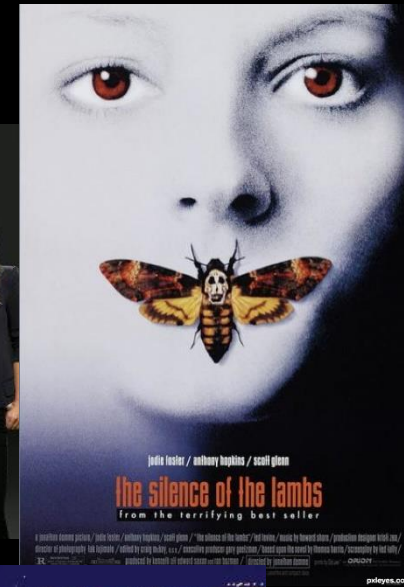
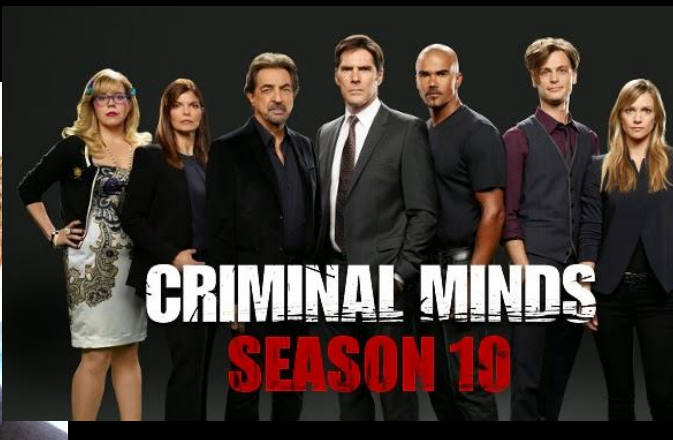


# Forensic Psychology – Adult Firesetting –

Dr Caoilte Ó Ciardha

# What is Forensic Psychology?

- What people think of...



# What is Forensic Psychology?

- What we actually work on...



# What do I work on?

- Social Cognition and Offending
  - What people believe?
  - How they make decisions?
  - How they interpret the actions of other people?
  - Does any of this cause offending?
- And, can we measure these processes accurately?

# What do I work on?

- Topics
  - Child Molestation
  - Sexual Violence
  - Firesetting



# Firesetting Research at Kent

2010 – Very little knowledge of the psychology of adult firesetting

2011 – Large Government grant awarded to Prof Theresa Gannon

2011-2014 – Intense period of data collection



# Firesetting Research at Kent

Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Aggression and Violent Behavior

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## The Multi-Trajectory Theory of Adult Firesetting (M-TTAF)

Theresa A. Gannon <sup>a,\*</sup>, Caoilte Ó Ciardha <sup>a</sup>, Rebekah M. Doley <sup>b</sup>, Emma Alleyne <sup>a</sup>

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The assessment and treatment of adults who set fires deliberately are underdeveloped relative to other areas of forensic-clinical psychology. From a scientist-practitioner perspective, all clinical assessment and treatment should be guided by a theoretical and empirically based understanding of the presenting clinical phenomena. In this paper, we critically review current typologies, motives, and theories regarding the etiological features of deliberate adult firesetting. Then, using a theory knitting perspective, we synthesise the prime parts of this information into a comprehensive multifactorial framework of deliberate firesetting. The results...

Keywords: Firesetting, Arson, Theory, Assessment, Treatment

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## The implicit theories of firesetters: A preliminary conceptualization

Caoilte Ó Ciardha <sup>\*</sup>, Theresa A. Gannon

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### ABSTRACT

The importance of cognition in the facilitation and reinforcement of criminal behavior has been highlighted and recognized in numerous offender populations. In particular, professionals have theorized that various offender populations hold offense-supportive schemas or implicit theories that require treatment in therapy. However, the role of cognition in deliberate firesetting has received no focused conceptual or theoretical attention. Using current research evidence and theory relating to general cognition and the characteristics of firesetters, this paper outlines a preliminary conceptual framework of the potential cognitions (in the form of implicit theories) that are likely to characterize firesetters. Five implicit theories are proposed that may be associated with firesetting behavior. The content, structure, and etiological functions of these implicit theories are described as well as the cognitive similarities between firesetters and other offender types. Future research implications and practical implications of the proposed implicit theories are also discussed.

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Psychiatry 76(4) Winter 2013 349

## Male Imprisoned Firesetters Have Different Characteristics Than Other Imprisoned Offenders and Require Specialist Treatment

Theresa A. Ga

Objective: Th distinguished, (n = 68).

