

# PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

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**Terence Morris** is Professor Emeritus of Criminology and Criminal Justice in the University of London, was the first director of the Mannheim Centre and taught at the London School of Economics from 1955-95. His works include *Pentonville: the sociology of an English prison* (with Pauline Morris, 1963).

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Cover photograph courtesy HMP Pentonville.

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The Editorial Board wishes to make clear that the views expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Prison Service.

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# Editorial Comment

Three articles in this edition focus on HMP Pentonville, the iconic London prison. Built by Joshua Jebb in 1840-42, it is the oldest built prison in the country, created at the time of the birth of the modern prison system. The first article is a version of a lecture delivered by Professor Alison Liebling, revisiting the groundbreaking sociological study of Pentonville conducted by Terence Morris and Pauline Morris in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Liebling describes the Morris's work as 'both the first English sociological study of a prison, and an important historical record of a very significant period in penal affairs as well as in prison sociology'. She draws upon key aspects of the Morris's work and contrasts this with her own contemporary observations of Pentonville and prison more generally. The contours she observes reveal both continuity and change, and this in itself speaks of the nature of prisons and late modern society. The second article is by Terence Morris, who brings vividly to life his inspiration for the research, the process of conducting it and the reality of prison conditions at the time. He also discusses the responses he received and his subsequent attempts to work with the Prison Service in order to achieve change. He closes with reflections on the continuing relevance of the study to contemporary challenges in prison management. The final article is an interview with the current Governor of HMP Pentonville, Gary Monaghan, who reveals the challenges of managing a transient population characterised by high levels of mental illness, drug dependency and social exclusion. By focussing on a single establishment over a period of half a century, these articles reveal the contemporary challenges of prisons, but also the ways that they have been reshaped by the conditions of late modernity, whilst also continuing to reflect deeply embedded aspects of wider society.

Another articles focussing on a specific prison is the interview with Andy Lattimore, Governor of HMP Isle of Wight, in which he discusses the closure of Camp Hill. This account reveals the process of managing such a major organisational change, but is also a poignant evocation of what for many staff and prisoners may have been a life changing event.

The other articles in this edition focus on aspects of prison regimes and services and attempt to promote

positive developments in policy and practice. Gwen Lewis and Rosie Meek offer a detailed analysis of physical education for young offenders in thirty four establishments. Their analysis suggest that provision is varied but they are clear that its potential is immense, suggesting that, 'Sport in particular then offers a unique means to address issues of health, offending behaviour and rehabilitation in a population which can be difficult to engage and motivate through traditional means'. Bethany Schmidt from University of Cambridge provides the key results from an ethnographic study of prisoner councils at three prisons operated under the auspices of User Voice. This research is effusive about the benefits not only in terms of the internal prison environment but also in helping prisoners to make changes in their own sense of identity which are the foundation for building a life outside of crime. Schmidt concludes that, 'Treating prisoners as citizens — people with value, worth, and purpose that can productively contribute to their communities has already been shown to reduce recidivism and improve prison functioning without the need to compromise security or custodial obligations, the User Voice council an make a significant contribution to this process'.

Two further articles in this edition focus on prisoners and their families. Martin Manby, Leanne Monchuk and Kathryn Sharratt provide an evaluation of a family support project at HMP New Hall, working with women in a range of circumstances, from those maintaining family contacts, to those whose children are in care. A further article by Helen O'Keeffe from Edge Hill University is based on a study of how school and head teachers support pupils whose parents are in prison. These articles aim to reveal the sometimes hidden pains and collateral effects of imprisonment and also suggest ways in which these can be ameliorated through good practice.

This edition, as with many, reflects the aims of *Prison Service Journal* to reflect upon imprisonment and society, and to promote progressive approaches in policy and practice. Sadly, Terence Morris died from Motor Neurone Disease in July 2013 between writing and publication. This edition is dedicated to his pioneering and principled work on prisons.

# The Benefits of Sport and Physical Education for Young Men in Prison:

## An Exploration of Policy and Practice in England and Wales

**Gwen Lewis** is an assistant research psychologist at Royal Holloway, University of London and **Dr Rosie Meek** is Head of Criminology and Sociology at Royal Holloway, University of London.

### Introduction

**Sport and physical activity is a universal addition to regimes across the secure estate in England and Wales and elsewhere. Although early criminal policy interventions incorporating sport were typically based on notions of deterrence and punishment — namely by enforcing physically and mentally demanding regimes on young offenders by means of American style ‘boot camps’ — attention has more recently been focussed on how the delivery of sport in prisons can confer benefits in terms of improving prisoners’ health and well-being<sup>1,2,3</sup>, promoting social control<sup>4</sup>, improving quality of life in prison<sup>5</sup>, facilitating behavioural change<sup>6</sup> and supporting rehabilitation<sup>7,8</sup>. However, to date there has been no comprehensive exploration of the delivery of sport and physical education (PE) within prisons in England and Wales, nor the extent to which current practice corresponds with existing policy. This paper seeks to summarise existing relevant policy and explore the extent to which current policy agendas are integrated into the everyday practice of delivering physical education and sport in prison establishments holding young offenders.**

### The Policy Context

The Physical Education Prison Service Instruction<sup>9</sup> states that, if circumstances reasonably permit, prisoners over 21 years old shall be given the opportunity to participate in physical activity (including a wide range of sporting activities) for at least one hour per week, whereas provision should be made for those under 21 years old to participate for an average of two hours per week. Taking part in physical education activities is not mandatory, but prisoners are actively encouraged to do so<sup>10</sup>, and a number of parliamentary publications refer explicitly to engagement — or lack of — in sporting activities in the context of promoting purposeful activity in prisons<sup>11,12</sup>. Contemporary policy regarding the delivery of sport in prison — in kin with social policy more widely — has also increasingly advocated the use of sport and physical activity as vehicles to achieve non-sport policy objectives<sup>13</sup>. The Prison Service Order<sup>14</sup> stated that PE programmes must not only offer sufficient access to physical activity, but also incorporate the key elements of regime provision, education, training and employment, resettlement and offending behaviour (where the balance between these elements is determined by national and local

