

## 1 – General Information

Project code	SHSP03
Partner University	Sheffield Hallam University
Faculty/School/Department/Research Centres	The Helena Kennedy Centre (HKC), Department of Law and Criminology
First supervisor Please provide name and weblink	Dr James Banks, Reader in Criminology <a href="https://elements.shu.ac.uk/userprofile.html?uid=1472&amp;em=true">https://elements.shu.ac.uk/userprofile.html?uid=1472&amp;em=true</a>
Second supervisor Please provide name and weblink	Dr Jaime Waters, Senior Lecturer in Criminology <a href="https://elements.shu.ac.uk/userprofile.html?uid=1262&amp;em=false">https://elements.shu.ac.uk/userprofile.html?uid=1262&amp;em=false</a>
Third supervisor Please provide name and weblink	Dr James Pickles, Lecturer in Criminology <a href="https://elements.shu.ac.uk/userprofile.html?uid=5369&amp;em=false">https://elements.shu.ac.uk/userprofile.html?uid=5369&amp;em=false</a>
Fourth (external) supervisor	
External/industrial supervisor	The research team offer extensive opportunities for collaboration. Please see below.
Which of the supervisors listed above is an early-career-researcher	Dr James Pickles
Contact details for project for informal applicant queries	<a href="mailto:J.banks@shu.ac.uk">J.banks@shu.ac.uk</a>
DTA Programme	DTA Social Policy
Project title	Experiences of Crime and Criminal Justice Among People with Autism Spectrum Disorder



Co-funded by the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Union

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 801604.

2 – Project Description

<p>Academic Excellence (500 words)</p>	<p>Crime and criminal justice have been identified as domains (Cohen, 2017) in which individuals with autism spectrum disorder’s (ASD) human rights are not being met. This PhD explores the lives of people with ASD who experience crime, victimisation and contact with the criminal justice system.</p> <p>It is estimated that one in 100 adults have ASD, equating to 70 million individuals worldwide (Baird et al, 2006). A significant minority population, people with ASD are more likely to be victims and witnesses of crime than offenders. Yet we know relatively little about the extent, nature and impact of crime and victimisation on this societal group nor do we have adequate understanding of the ability of criminal justice services to meet their needs. Indeed, it is recognised that the study of ASD, crime, victimisation and criminal justice is still in its infancy (King and Murphy 2014).</p> <p>This programme of research is responsive to this dearth in academic study and will contribute to the equitable development of society and a more cohesive social future. In turn, the research will advance knowledge and practice in three principal ways:</p> <p>First, it will develop our understanding of the impact of crime and victimisation on people with ASD;</p> <p>Second, it will explore experiences of and attitudes toward the criminal justice system among people with ASD;</p> <p>Third, the study will inform best practice relating to criminal justice. A desired outcome of the proposed research is to inform policy and practice, specifically by advising criminal justice professionals as to the needs of people with ASD.</p> <p>This programme of research is novel in that it gives voice to people with ASD, in order to document their lived experience. This population have valuable and insightful things to say yet</p>
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	<p>their voices are rarely heard in academic studies or policy debate. Thus, the social policy implications of this study are significant, as the voices of research participants will be used to aid the development of sufficient and effective support and protective systems for people with ASD who experience crime and criminal justice contact.</p>
<p>Aim (400 words)</p>	<p><u>Aim:</u> To examine the lived experience of people with ASD who experience crime and contact with the criminal justice system.</p> <p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To explore the extent and nature of crime and victimisation experienced by people with ASD;</li> <li>2. To examine understandings and experience of, and attitudes toward, the criminal justice system among people with ASD;</li> <li>3. To identify the needs of people with ASD who experience crime and victimisation.</li> <li>4. To use the findings to help shape policy and best practice for criminal justice professionals, and to inform further research in this area. This may include the development of an information hub and/or materials for those working in the criminal justice system.</li> </ol> <p><u>Methodological Approach:</u> This study will combine survey and photovoice methodologies. It is envisaged that the programme of research will involve four principal stages:</p> <p><i>1. Consultation and development of survey tools culminating in a pilot study</i> This study builds upon an established methodology and the research experiences of the supervisory team. Quantitative data tools will be developed through consultation and piloting. As it is critical that the needs of people with ASD are incorporated into the project, it is expected that the doctoral student will undertake preparatory work involving consultation events with key stakeholders.</p>



