Like much of Alex Stevens work, *Drugs, Crime and Public Health* is well-written, persuasive, analytical and yet easily accessible to both students and scholars alike. Drawing on an array of quantitative and qualitative evidence, each chapter contributes to the thematic coherence and credibility of this book by providing a rich, meticulously-argued and assiduous overview of drugs, crime and public health.

Unlike other books in this area, *Drugs, Crime and Public Health* is a welcome addition to the drug-crime literature, because it offers an alternative view to the hegemonic ideological notion that drug use causes crime. Stevens takes the less-travelled, but more realistic path, which seeks to explain drug use and criminality as a symptom of wider societal factors. Instead of focusing on the deterministic notion underpinning current drug policy, he attributes many of the problems arising from drugs and their use to inequality, whilst identifying that drug policy also seeks to perpetuate and reproduce this inequality. Consequently, Stevens reconceptualises the drug-crime debate in the wider social context, emphasising that long-term solutions rely on more radical societal changes. Until a more realistic stance is taken and attempts are made to tackle and reduce inequality, the drug problem will not be resolved; ‘we will not solve the drug problem by legislating, legalizing, educating, arresting, imprisoning or treating our way out of it’ (2011, p128). During the course of the book he successfully undermines current drug policy and provides a convincing case for its renunciation. However, he does not leave the reader speculating about the future; instead he goes on to offer a range of solutions, including international law reform and ‘progressive decriminalization’. Throughout this book Stevens successfully situates the social to the forefront of the drug-crime debate.

The opening chapters provide the raison d’être for his subsequent arguments. Drawing on an array of theorists (Foucault, Rousseau, Giddens, Young, Gewirth and Kant), Stevens not only demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of the subject area, but illustrates the drug-
crime relationship is considerably more complex than the official ideological rhetoric would have us believe. By using the moral philosopher Gewirth to discuss harm, Stevens neatly avoids the hackneyed reference to utilitarian John Stuart Mills in his debate about human rights, harm and drugs. Chapter one successfully contextualises all subsequent chapters and provides the reader with an historical overview of drug policy, including its contentious foundations, which are premised on class, race and emphasise ‘otherness’. These are themes which are revisited later on in the book.

The second chapter goes on to deconstruct the concept of social inequality and asks whether drug use and dependence are ‘afflictions of inequality’, an argument which is extended in the next chapter to the debate on drugs and crime. In this chapter Stevens successfully challenges Goldstein’s tripartite framework and its inability to explain ‘the social distribution of drug-related harms’ (2011, p50). He also discusses the over-exaggerated, but often accepted relationship between drug use, crime and criminality. Drawing on the concept of subterranean structuration as an alternative explanation, the author attempts to explain why crime and problematic drug use are concentrated in the most socioeconomically deprived areas, among people the rest of society consider to be ‘underground’. Although Stevens attaches important caveats to his explanation, he provides a compelling and more realistic alternative to the traditional drug-crime relationship perpetuated by policy.

The ensuing chapters (4 to 7) discuss the politicisation of drug policy and the selective use of evidence to inform and create it. Drawing on his experience as a policy advisor working in the civil service, Stevens not only highlights the importance of ethnographic research in uncovering hidden procedures, but illustrates the exclusionary and discriminatory practises indoctrinated in drug policy and the practical impact this has on people’s lives both in the UK (chapter 6) and internationally (chapter 7). The final chapter offers an alternative policy agenda, which seeks to address many of the issues raised in this book, via three strategies: the reduction of inequality; international law reform; and, decriminalization (which provided a welcome change to the monotonous prohibition-legalisation debate). Stevens mentions denying treatment to those unable to stop using opiates and prioritising those who can, an idea also proposed by McKeganey (2011) to reduce the numbers in treatment. However, unlike McKeganey, Stevens dismisses this idea as a practice more likely to cause ‘death and disease’ than a practical solution to the problem.

Many will undoubtedly criticise aspects of Stevens’ analysis and find fault with his proposed solutions, something the author seems fervently aware of, since he circumvents many of these objections by pre-empting the criticisms and acknowledging ‘that some may find his account overly simplistic’ (2011, p130). As highlighted by the author himself, his suggestions are not a definitive answer to creating new policy, but a ‘list for discussion’. Consequently, I think Stevens achieves what he sets out to do at the beginning of the book:

\[\text{He is mentioned on page 4.}\]
This book is my attempt to create a more adequate analysis. It discusses theoretical perspectives and presents new evidence that can be used to test them. Its aim is to change the way you think about the links between drugs, crime and public health. (pxiii).

