblowing intentions, actions and retaliations. *Journal of Business Ethics* 62 (3), pp. 277-297.

Metcalfe, T. 2017. Shifting the blame: towards a self-reforming police service in England and Wales. *International Journal of Emergency Services* 6(3), pp. 153-165.

Micheli, M. and Near, J. 1985. Characteristics of organisational climate and perceived wrongdoing associated with whistle-blowing decisions. *Personal Psychology* 38, pp. 525- 544.

Miceli, M. and Near, J.,1988. Individual and situational correlates of whistle-blowing. *Personal Psychology* 41, pp. 267-281.

Miller, J. 2003. *Police corruption in England and Wales: an assessment of current evidence*. London: Home Office.

Mills, K. A. 2024. Prison officer caught smuggling £100,000 of drugs and phones into jail. *The Mirror* 21 June 2024. Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/prison-officer-busted-smuggling-100000-33080935> [ Accessed: 1 July 2024].

Ministry of Justice Press Release. 2017. *Prison officer recruitment passes halfway target. Government on track to hit target of 2,500 additional officers by end of 2018*. 19 October 2017. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prison-officer-recruitment-passes-halfway-target> [Accessed 17 April 2023].

Ministry of Justice Press Release. 2019a. *New prison anti-corruption taskforce unveiled*. 4 May 2019. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-prison-anti-corruption-taskforce-unveiled> [Accessed on 23 February 2021].

Ministry of Justice Press Release. 2019b. *£100 million to crackdown on crime in prison*. 13 August 2019. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/100-million-crackdown-on-crime-in-prison> [Accessed: 23 February 2021].

Ministry of Justice. 2020. *Workforce statistics 30 June 2020*. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/910303/hmpps-workforce-june-2020-stats.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/910303/hmpps-workforce-june-2020-stats.pdf) [Accessed: 26 March

2021].

Ministry of Justice. 2023a. *Freedom of Information Act request number 230421031: number of prison staff bands 2-5 investigated for misconduct and dismissed for misconduct by year since 2015. Number of prison staff bands 6-11 investigated for misconduct and dismissed for misconduct by year since 2015.* [Email to Bronwen Frow-Jones] 23 May 2023.

Ministry of Justice 2023b. *Freedom of Information Act request number 230715004: operational staffing levels for every Category B male local public sector prison in England and Wales and prisoner capacity for each prison.* [Email to Bronwen Frow-Jones] 4 August 2023.

Ministry of Justice. 2023bc *Prison population figures.* Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prison-population-figures-2023> [Accessed: 14 May 2023].

Ministry of Justice. 2023d. *Safety in custody statistics.* Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-custody-quarterly-update-to-june-2023/safety-in-custody-statistics-england-and-wales-deaths-in-prison-custody-to-september-2023-assaults-and-self-harm-to-june-2023#assaults-12-months-to-june-2023> [Accessed: 1 January 2024].

Ministry of Justice. 2023e. *Prison security investment programme: X-ray body scanners.* Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/656714a175007400131dedc3/Prison\\_Security\\_Investment\\_Programme\\_Xray\\_Body\\_Scanner\\_Management\\_Information\\_December\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/656714a175007400131dedc3/Prison_Security_Investment_Programme_Xray_Body_Scanner_Management_Information_December_2023.pdf) [Accessed: 21 May 2024].

Ministry of Justice. 2024a. *Freedom of Information Act request number 240318056: number of calls recorded to the prison service Integrity Hotline each year for the past five years.* [Email to Bronwen Frow-Jones] 17 April 2024.

Ministry of Justice. 2024b. *Freedom of Information Act request number 204509024: number of Security Intelligence Reports and Corruption Prevention Intelligence Reports submitted throughout the prison estate in the previous five years.* [Email to

Bronwen Frow-Jones] 7 June 2024.

Ministry of Justice. 2024c. *Prison performance ratings 2022 to 2023*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-performance-ratings-2022-to-2023/annual-prison-performance-ratings-202223> [Accessed: 26 April 2024].

Ministry of Justice. 2024d. *Freedom of Information Act request number 24079007: number of prison staff (excluding bands 2-5) investigated and dismissed for misconduct from 2020 and number of prison staff bands 2-5 investigated and dismissed for misconduct from 2020*. [Email to Bronwen Frow-Jones] 30 July 2024.

Ministry of Justice. 2024e. *Freedom of Information Act request number 240709007: clarification regarding classification of data provided in respect of FOI request 2024d*. [Email to Bronwen Frow-Jones] 30 August 2024.

Minor, W. 1981. Techniques of neutralisation: a reconceptualization and empirical examination. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 18(3), pp. 295-318.

Mollen, M. 1994. Commission to investigate allegations of police corruption and the anti-corruption procedures of the Police Department. *Commission Report, New York*. Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/248581606/1994-07-07-Mollen-Commission-NYPD-Report> [Accessed: 1 January 2022].

Morgan, D. 2007. Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained: methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1(1), pp. 48-76.

Morgan, D. 2014. Pragmatism as a paradigm for social research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 20(8), pp. 1045-1053.

Morgan, R. 2006. Turnkey or role model. *Prison Service Journal* 168, pp. 1-13.

Morgan-Bentley, P. 2024. I Worked undercover in one of UKs most dangerous jails – without checks. *The Times* 27 March 2024. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.com/uk/article/undercover-hmp-bedford-prison-investigation>. [Accessed: 2 April 2024].

Morgan, R. and Liebling, A. 2007. Imprisonment: an expanding scene. In: Maguire, M., Morgan, R and Reiner, R. eds. *The Oxford handbook of criminology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1100-1137.

National Offender Management Service. 2010. *Conduct and discipline policy*. Prison Service Instruction 06/2010. Reissued 22 July 2013. Available at: <https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7d520ae5274a33be64877f/hr-procedures-hmp-isle-of-wight>. [Accessed: 1 September 2022]

National Prison Rape Elimination Commission Report. 2009. Available at: <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/226681.pdf> [Accessed: 24 June 2024].

Near, J. and Miceli, M. 1996. Whistle-blowing: myth and reality. *Journal of Management* 22(3), pp. 507-527.

Near, J., Rehg, M., Van Scotter, J. and Miceli, M. 2004. Does type of wrongdoing affect the whistle-blowing process? *Business Ethics Quarterly* 14(2), pp. 219-242.

Neill, R. 2024. *Letter from Chair of Justice Committee to Minister for Prisons* 23 May 2024. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/45092/documents/223457/default/> [Accessed: 29 May 2024].

Nelken, D. and Levi, M. 1996. The corruption of politics and the politics of corruption: an overview. *Journal of Law and Society* 23(1), pp. 1-17.

Newburn, T. 1999. *Understanding and preventing police corruption: lessons from the literature*. London: Policing and Reducing Crime Unit: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

Newburn, T. 2015. *Literature review- police integrity and corruption*. London: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

Nicholls, A. et al. 2021. Snitches get stitches and end up in ditches: a systematic review of the factors associated with whistleblowing intentions. *Frontiers in Psychology* 12. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.631538

Nichols, H. 2017. Encouragement, discouragement and connection: the role of relationships in prison education experiences. *Prison Service Journal* 233, pp. 4-10.

Norman, G. 2010. Likert scales, levels of measurement and the 'laws' of statistics. *Advances in Health Science Education* 15, pp. 635-632.

Nottingham Post. 2018. Prison officer sacked after she sent whatsapp and facebook messages to inmate at HMPPS Nottingham. *Nottingham Post* 12 April 2018.

Available at: <https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/prison-officer-sacked-after-sent-1446223> [Accessed: 29 January 2022].

Odling, G. and Hale, B. 2024. Why so many female guards are having sex in jail with prisoners. *Mailonline* 23 April 2024. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-13337243/female-guards-sex-jail-prisoners-rise-prison-sex-scandals-far-deeper.html> [Accessed: 24 April 2024].