1. Buckaloo, B. J., Krug, K. S., & Nelson, K. B. (2009). Exercise and the low-security inmate: Changes in depression, stress, and anxiety. *The Prison Journal*, 89, 3, 328-343.
2. Nelson, M., Specian, V. L., Tracy, N. C., & DeMello, J. J. (2006). The effects of moderate physical activity on offenders in rehabilitative program. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 57, 4, 276-285.
3. Verdot, C., S. Champely, S., Clement, M., & Massarelli, R. (2010). Physical practice as a means to limit the noxious effects of prison confinement: impact of a physical program on prisoners' perceived health and psychological well-being. *Psychologie Du Travail et Des Organisations*, 16 (1), 63-78.
4. Murtaza, T. S. & Uddin, R. (2011). Probing study on facilities of competitive sport in District Jail, Lucknow (India). *European Journal of Business and Management*, 3 (8), 69-79.
5. Johnsen, B. (2001). *Sport, masculinities and power relations in prison*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education, Oslo. Retrieved from: <http://www.krus.no/upload/PDF-dokumenter/disp01.pdf>
6. Farrington, D., Ditchfield, J., Hancock, G., Howard, P., Joliffe, D., Livingston, M. & Painter, K. (2002). *Evaluation of two intensive regimes for young offenders*. London, UK: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Publications. Retrieved from: <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hors239.pdf>
7. Andrews, J. P. & Andrews, G. J. (2003). Life in a secure unit: the rehabilitation of young people through the use of sport. *Sport Science and Medicine*, 56, pp. 531-550.
8. Meek, R. (2012). *The role of sport in promoting desistance from crime: an evaluation of the 2nd Chance Project Rugby and Football Academies at Portland Young Offender Institution*. Southampton, UK: University of Southampton.
9. Ministry of Justice (2011). *Physical Education (PE) for Prisoners*. PSI 58/2011.
10. National Audit Office (2006). *Serving Time: Prisoner Diet and Exercise*. London, UK: The Stationary Office.
11. Conservative Party (2011). *Prisons with a Purpose. Our Sentencing & Rehabilitation Revolution to Break the Cycle of Crime. Security Agenda* (Policy Green Paper No. 4). Brentford, UK: Conservative Party.
12. Home Affairs Select Committee (2004). *The committees Prison Diaries Project*. Retrieved from: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmhaff/193/19325.htm>
13. Bloyce, D. & Smith, A. (2010). *Sport Policy and Development: An Introduction*. Abington, UK: Routledge.
14. HM Prison Service (2009). *Physical Education*. PSO 4250. Issue No. 308.

needs as well as the availability of resources). Although this Prison Service Order's subsequent replacement, the 2011 Prison Service Instruction on physical education<sup>9</sup> no longer states that these elements must be incorporated in provision, it still advocates that they can be. Consequently, the delivery of sport in prisons intersects a number of policy objectives, including health promotion, addressing addictions and reducing reoffending.

In terms of health promotion, at the European level the World Health Organisation's *Health in Prisons*<sup>15</sup> and nationally, the Department of Health's strategy for improving the health of prisoners<sup>16</sup> outlined a whole-prison approach to promoting health, thus explicitly placing responsibility for improving the health of prisoners with all relevant departments and staff within prisons, rather than lying solely with health care professionals. Furthermore, policy directives have indicated that local plans for health promotion must address active living as a minimum requirement<sup>17</sup>, and that physical activity should be considered as an accompaniment to healthcare interventions and detoxification programmes<sup>9,18</sup> thus confirming that physical education departments clearly have an intrinsic role to play in offender health promotion.

With regard to linking sporting activity with the reducing offending agenda, European Union level recommendations for the reintegration of offenders stipulate that instilling an interest in new sports in prisoners (particularly young offenders) can assist in

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reducing the chances of re-offending<sup>19</sup> and it has consistently been found that young offenders frequently cite having something to do other than participating in crime as a primary factor that might help them desist from offending<sup>20,21,22</sup>. Reflecting these issues, the prison service physical education order (and to a lesser extent, the subsequent PE instruction) as well as the regimes for juveniles<sup>23</sup> order stated that activities should have a structured approach to support prisoners to tackle their offending behaviour, impact upon individuals' attitudes and behaviour,

enable prisoners to gain vocational qualifications and link effectively with resettlement policy and community provision, as well as to encourage the purposeful use of leisure time after release<sup>14</sup>.

### Method

Data extracted from reports published and made public by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons was utilised to capture variation in the delivery of sport across the male young offender estate. Specifically, the content of current published inspectorate reports for all thirty-four establishments holding male<sup>24</sup> young offender populations<sup>25</sup> in England and Wales were analysed in order to identify the provision, practices and problems

identified with regard to the delivery of PE and sport in relation to the policy areas of participation, health promotion, education, offending behaviour, resettlement and community partnerships. The prison establishments under consideration included those holding male juveniles aged 15 to 17 only ( $n = 6$ ),

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15. World Health Organisation (WHO) (2007). *Health in Prisons: A WHO guide to the essential in prison health*. Copenhagen, Denmark: WHO.
  16. Department of Health (2002). *Health Promoting Prisons: A Shared Approach*. Retrieved from: [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4006230](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4006230)
  17. HM Prison Service (2003). *Health Promotion*. PSO 3200.
  18. HM Prison Service (2000). *Clinical Services for Substance Misusers*. PSO 3550. Issue No. 116.
  19. EQUAL (2007). *European Union's level recommendations for the reintegration of (ex) offenders*. Retrieved from: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/equal/data/document/0707-recomoff.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/0707-recomoff.pdf)
  20. Audit Commission (1996). *Misspent Youth — Young People and Crime*. Oxford, UK: Audit Commission.
  21. Cripps, H. (2010). *Children and young people in custody 2009-2010. An analysis of the experiences of 15-18 year olds in prison*. HM inspectorate of Prisons/Youth Justice Board. London, UK: The Stationary Office.
  22. Summerfield, A. (2011). *Children and young people in custody 2010-2011. An analysis of the experiences of 15-18 year olds in prison*. HM inspectorate of Prisons/Youth Justice Board. London, UK: The Stationary Office.
  23. HM Prison Service (2004). *Regimes for juveniles*. PSO 4950.
  24. Establishments holding female young offenders were not considered for the purposes of this study, but the authors are currently investigating the role of sport in this prison population in a separate study.
  25. All establishments holding young offender populations in September 2010 were considered, although it is acknowledged that for some of these establishments their reception criteria has since be reconfigured and they no longer hold young adults.

young adults aged 18 to 25 only ( $n = 9$ ), both juveniles and young adults ( $n = 4$ ) and split sites holding young offenders and adults ( $n = 15$ ). Each establishment and the published year of the respective Inspectorate reports analysed are listed in Table 1. Analysis was conducted on the most recent inspectorate report that had been published for each establishment by September 2010, and in cases where a more recent inspectorate report had been published by April 2012, these were also analysed.

**Table 1:**  
**Prison establishment Inspectorate analysed**

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Year of Report (s)</b>
1. HMP Altcourse	2010
2. HMYOI Ashfield	2010, 2011
3. HMYOI Aylesbury	2009, 2011
4. HMYOI Brinsford	2009, 2011
5. HMP/YOI Chelmsford	2009, 2011
6. HMYOI Deerbolt	2009, 2011
7. HMP/YOI Elmley	2009
8. HMP Exeter	2009, 2011
9. HMYOI Feltham	2010, 2011
10. HMP Forest Bank	2007, 2010
11. HMYOI Glen Parva	2009
12. HMP Gloucester	2010
13. HMYOI Hindley	2009, 2011
14. HMP Hollesley Bay	2009
15. HMP Hull	2008
16. HMP Huntercombe	2008
17. HMP/YOI Isis	2011
18. HMYOI Lancaster Farms	2011
19. HMP Lewes	2007, 2010
20. HMP Lincoln	2007, 2010
21. HMP/YOI Littlehey	2011
22. HMP/YOI Moorland	2010
23. HMP/YOI Northallerton	2008, 2011
24. HMP/YOI Norwich	2010
25. HMP/YOI Parc	2010
26. HMYOI Portland	2009
27. HMYOI Reading	2009
28. HMYOI Rochester	2009, 2011
29. HMYOI Stoke Heath	2010, 2010
30. HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall	2009, 2009
31. HMP/YOI Thorn Cross	2008
32. HMYOI Warren Hill	2009, 2011
33. HMYOI Werrington	2009, 2011
34. HMYOI Wetherby	2009, 2010