While the majority of those already teaching or working in the drugs field may need less persuading about the arguments proposed by Stevens, others might be less convinced. However, he presents such a compelling and meticulously constructed argument, drawing on an array of international evidence, that I challenge anyone who reads this book to say it did not challenge the way they think about this topic.

This book is essential reading for academics, students, practitioners and policy-makers, although anyone with an interest in drugs and crime would find this book interesting and insightful. However, reiterating Toby Seddon’s sentiments (2011), we can but hope that presidents and prime ministers will also read this book, which will not only give them something to think about, but provoke a debate about the issues outlined in the last chapter. Realistically, however, this is unlikely to happen and, in my view, drug policy will continue along its own imprudent and illogical path, for many of the reasons already outlined in this book.

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References
FOUNDATIONS FOR OFFENDER MANAGEMENT


In September of last year, Anne Worrall and I were involved in organising a small conference on 'probation cultures and offender management' and, during a lively session, one delegate pertinently questioned what we meant by 'offender management'. From the discussion that followed, it was clear just how loaded and contentious the term (rarely heard before Patrick Carter's report that led to the formation of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in 2004) had become. Ironically, the term was originally chosen as a neutral one, apparently inoffensive to both the prison and probation service. It was, therefore, with some interest that I picked up this book, keen to learn Anne Robinson's take on the term. As it happens, she confronts it at the outset, acknowledging that the term is neither neutral nor unproblematic, and she uses it fully aware of the power relations involved. It is used in the book because it reflects official terminology and official discourses, but she also points out that 'offender management' is a new term for what probation officers would recognise as 'supervision or case management' (pvi). What is different, the book argues, is the complexity of the criminal justice practice context and the numbers of practitioners, in addition to probation workers, who are now involved in offender management. The author sets herself the task of shedding some light on this complexity and, in doing so, charts a path based on a rights-based framework that has the potential for all agencies involved in offender management to buy into and which ameliorates the technocratic risk-obsessed tendencies of government policies.

The book is organised into three distinct sections. Part one, comprising four chapters, sets the scene. Chapter one seeks to establish the possibility of a common underpinning value base across the range of agencies now involved in offender management. Despite the centrality of risk and public protection to criminal justice agencies, the author suggests that a common rights-based approach to offender management has the greater potential to achieve the building of relationships with offenders that may help them to change their lives and reduce the harm to others. It is this rights-based approach that threads through the remainder of the text. Chapter two charts the landscape of offender management and, specifically, explains developments in the probation service and NOMS since the election of New Labour in 1997 and the onslaught of the modernisation agenda with the management of risk moving ever closer to centre stage. Chapter three makes a good job of explaining the development and maze of partnership, joined-up, multi- and inter-agency working that probation workers now engage in. Chapter four concludes the first section by considering, within the complex context described, what intervention models might look like that involve various agencies jointly utilising a rights-based approach to interventions rather than the current dominant community protection model (Kemshall, 2008) predicated on notions of risk and dangerousness and negative assumptions of offenders' motivation. Drawing on recent research on desistance and human and social capital, a model is developed for working positively with offenders that reconfigures the more negative associations of offender management.
Section two of the book comprises eight chapters which outline current law and policies relevant to offender management. The themes developed in section one are continued in these chapters and range from equalities, human rights, and risk and danger, to court procedures, community and custodial sentencing. There is much in these chapters that current practitioners and those in training will find useful. Students too will gain an insight into the realities and practicalities of probation work.

The third section of the book contains six chapters on discrete areas of practice, beginning with working with victims and moving on to youth justice, substance use, sex offenders, mentally disordered offenders, and finally indeterminate sentence prisoners. The latter highlights the difficulties of writing a contemporary book on criminal justice law, policy and/or organisational structures; as I was reading this book in November 2011 the breaking news was Ken Clarke's intention to scrap indeterminate sentences. Criminal justice policy is constantly shifting; sections of books inevitably become quickly outdated and readers need to be responsive to this.

