

to Stay', which brims with evangelistic zeal for the merits of the privatisation process. He claims that the existence of The Wolds and Blakenhurst has already produced remarkable progress at Manchester, and will force up standards in the rest of the service. His main topic is the development of links between private and public sectors and this affords an example of the extent of his enthusiasm for a free market approach: arguing that mutual support for operational emergencies should be extended to involve the private prisons, he advocates a free market "network of informal agreements between governors" in preference to an official system. It seems clear to me that even if the necessary mutual trust existed (which it does not), this informality would be a recipe for the worst kind of operational disaster. Anyway, it is revealing that he appears to want the support of public sector staff in these situations, and interesting that he appeals for the development of some sort of trade association to facilitate co-operation between public and private sectors in training and standardisation schemes. Is this because it's cold out there, and he wants to come back in?

This enthusiasm for privatisation is strongly counterbalanced by Kate Foley whose experience with NATFHE allows her to give a sobering account of the market testing of prison education. Criticising the secrecy that surrounded the process and examining in some detail the TUPE regulations which protect existing staff, she poses the central question of whether the quality of the service has really been improved by the market testing process.

The most practical contribution comes from

Robin Halward, the governor of Manchester prison, who tells the story of the inhouse bid at Manchester, giving a number of important insights into this process for anyone (un)fortunate enough to become involved in it. He emphasises the importance of keeping staff (and unions) informed and involved in the process and of assembling a strong and representative team to put together the bid. In this connection he raises a number of important questions about just how the process will work in existing prisons: for instance, who will manage the bid? Plans are for it to be the current governor of the establishment, but if the reason for the market test is poor performance, can the existing management really put together a credible bid? Also, what level of access should competitors be afforded to a prison that is already functioning? While I cannot agree that "the successful in-house bid for Manchester prison has raised the morale of the whole public sector Prison Service", it is good to hear that he sees his responsibility to inform developments in the rest of the service, and this article is certainly an important contribution to that process.

A very useful mixture of general information, theoretical discussion, and practical tips, this is an excellent book which raises the question of why it is the Prison Reform Trust and not the Prison Service that is encouraging this sort of debate and discussion.

Chris Barnett-Page
Lifer Management Unit.



Dear Sir

Ian Benson's article "Education in Prisons" is well timed, well presented and clearly focuses upon the many positive developments the competitive tendering process has produced.

The tendering, and the subsequent contracting out was, by the secretive nature in which it was conducted, destructive. The Staff College's recommendations and report were, for 'commercial' reasons, never made public. This caused existing staff working in Prison Education to, rightly or wrongly,

mistrust the process and more so the originators of the process.

No information or just a little information breeds disinformation.

The Consortium has been given the consultancy reporting on the Core Education Curriculum, Ian Benson highlights this in his article. This initiative is long overdue and will be welcomed by practitioners.

I hope the Consultant's report will be published. If not the mistrust which sullied the tendering process will continue with a deleterious effect upon the

teaching staff and the curriculum they deliver to inmates.

I hope, as both a taxpayer and an employee working in Prison Education, I will be allowed to know what influences decisions concerning my professional work and how decisions are reached - open government and good information produces a trusting and loyal work force - secrecy by policy makers breeds distrust.

Yours faithfully

Paul Ripley
Education Co-ordinator
HMP Whatton/Clarendon
College Nottingham
Corporation

Letters

Letters

Dear Sir

I found Professor Morgan's article "Thoughts about Control" (May issue) genuinely interesting. But Professor Morgan missed something vital in relation to control in his assessment of The Wolds. This was probably because he fell into the trap of stereotyping prisoners "The inhabitants behave as they would at home in Sheffield or Hull. They doss, hang around, duck and dive".

Prisoners are mostly people like us and when considering conditions in prison, we should look at it as if we were the

prisoners. People often worry about their personal safety in prison. They want staff to be in charge so that they can be safe. Everything else comes after that. Only then can we begin the work of getting prisoners to participate in a responsible way and to develop a positive purpose.

My criticism of The Wolds and I experienced opening a similar sized remand prison about the same time, was that staff manning and deployment represented, in my view, an inadequate provision to reassure prisoners that staff were in charge. In other words it was ripe for the exploitation of

prisoners by prisoners. The Wolds has much to commend it and prisoners no doubt appreciate these things but a criminal dominated sub-culture however orderly, is wrong.

As David Wilson argues in his article "Confronting Crime in Prisons" (same issue P.S.J.) we need to attack crime inside prison as well as outside. It can be done but only if prisoners feel safe and trust a prison's staff.

Your faithfully

David Waplington
Governor

HMYOI Lancaster Farms

Seminars

PRODUCTION OF INMATES TO COURT SHARING THE PROBLEM

REPORT OF A ONE DAY SEMINAR

HOSTED BY MR JOHN ALLDRIDGE, GOVERNOR, HMP/YOI STOKE HEATH
ON BEHALF OF MR DAI CURTIS, AREA MANAGER, MERCIA

5 MAY 1994

Tom Law,
Senior Probation Officer

Barry Pierce,
Principal Officer

Serious problems are apparent in the production of inmates to Magistrates Court in particular. These were highlighted in Pre Trial Issues recommendation paper - WGPTI April 1993 and steps are being taken by the various criminal justice agencies to address these difficulties.

On 5 May 1994 HMP/YOI Stoke Heath hosted a one day seminar. The aim was to provide a forum for sharing and understanding the respective problems encountered by the relevant agencies and achieving greater co-operation in seeking effective solutions. Dai Curtis, the Area Manager for Mercia Region, chaired the event. Speakers included Judge Elisabeth Fisher, Midlands and Oxford Circuit; Jim

Shaw, Crown Prosecution Service, Shropshire; Ms Margaret Headon, Clerk to the Justices, Cirencester; Superintendent Ron Morris, West Mercia Police; and John Alldridge, Governor HMP/YOI Stoke Heath. Agencies represented included the judiciary, magistrates, clerks to the justices, Group 4, several prisons, the police, the probation service and the legal profession. Below is a synopsis of the day's event, together with observations and recommendations.

Dai Curtis opened the day with a welcome to the participants. He began by commenting that many Governors had not initially been aware of the existence of Pre Trial Issues Report and had been surprised at some of the undertakings given by the