

# editorial

## managerialism

Editors Peter Francis and Barry Loveday set the issue in context.

One of the most significant developments within criminal justice in recent years has been the application of 'new managerialism' to most services within the system. As has become all too clear since 1997, any hope that 'New Labour' would abandon some of the more questionable features of this approach has proved to be misplaced. It has in fact demonstrated a commitment to 'managerialism' which appears to surpass that of the previous Conservative Government. The application of performance measurement and performance indicators continues to be seen as the best way to improve efficiency and effectiveness in public services. There has been no real debate about the use of these as a mechanism of accountability which effectively replaced electoral accountability during the Conservative decades. Performance pay and central directives by way of 'target setting' continue to be as central a characteristic of the current government as of its predecessor. This might suggest either a lack of imagination within the ranks of 'New Labour' or alternatively their capture by the Whitehall machine and the implementation of established bureaucratic agendas which almost invariably have quite severe consequences for defendants rights in particular but also civil rights of citizens more generally.

There has, of course, been evidence of policy change, particularly in relation to crime reduction and crime prevention by

way of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It is also the case however that targets for the reduction of specific types of offence are set and will be monitored centrally (irrespective of any local priority identified within the local crime audit). This approach is of course best demonstrated in the government's 'Strategic Plan' for criminal justice, published last year. It remains one of the most explicit examples of the rather mechanistic 'rational management' approaches to crime control which characterise new managerialism (and, perhaps, a further example in policy terms of hope over experience). None of this would matter if performance management in terms of impact on criminal justice agencies was neutral. But this is far from being the case. As both the Glidewell Report on the CPS and more recently the Report from HMIC on Police Integrity have shown, this management approach can have a highly significant effect both internally to the organisation and externally to those who might use these services. It is evident that the continued application of New Public Management ('NPM') to public services comes at some cost. This ought to be sufficient to raise some doubts about its central location in terms of public service management. Sadly, given 'New Labours' commitment to certain 'old' programmes it is clearly unlikely to do so.

It is within this context that this issue of *Criminal Justice Matters* has been compiled and edited. Our main aim has been to examine the application and impact

managerialism, performance measurement and review have had on the operation of the criminal justice process and within the various core agencies which make up the criminal justice system. To this end, we asked some contributors to provide general overviews in order to set the issue in context, whilst asking other contributors to provide more detailed and reflective first hand accounts of their experiences of the managerialist agenda within specific areas of criminal justice. In doing so we hope the issue lends insight into the managerialist context and climate of criminal justice philosophy and practice for those readers with little direct experience of it, while offering a sober assessment and critique for those that do. The central theme running throughout the various contributions to this issue is that more of the same may not be enough.

The issue opens with two introductory and wide ranging articles - authored by **Eric Caines** and **Paul Flynn** - on the development, form, content and impact of new managerialism across public services including criminal justice. It is our view that both contributions provide succinct overviews of the context within which changes around crime and criminal justice have and are taking place, and offer fitting and apt descriptive backdrops against which many of the other contributions to this issue depart.

The area of criminal justice which has borne the brunt of much managerialist thinking has been the prison service of England and Wales. **Shane Bryans** explores the reality of managerialism and its impact upon the role of the governor. In doing so, he argues that 'management tools and measurement must not be allowed to become an end in themselves'. Rather, Bryans forwards the necessity of what he terms 'humanitarian managerialism' involving a focus upon human rights, individuality and fairness in which the central purpose is the contribution to humane and purposeful prisons. **David Wilson** develops Bryan's discussion through an examination of the impact new managerialism has had on the process of governing (and in particular on what he sees as the move from governing to managing), while **Steve Hamer** outlines and examines the recent changes relating to the Prison Service's Drug Strategy Unit. Rounding up this issue's examination of managerialism in the prison service, **Dave McDonnell** discusses the positive influence private sector thinking has had upon the service and on

prison management.

Managerialist developments in the probation service are reasonably similar to those in other public services including the prison service, although the onset of them, as **Sue Wade** identifies, was a little later for the probation service. Outlining the combined growth in managerial processes and the highly structured evidence based practice initiative across probation thinking and operation, Sue Wade examines the impact of managerialism in terms of the shifting emphasis within probation towards law enforcement and risk assessment/treatment methodologies. **Paul Senior** offers a response to the article published in the last CJM by Mike Nellis on the changing nature and practice of probation training.

Beyond these two services, all aspects and areas of the criminal justice system have been effected by the new managerialist agenda.

**John Raine** explores the transformation and modernisation process of the magistrates' courts, **Jack Holland** examines the managerial impact of partnership working with Youth Offender Teams, while the three final articles focus on managerialism, the public police and private policing arrangements. **Barry Loveday** addresses the changing climate of new managerialism in the public police; **Stewart Parkinson** and **Ian Marsh** offer a case study of partnership working showing how the nature and shape of policing in general and Merseyside Police in particular has been driven by business practice and performance culturalism; and **Mark Button** assesses the government's proposals for regulation of the private security industry.

It has not proved possible, given the size and nature of CJM, to examine the application and impact of new managerialism across all levels and services of criminal justice. We do however hope that the contributions to this issue prove informative and offer illumination of the nature and effect managerialist discourse and practice is having across the criminal justice system. Certainly some of the contributions highlight the 'costs' associated with its application, and the very real tensions and problems that arise as a result. Clear evidence, some would say, that old wine in new bottles is not enough to effect positive, humane and purposeful change.

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