

Editorial Comment

It is a proud moment that this edition of the Prison Service Journal encapsulates such a wide range of truly diverse content originating from many jurisdictions. The articles in this edition include; research exploring the impact of the importance of families and wellbeing on both prisoners and prison staff, articles on prison rape, and how to operate effective prison complaint systems, as well as interviews with very senior practitioners in HM Prison Service, including the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer.

The edition opens with an article by Sophie van der Valk and Mary Rogan, arising from a European Research Council funded study, focussing on prison complaints. Drawing on interviews with prisoners in Ireland, the authors explore the ways in which people in prison complain, as well as the implications of not having an effective or trusted outlet to make complaints. The article identifies significant challenges in how such a system operates in a prison context and may be of particular interest to those writing and implementing complaint policies and systems in custodial settings.

The second article, by Simon Venema and Eric Blaauw, examines the experience of imprisoned fathers in the Netherlands. This study provides a welcome insight into an important, but so far under-researched, topic: the needs and experiences of fatherhood and family relationships for people living in custody. The authors discuss the implications of their findings, including in relation to the principle of normalisation, and resettlement back into the community. The article provides important considerations for the development of family-focussed prison policies.

Laura McKendry, Rosemary Ricciardelli and Matthew Johnston's article presents their research relating to correctional staff's perspectives of the Employee and Family Assistance Programme in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada. In the context of the unique challenges faced by correctional employees, and the impact this can have on their wellbeing behaviour, the article examines users' perspectives of the systems and services intended to support them. Their analysis highlights the significance of the social and occupational context of prison-based work in influencing people's experiences and uptake of support services. Further, the findings demonstrate the need for health service providers to understand the nuances, complexities, and vulnerabilities of this specific occupation to design and deliver responsive services.

Our fourth article, by Craig Dunton, Heyden Smith and Frank Ferdik, examines prison administrator views of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), and its implementation in a South-eastern US prison system. The focus of PREA is to establish a zero-tolerance policy

for prison rape and sexual violence. Their findings may be of particular interest to those involved in the formation of policies designed to create safer and more inclusive institutional climates.

The edition includes two interviews. The first with Amy Rees, approximately one month into her new role as CEO of HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), about what motivates her in her work, what she hopes to achieve, and how she will approach the changes she hopes to make. The interview questions were compiled from speaking with people who live and work in HMPPS, and academics who study this field, resulting in a probing and illuminating interview for our readers. The second interview, with Helen Ryder and Tajinder Singh Matharu from HMPPS and Ryan Walker from the Howard League, took place shortly after His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation issued a report on 'inadequate' probation services in London, and a day before inspectors published a report calling for a root and branch overhaul of the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) model. As well as covering this area the interview covers recovery from the Covid pandemic, severe shortages in front-line staff in the criminal justice system and beyond in related services, and the move to 'One HMPPS' under the leadership of Amy Rees, as discussed in the preceding interview in this issue.

As well as the main articles and interviews, this edition includes three book reviews of varied topics. 'Penal Servitude: Convicts and Long-Term Imprisonment, 1853-1948' by Helen Johnston, Barry Godfrey and David J Cox examines what passed for the Criminal Justice system for over 100 years, illuminating the lives of those who experienced long-term imprisonment in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The central thesis of 'Male, Failed and Jailed: The Revolving Door of Imprisonment in the UK', by David Maguire, is that working-class men begin their journeys into prison many years earlier in impoverished neighbourhoods and institutional settings where they develop 'hard' masculinities that not only prepare them for "imprisonment but continue to 'trap' them 'in the revolving door of imprisonment.'" Finally, 'Dementia in Prison: An ethical framework to support research, practice and prisoners', edited by Joanne Brooke, is primarily aimed at healthcare professionals and prison staff and explores the challenges associated with dementia, which an increasing number of older prisoners are now experiencing.

This edition offers a wide range of material, aimed to reflect the eclectic interests of all of our readers and intended to stimulate reflection and debate about prison practices, and the needs of people living and working in this context.