Note: All inspectorate reports were authored by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons and published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, London and can be accessed at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi>

It is recognised that although inspectorate reports provide a valuable overview of the provision and practices observed and reported upon at the time of official inspection, the level of detail and focus is dependent on the type of inspection (i.e. full/short/follow up), the specific previous recommendations raised by the inspectorate for each establishment, and the time of inspection. It is acknowledged that there will be instances where the most recently published inspectorate report available for an establishment is dated (these may be up to four years old at the time of writing) and will not necessarily accurately reflect current practice and provision. As such the analysis provides a provisional insight into the diverse practice of sport delivery in young offenders' institutions whilst acknowledging that provision and practice in establishments changes rapidly and consequently cannot be comprehensively captured with absolute accuracy.

### **Provision and participation**

Across the thirty-four establishments accommodating male juvenile and young adult offenders a wide range of team and individual sports were available, including (but not limited to) football, rugby, cricket, basketball, volleyball, rounders, boxing, table tennis, dance, weight lifting, swimming, racquet sports, mountain biking, climbing, athletics, exercise classes and other gymnasium activities. Most establishments were observed by the inspectorate to offer a sufficient range of sporting activities and, not surprisingly, the reports indicated that the variety of sports offered within individual establishments was largely determined by local resources and preferences, mirroring the National Audit Office's<sup>10</sup> finding that the type of facilities available determines the range of activities offered to prisoners. All establishments appeared to offer both individual and team sports, with most having a combination of both indoor and outdoor provision, although no outdoor provision was available at one split site, and access to outdoor provision was lacking at one of the juvenile establishments and one split site.

In terms of promoting good practice of the use of sport and leisure activities in work with young men in prison, the content of the inspectorate reports suggests that Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) may need to engage in further prisoner consultation, and target specific groups (e.g. vulnerable prisoners or those less likely to engage in sport) in order to establish which activities would best promote participation and motivation<sup>10</sup> and are consequently most effective in meeting prison targets. Offering taster sessions for sporting activities has already been identified as one way of effectively promoting

participation in sporting activities<sup>26</sup> however, such promotion should be done with an awareness that academic research has demonstrated that activities primarily focusing on the physical and individual aspects of sport (as opposed to the wider associated psychological processes) can result in negative outcome such as increased aggression<sup>27,28</sup>.

Analysis of the inspectorate reports also revealed that the amount of time prisoners were able to participate in PE per week and the resulting participation levels varied substantially across the different establishments — although it should be noted that the majority of establishments achieved the minimum recommended provision of two hours per week for those aged under 21 years old. It should also be acknowledged, however, that establishing baselines for participation in physical activities and making meaningful comparisons across establishments is difficult since few YOIs hold identical populations or have comparable facilities<sup>10</sup>. In the reports analysed, prisoner participation levels ranged from 93 per cent in one juvenile establishment to 37 per cent at a split site holding young offenders and adults. Participation levels in three establishments holding young adults, one prison holding both juveniles and young adults and one other split site for adults and young offenders were also deemed to be low. In a minority of instances, Inspectorate reports identified that access to PE was perceived to be insufficient or not equitable due to unclear selection criteria, whereas the provision at some establishments far exceeded minimum requirements. For example, one juvenile establishment scheduled six hours per week of core PE, plus additional access to recreational PE, thus offering young people up to 10 hours of PE a week. Promisingly, surveys of juveniles coordinated by the Inspectorate of Prisons have revealed that the number of young people who said they attended the gym at least five times a week and could exercise outside

everyday has increased consistently over the last four years<sup>20, 21, 29</sup>.

In some instances, although access to sufficient PE was deemed readily available, inspectorate reports revealed that participation was low, explained due to it being perceived as voluntary or due to clashes with other regime activities. The National Audit Office<sup>10</sup> previously identified low uptake rates being directly influenced by the range of activities and facilities available, the emphasis on particular activities within certain establishments, equity of access, and staff availability. Within juvenile facilities specifically, the type of facility has also been identified as contributing to participation levels — whereby higher proportions of young men attending the gym regularly were identified in dedicated sites for young offenders as opposed to split sites holding diverse age groups<sup>21, 26</sup>. Consistent with the National Audit Office's<sup>10</sup> findings regarding the entire prison estate, inspectorate reports have also indicated that increased access to PE in YOIs was often related to the prisoners' Incentives and Earned Privileges status, which comes as no surprise since access to the gym is widely acknowledged to be an important tool in rewarding good behaviour. For example, an inspection of an establishment holding young adults in 2011 noted that those

. . . although policy advocates equitable access to physical education among prisoners, in practice sport is often used as a reward for good behaviour and/or a punishment for poor behaviour.

on 'basic' status and 'standard' unemployed prisoners were entitled to one session of PE a week, whereas a 'standard' level employed prisoner would be entitled to two sessions of PE per week, and an 'enhanced' status prisoner would be entitled to three sessions per week. As such, although policy advocates equitable access to physical education among prisoners, in practice sport is often used as a reward for good behaviour and/or a punishment for poor behaviour. As research continues to explore how physical activity can be used most effectively in prisons, efforts may need to be made to ensure that prisoners who have reduced privileges or specific needs (such as