Penfold, C., Turnbull, P. and Webster, R. 2005. *Tackling prison drug markets: an exploratory qualitative study*. Institute for Criminal Policy Research, Kings' College, London. Home Office Online Report 39/05. Home Office. Available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237776662\\_Tackling\\_Prison\\_Drug\\_Markets\\_An\\_Exploratory\\_Qualitative\\_Study](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237776662_Tackling_Prison_Drug_Markets_An_Exploratory_Qualitative_Study) [Accessed: 15 September 2020].

Peterson, B., Kizzort, M., Kim, K. and Shukla, R. 2023. Prison contraband; prevalence, impacts and interdiction strategies. *Corrections* 8(5), pp. 428-445.

Peterson, B., Deuk Kim, K. and Shukla, R. 2024a. The sociology of contraband: examining the correlates of illicit drugs, cellphones and weapons in U.S. prisons. *The Prison Journal* 104(3), pp. 365-389.

Peterson, B. and Kim, K. 2024b. Staff as a conduit for contraband: developing and testing key assumptions of professional boundary violations in prison. *Deviant Behaviour*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2024.2354340>.

Philp, M. 2002. Conceptualizing political corruption. In: Heidenheimer, A. and Johnston, M. eds. *Political corruption: concepts & contexts*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Transaction Publishers.

Pidd, H. and Syal, R. 2023. Criminal gangs in UK sending recruits in to train as prison officers, union warns. *The Guardian* 27 September 2023. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/sep/27/organised-crime-gangs-uk-sending-recruits-to-train-as-prison-officers-union-warns> [Accessed: 28 September 2023].

Podmore, J. 2012. *Out of sight, out of mind: why Britain's prisons are failing*. London: Biteback Publishing.

Police Remuneration Review Body. 2022. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d6cb23e90e071e7cbe1eda/PRRB\\_2022\\_report\\_for\\_publication.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d6cb23e90e071e7cbe1eda/PRRB_2022_report_for_publication.pdf) [Accessed: 15 January 2024].

Police Remuneration Review Body. 2023. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64aff399fe36e0000d6fa8fd/PRRB\\_report\\_2023\\_web\\_accessible\\_PDF\\_for\\_publication.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64aff399fe36e0000d6fa8fd/PRRB_report_2023_web_accessible_PDF_for_publication.pdf) [Accessed: 15 January 2024].

Pope, M. 2023. Female prison officers, 25, is jailed for 16 months after having an affair with convicted robber, sending him explicit photos and smuggling designer clothes and women's underwear into his cell. *Mailonline*. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11804235/Female-prison-officer-25-jailed-16-months-having-affair-convicted-robber.html> [Accessed: 5 January 2024].

Porter, L., Prenzler, T. and Hine, K. 2015. Police integrity in Australia. In Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. and Haberfeld, M. eds. *Measuring police integrity across the world*. New York: Springer, pp. 67-96.

Porter, L. and Prenzler, T. 2016 The code of silence and ethical perceptions: exploring police officer unwillingness to report misconduct. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 39(2), pp. 370-386.

Prenzler, T. 2009. *Police corruption: preventing misconduct and maintaining integrity*. London: CRC Press, Taylor and Francis Group.

Press Association. 2021. Prison officer jailed following affair with gangster inmate. *Wandsworth Times* 7 February 2020. Available at: <https://www.wandsworthguardian.co.uk/news/national/18219534.prison-officer-jailed->

[following-affair-notorious-gangster-inmate/](#) [Accessed: 10 May 2024].

Prison Service Pay Review Body 2022. Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d6c603e90e071e7e59c975/PSPRB\\_2022\\_E\\_W\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d6c603e90e071e7e59c975/PSPRB_2022_E_W_report.pdf) [Accessed: 15 January 2024].

Public Health England. 2015. *New psychoactive substances (NPS) in prisons*.

Available at:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82ee39e5274a2e87dc3b1e/9011-phe-nps-toolkit-update-final.pdf> [Accessed: 11 January 2024].

Punch, M. 1985. *Conduct unbecoming*. London: Tavistock Publications Limited.

Punch, M. 2000. Police corruption and its prevention. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 8, pp. 301-324.

Punch, M. 2003. Rotten orchards: 'pestilence', police misconduct and system failure. *Policing and Society* 13(2), pp. 171-196.

Punch, M., Huberts, L. and Lamboo, M. 2004. Integrity perceptions and investigations in the Netherlands. In Klockars, C.B., Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. and Haberfeld, M. eds. *The contours of police integrity*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, pp. 161-173.

Punch, M. and Gilmour, S. 2010. Police corruption: apples, barrels and orchards. *Criminal Justice Matters* 79(1), pp. 10-12.

Raemason, S. 2023. Love behind bars. Inside sordid affairs between female prison officers and lags – from romps in cells to tattoo tributes. *The Sun*. 29 August 2023. Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/23684721/affairs-between-female-prison-officers-and-lags/> [Accessed: 5 January 2024].

Rainbow, J. 2024. *Researching prisons*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Ramzan, A., Harries, H., Taylor, J. and Musimbe, S. 2024. *Security investment programme: overview and outcome study*. Ministry of Justice Analytical Series. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/security-investment-programme-evaluation>. [Accessed: 6 September 2024].



Reiner, R. 2010. *The politics of the police*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reuss-Ianni, E. 1999. *Two cultures of policing: street cops and management cops*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Rogers, J. 2023. Forbidden romance. *The Sun* 3 January 2023. Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/20924808/women-guards-jailed-illicit-affairs-prisoners-wrexham/>. [Accessed: 5 January 2023].

Ross, J. 2013. Deconstructing correctional officer deviance: toward typologies of actions and controls. *Criminal Justice Review* 38(1), pp. 10-126.

Ross, J., Tewksbury, R. and Rolfe, S. 2016. Inmate responses to correctional officer deviance: A model of its dynamic nature. *Corrections* 1(2), pp. 139-153.

Rothschild, J. and Miethe, T. 1999. Whistle-blower disclosures and management retaliation. *Work and Occupations* 1, pp. 107-128.

Rothstein, B. and Varraich, A. 2017. *Making sense of corruption*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rothwell, G. and Baldwin, J. 2006. Ethical climates and contextual predictors of whistleblowing. *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 26(3), pp. 216-244.

Rothwell, G. and Baldwin, N. 2007. Whistleblowing and the code of silence in police agencies. *Crime and Delinquency* 4, pp. 605-632.

Ruiz, J. and Bono, C. 2004. At what price a “freebie”? The real cost of police gratuities. *Criminal Justice Ethics* 23(1), pp. 44-54.

Russell, S. 2022. Former prison governor jailed over ‘intimate’ Whatsapp messages to inmate. *The Independent* 28 April 2022. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/northamptonshire-coventry-prison-service-b2067692.html> [Accessed: 2. September 2023]

Russo, J., Woods, D., Shaffer, J. and Jackson, B. 2019. *Countering threats to correctional institution security*. Rand Corporation. Available at: [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2933.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2933.html) [Accessed 14 June 2024].

