

editorial

training

Editor Peter Francis sets this issue in context.

In 1998 the Community Justice National Training Organisation (CJNTO) was established. Its role, as Helen Schoffield its Chief Executive details in this issue, is to work in partnership with a variety of key stakeholders to develop standards and qualifications for organisations involved in crime reduction, community safety, working with offending behaviour, victims, survivors and witnesses. By April 2000, the CJNTO was one of 75 National Training Organisations (NTOs) that had been recognised by the Secretary of State, covering some 94% of the workforce. Subsequently, national occupational standards and S/NVQs for the Community Justice Sector were approved by QCA / SQA in November 2000 and launched in March 2001.

National Training Organisations are employer-led bodies. They are responsible for the development of skills to meet the business needs of employment sectors throughout the UK. According to the DFEE, NTOs have a primary role in galvanising employer involvement in the development and uptake of competence-based standards, education, training and qualifications to help businesses improve competitiveness at home and abroad. NTOs are the government's recognised 'voice of employers'. Their key strategic roles are to: identify skill shortages and the training needs of the whole of their sector; influence and advise Government policy on education and careers guidance, and training arrangements and their solutions; lead the development of qualifications based on national occupational standards and advise on the national qualification structure; and effectively communicate and network with their employer

base and key partners to implement strategies.

The development of the CJNTO, together with NTOs whose terms of reference include policing, local government, custodial care and social care, highlights not only the centrality given to learning, but also the changing nature and development of training across criminal justice and related areas generally. The provision and delivery of training has not only become a growth area, but an increasingly important sector in its own right. The numbers of staff involved in the development and delivery of training has grown progressively over recent years, as have the numbers of training organisations. Moreover trainers engage ever more members of the criminal justice workforce regularly and the annual turnover and budgets of training organisations are substantial. Training within and across the criminal justice sector today is big business.

A number of factors can be identified behind this growth. First, over the last two decades there has been a substantial increase in legislative and policy developments, and the provision and delivery of training and learning has expanded its capacity in consequence. Second, developments surrounding the identification and development of occupational standards have provided the opportunity for the expansion of training provision. Third, training organisations have quickly responded to the managerial culture and climate of performance measures and indicators, alongside concerns to standardise, rationalise and ensure consistency across practice. Fourth, the pursuit of a 'What Works' agenda underpinned by evidence has created opportunities for a

growth in mechanisms for the dissemination of information around crime reduction, community safety, youth justice, working with offenders, etc. Fifth, debates surrounding accountability, redress and governance have created a climate in which training, to ensure competence and professionalism across all areas of service delivery and development, has thrived.

Yet while the growth of training can be understood, questions arise with regards to its delivery, nature, purpose and outcome. For example, what is the purpose of training? Who delivers the training and what are their competencies for doing so? What are the differences and relationship between training, teaching and assessment? How is training delivered most effectively? How should training be developed? How is the demand for training measured? How is the efficacy of training assessed? How is the impact of training evaluated? Perhaps a critical question is who really benefits from training? Given the growth in the training sector over recent years, there is an argument that training could become an end in itself, or a means to an end rather than of intrinsic value in itself (i.e. training as investment). These questions clearly pinpoint the need for ongoing critical and reflexive assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the provision, delivery and impact of training across the criminal justice sector. Of particular importance are the concerns and experiences of those criminal justice workers who have been/are recipients of training, as well as those involved in its development, provision and delivery.

This issue of Criminal Justice Matters attempts to shed some light on the nature, provision and influence of training across the criminal justice sector. Given the size and space of CJM, it goes without saying that it would have proved impossible to cover all elements and areas surrounding training in criminal justice today. Rather, we have taken a more modest approach; to address a number of key issues effecting the criminal justice sector today, making sure to offer a broad focus. As a result, articles

explore the training needs associated with the introduction of referral orders and in the delivery of restorative justice as part of provisions laid down in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. We also focus discussion upon the development and operation of the NTO sector, and in particular the Community Justice NTO. We examine and debate developments in probation training. In doing so, we raise the question as to what might be learned from these developments for learning and training need, assessment and provision. This issue also focuses upon training provision in relation to drugs prevention, magistrates' justice and the prison service. Two particular areas that we were keen to address were the training needs of the 'community' (for example in relation to community capacity building and in relation to developments across 'community safety' generally) and the issues relating to training needs and training efficacy within the private criminal justice system. In addressing these issues and questions, we draw upon a range of expertise from contributors who have experience working within academic, practitioner, training and development roles.

We begin our discussion and review of training in criminal justice with an assessment by Gordon Hughes and Adam Edwards of one of the fastest growing sectors within criminal justice training, the community safety sector. In doing so, they open this issue with a call for a more critical and reflexive culture "which encourages a normative engagement among practitioners with the pressing and irreducibly political and moral questions raised by the current crime control strategies..." It is a call that the criminal justice sector generally could do well to engage with over the coming months and years.

Peter Francis is a Senior Lecturer in the Sociology and Criminology Subject Group and a member of the management team of the Community Safety Research Unit, University of Northumbria at Newcastle.