

Time to rethink the Rehabilitation of Offenders?

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More than a third of men and almost one in ten women in Scotland are likely to have at least one criminal conviction, according to a new report published by academics at the University of Glasgow.

The figure emerged in the context of a review of the operation of and possible alternatives to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, by Paul McGuinness, Sarah Armstrong and Fergus McNeill of the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research at Glasgow University. It shows that 38 per cent of men and nine per cent of women born in 1973 are known to have at least one conviction.

One of the authors, Professor Fergus McNeill said: "Our findings show a large proportion of the [adult population](#) in Scotland now have at least one conviction. This could cause grave difficulties for those who then go on to apply for jobs. Our research also found people with convictions report feeling discouraged and stigmatised due to rejection linked to their backgrounds. As a result, they find it harder to move on in their lives, away from offending and into employment and education."

The research also found that the experience of criminal records checks are now a regular experience for many people. Currently over one million applications for basic disclosure of criminal convictions are processed every year by Disclosure Scotland.

The report concludes with a review of three possible ways to reform the approach to criminal records so as to promote [rehabilitation](#) whilst

continuing to protect vulnerable people.

More information: [www.sccjr.ac.uk/publications/t ... ct-1974final-report/](http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/publications/t...ct-1974final-report/)

Provided by University of Glasgow

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