- Ryan, J. 2022. Number of prison officers convicted of corruption rockets by 600% since dedicated investigation team was set up but former Belmarsh governor warns 'it's just the tip of the iceberg'. *Mailonline* 12 June 2022. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10907991/Number-prison-officers-convicted-corruption-rockets-600.html> [Accessed: 5 January 2024].
- Ryan, C. and Bergin, M. 2022. Procedural justice and legitimacy in prisons. A review of extant empirical literature. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour* 49(2), pp. 143-163.
- Sales, D. 2023. Prison bosses go through guards' social media accounts to make sure they are not having illegal affairs with inmates in new crackdown. *Daily Mail* 18 March 2023. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11867355/Prison-officers-having-affairs-criminals-rise-nearly-90.html>. [Accessed: 5 May 2024].
- Samworth, N. 2018. *Strangeways: a prison officer's story*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson.
- Schein, E. 1990. Organisational culture. *American Psychologist* 45(2), pp. 109-119.
- Schein, E. 1996. Culture: the missing concept in organisation studies. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 41 (2), pp. 229-240.
- Schein, E. and Schein, P. 2017. *Organizational culture and leadership*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Selous, A. 2016. *Prison officers: redundancy*. 27 January 2016. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2016-01-27/24639> [Accessed: 17 April 2023].
- Shapira, R. and Navon, D. 1985. Staff-inmates cooperation in Israeli prisons: toward a non-functionalistic theory of total institutions. *International Review of Modern Sociology* 15(1/2), pp. 131-146.
- Sherman, L. 1974. *Police corruption: a sociological perspective*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Sherman, L. 1978. *Scandal and reform: controlling police corruption*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sherman, L. 1985. Becoming bent. In: Elliston, F. and Feldberg, M. eds. *Moral issues in police work*. New Jersey: Rowan & Allanheld, pp. 253-267.

Sherman, L. 1999. The mobilisation of scandal. In: Heidenheimer, A., Johnston, M. and LeVine, V. eds. *Political corruption: a handbook*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New Brunswick (US) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers, pp. 887-911.

Shigihara, A. 2013. It's only stealing a little a lot: techniques of neutralisation for theft among restaurant workers. *Deviant Behaviour* 34(6), pp. 494-512.

Shively, R. 2015. Games criminals play: revisited. *Corrections Today* Jan/Feb. pp. 44-47.

Sky News. 2021. Our lockdown heroes. *Sky News*. Undated. Available at: <https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-nhs-staff-teachers-and-other-lockdown-heroes-11973897> [Accessed: 22 January 2024].

Sloan, J. and Wright, S. 2015. Going in green: reflections on the challenges of 'getting in, getting on, and getting out' for doctoral prisons researchers. In: Drake, D., Earle, R. and Sloan, J. eds. *The Palgrave handbook of prison ethnography*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 143-168.

Smith, L. 2023. Losing faith in the service: a path to disenchantment among governor grades. *Prison Service Journal* 268, pp. 11-16.

Souryal, S. 2009. Deterring corruption by prison personnel: a principle-based perspective. *The Prison Journal* 89(1), pp. 21-45.

Souryal, S. 2015. *Ethics in criminal justice: in search of the truth*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Sparks, R. 1971. *Local prisons: the crisis in the English penal system*. London: Heinemann.

Sparks, R., Bottoms, A. and Hay, W. 1996. *Prisons and the problem of order*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sparling, R. 2018. Impartiality and the definition of corruption. *Political Studies* 66(2),

pp. 376-391.

Spillett, R. 2017. Infatuated female prison officer is jailed for swapping more than 850 texts and two-hour calls on 'dirty phone' to canal path knifeman. *Mailonline* 10 August 2017. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4778244/Female-prison-officer-jailed-texts-inmate.html> [Accessed: 24 June 2024].

Spril, L and Dathan, M. 2023. Sexual misconduct by prison staff soars with only a third sacked. *The Times* 17 July 2023. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sexual-misconduct-by-prison-staff-soars-with-only-a-third-sacked-9k0qk57j6> [Accessed: 4 April 2024].

Steenbergen, E. and Ellemers, N. 2021. The social and organisational psychology of compliance: how organisational culture impacts on (un)ethical behaviour. In: Rooij, B. and Sokol, D. eds. *The Cambridge handbook of compliance*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi-org.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/10.1017/9781108759458>.

Stevens, A. 2017. Sexual activity in British men's prisons: a culture of denial *British Journal of Criminology* 57, pp. 1379-1397.

Stevens, A. 2019. Access denied: research on sex in prison and the subjugation of 'deviant knowledge'. *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 20(4), pp. 451-469.

Stohr, M., Hemmens, C., Marsh, R., Barrier, G. and Palhegyi, D. 2000. Can't scale this? The ethical parameters of correctional work. *The Prison Journal* 80(1), pp. 56-79.

Suedfeld, P. and Steel, D. 2000. The environmental psychology of capsule habitats. *Annual Review of Psychology* 51(1), pp. 227-253.

Surette, R. 1998. Media, crime and criminal justice: images and realities. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. United States of America: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Surrell, A. and Johnson, M. 2020. An examination of women's experiences with reporting sexual victimisation behind prison walls. *The Prison Journal* 100(5), pp. 559-580.

Sykes, G. and Matza, D. 1957. Techniques of neutralisation: A theory of delinquency.

*American Sociological Review* 22(6), pp. 664-670.

Sykes, G. 1958. *The society of captives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sylvester, R. 2024. Gangs 'infiltrating prison workforce to help distribute drugs'. *The Times* 23 April 2024, p.1.

Tait, S. 2008. Care and the prison officer: beyond 'turnkeys' and 'carebears'. *Prison Service Journal* 180, pp. 30-11.

Tavits, M. 2010. Why do people engage in corruption: The case of Estonia. *Social Forces* 88(3), pp. 1257-1279.

Taylor, C. 2023. The importance of culture where it comes from, where it goes wrong and how it can be sustained and improved. *Prison Service Journal* 269, pp. 8- 11.

Taylor, C. 2024. Drugs and disorder: worrying times for prisons. *Charlie Taylor's blog* 25 March 2024. Available at:  
<https://hmiprisons.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/news/chief-inspectors-blog-drugs-and-disorder-worrying-times-for-prisons/> [Accessed: 26 March 2024].

Taylor, O., Philpot, R., Fitton, O., Walkinton, Z. and Levine, M. 2024. Police whistleblowing: a systematic review of the likelihood (and the barriers and facilitators) of the willingness of police officers to report the misconduct of fellow officers. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 91 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2024.102170>.

Taylor-McCune, K. 2020. *Correctional officers' perspectives on cellphone contraband introduction by fellow officers*. PhD Thesis, Walden University.

Telegraph Newspaper. 2009. Prison officer sacked after befriending criminals on Facebook. *The Telegraph* 23 March 2009. Available at:  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/facebook/5035703/Prison-officer-sacked-after-befriending-criminals-on-Facebook.html> [Accessed: 29 January, 2021]

Telegraph Newspaper. 2023. 'Phone sex' prison officer insisted on wearing skin-tight trousers to work, court told. *The Telegraph* 13 December 2023. Available at:  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/12/13/prison-officer-wore-skin-tight-trousers-alleged-affair/>. [Accessed 17 January 2024].

Thornton, L. 2023. Prison worker flooded jail with drugs after falling for lover inmate who 'recruited' her. *The Mirror* 27 October 2023. Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/prison-worker-flooded-jail-drugs-31298989> [Accessed: 5 January 2024].

Tingle, R. 2024. How gangs are planting prison officers in jails: cartels are getting 'clean' members to work behind bars as 'sleeper agents' so they can pump drugs across Britain's prisons. *Mailonline* 28 April 2024. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13339705/Prison-drugs-sssstory.html> [Accessed: 11 May 2024].

Tompkins, C. 2016. 'There's that many people selling it': exploring the nature, organisation and maintenance of prison drug markets in England. *Drugs Education Prevention and Policy* 23(2), pp. 144-153.

Topalli, V. 2005. When being good is bad: an expansion of neutralization theory. *Criminology* 43, pp. 797-836.

Towl, G. and Crighton, D. 2008. Psychologists in prison. In Bennett, J., Crewe, B. and Wahidin, A. eds. *Understanding prison staff*. Devon. Willan Publishing, pp. 316-329.

Transparency International. 2011a. *Corruption in the UK part two: assessment of key sectors*. Transparency International UK. Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/glossary> [Accessed: 5 April 2019].

