

Controversial Issues in Prisons (UK Higher Education OUP Humanities & Social Sciences Criminology)

By David Scott, Helen Codd

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"This book is something of a 'call to arms'… Towards the end of this carefully-researched and well-argued book there is an exhortation to 'step out', 'be brave', and Scott and Codd have, indeed, written a brave book which deserves to be read widely; not only for the detailed analysis it unfolds on the toxic effects of prison, but also for the energy and passion they bring to bear in exploding the many myths which support its continued use."
British Journal of Community Justice, Vol 9, Issues 1 & 2 special issue on the Rehabilitation Revolution

"Scott and Codd's* Controversial Issues in Prison *is a passionate plea for academics to be 'be brave' and 'step out', and thus to acknowledge that the idea of, for example, an 'healthy prison' being (p.170) 'an oxymoron. Prisons are places of sadness and terror, harm and injustice, secrecy and oppression'. Set over ten chapters, eight of which deal with a 'controversial issue' - mental health problems in prison, women in prison, children and young people in custody, race and racism, self-inflicted deaths, the treatment of people who sexually offend, and prisoners and their families – Scott and Codd frame their argument to demonstrate that these issues raise fundamental concerns (p. ix) 'about the legitimacy of the confinement project and the kind of society in which it is deemed essential'."
Howard League Journal

This textbook is designed to explore eight of the most controversial aspects of imprisonment in England and Wales. It looks at the people who are sent to prison and what happens to them when they are incarcerated. Each chapter examines a different dimension of the prison population and makes connections between the personal troubles and vulnerabilities of those confined.

The book investigates controversies surrounding the incarceration of people with mental health problems, women, children, BME and foreign nationals, offenders with suicidal ideation, sex offenders and drug takers, as well as looking at the consequences of incarceration on prisoners' families.

Each chapter addresses key questions, such as:

- How have people conceptualised this penal controversy?
- What does the official data tell us and what are its limitations?
- What is its historical context?
- What are the contemporary policies of the Prison Service?
- Are they legitimate and, if not, what are the alternatives?

The book concludes that the eight penal controversies highlighted in the text collectively provide a damning indictment of the current state of imprisonment in England and Wales and points to the need for radical alternatives for dealing with human wrongdoing rooted in the principles of human rights and social justice.

Controversial Issues in Prisons is key reading for students and academics in the fields of criminology and criminal justice, as well as those studying crime and punishment on courses in social policy, sociology, social work and addiction studies.

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