Education and social care predictors of female offending trajectories: A UK administrative data linkage study

Start Date:

1st October 2023

Award:

1 LISS DTP Administrative Data UK (ADR UK) PhD studentship (+ 3 studentship only), full-time based in the Department of Forensic and Neurodevelopmental Sciences, IoPPN.

The project

Despite female offenders being a minority in the UK criminal justice system (CJS), the UK has one of the highest rates of female's imprisonment in Western Europe. The financial and wider social costs associated with female offending are significant, costing the government £1.7 billion in 2015-16. In 2018, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) released the Female Offender Strategy, the aim of which was to reduce the number of females entering the CJS by intervening earlier. Although it is widely recognised that females experience different drivers of offending behaviour and worse CJS outcomes relative to males, there is a paucity of research focusing on female offenders. Importantly, there is little consensus about the development of female offending over time and whether it aligns with the age-crime curve, which indicates that criminal behaviour typically peaks in adolescence and decreases during adulthood. This is because research on the patterns and trajectories of (re-)offending consists mostly of homogenous male samples, highlighting the lack of longitudinal studies on offending among females. It is important to examine the offending trajectories of females, because among males, certain trajectory groups (i.e., early-onset persistent offenders) are associated with more negative outcomes than others.

The linked crime and education dataset (Police National Computer-National Pupil Database) that this project proposes to use contains the records of over 1.65 million individuals in England. It spans childhood to adulthood, and therefore provides us with a unique opportunity to examine offending trajectories in *the largest sample of female offenders* to date. The linked dataset will also enable us to examine the early education and social care predictors of different offending trajectories, thereby informing early identification and intervention approaches as proposed in the Female Offender Strategy, which have the potential to reduce criminal offending and its associated social and economic costs. To this end, stakeholder and advisory groups will be consulted throughout the PhD studentship to guide its development and to ensure project outcomes are met.

Using the linked dataset, the successful applicant will undertake the following work:

- Use administrative crime records to identify the different offending trajectories followed by female offenders after their first recorded conviction or caution

- Use linked administrative longitudinal education and social care records to describe the characteristics of female offenders and their offending trajectories

- Develop educational attainment trajectories in relation to offending trajectories and broader offending outcomes

- Develop statistical models to prospectively identify the different female offending trajectories using longitudinal education and social care data prior to the first conviction or caution

There is also the opportunity for the student to undertake a 3-month funded placement over the course of the PhD. All applicants should be aware that this studentship comes with monitoring requirements above and beyond those of King's College London. These additional requirements are: (1) 6-monthly virtual check-ins with supervisors and ADR UK; (2) Quarterly progress check-in reports to ADR UK; and (3) final End of Award report. Applicants should also note that statistical analyses of the data can only be undertaken in a designated secure room in the Department of Forensic and Neurodevelopmental Sciences at the IoPPN, in line with Office of National Statistics (ONS) 'Five Safes' framework.

Project supervisors:

Dr Hannah Dickson (1st), Dr Alice Wickersham (2nd) and Dr Nigel Blackwood (3rd)

Entry Requirements:

A Master's degree in Psychology, Criminology, Epidemiology or related subjects at Merit level or above with high grades on modules relating to Research Methods and Statistics, where appropriate. The applicant must be an ONS full accredited researcher or work towards achieving accreditation prior to the project start date. The applicant should also be proficient in Stata and/or R statistical software programmes.

How to apply:

Applicants must complete and submit an online application via the admissions portal by **midnight (23:59 GMT), 27th March 2023.**

On the 'Choosing a programme' page, please select Forensic & Neurodevelopmental Sciences MPhil/PhD.

More information on the department and the programme is available at the departmental prospectus page here: https://www.kcl.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/areas/forensic-and-neurodevelopmental-science-mdres-mphil-phd

In your application, you will be asked to include:

- **Academic Transcripts** - where applicable, academic transcripts must be submitted with the online admissions application
- **Details of your qualifications**
- **Details of previous employment** - please include your CV
- **A personal statement** describing your interests and why you wish to apply for this project. Please include this as an attachment rather than using the text box.
- **Academic References** – all admissions applications require one supporting reference. If the applicant is relying on their referees to submit a reference directly to the College after they have submitted their admissions application, then the applicant must ensure that (1) their chosen referee is made aware of the deadline (i.e., 7 days after application deadline) and (2) that the reference needs to be sent from an institutional email address.

In the Funding section of the admissions portal, please tick box 5 and include the following reference: LISS DTP Studentship

Please note there is no need to complete the Research Proposal section in your application as the project has already been set.

Closing date for applications

The closing date for all applications is the 27th March 2023. Interviews will take place on 26 April 2023. Note that the successful applicant will be expected to submit a project approval form in collaboration with project supervisors to KCL by June 1st 2023 to ensure an October 2023 start date. The project approval form can be found here.

You are welcome to email Dr. Hannah Dickson (hannah.dickson@kcl.ac.uk) for more information regarding the project and studentship.

If you have any queries regarding the application process, please contact the Education support team at ioppn.pgr@kcl.ac.uk.

Only applicants shortlisted for interviews will be contacted.