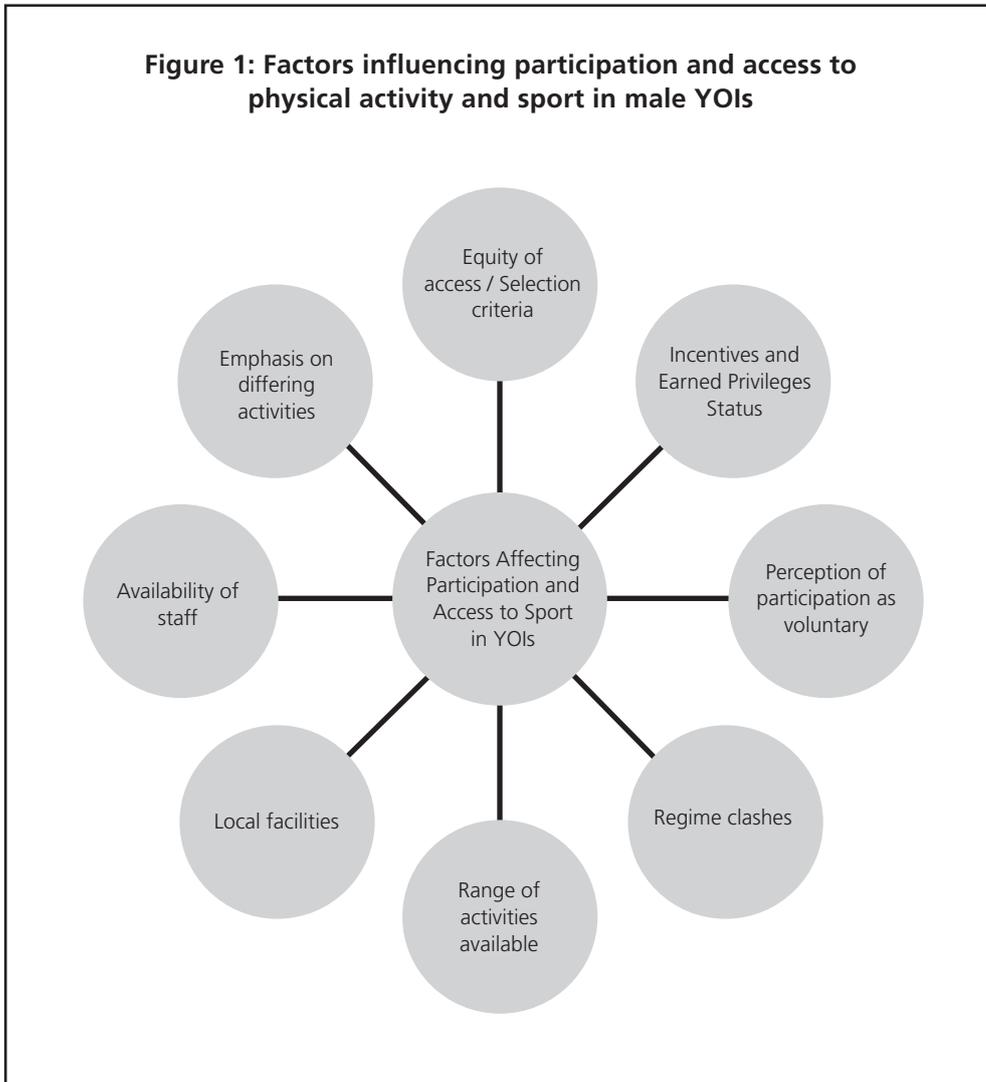
26. National Audit Office (2008). *Promoting Healthier Lifestyles for Prisoners*. London, UK: National Audit Office.

27. Rutten, E., Stams, G., Biesta, G., Schuengel, C., Dirks, E. & Hoeksma, J. (2007). The contribution of organised youth sport in antisocial and prosocial behaviour in adolescent athletes. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 36, 255-264.

28. Trulson, E. (1986). Martial Arts Training: A novel 'cure' for juvenile delinquency. *Human Relations*, 39, 1131-1140.

29. Tye, D. (2009). Children and Young People in Custody 2008–2009. *An analysis of the experiences of 15–18-year-olds in prison*. HM Inspectorate of Prisons/Youth Justice Board. London, UK: The Stationary Office.

**Figure 1: Factors influencing participation and access to physical activity and sport in male YOIs**



substantial mental health needs<sup>30</sup>) have the opportunity to participate in appropriate and effective forms of physical activity.

In summarising the policy literature and content of the inspectorate reports, we propose that access to and participation in physical activity in YOIs can — in addition to the individual differences in prisoners’ interest in sport — be largely explained by the external factors summarised in Figure 1.

In practice, analysis of inspectorate reports across the male juvenile and young adult secure estate indicates substantial variation in delivery of sport within young offender institutions. Figure 2 provides an overview of this variation, illustrating the number of establishments that, according to inspectorate reports, successfully endorse the use of sport in promoting varied aspects of health and education, resettlement and community partnerships.

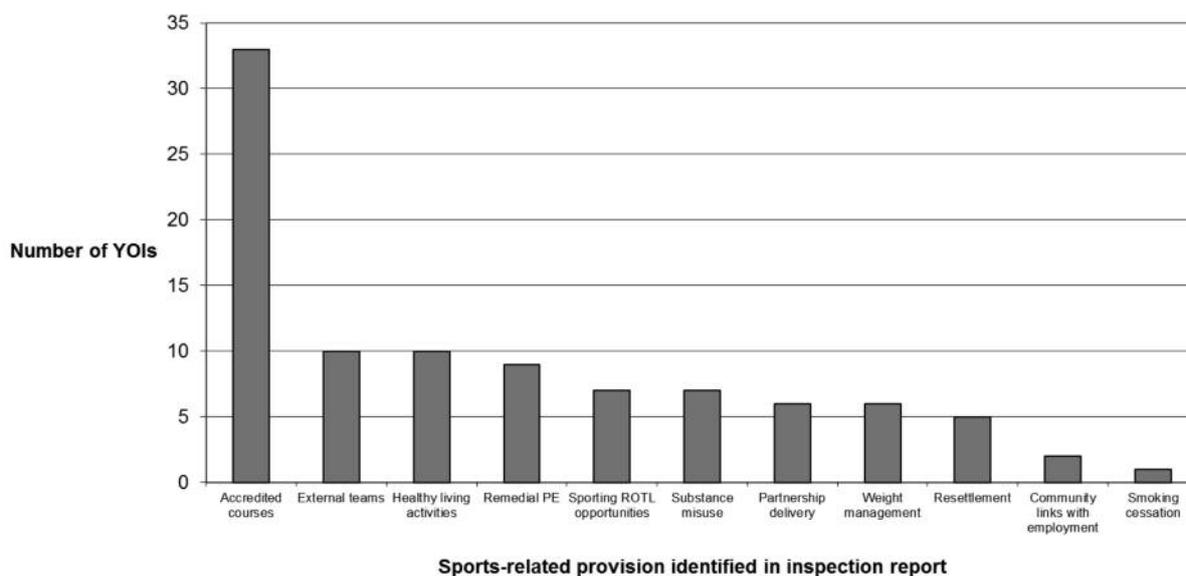
### Physical and mental health

In considering the relationship between health promotion and physical education, current inspectorate reports from across the young offender estate suggest that the majority of PE departments have good working relationships with health care. Inspectorate reports for almost a third of the establishments explicitly referred to healthy living activities or exercise referral programmes incorporated into PE programmes. Remedial PE was noted as available in nine of the establishments and clear links to substance misuse programmes were identified for seven prisons. Several PE departments offered specific weight loss/gain programmes, and one PE department was explicitly linked with a smoking cessation programme. In previous research, Lewis and Heer<sup>31</sup> identified an innovative scheme for

30. Harrington & Bailey (2005). *Mental Health Needs and Effectiveness of Provision for Young Offenders in Custody and in the Community*. London, UK: Youth Justice Board.

31. Lewis, E. & Heer, B. (2008). *Child Matters in Secure Settings: A practical toolkit for improving the health and well-being of young people*. London, UK: National Children’s Bureau.

**Figure 2: Frequency of wider sports-related policy provision within the YOI estate**



young adult offenders which aimed at improving physical and mental well-being through the use of physical activities to enhance confidence and develop social and emotional coping skills among those vulnerable to self-harm and bullying.

Nevertheless, when looking specifically at physical health, the accumulated inspectorate material and policy literature indicates that the degree to which health promotion is incorporated into PE programmes varies significantly across establishments, with some PE departments being able to make stronger links with health promotion than others. Initiatives promoting healthy living clearly have the potential to be integrated into PE delivery plans to ensure that the healthy prisons agenda<sup>15</sup> is translated into practice within PE departments. For example, young prisoners have already been identified as being particularly resistant to healthy eating<sup>23</sup>, so we would suggest that physical education departments are ideally situated to encourage and educate for better eating habits and work in partnership with those involved in wider health promotion remits. Moreover, introduction to physical activities through health promotion incentives and exercise on referral may also encourage prisoners to attend mainstream sporting activities with greater regularity.