Transparency International. 2011b. *Corruption in the UK: overview and policy recommendations*. Transparency International UK. Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/glossary> [Accessed: 5 April 2019].

Transparency International. 2017. *Global corruption barometer*. London: Transparency International. Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/global/global-corruption-barometer-2017> [Accessed: 17 November 2020].

Transparency International. 2019. *Corruption perception index*. London: Transparency International. Available at:

<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2019/index/results>. [Accessed: 17 November 2020].

Transparency International. 2018. *Corruption perception index 2018*. London: Transparency International. Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2018> [Accessed: 17 November 2020].

Treadwell, J., Gooch, K. and Barkham Perry, G. 2019. *Crime in prison: what now and where next?* Available at: <https://www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/PCCs-present-plan-to-government-to-tackle-organised-crime-in-prisons.pdf?x94727> [Accessed: 15 September 2020].

Tyler, T. 2006. *Why people obey the law*. Oxford: Princeton University Press.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2017. *Handbook on anti-corruption measures in prisons*. Vienna: United Nations. Available at: [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/17-06140\\_HB\\_anti-corr\\_prisons\\_eBook.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/17-06140_HB_anti-corr_prisons_eBook.pdf) [Accessed: 28 October 2020].

Van Dijk, M., Maesschalck, J. and Daems, T. 2023. Beyond custody versus care: understanding the ethical dilemmas of prison officers in Belgium. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 29, pp. 71-89.

Vickovic, S., Griffin, M. and Fradella, H. 2013. Depictions of correctional officers in newspaper media: an ethnographic content analysis. *Criminal Justice Studies: A Critical Journal of Crime, Law and Society* 26(4), pp. 455-477.

Vito, G., Wolfe, S., Higgins, G. and Walsh, W. 2011. Police integrity: rankings of scenarios on the Klockars scale by 'management cops'. *Criminal Justice Review* 36(2), pp. 152-164

Von Alemann, U. 2004. The unknown depths of political theory: the case for a multidimensional concept of corruption. *Crime, Law & Social Change* 42(1), pp. 25-34.

Warburton, D. 2019. Prison Service boots out 500 corrupt workers in past five years. *The Mirror* 6 April 2019. Available at: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/prison->

service-reveals-boots-out-14247335 [Accessed: 28 September 2023].

Warr, J. 2018. *Forensic psychologists: vulnerable adjuncts of penal power*. PhD Thesis. University of Cambridge.

Warr, J. 2020. *Forensic psychologists: prisons, power and vulnerability*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited.

Wells, J., Minor, K., Lambert, E. and Reeves, A. 2020. An exploratory study of possible correlates of individual whistleblowing propensity among sworn staff in a city jail. *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 32(4), pp. 374-402.

Westmarland, L. 2004. Policing integrity: Britain's thin blue line. In Klockars, C.B., Kutnjak Ivkovic, S. and Haberfeld, M. eds. *The contours of police integrity*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, pp. 75-90.

Westmarland, L. 2005. Police ethics and integrity: breaking the blue code of silence. *Policing and Society* 15(2), pp. 145-165.

Westmarland, L. and Rowe, M. 2018. Police ethics and integrity: can a new code overturn the blue code? *Policing and Society* 28(7), pp. 854-870.

Westmarland, L. and Conway, S. 2020. Police ethics and integrity: keeping the 'blue code' of silence. *Police Science and Management*. doi: 10.1177/1461355720947762.

Wheatley, M. 2008. The prison drug worker. In Bennett, J., Crewe, B. and Wahidin, A. eds. *Understanding prison staff*. Devon: Willan Publishing, pp. 330-348.

White, M. and Kane, R. 2013. Pathways to career-ending police misconduct. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour* 40(11), pp. 1301-1325.

Wilkinson, J. 2020. *Behind prison walls: reported sexual assaults in men's prisons in England and Wales*. PhD Thesis, Southampton University.

Wise, L. 2020. HMP Berwyn workers arrested after raids uncover designer goods and drugs. *Cheshire Live* 12 May 2020. Available at: <https://www.cheshire-live.co.uk/news/chester-cheshire-news/hmp-berwyn-workers-arrested-after-18237768> [Accessed: 22 April 2021].



World Bank Group Enterprise Surveys. 2017. Available at <http://www.enterprisesurveys.org/Methodology> [Accessed: 8 April 2019].

World Bank. 2019. *Combating corruption*. Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/governance/brief/anti-corruption> [Accessed: 8 April 2019].

Worley, R., Marquart, J. and Mullings, J. 2003. Prison guard predators: An analysis of inmates who established inappropriate relationships with prison staff, 1995-1998. *Deviant Behaviour: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 24(2), pp. 174-194.

Worley, R. and Cheeseman, K. 2006. Guards as embezzlers: The consequences of non-shareable problems in prison settings. *Deviant Behaviour* 27(2), pp. 203–222.

Worley, R., Tewksbury, R. and Frantzen, D. 2010. Preventing fatal attractions: lessons learned from inmate boundary violators in a southern penitentiary system. *Criminal Justice Studies* 23(4), pp. 347-360.

Worley, R. and Worley, V. 2011. Guards gone wild: A self-report study of correctional officer misconduct and the effect of institutional deviance on ‘care’ within the Texas prison system. *Deviant Behaviour* 32, pp. 293-319.

Worley, R. and Worley, V. 2013. Games guards play: A self-report study of institutional deviance within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. *Criminal Justice Studies* 26(1), pp. 115-132.

Worley, R. and Worley, V. 2016. The economics of crossing over: Examining the link between correctional officer pay and guard-inmate boundary violations. *Deviant Behaviour* 37(1), pp. 16–29.

Worley, R., Worley, V. and Hsu, H. 2018. Can I trust my co-worker? Examining correction officers’ perceptions of staff-inmate inappropriate relationships within a southern penitentiary system. *Deviant Behaviour* 39(3), pp. 332-346.

Worley, R., Lambert, E and Worley, V. 2019. I can’t get no satisfaction! An examination of correctional officers’ perceptions of staff-inmate boundary violations and willingness to follow institutional rules within the Texas Department of Criminal

Justice. *Deviant Behaviour* 40(8), pp. 1007-1019.

Worley, R., Worley, V. and Lambert, E. 2021. Deepening the guard-inmate divide: An exploratory analysis of the relationship between staff-inmate boundary violations and officer attitudes regarding the mistreatment of prisoners. *Deviant Behaviour* 42(4), pp. 503-517.

Wortley, R. 2001. A classification of techniques for controlling situational precipitators of crime. *Security Journal* 14(4), pp. 63-82.

Wortley, R. 2003. Situational crime prevention and prison control: lessons for each other. In Smith, M. and Cornish, D. eds. *Theory for practice in situational crime prevention*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 97-117.

Yip, A. 2020. Lawyer jailed after talking to prisoner on smuggled phones. *Borehamwood & Elstree Times*. 23 December 2020. Available at: <https://www.borehamwoodtimes.co.uk/news/18965443.lawyer-jailed-talking-prisoner-smuggled-mobile-phones> [Accessed: 16 October 2023].

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: staff survey and information**

#### **Exploring Staff Professional Standards, Boundaries and Wrongdoing**

Prison staff wrongdoing is defined as any behaviour which falls short of the professional standards expected of staff by employers. Wrongdoing can be unintentional, such as overstepping professional boundaries with prisoners, or intentional behaviour such as corruption, bullying and harassment, and inappropriate use of force.

There are several policies to tackle wrongdoing such as the Counter Corruption Policy. There are also new initiatives, such as Enhanced Gate Security.

This research aims to: increase understanding of how prison staff perceive wrongdoing; to find out what makes one staff member more vulnerable than another to different forms of wrongdoing; and to identify perceived barriers to reporting wrongdoing.