The target audiences of this book include students of criminal justice in addition to current probation workers and practitioners in training. I would agree that there is something of interest and value in this book for both students and practitioners, though, in my opinion, it is rather more suitable for postgraduate students. It will also be a valuable resource for researchers and academic teachers. The author has produced a guide to help practitioners and students navigate their way in humane fashion through an important component of an increasingly technical and complex criminal justice system; this is not an easy or light read, but it is a rewarding and hopeful one.

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SOCIAL WORK IN NORTHERN IRELAND: CONFLICT AND CHANGE

It is tempting to assume that a book with Northern Ireland in the title is only of interest to those who live or work in that country, but this book has much wider scope and application. It is certainly an essential text for anyone practising social work in Northern Ireland. The material covered, particularly the discussion of innovative practice in violence and civil emergencies, should be of interest to a very wide readership, including those working in community justice.

The book starts by putting the development of social work in Northern Ireland into an historical context, linking the development of social work to the formation of the Northern Ireland state, and the political and social influences from the UK, Ireland and within Northern Ireland. The strong voluntary sector and the location of probation work within the auspices of social work are characteristic features of the Northern Ireland system, but there has been a general trend to follow developments in Great Britain. Important themes for social work in Northern Ireland include those that are related to Northern Ireland’s specific situation (such as sectarianism, violence devolution and cross-border work) and those that are present in most jurisdictions but have strong relevance in Northern Ireland (such as poverty, community development and organisational issues).

The two chapters on violence and sectarianism give most insight into the working lives of Northern Ireland social workers. The authors clearly explore the meaning and definition of sectarianism and the different ways it can influence individuals in social work practice. This includes implications for work with clients, relationships between staff, and legal, organisational and training issues. The advantages of linking anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive approaches to sectarianism in Northern Ireland are explored. One tangible effect of sectarianism in Northern Ireland has been the violence that the community has had to endure but, prior to this book, the impact that this violence has had on social work practice has been largely, and surprisingly, underexplored. The authors examine the nature of violence, the response to civil emergencies and mental health and trauma as related to both staff and service users. Responding to trauma is a particular contribution that social work makes and the discussion of this issue is the strongest and most fascinating part of the book. The skill and experience developed by Northern Irish social workers, and other professionals, in responding to many years of violence and trauma is invaluable and is seen both in the work of individual practitioners and in the structures that have been put in place. For example, the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation (NICTT) was established following the Omagh bombing. Northern Irish social work researchers have also led the way in exploring the impact of violence and trauma on professional staff and this learning and expertise has been exported around the world.
Social workers in all jurisdictions deal with poverty but, in Northern Ireland, the levels of deprivation are greater than UK averages leading to, for example, high numbers of referrals to social services and high numbers of children on the child protection register. In contrast to the ground-breaking and innovative work on violence and trauma, the authors describe how social work in Northern Ireland has been slow to respond appropriately to this situation. There are significant research gaps and some areas of practice, such as youth transition work, welfare advice and provision of early years services, which are underdeveloped in Northern Ireland. Community development, in contrast, is another area where the Northern Irish experience can provide lessons for other jurisdictions. The five main tenets of community development – collective action, active citizenship, empowerment, participation and inclusion and partnership – can have an important impact on social work practice. A community development approach responds to an individual in the context of their community and has accountability to that community. The large community and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland facilitates this community-oriented approach to social work.

Organisational and legislative issues in Northern Ireland are also of wider interest, in that an integrated approach to health and social care was taken there before it became such a key part of organisation in the wider UK. The identified advantages and disadvantages provide important lessons in that there are many improved outcomes such as the links from hospital-based care to community care but an associated risk of social work becoming overwhelmed by the larger health sector. In addition, as there is a greater focus on European and cross-jurisdictional work, lessons can be learned from the cross-border social work that has taken place in Northern Ireland. The authors describe how the greater flexibility of the voluntary sector has enabled Northern Irish social work practice to lead the way here.

Victims work is gaining a greater profile in Great Britain but it is in Northern Ireland where real development with that group is seen. Political debates are heated and high profile, but social care professionals have led on actually meeting the needs of victims both in response to emergencies and on an ongoing basis. The Social Care Institute for Excellence made the important recommendation that social care should be the lead agency in providing humanitarian assistance in emergencies.