### Education, training and employment

Offering accredited courses represents one way in which delivery of PE can be aligned with the reducing reoffending agenda by empowering young people with the necessary skills to increase their employment options after release. However, although a key strand of the reducing reoffending agenda focuses on providing education and training to equip offenders with skills to increase the chance of employment on release<sup>23</sup>, and despite the Prison Service Order previously stating that PE programmes must incorporate education and training as a key element, delivery of accredited programmes is no longer included as a minimum requirement of the PE Specification<sup>32</sup>. In practice however, almost all YOIs deliver PE related accredited learning courses and the Inspectorate of Prisons continues to review such provision. Inspectorate reports for thirty three of the thirty-four establishments considered explicitly referred to provision of accredited PE courses although the range and level available varied greatly across establishments. The range of accredited courses was however deemed to be limited in three young adult and one split site holding young adults and adults, while the courses available in three young adult and one mixed juvenile/young adult

32. Ministry of Justice (2011). *Physical Education (PE) for Prisoners*. PSI 58/2011.

establishment were only of a basic level. The range of accredited courses across the estate was diverse including GCSE PE, sports leader awards, certificates in diet and nutrition, awards in specific sporting activities, football coaching and junior manager awards, community sports leader awards, NVQs in sport, leisure and recreation, gym instructor and assistant qualifications. We also found evidence of qualifications offered in communication in the workplace, developing customer service and understanding personal physical fitness, Active IQ, HeartStart, first aid, Manual Handling and Duke of Edinburgh Awards, demonstrating a wide range of potential qualifications being drawn upon in this area.

Likewise, sports-based activities and placements for those eligible for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) provide an especially valuable opportunity for physical activity to be integrated with resettlement concerns, and sports-related leave in order to facilitate participation with outside sports clubs can play a key role in preparing individuals for release<sup>33</sup>. Inspectorate reports identified seven out of thirty-four establishments whose PE departments took advantage of the ROTL scheme to offer further opportunities for sport, physical activity and sports-based work placements in the community.

### Community partnerships

In terms of utilising and developing community partnerships when delivering PE to young people in prison, although the relevant Prison Service Instruction and policy documents such as *Every Child Matters in Secure Settings*<sup>27</sup> advocate this, the actual practice is varied and patchy. Clear links with community sporting organisations and teams were noted in current inspectorate reports for fifteen out of the thirty-four establishments considered, and community links were identified as lacking at one juvenile establishment. However, dedicated Young

Offender establishments (as opposed to split sites) were more likely to be cited as having good community links: over half the inspectorate reports for dedicated sites made reference to community links, compared to only a quarter of those for establishments holding young offenders and adults. Those establishments who had developed external links utilised community partnership for varying purposes, but predominantly to facilitate matches with external teams and receive specialist coaching. For example, the inspectorate reports highlighted

Inspectorate reports identified seven out of thirty-four establishments whose PE departments took advantage of the ROTL scheme to offer further opportunities for sport, physical activity and sports-based work placements in the community.

that some establishments worked in partnership with external organisations specifically to deliver sport to young offenders, for example two prisons delivered sports academies in partnership with local sports clubs while three others utilised professionals from external teams to plan and deliver coaching sessions. External partnerships in some instances also facilitated delivery of accredited courses. Given that partnership working and community links have been highlighted as a key element of best practice in the delivery of community based sports initiatives for young offenders<sup>31, 34</sup> and in light of the elevated level of social isolation following incarceration, it is recommended that positive community partnerships should continue to be advocated and expanded in the delivery of sport in prisons.

### Attitudes, thinking and behaviour

Existing policy clearly states that sport should also be promoted as a means to address offending attitudes and behaviours, but analysis of the YOI inspectorate reports suggests that in practice few YOIs explicitly target offending behaviour through sporting activities. Only five out of the thirty-four inspectorate reports identified sporting initiatives explicitly targeting offending behaviour. One way in which some YOIs have targeted offending behaviour and attitudes is through the delivery of team and group

33. Gras, L. (2005). Inmates on sports-related leaves: a decisive experience. *Champ Pénal*, Vol II. DOI: 10.4000/champenal.2302.

34. Big Lottery Fund (2009). *New Opportunities for PE and Sport: Final Evaluation Summary*. Retrieved from: [http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/er\\_eval\\_nopes\\_final\\_eval\\_summary.pdf](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/er_eval_nopes_final_eval_summary.pdf)

activities such as football, rugby, cricket, boxing and dance to encourage and develop prosocial behaviour and skills. Box 1 outlines one such intervention at HMP/YOI Portland as an example of good practice, whereby evaluation of the programme demonstrated significant improvements to critical elements such as attitudes towards offending as well as aggressive and impulsive behaviours<sup>8</sup>. Given that in community settings sport has effectively been used to engage young people and improve performance in activities which they don't like or are not motivated to engage in<sup>35,36</sup>, and that active learning has been identified as a key element in the 'what works' reducing reoffending literature<sup>19</sup>, the limited examples of prison-based programmes suggest that sport may be particularly valuable in motivating young prisoners who are reluctant to engage in classroom-based offender behaviour programmes. In practice however, such incentives are not currently widespread in the juvenile and young adult estate, and their success is often contingent upon innovative delivery, drawing on community partnerships as well as internal expertise.

### Conclusion

In sum, the practical delivery of sport to young offenders in custody in England and Wales is highly diverse and variable across establishments. Whilst the majority of establishments meet minimum policy standards in terms of access to physical education,

the degree to which the wider policy agendas of health promotion, education and training, and reducing reoffending are ingrained into the delivery of sport varies substantially, although the landscape continues to change rapidly. Clearly the distinct populations held and the availability of local resources prevents ubiquitous practice in the delivery of sport across young offender institutions. However, the examples identified demonstrate how key policy agendas can be more or less incorporated innovatively into physical education provision in order to improve the immediate and long term prospects of young prisoners. While policy makers and prison staff advocate sports potential to fulfil broader objectives, prisoners do not typically participate in sport to fulfil wider goals but rather for reasons associated with prison life itself<sup>5</sup>. Sport in particular then offers a unique means to address issues of health, offending behaviour and rehabilitation in a population which can be difficult to engage

and motivate through traditional means. Further work is required to identify and disseminate principles of best practice in order to inform policy, improve the evidence base, and encourage a move away from a universally uncritical acceptance of the positive value of all sports provision in current policy and practice.

*This article is based on an extract from the forthcoming book by the first author, 'Sport in Prison', due to be published by Routledge in October 2013.*

. . . the limited examples of prison-based programmes suggest that sport may be particularly valuable in motivating young prisoners who are reluctant to engage in classroom-based offender behaviour programmes.

35. Nichols, G. & Taylor, P. (1996). *West Yorkshire Sports Counselling: Final Evaluation Report*. Sheffield: University of Sheffield Management Unit.

