

Institution: Newcastle University		
Unit of Assessment: 17 Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Influencing the adoption of social enterprise initiatives in public prisons in England: enabling the recognition of social value		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008–2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Jane Gibbon	Senior Lecturer in Accounting	2008 to date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>This case is led by Newcastle University in partnership with the Social Enterprise Research Innovation Foundation (SERIF). It builds upon Gibbon's research expertise in measuring social value through innovative and robust participatory methods to address a significant knowledge gap in how social enterprise can be valued in criminal justice settings. This evidence base has influenced prison policy and strategy in relation to the role of social enterprise in prisoner rehabilitation through targeted dissemination activities. The research has also had impact by building the capacity of prison leaders and staff to measure and promote the value of social enterprise to multiple stakeholders (including those who inspect prisons); by contributing to a more joined-up approach to social enterprise in public prisons in the North East of England; and by supporting the skills development of long-term prisoners by providing social audit training.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Research conducted by Gibbon has made a significant contribution to challenging emerging social accounting practices and developing alternative models. Methods of social reporting based on the idea of a social return on investment (SROI) rely on the translation of social indicators into the quantitative measures required by hard accounting. Research by Gibbon and colleagues has demonstrated that SROI is a complex and expensive process in which much of the essentially social meaning of data can be lost (PUB1–5). Gibbon and colleagues have shown that despite its attractiveness to those who are keen to quantify and express social value creation and thus make comparative assessments of social value, SROI's apparent simplicity risks reducing the measurement of social impact to a potentially meaningless or even misleading headline figure, and should therefore be treated with caution. This is especially so where exact measures are unobtainable, and approximations, or so-called 'financial proxies', are used (PUB2). Gibbon's international reputation in social accounting and social impact measurement can be seen in her invited input into the OECD's 2015 Policy Brief on Social Impact Measurement for Social Enterprises [IMP1].</p> <p>Gibbon's innovative approach of using participatory methodologies in social accounting has always included user involvement, enabling the development of insights in direct relation to end user needs in a variety of settings (Grant 1; PUB1,2). Since 2015, Gibbon has drawn on her social accounting research expertise (PUB1–5) and these participatory methodologies to conduct research in an area where the measurement of social value creation had not previously been rigorously addressed. This research, working within complex and challenging prison settings, has enabled multiple voices to be captured, including those of service users (the prisoners), staff and the wider community, and has demonstrated the social value of social enterprise activity within prison settings (Grants 2 and 3; PUB6).</p>		

To undertake this research, Gibbon secured funding from Newcastle's ESRC Impact Accelerator Account (Grants 2 and 3) to develop the measurement of the social value of social enterprise activities within custodial settings. The research was co-produced in partnership with the Social Enterprise Research and Innovation Foundation (SERIF), a not-for-profit organisation that champions socially enterprising approaches to rehabilitation through partnership working and fostering debate amongst the broad range of stakeholders in the criminal justice system. The recognition of 'social' value is always complex and difficult to capture, since it is not easily measured through transactional and financial methods. Criminal justice settings, where the impact of particular interventions can be easily overlooked, are extremely challenging spaces for this type of research, given that access to custodial settings requires high levels of trust and a flexible longitudinal approach. Gibbon's research is valuable and novel due to this challenging context and the aims and approaches used.

The research funded by Grant 2 captured the social value of a social enterprise strategy developed within public sector prisons in North East England from 2012 to 2014. A detailed case study of HMP Kirklevington Grange provided an evidence base documenting the use of social enterprise within a custodial setting and identifying multiple benefits to offenders through skills development and education. The research provided evidence that skills development is part of the rehabilitation process. Prisoners close to release had developed skills through social enterprise to support them whilst moving towards employment after release; examples included working in the prison coffee shop as a barista, car washing and garden centre work. The research also identified that social enterprise 'outside the prison gate' brought members of the public (as customers) into direct contact with prisoners, and improved public understanding of and support for a rehabilitative culture in prisons (PUB6).

Other findings from Grant 2 were that socially enterprising approaches to rehabilitation in North East public prisons had been welcomed at a policy level, and that there were examples of projects delivering results through social enterprise activities that increased skills for prisoners. However, the research also found that many aspiring projects encountered numerous practical difficulties in reaching fruition, particularly because of the understandably risk-averse culture of the prison service, where prisoner education, employability and rehabilitation come second to the demands of maintaining a safe, orderly and secure prison. The research established that barriers arose from the willingness (or otherwise) of prison staff to embrace change and adapt the established regime to accommodate social enterprise activity. Grant 3 extended the co-produced research work carried out in North East prisons to a national level; this project worked with six prisons, across a variety of security categories, to develop a further five case studies as examples of how social enterprise can work with prisoners and ex-offenders. Grant 3 found that skills among those serving longer-term sentences were also developed through social enterprise approaches in education, business, woodcraft, gifts and cards, and that the social enterprise approach included opportunities for trade and links to customers that cannot easily be offered within a prison system.