This survey does not ask you whether you or anyone you know has engaged in wrongdoing. It is asking for your opinions, not your experience.

The research has been organised by me, Bronwen Jones. I am a Doctoral Researcher and my supervisors are Professor Michael Levi and Dr Alisa Stevens. The research project has been reviewed and approved by the School of Social Science Research Ethics Committee, Cardiff University. The National Research Committee for HMPPS has also given permission for my research.

This survey can be completed electronically at:

[https://socsi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3sbimgRxKJjBnhQ](https://socsi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3sbimgRxKJjBnhQ)

or, if you prefer, you can print it out and post it to me at: B. Jones at SOCSI Graduate Office, School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3WT.

The survey link is valid for 30 days and you can return to it within a week of starting it. Please complete all the questions

#### **Why am I being asked to participate?**

Two prisons have been selected to take part in this research. They have been selected for reasons of geographical convenience to me, not because they have been identified as prisons with particular problems. Your prison is one of the two prisons. For the purposes of my writing about this research, your prison is described as HMP Beechfield.

The governing governor and security governor are supportive of this research and have already completed the survey and been interviewed.

All the prison staff (uniformed, non-uniformed, contractors, agency staff and volunteers) in your prison are being asked to take part in this research and it is important that I obtain responses from as many staff as possible across all departments.

### **What will I be asked to do and how long will it take?**

The survey begins with 17 scenarios which you are asked to respond to on a 5 point scale. There are then questions about your perceptions of wrongdoing. The survey concludes with an opportunity to write comments or to take part in a separate interview. The survey should take about 15- 20 minutes to complete.

### **Do I have to take part?**

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you do decide to fill out this survey but want to stop, you can. Your decision to share or not share your opinions will not change your relationship with your prison.

**I will not collect any information in the survey that can identify you. Please do not write your name or any other names on the survey (apart from a made up name if you are willing to be interviewed).**

If you decide to fill out the survey, you will be providing your consent for me to:

- a. Collect anonymously your responses to the survey questions as part of the research;
- b. Analyse your responses anonymously; and
- c. Publish the findings from the survey responses as part of my PhD research and in a summary report to HMPPS, while maintaining your anonymity in private and in public.

As the survey is anonymised, it is not possible to withdraw from the study once you have submitted the completed survey.

### **What are the benefits of participating?**

The wrongdoing of a few members of staff can undermine the safety and security of the prison for prisoners and staff, damage the reputation of the prison and reduce workforce morale and performance.

HMPPS recognises that wrongdoing should be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

HMPPS has undertaken to support staff who fall short of professional standards but can only do this if there is greater understanding of the risks of wrongdoing and the reasons why it might not be reported. This research aims to increase that understanding.

**Will my taking part and my data be kept confidential? Will it be anonymised? Are there any risks?**

The survey is anonymous. Only my academic supervisors and I will have access to your responses. I will not ask for your real name, the only personal details I will ask you to provide are your occupation, your department, your gender, your age range and your length of service. You do not need to include all of these details if you think you can be identified from them but it will help my research to have this information.

**What will the survey responses be used for?**

I will use the survey responses for my Doctoral research. At the end of my research period I will write up my findings in a research thesis which will be submitted for examination. If possible, I will publish my research in one or more academic journals such as the Prison Service Journal and/ or present papers at an academic conference. A summary of my findings will be sent to HMPPS. Participants will not be identified in any report, publication or presentation. I may include some verbatim quotes in my thesis but if I do this, I will ensure there is no way to identify who gave the quote.

**What if I have a question or complaint?**

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me [JonesBresearch@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:JonesBresearch@cardiff.ac.uk) . Or at the above address c/o the Graduate Office.

If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the Chair of the Social Science Research Ethics Committee - [socsi-ethics@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:socsi-ethics@cardiff.ac.uk), or my supervisor Professor Michael Levi via [Levi@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:Levi@cardiff.ac.uk).

**Thank you for your assistance with this research project. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Your views are important.**

**If you prefer to print out this survey and post it back to me, then please print out the below. Otherwise, please complete the survey online at:**

[https://socsi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3sbimgRxKJjBnhQ](https://socsi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3sbimgRxKJjBnhQ)

**This survey is anonymous. Please do not write your name or the names of others on the survey.**

## **SECTION 1**

Below are hypothetical cases which ask for your opinion on the decision of an imaginary staff member.

Unless otherwise stated, please assume that the staff member concerned has worked in prisons for five years, has a satisfactory work record and has never been under investigation or disciplined for a code of conduct offence. Prisoners are named in accordance with the phonetic alphabet. Please assume the establishment is a Category B male local prison.

1. A member of staff has come into contact with Alpha on a regular basis. Alpha is always friendly and helpful. One day the staff member misses their lunch break and comments to Alpha they are very hungry. Alpha offers a chocolate bar which the staff member accepts.

- a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

- b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

- c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

- d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

- e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

2. A staff member is having some relationship problems and is quite distracted at work. Bravo comments that they are looking tired. The staff member confides to Bravo that they think their marriage is breaking up. Bravo is sympathetic as his own relationship broke up a few months ago. The staff member tells Bravo all about their personal problems.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

3. A staff member has only recently started to work in the prison. Two of the prisoners are arguing and ignore the staff member's request to stop. Charlie steps in and tells the prisoners to be quiet so they stop arguing. After this Charlie takes it on himself to keep the other prisoners in order. A few weeks later Charlie explains he has missed the post and asks the staff member to pop a letter in the post box their way home. The staff member takes the letter and posts it.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes



b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

4. Delta is very friendly to a female member of staff. The female staff member starts to spend more time talking to Delta than anyone else. One day Delta pats the female staff member on the arm. She does not object and smiles at Delta.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

5. Echo has enhanced status. He is never any trouble and appears to be trying hard to progress through his sentence plan. One day he is very upset as he has repeatedly asked for his Playstation to be retrieved from his property box. He says he has put in an app and a Comp 1 but he's had no response. All staff have recently been reminded that requests for property need to be made through the formal process. The staff member feels sorry for Echo and offers to go to property and collect the Playstation for Echo.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

6. A staff member has worked for some time with Foxtrot who is about to be released from prison. Foxtrot assures the staff member that he is determined not to re-offend and intends to get a job. A few weeks after his release, Foxtrot sends a Facebook/Instagram/WhatsApp friend request to the staff member who accepts it.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

7. Golf has tried hard to do everything asked of him by the staff. He is an enhanced prisoner, has attended education classes and seems determined to turn his life around. Owing to a number of lock downs and illness he has missed a number of classes and his attendance rate isn't good enough for him to pass the course. Golf asks a staff member to alter the attendance register so he has a better chance of being re-categorised. The staff member feels sorry for Golf and adds in two attendances which is enough for him to pass the course.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

8. Hotel is a wing cleaner. His cell is in the middle of the wing. One day Hotel asks one of the staff to lock him up after everyone else as he wants to take a shower. The officer agrees to give Hotel an extra 15 minutes out of cell.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

9. A young officer has recently been recruited. They realise that one of their friends from school is a prisoner on another wing. They used to smoke weed together when they both went to parties. The staff member decides not to say anything to their manager as the prisoner is on a different wing and it is a short sentence.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

10. A staff member agrees that a close friend can give the staff member's mobile details to another friend (India) as they share the same music tastes. India then texts the staff member. After exchanging a few messages, the staff member realises India is a prisoner at the same prison the staff member works in. One day India shows the staff member the mobile he has been using and tells the staff member that communicating with a prisoner on a mobile device is illegal, so the staff member has broken the law. The staff member does not file a Corruption Prevention Intelligence Report or talk to the Local Counter Corruption Manager.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

11. Julian is very upset about some serious family news. He is crying in his cell. The staff member is concerned as Julian is on an ACCT. Without telling any of their team, the staff member goes into the cell, sits on the bunk next to Julian and puts their arm around Julian to console him.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