Although there is little direct material dealing with probation or with the voluntary organisations that work with offenders in this book, the discussions of violence, trauma, community development and victims’ services mean that there is much to interest community justice practitioners. The writing style is both academic and accessible, combining clear description with the promotion of good practice. The book should be of great value to both practitioners and academics in a variety of disciplines and locations.

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Although there is evidence that social workers gain considerable enjoyment and satisfaction from their work, they tend to report higher levels of stress, fatigue and burnout than many other occupational groups. This has serious implications for health and job performance, as well as recruitment and retention. The need for social workers to develop the emotional resilience required to cope with the numerous stressors inherent in their role has been widely emphasised. Nonetheless, although numerous books have been published on work-related stress and its management in general, very few focus specifically on the social work context. This book aims to help social workers overcome stress and enhance their wellbeing. It is targeted towards managers and supervisors, as well as front-line social workers. As an experienced social worker, van Heutgen has a deep understanding of the pressures faced by social workers in criminal justice, mental health and child protection settings. She also draws on interviews with 14 social work practitioners, supervisors and managers based in New Zealand that explored the most stressful features of social work and ways by which these may be ameliorated.

The book comprises nine chapters that are presented in two parts. Relevant, engaging and effective quotes from interviews are provided in each chapter in order to present the views and experiences of front-line social workers. Each chapter concludes with a 'stock-take' or 'tool-kit' section that encourages the reader to reflect on personal experience. Suggestions for further reading, including up-to-date journal articles and reports, are also provided. Part 1 introduces the reader to meanings and definitions of workplace stress. Van Heugten effectively contextualises the nature of stress in the sector by exploring the stressors inherent in the job, emphasising the complexity and increasing bureaucracy of the social worker's role. The wide-ranging impact of stress is examined, placing particular emphasis on compassion fatigue and the burnout syndrome. Ways by which work-related pressure may 'spill over' to affect the social worker in her or his personal life is also explored. A discussion of the emotional labour inherent in human service work and its potential impact is a particularly welcome addition.

Three prominent models of job stress are described, including Karasek's widely utilised Demand-Control-Support framework. Although the author argues that these models can help social workers gain insight into the sources of the pressure they face, and inform the development of interventions to enhance work-related wellbeing, how this may be accomplished is not adequately explored. Nonetheless, several strategies that have the potential to help social workers manage stress are examined, including workload management, education / training and supervision. Although employers clearly have a legal and moral responsibility to manage the structural sources of stress, several meta-analyses indicate that secondary stress management strategies such as cognitive-behavioural techniques and relaxation can be useful in reducing the arousal associated
with the fight and flight response and enhancing wellbeing. It is surprising, therefore, that the author dismisses such techniques as lacking support for their effectiveness. 

The chapters included in Part 2 of the book explore issues encountered in front-line practice, trauma work, and the impact of violence from clients or colleagues. One chapter focuses on working with victims of trauma, drawing on the recent New Zealand earthquake to contextualise the difficulties experienced by social workers in such circumstances. This chapter is particularly welcome as it emphasises the need for social workers to be aware of the impact that working with distress can have on them both personally and professionally. Some potentially useful techniques are described to help reduce the possibility of long-term negative impact on their own wellbeing. Chapter 7 focuses on workplace bullying and harassment and the impact this may have on social workers. This is useful and informative, but many of the points made are not specific to social work and could be equally applied to other workplace contexts including community and criminal justice. There is an increasing tendency for organisations to adopt, often unwittingly, cultures of blame rather than providing a 'safe' environment whereby workers learn from their mistakes and 'near misses'. Van Heugten considers the implications of a 'blame' culture for the wellbeing of social workers emphasising the effect on wellbeing of worries about risks, mistakes and complaints.

The final chapter draws together some of the themes introduced in the book and makes some recommendations for enhancing wellbeing in the profession. However, the issues introduced in this chapter are somewhat fragmented and under-developed. This book makes a significant contribution to understanding the stressors and strains experienced by contemporary social workers and emphasises the importance of having appropriate organisational support. The author adopts an evidence-based approach, citing up-to-date evidence to support her argument. Nonetheless, in order to help the workforce overcome stress, fatigue and burnout, more detailed recommendations are required of the ways in which social workers can enhance their resilience to stress.

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