36. Sharpe, C., Schagen, I. & Scott, E. (2004). *Playing for Success: The Longer Term Impact*. London, UK: Department for Education and Science/National Foundation for Educational Research.

## Box 1. An example of good practice from HMP/YOI Portland's Sports Academies

### *Structure of the Academies*

Seventy nine young men aged between 18 and 21 years participated in four sports academies delivered over 12-15 week periods from early 2010 to late 2011. The academies incorporated intensive football or rugby coaching, fitness training and matches, supplemented with group based activities. Activities were delivered by prison PE staff in collaboration with specialists from the community. Individually tailored resettlement case work was delivered during the course of the academies and continued after release by a transition worker employed by a partner community organisation, the 2<sup>nd</sup>Chance Project. Case work aimed to identify and improve resettlement needs, challenge negative attitudes, and establish positive working relationships between the academy participants and a network of professionals, with the ultimate aim of preparing and supporting each individual for a successful transition from custody to the community.

### *Key Outcomes*

Rigorous evaluation <sup>(See 8)</sup> revealed:

- Statistically significant improvements were identified on psychometric measures relating to beliefs about the use of aggression, impulsivity (with and without aggression) and general attitudes towards offending from prior to commencing the academies, immediately following the academies and up to 16 months after completing the academies.
- Staff and participants reported that the academies has a positive impact on quality of life with prison, promoted good behaviour, improved relationships between both prisoners and prisoners and staff, aided resettlement planning and the transition back to the community, improved offending attitudes and behaviours and promoted desistance from crime.

### *What Worked?*

In terms of delivery, feedback from the young men involved and delivery staff highlighted the following key elements as contributing to the successful outcomes of the academies:

- High quality expert sports coaching and training.
- The opportunity to gain vocational qualifications.
- Partnership delivery and endorsement by community based sporting organisations.
- Personalised resettlement support delivered via a resettlement caseworker and that was on-going once released into the community.

# User Voice and the Prison Council Model:

## A Summary of Key Findings from an Ethnographic Exploration of Participatory Governance in Three English Prisons

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### Introduction

**User Voice was established in 2009 ‘to foster dialogue between service providers and users that is mutually beneficial and results in better and more cost-effective services’<sup>1</sup>. Its organizational philosophy, ‘Only offenders can stop re-offending’, communicates the importance of personal choice and individual responsibility in behaviour and action, whereas the broader ethos of support through advocacy and solution-focused problem-solving directs User Voice’s services and initiatives.**

This study examines the User Voice prison council model that is currently operating in six prisons in England, Wales, and Ireland. The approach is distinguishable from other forms of prisoner representative councils or advocacy services in a number of ways: Firstly, User Voice is an outside, independent organisation contracted to each prison in order to develop, organize, and maintain each council. The organisation oversees the initial information and education process, encourages participation from both prisoners and staff, orchestrates the election phase, and provides ongoing support to ensure the council is kept active and accountable<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, User Voice employs ex-offenders who can provide modeling and potential role models for prisoners, as well as an alternative way for them to relate to and engage with prison staff. In addition, the relationships and forum that are established via the unique insight of the organisation can better reflect genuine concerns of prisoners and staff. These concerns may range from resettlement planning to lifestyle changes, or to improvement of relationships within the prison. On Election Day, prisoners and staff will vote for their preferred ‘party’, rather than electing specific individuals avoiding personal agendas or staff nominating ‘favourites’. This model incorporates User Voice’s unique approach that is based on democratic values of equal representation and giving prisoners a voice, therefore enabling a focus on issues pertinent to the whole prison community. Finally, although User Voice has a specific curriculum and protocols for its council model, it remains flexible in its approach to the differing environments and specific needs of each prison.

An ethnographic style of research was employed using participant observation as the primary source of data collection. Over a three-month period, nearly 100 hours were spent in three English prisons — HMP Birmingham, HMYOI Aylesbury, and HMP Maidstone — observing User Voice employees, prison staff, and prisoners. This entailed interviews, small group discussions, as well as direct observation. The prisons were selected for their varying stages of council development. The researcher attempted to ‘experience’ the council from both a prisoner and staff member viewpoint, whilst examining changes within the environment as a whole.

### Summary of Key Findings

The key theme emerging for prisoners, staff, and User Voice employees was that ‘the council is good for everyone’. Despite many staff initially expressing apprehension and at times outward hostility towards the council and how they perceived it to impact their workplace (e.g. increased power to prisoners, appeasement, or decreased recognition of staff needs), over time (after a council was established), anxieties lessened as positive outcomes began to emerge. A number of staff felt that their status within the prison hierarchy would suffer or be compromised as prisoners were given a stronger voice and increased ‘control’ over their environment. However, these anxieties diminished as staff saw that prisoners were concerned most about basic issues which when addressed increased their level of wellbeing by alleviating frustrations and uncertainty. This in turn improved staff-prisoner relationships and along with it job satisfaction.

Despite the personalized nature of responses, several themes were consistent across all three sites. For many prisoners, the council and participation in it assisted them in conceptualising a positive and productive identity with future-oriented aspirations. User Voice employees, whose ex-offender status revealed that ‘there can be a life outside of prison’, significantly aided this process. Second, by establishing a council that allowed prisoners to be recognized through constructive dialogue, efforts centred on community betterment

1. User Voice (2012) ‘Mission: What Do We Do?’. Available at: [www.uservice.org/about-us/mission/what-do-we-do/](http://www.uservice.org/about-us/mission/what-do-we-do/).

2. Contract lengths are typically one to two years.

allowed a sense of collective responsibility to be developed. This created an environment of inclusion and purpose, and impacted on the wider prison culture. Prisoner-staff relationships were reformulated on increased levels of recognition and trust, and many developed long-term faith that these relations would continue to get better, aided by the collaborative work needed to sustain the council. Lastly, the council enabled prisoners to feel more secure and certain in an often-unstable atmosphere, lessening tensions, anxiety, and increasing overall feelings of wellbeing.

### **Prisoner Identities**

Throughout the study it became apparent that identity and the desire to 'feel human' and 'be treated like a person' were daily reflections for prisoners. Being recognised and included in the council and voting process gave prisoners the confidence to take responsibility for their environment and commit to making it a better place. Through council participation prisoners were given the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue with each other, staff, and User Voice employees while elevating their 'prisoner' status to that of 'council member'.

Prisoners discussed how the council had assisted them in conceptualising themselves as people (beyond 'prisoners' or 'offenders'), and more importantly, as people that have value and worth. Participating in the council enabled them to construct new roles that they saw as productive, helpful, and beneficial to others. Research on desistance stresses the importance of helping offenders identify positive roles within their communities through which they can achieve status without offending<sup>3</sup>. As prisoners develop roles based on positive attributes rather than deficits, self-esteem is accrued, as is their sense of purpose and self worth.

*Interviewer: How does participating in the council make you feel?*

*Prisoner: He is our party leader [pointing to another prisoner], so obviously it made me proud of him, but also proud of myself. It*

*makes us feel more mature and like we're accomplished and accomplishing stuff. 'Cause some people on the outside might think negatively of it [the council], but what we're actually doing is big 'cause we can actually make a change and once they see we're changin' stuff, we'll be able to say that we've done it, and we've changed too.*

Nearly all prisoners interviewed discussed experiencing new feelings as a result of taking part in council activities. These feelings ranged from pride, usefulness, increased levels of confidence, to a greater sense of maturity ('I feel like I've grown up a lot').