The research funded under Grants 2 and 3, resulting in PUB6, makes significant contributions to the understanding of how the value of social enterprise in custodial settings can be articulated. Firstly, the research provides a unique longitudinal case study which captures the true 'social' value of social enterprise activities undertaken within a prison. Secondly, PUB6 documents the potential for a realistic and appropriate reporting framework for social and environmental accounting relating to social enterprise in custodial settings where the intended 'impacts' (e.g. reduced reoffending, reduced cost to the public purse, improved public attitudes to prisoner rehabilitation) are difficult to 'prove'. PUB6 demonstrates how impact maps can be developed to map social enterprise activities to outcomes that, crucially, need to be captured through soft indicators (e.g. surveys, interviews and case studies). These outcomes relate to multiple stakeholders, including prison management and governance, the prisoners themselves, and the public who use the social enterprises, and supplement harder output measures (e.g. Ministry of Justice targets for purposeful activity and training), enabling the value of social enterprises in custodial settings to be articulated.

3. References to the research

This case is underpinned by a range of publications in international peer-reviewed journals, supplemented by an invited chapter in a book edited by leading sustainability accounting researchers and a conference paper presented at a leading international social innovation conference. As of October 2020, PUB2 is the second-most-cited publication in its journal.

Publications

1. **Gibbon, J.** (2012) 'Understandings of accountability: an autoethnographic account using metaphor'. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 23(3), 201–212. [DOI.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2011.12.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2011.12.005)
2. **Gibbon, J.** and Dey, C. (2011) 'Developments in social impact measurement in the third sector: Scaling up or dumbing down?' *Social and Environmental Accountability Journal*, 31(1), 65–74. [DOI.org/10.1080/0969160X.2011.556399](https://doi.org/10.1080/0969160X.2011.556399)
3. **Gibbon, J.**, Fenwick, J., and McMillan, J. (2008) 'Governance and Accountability: a role for social accounts in the sustainable school'. *Public Money and Management*, 28(6), 353–361. [DOI.org/10.1111/j.1467-9302.2008.00669.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9302.2008.00669.x)
4. Fenwick, J. and **Gibbon, J.** (2016) 'Localism and the third sector: new relationships of public service?' *Public Policy and Administration*, 31(3), 221–240. [DOI.org/10.1177/0952076715610413](https://doi.org/10.1177/0952076715610413)
5. Dey, C. and **Gibbon, J.** (2013) 'External Social Accounting'. In: Unerman, J., Bebbington, J., and O'Dwyer, B, eds. *Sustainability Accounting and Accountability*. London: Routledge. [DOI.org/10.4324/9780203815281](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203815281)
6. Watson, N., **Gibbon, J.** and Angier, P. (2019) 'Social Enterprise in Prison: exploring desistance, employment opportunities and cultural change'. Conference paper presented at ISIRC (International Social Innovation Research Conference), Glasgow, September 2019. (Available on request)

Grants and other funding

	Grant Title	Sponsor/Funder	Dates	Amount GBP
1	Measuring social value for cultural and leisure facilities managed by third sector organisations	ESRC Fellowship	December 2010 – April 2011	8,464
2	Capturing social value added within public sector prisons	ESRC Impact Acceleration Account	January 2015 – June 2015	9,277
3	Social enterprise in the English prisons system: challenging culture change	ESRC Impact Acceleration Account	April 2018 – March 2019	10,110

4. Details of the impact

Gibbon's research conducted in partnership with SERIF has produced a solid evidence base of the social value of social enterprise activities in prisons, and a framework for recognising the social value of these activities in custodial settings. The research has had an impact in four main ways: (1) through targeted dissemination activities, it has enhanced understanding of the role of social enterprise in custodial settings and increased the confidence of prison leaders in their approaches to social enterprise; (2) it has directly built the capacity of the public prisons that took part in the research to measure and promote the value of social enterprise to stakeholders (including those who inspect prisons); (3) it has contributed to a more joined-up approach to social enterprise in North East England public prisons; (4) it has supported skills development in a group of prisoners in a high security prison by providing social audit training.

Recognising the value of social enterprise in a custodial setting: enhancing understanding and motivation of practitioners

Reducing Re-offending Through Social Enterprise, a 2009 report commissioned by the Ministry of Justice's National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the Cabinet Office's Office of the Third Sector, had called for the creation of a solid evidence base to help those working in the prison service to understand the benefits of social enterprise within criminal justice settings. The Newcastle and SERIF research intentionally set out to address this gap and provide evidence of the social benefit and impact of particular social enterprise interventions within public prisons, including the wide range of stakeholders positively impacted by social enterprise activities (e.g. prison management, prison staff, the prisoners themselves and the general public).