Method: P; relating to fir dom prone examined to ries of MANT as the depend score analyse for firesetters non-firesetter emotional/self discrimination testing were I identification self-esteem, a specialist gro setters are lik as opposed to

Special section paper

## Multiple factors in the assessment of firesetters' fire interest and attitudes

Caoilte Ó Ciardha<sup>\*</sup>, Magali F. L. Barnoux, Emma K. A. Alleyne, Nichola Tyler, I

School of Psychology

Psychology, Crime & Law, 2015  
Vol. 21, No. 6, 606-616, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2015.1008478>

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Legal and Criminological Psychology (2015), 20, 37-47

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Routledge  
Taylor & Francis Group

## Examining the psychopathology of incarcerated male firesetters using the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-III

Caoilte Ó Ciardha<sup>\*</sup>, Emma K.A. Alleyne, Nichola Tyler, Magali F.L. Barnoux, Katarina Mozova and Theresa A. Gannon

School of Psychology, University of Kent, Kent, UK  
(Received 9 August 2014; accepted 17 December 2014)

Research to date has been equivocal on the relationship between firesetting and psychopathology and has been impeded by studies lacking adequate control samples. The present study examined psychopathology in a sample of incarcerated adult male firesetters (n = 112) and prison controls (n = 113) using the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-III. Firesetters demonstrated multiple elevated scores on personality and clinical syndrome scales. Logistic regression showed that the borderline personality scale was the strongest personality scale discriminator between firesetters and controls. Major depression and drug dependence were the strongest clinical syndrome scale predictors. However, both clinical syndrome scale predictors appeared to be mediated by borderline personality scores indicating that firesetters are best characterized by responding indicative of borderline personality traits rather than other psychopathological deficits. The results suggest that, relative to other offenders, firesetters face challenges with impulse control, affect regulation, stability of interpersonal relationships, and self-image.

Keywords: firesetting; arson; psychopathology; personality disorder; MCMI-III

# Firesetting Research at Kent

2010 – Very little knowledge of the psychology of adult firesetting

2011 – Large Government grant awarded to Prof Theresa Gannon

2011-2014 – Intense period of data collection

2013/2014 – Two treatment programmes were launched





# Firesetting Research at Kent

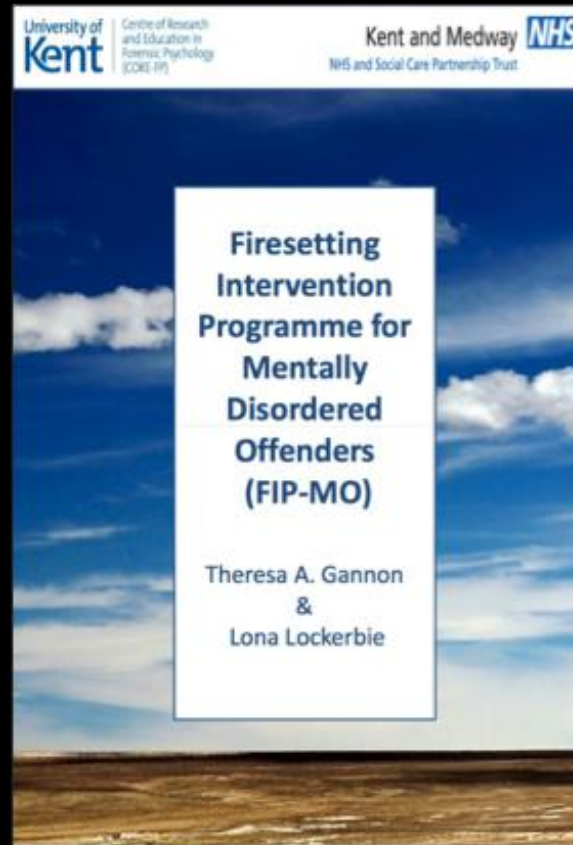
## Firesetting Intervention Programme for Prisoners (FIPP)

Theresa A. Gannon



University of Kent  
Centre of Research and Education in Forensic Psychology (CORE-FP)

FIPP



FIP-MO

# Firesetting Research at Kent

## Firesetting Intervention Programme for Prisoners (FIPP)

Theresa A. Gannon



University of  
**Kent** | Centre of Research  
and Education in  
Forensic Psychology  
(CORE-FP)

28 weeks

- Fire Factors ✓
- Coping with Emotions/Communication ✓
- Self Esteem ✗
- Fire/Offending Supportive Attitudes ✓
- Awareness of Risk ✗

FIPP

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**Kent** | Centre of Research  
and Education in  
Forensic Psychology  
(CORE-FP)


# Firesetting Research at Kent


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## Specialist group therapy for psychological factors associated with firesetting: Evidence of a treatment effect from a non-randomized trial with male prisoners

Theresa A. Gannon\*, Emma Alleyne, Helen Butler, Harriet Danby, Aparna Kapoor, Tamsin Lovell, Katarina Mozova, Elizabeth Spruin, Tracey Tostevin, Nichola Tyler, Caoilte Ó Ciardha

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**ABSTRACT**

Despite huge societal costs associated with firesetting, no standardized therapy has been developed to address this hugely damaging behavior. This study reports the evaluation of the first standardized CBT group designed specifically to target deliberate firesetting in male prisoners (the Firesetting Intervention Programme for Prisoners; FIPP). Fifty-four male prisoners who had set a deliberate fire were referred for FIPP treatment by their prison establishment and psychologically assessed at baseline, immediately post treatment, and three-months post treatment. Prisoners who were treatment eligible yet resided at prison establishments not identified for FIPP treatment were recruited as Treatment as Usual controls and tested at equivalent time-points. Results showed that FIPP participants improved on one of three primary outcomes (i.e., problematic fire interest and associations with fire), and made some improvement on secondary outcomes (i.e., attitudes towards violence and antisocial attitudes) post treatment relative to controls. Most notable gains were made on the primary outcome of fire interest and associations with fire and individuals who gained in this area tended to self-report more serious firesetting behavior. FIPP participants maintained all key improvements at three-month follow up. These outcomes suggest that specialist CBT should be targeted at those holding the most serious firesetting history.

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# To find out more...



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