Staff also noticed how many prisoners matured, setting examples for other prisoners on their wing. As one senior staff member noted: 'It's like they become ambassadors to others on their wing; now they're held accountable. It also means they have to step up and set a good example. And they do it!' This was particularly pronounced in HMYOI Aylesbury where the prisoners are referred to as 'boys' and 'lads'. These young offenders frequently found themselves in an on-going struggle to establish themselves as mature men and wanting to be treated as such by officers, but realising that acting out or 'kicking off' was at times the most expedient way to serve their needs. This in turn reinforced

Being recognised and included in the council and voting process gave prisoners the confidence to take responsibility for their environment and commit to making it a better place.

many officers' perceptions that 'these are immature youngsters, after all' therefore limiting expectations. However, other staff (particularly those working closest to the council) had elevated expectations of prisoners, allowing them to often challenge prisoners to 'step up' and meet them. This is consistent with Pryor's observations from his years as a prison governor: 'The more we see prisoners as people capable of behaving responsibly, the more we come to expect them to do so, and the greater the demand on prison staff to set new challenges to themselves and to those in their care<sup>4</sup>.'

Interactions and relationships with the User Voice employees who openly identified themselves as ex-offenders were particularly important to prisoners who wanted to 'reshape' their identity. This aspect of the council was perhaps the most powerful for prisoners, as they gained considerable insight and strength from this

3. Maruna, S. (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild their Lives*, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.  
4. Pryor, S. (2001:1) *The Responsible Prisoner: An Exploration of the Extent to which Imprisonment Removes Responsibility Unnecessarily and an Invitation to Change*, London: HM Prison Service.

engagement, encouraging their pursuit and maintenance of positive new roles.

*Knowing that as a lifer you can do something after jail, and not just do something that helps you, or keeps you out of jail. You can do something that keeps others from coming back to jail, while at the same time showing them about life on the outside and helping them while they're in jail. So yeah, it has shaped my perspective. (Prisoner)*

The importance of the User Voice employees' ex-offender status was one of the most prominent themes amongst prisoners. This shared experience had significant value at every stage of council development and maintenance, and created legitimacy for the understanding between them, which also represented hope and a future outside of the prison. From this, heightened levels of trust and confidence were able to develop, further enhancing commitment and engagement in the council process.

A prisoner able to see ex-offenders living 'a good life' post-release was significant and meaningful. For many prisoners, especially those serving long sentences, encountering someone 'come out the other side' intact meant hope and a future outside.

*Interviewer: And what if the User Voice guys weren't ex-offenders?*

*Prisoner: Well, it helps, you know? 'Cause we feel like we can relate to them, and if they wasn't, they'd be ignorant. They wouldn't know what it's like, you know? They've done their own bird, yeah, so they can tell us about their first-hand experience...It shows that if you're an ex-offender you can do something different; something positive.*

This benefit was also recognised by staff:

*The one thing that ex-lads [ex-offenders] add to any jail is that they add a lot of stability; a lot of influence. We always notice this because, what a lot of these lads here don't know is what's around the corner. They don't know*

*what to expect, and we're not very good at telling them, because actually, we don't know half the time...and they can actually see, 'oh, there is an end to it [specifically longlife sentences], there is something I can do'. That side of it is always positive; it always is.*

Hope and future-oriented thinking, especially in prisons, is widely accepted to be fundamental to general wellbeing, ability to cope, and integral to the desistance process<sup>5</sup>. What was evident in observing and discussing these issues with prisoners was that hope and belief in 'a future' were enhanced through council participation. Prisoners observed what a future might look like through the User Voice employees who practised future-oriented thinking and planning. This combination of interaction with 'the product' of the engagement process, coupled with experiential exercises in forward thinking and goal setting, instilled a new or renewed sense of hope in many of these men.

### Community

Sociological theories of community organisation stress the importance of collective will and the benefits of accrued social capital that are derived from the cooperation between individuals and groups<sup>6</sup>. User Voice employees were quick to point out that the goal of an active council is to benefit everyone and accordingly referred to it as 'prison-based' rather than 'prisoner-based'. This distinction was reiterated by a governor who indicated that he was initially attracted to this particular council model because 'it was about the wider prison' and 'wasn't just to cater to prisoners or staff, but everyone in the facility'. Fostering a sense of community and common consciousness through council work is built into the User Voice model, as it reflects a democratic process that promotes representation, shared goals, and collaborative effort toward shared objectives. As each member of the facility invests his or her time and knowledge into solution-focused action, loyalty, trust, commitment, and service enhancement is established and accrued.

Because staff and prisoners were able to recognize each other as valuable community members — each having a purpose and sharing goals — empathy and respect increased throughout the facilities. A notable aspect of this new relationship with their environment was the way prisoners were able to experience and feel

## A prisoner able to see ex-offenders living 'a good life' post-release was significant and meaningful.

5. Hillbrand, M. and Young, J.L. (2008) 'Instilling Hope into Forensic Treatment: The Antidote to Despair and Desperation', *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* 36: 90-94.
6. Putnam, R.D. (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Simon & Schuster.

the reciprocity of having such responsibility and people that rely upon you. As one User Voice employee remarked:

*I think one of the things that we do, is actually introduce people to a process that's kind of inherent to the way that we live in our society; the democratic process, that actually, people are not engaged with at a very young age, and don't become engaged with. However, through our process, they do become involved in that, and even if that engages them slightly with the larger democratic ethos and the democratic philosophies, then that may have impacts on the ways that they perceive their community on the outside.*

Inclusion evokes not only a sense of belonging and purpose, but also responsibility. Prisoners were able to feel like their presence in the prison could be utilized in ways to better their facility and were now accountable for the decisions made and changes effected. From my observations, participating in the council and being included in the 'solution' was a transformative experience for prisoners. For many of these men, they had been told their whole lives that they were 'not worth anything' or that they have nothing to contribute; taking part in the council and constructing problem-solving proposals converted them from a 'community liability' to a 'community asset'. User Voice employees indicated, when I asked about their own journeys through the system and leaving a criminal past behind, that recognizing previously denied self-worth can be the first step toward taking responsibility for building a different life, one in which the offender is no longer 'not worth anything', but instead can become an agent for positive change.

As social, political, and administrative exclusion impacts an individual's ability to actively participate in their community and government, a deeper sense of loss of agency persists. Research has demonstrated that desistance is linked to agency and social bonds<sup>7</sup>, and according to Farrall and his colleagues, 'research has taught us that most repeat offenders who wish to desist see the process of desistance as a way of charting a path

towards greater social inclusion in 'mainstream'<sup>8</sup>.' The journey from exclusion to inclusion then requires the ability to exert agency through the formation and execution of decisions and the acceptance of responsibility. The literature also suggests that in addition to work and family, another area of 'identity transformation for returning prisoners is that of responsible citizen, including varieties of civic participation such as voting, volunteer work, 'giving back', and neighbourhood involvement<sup>9</sup>.'