Through a series of planned dissemination activities – including distribution of the findings of Grant 2 in report form through the Clinks network (a charity which supports voluntary sector organisations working in the criminal justice system) and the findings of Grants 2 and 3 through four regional and three national practitioner events – the research has enhanced the understanding and motivation of prison staff and practitioners working in custodial settings on social enterprise activities. Feedback from a national practitioner event attended by over 30 staff from 8 prisons in March 2019 evidences this impact. When asked in a feedback survey what they had gained from the event, participants' replies included, *'The will/desire to make social enterprise work in prisons'*; *'Understanding that we are not alone in trying to make social enterprise work in prisons'*; *'Gained more background about where social enterprise sits in a prison context'* and *'New contact; renewed impetus'* [IMP2]. Following the event, a member of the research team was invited to visit HMP Drake Hall, a women's prison, which offers opportunities for women to use and develop their own enterprise skills within the prison by running and managing a charity shop, linked to the local hospice, selling clothes, gifts and toys to fellow prisoners. This invitation was extended because those who had attended the event were inspired to learn more about the Newcastle research. The Head of Reducing Reoffending confirmed in a communication that the dissemination of the Newcastle/SERIF research had given them confidence in the work they were doing: *'The event was beneficial to us both as an opportunity to share learning and solutions with others working in the prison service and to broaden our understanding of what is meant by social enterprise. What we learned at the event and the subsequent visit by [one of the SERIF team] helped us appreciate that many of our practices and policies to encourage self-agency and personal resilience for our residents at HMP Drake Hall already reflect good social enterprise principles'* [IMP3].

Building the capacity of public prisons to measure and promote the value of social enterprise to stakeholders

Impact has occurred in the North East public prisons which were the focus of the first stage of the prison project. The case study of Kirklevington Grange Prison (Grant 2) was presented to the National Offender Management System (NOMS) National Research Committee, who acknowledged it as showing *'that the Grange [the café outside the prison gates at Kirklevington] is having a rehabilitative effect and is valued by the many people that use it.'* [IMP4]. The research has reinforced the case for continuation of social enterprise activities at Kirklevington by demonstrating the range of stakeholders positively impacted by the social enterprise activities. The HM Inspectorate of Prisons' report of the Kirklevington Grange inspection in 2019 notes that *'Managers had developed community enterprises outside the prison gate, including a café, craft shop, and car valeting service. These provided work for prisoners and developed positive relationships between the prison and the local community, who used and valued the services'* [IMP5, p. 50].

Contributing to a more joined-up approach to social enterprise in North East England public prisons

Impact through facilitating knowledge exchange between prisons has been recognised in a communication from the Tees and Wear Prisons' Group (part of HMPPS), which states that *'the social enterprise activities in the Tees & Wear Prisons Group have been informed by the best practice sharing made possible through SERIF's action research programmes [i.e. Grant 2 and 3]'* [IMP6]. [text removed for publication]

Supporting skills development of long-term prisoners through enabling them to demonstrate the impact of social enterprise

In 2018, social audit workshops for skills development in social accounting and social value measurement were provided by Gibbon and a SERIF research team member working with prisoners in the Virtual Business and Innovation Centre (VBIC) at HMP Frankland; a long-term high security category A adult male prison. In this challenging environment, the VBIC supports the Social Enterprise scheme, and the workshops enabled the prisoners to co-produce their social account of how social enterprise works for long-term prisoners within this high security custodial setting [IMP8]. Despite a context of restricted communication between prisoners working in different areas, the VBIC prisoners carried out stakeholder research on the impact of social enterprise on the prisoners who participated in three of the social enterprises in HMP Frankland: Ugly Duck Designs, One Day Designs and In-Wood.

The report [IMP8] was used to support recommendations given to the prison management and staff. Social enterprise is recognised in HMP Frankland Inspection Reports: IMP9a (p. 18–19) confirms that *'The Social Enterprise scheme provides real work opportunities and enables new skills to be developed. Prisoners take pride in producing high quality goods such as greeting cards, gift bags, gift boxes and tags and a wide range of wooden items. These are sold in a variety of retail outlets. The concept of groups of prisoners (approx. 10) forming a "business", leaning on individual pathways, enterprise skills and personal development targets is well established.... The co-ordination of this by prisoners is overseen by the Virtual Business Innovation Centre (VBIC). This is a good example of the Rehabilitative Culture introduced last year in HMP Frankland.'* IMP9b notes that *'prisoners produced good work in art and social enterprise'* (p. 47). The Strategic Lead, Learning, Skills and Employment, for Tees and Wear Prisons' Group is also including the prisoners' social account with the action research when she refers to *'best practice sharing made possible through [the ESRC IAA] action research programmes'* [IMP6].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

IMP1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2015) [Policy Brief on Social Impact Measurement for Social Enterprise](#). (Acknowledgements and P5)

IMP2 Participant feedback summary, 'Is Rehabilitation Working?' Event held in Birmingham, March 2019

IMP3 Email communication from HMP Drake Hall, dated 2 March 2020

IMP4 Email communication from HMP Kirklevington Grange, dated 16 April 2019

IMP5 [HM Inspectorate of Prisons, Kirklevington Grange inspection 2019](#).

IMP6 Email communication from Strategic Lead, Learning, Skills & Employment, Tees & Wear Prisons' Group (based at HMP Northumberland), dated 24 February 2020
[text removed for publication]

IMP8 Social account report co-produced by prisoners in HMP Frankland

IMP9 HMP Frankland Inspection Reports: **IMP9a** [Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Frankland](#), dated August 2019; **IMP9b** [Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Frankland by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 13–24 January 2020](#)