12. Kilo is a challenging prisoner. He has attacked several staff members and other prisoners. He is sent to segregation where he continues to be challenging and violent. On his way to the segregation shower he punches a female member of staff in the face. He is restrained and cuffed. While being taken back to his cell one of the other staff punches Kilo in the face saying 'Hurts, doesn't it'.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

13. Lima is a model prisoner. He has already served five years and has four years to go. He is helpful and has a full time job. One day he asks if he can move cells to share with a young offender who he has become friendly with. The officer agrees to do this without checking CSRA (Shared Cell Risk Assessment), NOMIS or with his SO.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

14. A prisoner is deported but he leaves a number of items in his cell. One of them is his X box. Two staff members clear the cell. They agree that one of the staff members can keep the X box as he was just about to buy one. Evaluate the behaviour of the staff member who takes the X box.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes



15. Mike tells a staff member that some of his property has been stolen from his cell.

Mike makes complaints all the time and the staff member doesn't believe him. He tells Mike to give the Comp 1 to him. He then shreds it in the belief that Mike is lying and won't pursue his complaint.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

16. A staff member joins a team which they want to fit into. All of the team get on.

The staff member notices that one their managers is often seen talking to a prisoner who is known to be involved in organised crime. One day the staff member sees their manager give the prisoner a small package which they suspect are drugs. The staff member doesn't want to cause trouble so they don't tell anyone about it.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

17. Oscar is on remand for child sex offences. He is waiting for a space on the VP wing. A staff member reads Oscar's file and is shocked by the offence, he tells a prisoner what the offence is. The staff member deliberately unlocks Oscar's cell door during association, knowing the other prisoners know his offence and are likely to assault him.

a. Do you consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

b. Do you think most staff at your prison would consider this behaviour to be serious?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

c. Do you think this behaviour would be regarded as a violation of prison policy?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

d. Would you report a staff member who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

e. Would most staff in your prison report a colleague who engaged in this behaviour?

Definitely not      Probably not      Not sure      Probably yes      Definitely yes

## SECTION 2

Please say to what extent do you agree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The staff morale in my prison is good					
The management team in my prison is effective in controlling staff wrongdoing					
I am satisfied with my overall compensation (this includes salary and overtime)					
My corruption training covered everything I needed to know about corruption risks					
The Counter Corruption and Reporting Wrongdoing Policy would protect me if I reported any wrongdoing by myself or others					

The risks of being caught engaging in corrupt behaviour are very low					
The main reason staff engage in corrupt activities is to make money					
Most corrupt staff are forced to engage in corrupt activities when they or their families are threatened with physical violence or are being blackmailed					
Over 25% of staff in this prison have formed personal relationships with prisoners (friendship and/or sexual) which violate professional boundaries					
Corrupt staff feel they have enough support from their managers					
Corrupt staff have financial problems					

Corrupt staff have personal problems with family and/or friends					
If I witnessed wrongdoing, I would report it to my manager					
If I witnessed wrongdoing, I would file an IR					

### SECTION 3

In your opinion, how many uniformed staff (Band 3, 4 and 5 and OSGs) at your prison have engaged in the following activities.

Please put an X under the relevant column.

	None	Less than $\frac{1}{4}$	More than $\frac{1}{4}$ but less than $\frac{1}{2}$	More than $\frac{1}{2}$ but less than $\frac{3}{4}$	More than $\frac{3}{4}$	Not sure
Smuggled in drugs						
Smuggled in phones						
Brought in money						

/transferred money for prisoners						
Accepted a gift or money from a prisoner, their family or friend						
Allowed prisoners to possess contraband						
Formed an inappropriate relationship with a prisoner						
Turned a blind eye to any staff involved in the above						

In your opinion, how many non-uniformed staff and volunteers in your prison have engaged in the following activities.

Please put an X under the relevant column

	None	Less than $\frac{1}{4}$	More than $\frac{1}{4}$ but less than $\frac{1}{2}$	More than $\frac{1}{2}$ but less than $\frac{3}{4}$	More than $\frac{3}{4}$	Not sure
--	------	-------------------------	---	---	-------------------------	----------

Smuggled in drugs						
Smuggled in phones						
Brought in money/transferred money for prisoners						
Accepted a gift or money from a prisoner, their family or friend						
Allowed prisoners to possess contraband						
Formed an inappropriate relationship with a prisoner						
Turned a blind eye to any staff involved in the above						

#### SECTION 4

Please can you provide the following information:

Your age

18-25                      26-35                      36-45                      46-55                      56 and above

Are you:

Male                      Female                      Non-binary/third gender                      Prefer not to say

How long have you worked for the prison service?

0-12 months                      1-2 years                      3-5 years                      6-10 years                      11 years and above

How long have you worked at your current prison?

0-12 months                      1-2 years                      3-5 years                      6-10 years                      11 years and above

Are you:

Uniformed                      Non Uniformed

Please state which department you work for:

Have you attended Counter Corruption Training in the last:

Never attended                      0-6 months                      7-12 months                      1-2 years                      more than 2 years ago

Are you aware of the Security Investment Programme?

Yes                      No

If you are aware of the Security Investment Programme, please list any initiatives/ training/ policy/ process changes you are aware of:

## SECTION 5

Would you be prepared to be interviewed for this study?   YES                      NO

If you answered yes, please go to the next section as we will cover these issues during the interview. [ NO drops down a text box]

Areas you might want to cover include what you think makes someone vulnerable to wrongdoing; whether you think it is difficult to know what the professional boundaries should be; why do you think staff might become corrupt; whether the corruption training could be



improved; whether you feel there is support for staff who are worried they have had their position compromised and/or think they might have violated professional boundaries; and whether you think there are clear guidelines on helping staff assess the sort of situations in the scenarios above. Please continue overleaf if necessary

## **SECTION 6**

The interview will take about an hour and will allow you to provide more details than you already have done. The interview can be online or in an office at the local college. If you are willing to be interviewed, please email me on [JonesBresearch@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:JonesBresearch@cardiff.ac.uk)

Please include a made up name below so I can identify that this is your survey.

If your email includes your name, and you do not want me to know your name, please return this survey by post to Bronwen Jones c/o SOCSI Graduate Office, School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3WT and include your mobile phone number with details of the best time to call you.

I will then phone you and we can arrange a time for an online interview, or if Covid restrictions permit and you would prefer, we can meet face to face at a public location. If you reveal your name to me for ease of communication, I will keep those details confidential and will delete your email details once the interview has taken place. I will not store your name on your survey response or interview notes.

Made up Name:

## **SECTION 7**

Do you think that most prison staff would give their honest opinion in completing this survey?

YES            NO

If you answered 'no' to the above, please can you say why you think this.

If completing the survey has caused any distress, please access relevant support agencies such as your Care Team, TriM team or mental health allies.

As this survey is anonymous, I will not pass on any specific information you have included about wrongdoing. However, if you have told me something which means that you or another person are in imminent danger or that you had committed a serious criminal offence. I would then be legally obliged to inform the security department at your prison about the

activities you have described. As I will not have your name, I will be unable to give security your name, although I might be obliged to pass on details about which department you work for.

**Thank you for completing this survey. Your opinions are important.**

## **Appendix B : Interview topic guide:**

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed and giving up your time. Can I first assure you that you will remain completely anonymous and no records of the interview will be kept with your name on them.

### **1. I'd like to start with some questions about why you joined the prison service.**

#### **Probing reminders:**

What led you to work in the prison service – (prompts include, do you have any family members who work in prisons, what is your educational background and what was your career goal). Did you 'want to make a difference' or was the job just one which could pay the bills?

How well did you find the training prepared you for the job? Do you think most people are quite idealistic when they first work in a prison? What did you think about the support you had once you started? Do you like the job? How do you find working in the prison re staff and prisoners? Do you think lots of people become cynical?

