

The life-long consequences of criminal justice interactions: research findings

This project report shares select findings of the doctoral thesis of Dr. Nicola Collett. Nicola's work outlines:

- The various ways in which criminal record disclosure occurs in public and private lives
- The complex ways people negotiate such disclosures
- The long-term impact this has on life trajectories and identity

The real me

There can often be a disconnect between how a person sees themselves, and the picture painted by their criminal record.

I'm not a violent person, I never have been! ...If I look at my criminal record I'm like, is that really me? The way it reads and to who I am is a totally different concept

- Martin, 49

Employment and careers

Employers frequently make judgements solely on the contents of a DBS certificate, rather than assessing the applicant themselves. This can leave people in a cycle of rejection.

[They] didn't know any of the circumstances and were judging the kind of person that I am on my criminal record. Even when I contacted them to try and give them an explanation, they just would not speak to me...what was written down on paper was more important than what I had to say about it and yeah, that was horrible

- Louise, 39

Higher paid and more meaningful careers are often those cut-off by a criminal record.

I'm working all week and absolutely knacker myself for very little money, and I can't afford to save up and go on holiday and, you know, things like normal people can...I just feel like I'm stuck at this level for ever and ever, and then I'll retire and I'll have nothing to live on, or very little to live on

- Kirsty, 42

Family and relationships

Megan found her criminal record prevented her from engaging with her children's school activities.

They go on school trips...I've never volunteered because that's gonna' involve a DBS check ...I don't want to undergo that whole erm, rigmarole basically of somebody finding out and then me having to explain it, and then sort of exposing myself putting myself as risk of them saying no

- Megan, 35

Enduring stigma

Owing to widespread requests for criminal record information from many organisations, the criminal record can act like a rubber-band, drawing people back to the past.

I had to keep reliving it over, and over again...it's like they won't let you stop reliving your past

- Yasmeen, 28

Years later in life as I've tried to shed that background and put it behind me...I have not been able to. It has haunted me. It has always come back to haunt me, you know?

- Martin, 49

Read the [full report here](#)