Bridging the Gap: Forensic Psychology Academia and Practice

The University of Lincoln, HMPPS North East and Yorkshire Psychological Services have been supported by the Lincoln Policy Hub fund to identify opportunities to 'bridge the gap' between academia and practice within Forensic Psychology. Specifically, Lincoln Policy Hub provided funding to support staff from the School of Psychology to host our first joint conference style event at HMP Askham Grange alongside our HMPPS colleagues.

University of Lincoln Event has:

➡ Furthered a partnership between HMPPS Psychological Services and UoL Forensic Psychology teaching staff

➡ Identified ways that HMPPS Psychological Services and UoL Forensic Psychology teaching staff could work more collaboratively

➡ Considered in the longer term, ways we can further the field of forensic psychology practice and research through increased collaborative working

Across the academic literature, there has been a recent spike in journal articles seeking to explore, understand and address the divide between academics and practitioners.

Research is interested not only in how we can 'bridge the gap' between academics and practitioners but also how to understand the reason for why these groups so often work separately.

The many benefits of academics and practitioners working more closely together is acknowledged and this event highlights this as an area to be explored more within the field forensic psychology.

A starting point for exploration was to consider ways in which HMPPS, the single, biggest employer of Forensic Psychologists, could work more closely with relevant academics at the UoL.

Rachael Dagnall used contacts from her previous practitioner role, to work with HMPPS North East &Yorkshire Psychological Services to deliver a joint collaborative conference style event exploring shared working possibilities.

Our inaugural joint working event: HMP Askham Grange

On the 26th April 2023, UoL Forensic Psychology Teaching Staff attended HMP Askham Grange for a 'bridging the gap' conference style event hosted by HMPPS and UoL.

Prior to attending the event, UoL and HMPPS psychology staff with similar forensic interests were paired together to provide co-delivered presentations at the event. The 'joining up' of staff from UoL and HMMPS provided the opportunity for closer working between staff from the two organisations. The co-delivery model of a presentation, highlighted interests in shared topics to both academics and practice staff. During the event, several presentations were delivered across the following topic areas:

- Trauma Informed Approaches and the PTMF
- Sexual Deviance and Risk Assessment/treatment
- Culturally informed Formulation and Assessment (HCR-20)

The event also provided the space for a networking workshop where HMPPS and UoL employees were tasked with identifying ways to work more closely going forward to 'bridge the gap' between academia and practice within forensic psychology.

The conference style event was attended by around 70 HMPPS Psychologists (including Forensic Psychologists in Training) and 5 UoL teaching staff

A networking workshop event was part of the agenda to allow a space for HMPPS and UoL to work in small groups to identify future opportunities for working together across research, consultancy, training and teaching

IMPACT ON POLICY

The event led to:
- The development of an action plan identifying ways that HMPPS and UoL can work more closely together in the future
- Highlighted further areas of collaborative working including research, consultancy and teaching
- The start of a working group to explore the possibility of a research proposal to explore funding opportunities for a for a large scale research grant
- Teaching opportunities being offered to HMPPS NE&Y to allow for students to have access to teaching delivered by practicing forensic psychology staff, thereby increasing student engagement, enjoyment and subsequent employment from the Forensic psychology teaching programmes at UoL
- A similar event for 2024 is currently being developed

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