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	<p><i>2. Distribution of the survey online and through completion of paper copies, which will be completed anonymously</i> Research participants will be self-selecting respondents. We will generate a research sample of people with ASD by engaging with a range of providers – support services, charities, online communities and media – and through the promotion of this research across social media. This approach has been highly successful in generating respondents for previous HKC studies.</p> <p><i>3. Case studies</i> Photovoice – a combination of photography and semi-structured interviews – will be employed as a creative methodological tool through which to gain insight into individuals’ lived experiences. Photovoice offers a expressive means through which to develop case studies that will enable us to gain a holistic view of the experiences, feelings, perceptions and impacts of crime and criminal justice through the perspectives of people with ASD. This is a novel approach through which to generate deep idiographic accounts of individuals’ experiences of crime and criminal justice. It is envisaged that photovoice will result in rich qualitative data that will complement and augment data derived through the survey method, in turn, enhancing our understanding of the lived experience of crime and criminal justice among people with ASD.</p> <p><i>4. Analysis and dissemination</i> In order to maximise impact at local and national levels, results will be disseminated to policy makers, practitioners and project participants. Particular efforts will be made to reach the Autistic community and the doctoral student will be encouraged to devise appropriate and relevant dissemination activities.</p>
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<p>Strategic Relevance (300 words)</p>	<p>The proposed programme of research will inform statutory and non-statutory guidance for criminal justice agencies to follow when they come into contact with people on the autism spectrum. Greater awareness and understanding of this hidden disability, and the development of coherent, evidence-based policies that shape criminal justice practice are arguably key to ensuring a more cohesive social future. A doctoral student working on these topics will be equipped with the skills to contribute to a pressing area of social policy and will be able to assist communities to adjust to complex needs of citizens.</p>
<p>Interdisciplinarity and fit with DTA3</p>	<p>The PhD is interdisciplinary, bringing together law, criminology, disability and education studies. It aligns with DTA3's aim to produce doctoral graduates equipped with the skills and experience to contribute effectively to the social policy challenges relating to identity, diversity and disability facing communities and societies globally.</p>
<p>Industrial Relevance (300 words)</p>	<p>The supervisory team are all well connected with policy makers, academic institutions and NGOs working in the fields of disability and criminal justice which presents significant opportunity for collaboration. Collaborations and placement opportunities will serve to facilitate the development of understanding of variations in jurisdictional responses to neurodiversity, crime, victimisation and criminal justice, and aid in the development of the methodological approach outlined above.</p> <p>First, the student will become a member of the Early Careers Network for European Criminologists with the expectation that they engage collaboratively with a network comprising academics and practitioners from the fields of law and criminology from a range of European countries. Dr Waters is a founder member and was chair of this group. The student will have the opportunity to participate in collaborative events in Bucharest in 2020, Florence in 2021 and Malaga in 2022.</p> <p>Second, Dr Banks is a member of the National Autistic Society and will facilitate the PhD student's access to researchers and</p>



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	<p>           policymakers, which will aid with the identification and collation of relevant data and access to research participants.         </p> <p>           Third, Dr Banks will facilitate placement opportunities at either or both the University of Oslo and the University of Tampere, enabling the student to utilise the academic work at the institutions and further their understanding of similarities, differences and best practice relating to ASD and criminal justice cross-nationally.         </p>
<p>Economic and Societal Impact (300 words)</p>	<p>           The proposed research will have a significant societal impact at multiple levels.         </p> <p>           One of the principal goals of the project will be to influence criminal justice practice at a local, national and global level. The research will involve close collaboration with individuals in the ASD community and other key stakeholders. We will generate debate around this complex issue and encourage policy-makers to utilise the lived experience of all individuals in the community in order to inform criminal justice operations.         </p> <p>           The proposed project aims to demonstrate the important links between disability, crime and the administration of justice. The principal outcomes will be:         </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of people with ASD and the impact that crime, victimisation and criminal justice has on their lives;</li> <li>• An improvement to the lives of people with ASD and the communities in which they reside;</li> <li>• Recommendations for policy changes to enhance the experience of individuals with ASD who come into contact with the criminal justice system.</li> </ul>



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### 3 – Admission Requirements

Specific Admission Requirements	The student will need to have completed an undergraduate and masters' degree in a relevant field and to a high level (law, criminology, social policy, sociology, politics, human rights).
Minimum IELTS score	7.0 or above, with at least 6.5 in each component or an accepted equivalent. Please note that your test score must be current, i.e. within the last two years.



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