

Working together to cut numbers in the criminal justice system

Tammy McGloughlin and Helen Mills introduce this issue of *cjm*

Here at the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, we are not strictly speaking a campaigning organisation. However, we are interested in forming a coalition with academics, practitioners, our members and all those for whom the current rate of imprisonment and the government's concerted lack of commitment to the significant reduction of prison numbers, is of grave and ongoing concern; it is unacceptable.

Is it too ambitious to seek a reduction in numbers in terms of thousands rather than hundreds? We don't think so and it will be an ongoing focus of the Centre's work to gather together supporters who share our downsizing vision at a point when UK prison numbers have breached the 100,000 mark this year.

This work compliments our Works for Freedom website (www.worksforfreedom.org), which features positive, and supportive, interventions intended to help those at risk of being caught up the criminal justice system. If you would like to get involved, or hear more about the coalition then contact us at penalexcess@crimeandjustice.org.uk

It is therefore timely that the themed section for this issue of *cjm*, guest edited by **Vincenzo Ruggiero**, looks at the poverty of punishment and 'its effects on individuals and society and, ultimately, its visible dysfunctions'. Contributors consider the authoritarian responses to last summer's riots, the future of probation and the reliance on custodial sentences as punishment.

In the first of the topical articles, **Frances P Bernat** and **Nicholas Godlove** consider the way in which 'cybercrimes are committed behind the veil anonymity that exists on the internet'. They propose a universal jurisdiction to deal with the practices. **Ross McGarry** questions the government's commitment to protecting British soldiers while on active service during the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq. Looking beyond 'urban crimes', **Jane Jones** investigates the 'dichotomy that arguably has underpinned the "rural idyll" myth'.

The first part of the controversial 2011 Winsor Review of police pay and conditions details proposed reductions to entry salaries and overtime for police staff, **Mark Brunger** reflects on the proposed police cuts and the consequence of 'the pervasive spread of private policing', and argues this is not simply symptomatic of the cuts but rather a continuation of 'the slow but deliberate path towards the privatisation of policing services that have been witnessed over the past 30 years or so'. He considers how in line with the privatisation of parts of the criminal justice system, private security firms will be taking over the running of sections of the police and he

questions where accountability will lie.

Some of the points raised by Brunger are expanded on, with an international perspective, by **Michael King** who considers the role of private investigators in Australia and the way in which their roles have become subject to higher entry requirements than the police but are subject to little scrutiny.

Sean Casey focuses on how young people are targeted with criminal justice measures creating 'outsiders', arguing that rather than interventions by the Youth Justice Service, children and young people should be treated with care not coercion.

In the first of an annual feature in *cjm*, **Christina Pantazis** and **Simon Pemberton** contribute their harm audit. The first harm audit considers 2010-2011. Supported by social harm data, they argue the way societies choose to operate is crucial to understanding the health and well-being of their populations and the harms they face. Each year Pantazis and Pemberton will update this analysis with new data about social harm in the United Kingdom for the year in question, so tracking the impact of Coalition policies on issues such as poverty and physical harm.

Finally, **Bill Puddicombe**, **Dan Corry**, **Chris Fox** and **Kevin Albertson** debate the merits and disadvantages of Payment by results and who may or may not be the beneficiaries. ■

Tammy McGloughlin is Publications Manager and **Helen Mills** is Research Associate at the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies

Reference

Winsor, T. (2011), Independent Review of Police Officer and Staff Remuneration and Conditions, London: The Stationery Office.

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