### **2. Please can we now can we go over some of the issues raised in the survey?**

- a. Where do you think the professional boundaries should be drawn between staff and prisoners? Do you think it's easy for the boundaries to become blurred? How and why do you think staff become involved in wrongdoing?  
**Probe** in which way do boundaries become blurred/crossed – where do you think crossing boundaries can lead to? Minor wrongdoing v serious wrongdoing - manipulated/groomed/ actively looking for ways to engage in corrupt behaviour/ to make money inappropriate relationships/blackmailed or some other sort of pressure like threats? Not enough guidance?
- b. Did you find it quite hard to make decisions about the scenarios? What do you think you'd do in most of those situations? Which ones did you find it hardest to decide on? Why did you reply in the way you did?
- c. Do you think your reply to the scenario questions asking about your willingness to report the behaviour would be affected by how the imaginary

staff member had behaved in the past?

- d. What do you think managers could do better to support the staff more so they don't engage in wrongdoing? **Probe** about reporting wrongdoing – is the process clear? Who should they report wrongdoing to? Any worries about what would happen if they reported themselves or others? Culture of silence? Do you think you have to be really certain someone has done something wrong before you report it? Do you think it might get back to them that it was you? Why do you think this? When would something be considered a disciplinary matter and when should it be dealt with by managers treating it as a learning exercise?
- e. If you had a problem, what sort of help do you think would be available to you?
- f. Do you feel able to discuss work issues with your family/friends? Do you think the wider public understands your work?
- g. What do you think makes someone working in a prison vulnerable to wrongdoing? Do you think that improved recruitment and training could reduce wrongdoing? **Probe** -what do you think are the triggers which might make someone behave in a certain way?
- h. Do you think the job is more challenging that it used to be?
- i. What do you think leads to serious wrongdoing such as corruption, inappropriate relationships and assault? **Probe** – what are the motivations for wrongdoing – money/ compromised/duress. Why do you think this? Do you think the risk of being caught engaging in corrupt behaviour have increased or decreased over the last three years (ie. Since implementation of the new CC policy in April 2019). If P comments on an example of wrongdoing, ask if it has happened in their prison and whether there were warning signs?
- j. Do you think social media has made it harder to know where the boundaries are? Do you think there should be more training on social media?
- k. How do you think staff wrongdoing can be stopped? **Probe** – SIP, situational methods/ improve reporting process including how to improve confidence in it/ more routine financial investigation of staff / see compromised positions as a learning exercise rather than fear of disciplinary punishment
- l. Do you think that investigations into wrongdoing – particularly corruption –

should be conducted by an independent body, like the police with the Independent Office of Police Conduct. Do you think that an independent body would lead to better or worse investigations, and would their findings be seen as more legitimate in the eyes of staff and the public? Do you think that an independent investigatory body would be more of a deterrent or less? What do you think of police investigations into corruption?

Would you like to add anything else?

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed, it is really appreciated

## **Appendix C: Participant Information sheet and consent form**

### **Exploring Staff Professional Standards, Boundaries and Wrongdoing**

**Bronwen Jones Doctoral Researcher**

School of Social Sciences: Cardiff University

#### **Information for participants**

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Please read the following information.

What is the purpose of this research project?

Prison staff wrongdoing is defined as any behaviour which falls short of the professional standards expected of staff. Wrongdoing can be unintentional such as overstepping professional boundaries with prisoners and intentional behaviour such as corruption, bullying and harassment, and inappropriate use of force.

There are several policies to tackle wrongdoing such as the Counter Corruption Policy. There are also new initiatives, such as Enhanced Gate Security which are part of the Security Investment Programme.

This research aims to: increase understanding of how prison staff perceive wrongdoing; to find out what makes one staff member more vulnerable than another to wrongdoing, and identify perceived barriers to reporting wrongdoing.

I will not ask you whether you or anyone you know has engaged in wrongdoing. I will be asking for your *opinions*, not your experience.

The research has been approved by Cardiff University Ethics Committee and HMPPS National Research Council. The governing governor and security governor have also agreed to this research being conducted.

Why have I been invited to take part?

I am seeking the views of staff and volunteers working in all departments, custodial and non-custodial. A survey will be sent out to all staff including agency staff, contractors and volunteers to ask for views on a number of questions. As your role includes prison security, I would like to go through the survey with you in person before asking a few supplemental questions about your opinions.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part and I will not inform anyone that you have agreed to be interviewed. If you do agree to be interviewed I will ask you to sign the consent form at the end of this information sheet which you can sign and return in advance of the interview or sign at the meeting. The form will be kept separately from any information you give me and will not be included in my final research report.

You can withdraw at any point of the research or interview, without having to give a reason, by informing me you do not wish to continue. Also, if any questions during the interview make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them.

Withdrawing from the research will have no effect on you, and will not be reported to anyone. If you withdraw from the research I will not retain the information you have given me, unless you are happy for me to do so. However, it will not be possible for you to withdraw your consent once I have started my data analysis from April 2022 onwards.

What will my involvement be?

Your involvement will consist of one interview which will take place in an admin room at the prison at a time convenient to you. The interview will last approximately one hour. If you agree, the interview will be recorded on a device which will immediately encrypt it. Only I will have the encryption key. I will transfer the recording to my password protected computer as soon as practicable and then delete the recording. If the interview is not recorded, I will make contemporaneous notes which I will transcribe as soon as possible on to my password protected computer. The handwritten notes will then be shredded.

What will my information be used for?

I will use the collected information for my PhD research. At the end of my research period I will write up my findings into a 80,000 word thesis, which will be submitted for examination. If possible, I will also publish my research in one or more academic journals such as the Prison Service Journal and/ or present papers at an academic conference. A brief report on my key findings will be sent to HMPPS. Participants and the prisons I go to will not be identified by name in any report, publication or presentation. I may include some verbatim quotes in my PhD thesis but if I do this, I will ensure there is no way to identify who gave the quote.

Will my taking part and my data be kept confidential? Will it be anonymised?

The records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. Only my academic supervisors and I will have access to the files Your interview will be anonymised. The only personal details I will ask you to provide are your occupation, your gender, age range, and length of service. I will not keep any record of your name with your interview but will use a made up name and your establishment will be described as HMP Chestnutwood. Your name will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

The recording device will be encrypted and the file will be deleted once I have uploaded it to my password protected computer. All digital files, interview transcripts and summaries will be given codes and stored separately and securely.

It is a requirement of academic research that I obtain your written consent to be interviewed. This will include your real name. However, your consent form will be kept separately from your interview notes/ interview transcription so it will not be possible to link what you tell me with your consent form. Hard copies of research information will be kept in locked files at all times. Only my academic supervisors and my examiners will have access to the consent forms.

What you tell me will be confidential. The only exceptions would be if you told me something which meant that you or another person were in imminent danger or that you had committed a serious criminal offence. I would then be legally obliged to inform the relevant authority. In addition, I am required to pass on information to the



relevant authority if you tell me you have broken prison rules and your behaviour would bring the authority of the prison into question. I do not envisage you telling me any information which would fall into these categories, but it is important that you understand that these exceptions exist.

If you realise, as a result of the interview, that you have witnessed wrongdoing but have not reported it, please consider whether you should complete an IR report.

All interview data will be retained for no less than five years and will then be destroyed. The University may request access to the interview transcripts to confirm my PhD but the interviews will all be stored in an anonymised form.

Cardiff University is the Data Controller. Further information about Data Protection may be found at <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/policies-and-procedures/data-protection>.

What if I have a question or complaint?

If you have any questions regarding this study please contact me, Bronwen Jones, at [Jonesbresearch@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:Jonesbresearch@cardiff.ac.uk).

