

Editorial

This bespoke general edition of the Prison Service Journal brings together contributions from some of the speakers at the annual Perrie Lectures series and a range of articles that will be of interest to our diverse readership, with the aim to promote discussion, debate, and reflection. The edition concludes with a selection of book reviews and the announcement of the 2024 'Bennett Award' for outstanding article of the year.

The first three articles are taken from the Perrie Lectures. The Perrie Lectures is an annual event, which has the purpose of stimulating dialogue between criminal justice organisations, the voluntary sector, and all those with an academic, legal, or practical interest in people in prison and their families. The theme for the 2024 Perrie Lecture was *Recruiting, Training and Retaining Great Prison Officers*.

Prison officers are crucial to the achievement of the goals of prisons. This has resulted in changes to the prison officer role. Although prison officers continue to do basic routine custodial work, they are also expected to occupy prisoners in purposeful activity and help them acknowledge and address their offending behaviour. The increased demand on prison officers has meant they are at greater risk of work-related stress, mental health problems and burnout, because they deal with difficult, emotional, threatening, and dangerous situations. It is therefore paramount that there is an increased focus on the role of prison officers and their wellbeing, to put them in the best position to do an important job well and improve retention. The first article is a transcript of a presentation given at The Perrie Lectures 2024. **Dr. Georgia Barnett and Dr Helen Wakeling** discuss the importance of prison officer wellbeing.

In the second article transcript, we hear from **Prof Berit Johnsen and Dr Vanja Lundgren Sørli**, they explore how the term 'prison officer' may act as a reductive term that no longer aligns with the professionalisation of the role. Illuminating the education of prison officers in Norway and the principles that guide this education role, they articulately show that prison officers are more than turnkeys.

The final article transcript from the Perrie Lectures 2024 in this edition, continues with the theme of how the prison officer role is perceived as an underappreciated profession within the sector and by the wider public. Written by **Andi Brierley and Max Dennehy**, they share their reflections from the book they edited — *The Good Prison Officer: Inside Perspectives*. They embark on a thought-provoking discussion that compels the reader to rethink the term 'rehabilitation' as a functional concept, that not only negatively impacts the lives of prisoners but has a detrimental effect on the morale of prison staff, and the retention of prison officers.

It's quite pertinent that the Perrie Lectures articles are followed by an article co-written by **Scott Thomas and Dr Helen Nichols**. They completed a critical review of prison education and posed a fundamental question — does lived experience reflect the government's narrative of education being a key tool to aid rehabilitation, or whether officials are simply paying 'lip service' to a required element of the prison regime.

The fifth article by **Helen Downham** discusses a prison activity that is generally under-researched — prison libraries. Prison libraries are a unique space within prisons because they promote positive activities by offering a calming community hub, while facilitating informal education that can support rehabilitation. This article endeavours to add to the empirical evidence of prison library research. In the final article **David Adlington-Rivers** discusses to what extent hope theory could transform the lives of people in and released from prison, with the aim to increase awareness of hope theory in forensic environments.

There are four book reviews in this edition. The first is a review of **Body Searches and Imprisonment** edited by Tom Daems and reviewed by **Ray Taylor**. This book explores and addresses body search practices in prison environments from different perspectives and different national contexts within Europe. It also highlights the different effects being routinely and regularly searched may have on the people who are subjected to the practice. The second book **Introduction to Convict Criminology**

by **Jeffrey Ian Ross** was reviewed by **Dr Baris Cayli Messina**. Using the language of the author, this book illuminates the positive impact of the convict's voice in the fields of corrections, criminology, criminal justice', and policy making. **Creating Space for Shakespeare — Working with Marginalized Communities**, by **Rowan Mackenzie** and reviewed by **Martin Kettle** is the third book review. This book is part of a series on 'Shakespeare and social justice, a research project that examined the ways in which performing Shakespeare can offer opportunities for reflection, transformation, and dialogue for people who feel imprisoned, whether literally or metaphorically. The final book review **Unmasking**

the Sexual Offender by **Veronique N. Valliere** and reviewed by **Emma Tuschick**, details the motivations, techniques, and dynamics of sexual offenders and their behaviour, and provides an analysis of the factors that contribute to sexual offending, including psychological, environmental, and situational influences.

This edition concludes with the announcement of the 2024 'Bennett Award' for outstanding article of the year from special issue 272 — Knowledge Equity in Carceral Research. The winning article was co-written by Donna and Mark entitled '*Exploring Friendships behind Prison Walls through a Knowledge Equity Approach*'.