If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the Chair of the Social Science Research Ethics Committee via : [socsi-ethics@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:socsi-ethics@cardiff.ac.uk) or my supervisor Professor Michael Levi via [Levi@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:Levi@cardiff.ac.uk).

[If any of the issues discussed during the interview cause distress, please access relevant support agencies such as the TriM team, the Care Team or mental health allies.](#)

Thank you for considering to take part in this research project. If you decide to participate, you will be given a copy of this Participant Information Sheet and a signed consent form to keep for your records.

## Exploring Staff Professional Standards, Boundaries and Wrongdoing

### CONSENT FORM

Name of researcher: Bronwen Jones, Doctoral Researcher, Cardiff University

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY IS VOLUNTARY.

I agree to take part in this research study	YES / NO
I understand that I do not have to participate and I can withdraw my participation at any point without penalty. My decision whether or not to participate in this research study will have no negative impact on me either personally or professionally.	YES / NO
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet provided. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and to ask any questions.	YES / NO
I understand that my data will be anonymised and it will be kept in anonymised form for future research or future publications.	YES / NO
I agree to the interview being audio recorded. I will not be asked to provide my name or the establishment at which I work during the recording.	YES / NO
If the interview is not recorded, I agree that the interviewer can make hand written notes	YES/NO

Please retain a copy of this consent form.

Participant name:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer name: Bronwen Jones

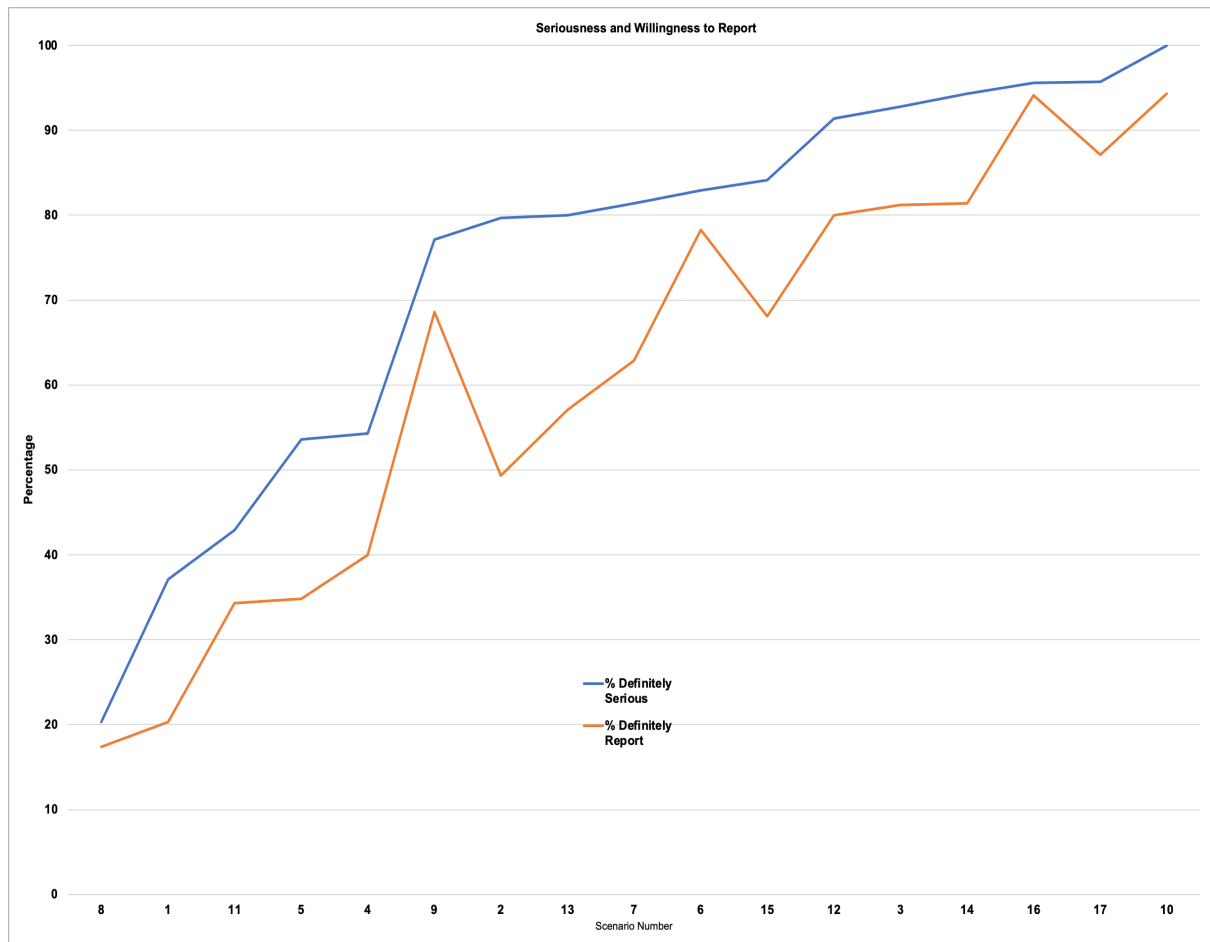
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D: Standard Deviation in mean responses

Scenarios in rank order of seriousness	Seriousness		Standard	
	Mean		Deviation	
Phone communication	5.00		0	
Witness passing of package	4.96		0.21	
Steal prisoner X box	4.94		0.23	
Unlock sex offender's cell	4.90		0.54	
Post letter	4.90		0.43	
Rip up Comp 1	4.78		0.57	
Social media	4.76		0.62	
Move prisoner to YOs cell	4.76		0.52	
Alter attendance reg	4.74		0.63	
Excess force	4.71		0.96	
School friend prisoner	4.66		0.79	
Personal Prob	4.62		0.93	
Pat female	4.21		1.02	
Collect prop	4.09		1.22	
Go into cell to give a hug	3.89		1.19	
Choc bar	3.70		1.32	
Allow shower	3.01		1.39	

## Appendix E : Respondents' perception of seriousness and willingness to report– percentage scores



## Appendix F: Perception of the extent of corruption of non-uniformed staff

<b>All staff</b>
Beechfield
Chestnutwood

Non Uniformed Staff						
How many non-uniformed staff have engaged in the following activities?	None	Less than 1/4	Valid 1/4-1/2	Percentages 1/2-3/4	More than 3/4	Not sure
Smuggled in drugs	14.50	34.80	10.10	2.90	7.20	30.40
	30.00	30.00	3.30	3.30	0.00	33.30
	2.60	38.50	15.40	2.60	12.80	28.20
Smuggled in phones	14.50	33.30	10.10	4.30	7.20	30.40
	30.00	30.00	3.30	3.30	0.00	33.30
	2.60	35.90	15.40	5.10	12.80	28.20
Brought in money for prisoners	17.40	27.50	10.10	4.30	7.20	33.30
	36.70	16.70	3.30	3.30	0.00	40.00
	2.60	35.90	15.40	5.10	12.80	28.20
Accepted a gift from prisoners/their family	17.40	21.70	11.60	5.80	8.70	34.80
	36.70	10.00	3.30	6.70	0.00	43.30
	2.60	30.80	17.90	5.10	15.40	28.20
Allowed prisoners to possess contraband	15.90	26.10	7.20	5.80	11.60	33.30
	33.30	20.00	0.00	6.70	3.30	36.70
	2.60	30.80	12.80	5.10	17.90	30.80
Formed inappropriate relationship	8.70	34.80	8.70	8.70	8.70	30.40
	16.70	46.70	0.00	6.70	0.00	30.00
	2.60	25.60	15.40	10.30	15.40	30.80
Turned a blind eye to the above	11.60	29.00	5.80	7.20	10.10	36.20
	23.30	26.70	0.00	10.00	0.00	40.00
	2.60	30.80	10.30	5.10	17.90	33.30