In the context of the council, prisoner empowerment enables them to generate, organize, and articulate solution-focused arguments that address concerns that impact the entire institution. This allows them to become stakeholders in their community and environment, and mutually accountable for the consequences of their actions.

It has long been recognized that staff-prisoner relations are at the heart of prison life.

*Interviewer: What do you think prisoners can gain from participating in the council?*

*Staff Member: I think there's the confidence thing, there's the bit about maturity and responsibility, but I think it's the bit about, um, what do you call it, taking that social responsibility. To say actually, I'm going to put myself out,*

*I'm going to do some work, and I'm actually going to try and make this place better. There is the bit about debating, which is interesting. They'll obviously learn that they haven't got to be right all of the time, and there will be times when it's better to just let someone else push through something, rather than their own agenda because it's for the greater good. But I think it's that bit about, the main thing about responsibility; the responsibility to act as a party, as a member of a party, the responsibility to listen and act appropriately at the council with each other.*

### **Staff-Prisoner Relationships**

It has long been recognized that staff-prisoner relations are at the heart of prison life. These relationships are complex, often predicated upon surprising levels of mutual discretion, trust, and dependence. It is from getting these relations right that

7. Bottoms, A. (2006) 'Desistance, Social Bonds and Human Agency: A Theoretical Exploration', in Wikstrom, P.O.H. and Sampson, R.J. (eds), *The Explanation of Crime: Context, Mechanisms and Development* (pp. 243-290), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
8. Farrall, S., Bottoms, A. and Shapland, J. (2010:547) 'Social Structures and Desistance from Crime', *European Journal of Criminology* 7(6): 546-570.
9. Visher, C.A. and Travis, J. (2003:97) 'Transitions from Prison to Community: Understanding Individual Pathways', *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 89-113.

decency and balanced levels of care and custody are established. Improving these relationships by humanizing the 'other' through collaborative effort and productive dialogue has great potential for creating a more humane environment with positive regimes. As one senior staff member noted, 'at the end of the day, everybody's in this pot together and we all need to sort things out together.' These themes were prominent amongst both prisoners and staff, and emerged (to varying degrees) from general observations at each prison.

Important to note is how perceptions of staff-prisoner relations varied considerably between prisons, in large part due to their stage in council development. In the pre-council phase at HMP Birmingham, many staff expressed frustration and anger over the council's imminent implementation. Several officers feared that this type of forum would be giving prisoners too much power:

*You know, they're in here for a reason. They shouldn't be rewarded for that.*

*They can't just start requesting whatever they want...that's not how prison works.*

These statements also highlight undercurrents of resentment, punitive values, and a belief that prisoners did not deserve to have a voice. Staff expressed similar sentiments and a deep contempt towards the council model prior to its enactment at HMYOI Aylesbury. However, as reality replaced misconstrued visions of prisoners 'running the prison', it became evident that the council and its activity were reasonable, feasible, and an asset to the whole establishment. Very few staff at Aylesbury or Maidstone talked about the council in terms of giving prisoners 'power'. Staff were better able to recognize that the council was an effective tool to gather information, disseminate information, and have a civil, often professional, dialogue concerning issues within the facility. This was most visible at Maidstone, where a considerable number of administrative staff participate in the monthly council meetings and regularly consult party members for feedback on upcoming or on going initiatives. One former senior staff member recalled his experience with the then newly established council at Maidstone:

This increased patience and feelings of empathy on both sides, as both parties were able to better understand the struggles of the other.

*It being a new-ish concept, there was doubt whether it would actually work. However, this can be similar for all new concepts, and once User Voice were in, staff quickly realized that the system used directs offenders to act, vote, discuss matters reasonably. It was very much welcomed once embedded. It also gave offenders direction, a purpose, responsibility, and staff saw the positive influence and welcomed it from then on.*

Although not stated outright, it was apparent from observations and conversation that the staff and prisoners who worked together on the council shared a unique experience and their subsequent interactions were framed differently. Staff now viewed prisoners as

productive and useful because they were directing their energy towards constructive action. Participating in the council allowed prisoners to get a glimpse of prison bureaucracy, which gave them a new understanding of how officers were often limited in their ability to get things done and restricted by administrative hurdles. This increased patience and feelings of empathy on both sides, as both parties were able to better understand the struggles of the other. Pompa argues that dialogue breaks down barriers and

stereotypes, especially when working towards a common goal<sup>10</sup>. This was present amongst prisoners and staff, many of whom saw each in a new light after regularly engaging in discussions with them. One User Voice employee echoed this when he said:

*But already you can see that those guys, and there are some real problems with some of those people, but with those guys, they are already beginning to work together. But they take that back to the wings, do you know what I mean? They take all those motives, those things that work, that ethos, away from the council process, that's one thing. But also, breaking down those barriers between the con and staff, and making cons and staff work together a little bit better, I think is also something that arises out of the council. You can see that once those barriers are broken down even just a little bit, that actually, the relationships are better.*

10. Pompa, L. (2011) 'Breaking Down the Walls: Inside-Out Learning and the Pedagogy of Transformation', in Hartnett, S.J. (ed), *Challenging the Prison-Industrial Complex: Activism, Arts, and Educational Alternatives* (pp. 253-272), Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

From engaging together on the council, staff got to know prisoners 'as a person, not just a prisoner', while prisoners were better able to understand the pressure and constraints staff worked under. As a result, empathy flowed from these new dynamics, which increased mutual respect in the facilities with established councils. Prisoners were quick to point out the difference in how staff now interacted with them:

*Interviewer: Do you think the council could impact things like staff-prisoner relationships?*

*Prisoner: Well, I've seen a lot of changes already in the ways that staff react around me and react around other prisoners on the council.*

*Interviewer: What kind of changes?*

*Prisoner: Well, they show me a lot more respect now and they're being more polite to me; they treat me more like an individual.*

### **Overcoming barriers to success**

Although the councils were overwhelmingly perceived as beneficial, there were four consistently identified impediments to a council's success. First, the governor's level of commitment was critical to setting the tone for the introduction, implementation, and on going legitimacy of the council. Staff and prisoners were acutely aware of how dedicated the governor was by the messages (explicit and otherwise) sent out. Second, and similarly, staff must be accepting of, and engaged with, the project throughout each stage of development. Toch suggests that 'in prisons, we must also worry about the impact on staff of what we do with inmates. It is axiomatic that prisoner participation in the absence of staff participation lowers morale<sup>11</sup>.' As the council is *prison*-based, it is essential that all members of the prison community are given the opportunity to participate and have their voice heard. Third, the council needs to maintain its legitimacy and effectiveness by regularly

generating positive changes, and ensuring that others understand that these changes are attributed to the council. This keeps the council accountable and its achievements visible. Lastly, User Voice needs to offer consistent support and guidance to each site and to their staff. This had been an issue at Maidstone where User Voice had faced considerable staff turnover during the previous year. Because the relationship between User Voice employees and prisoners is so meaningful, this consistency is crucial in keeping them engaged. Moreover, it is also important for prison staff to view User Voice, the organisation and employees, as professional and reliable.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined how User Voice and their council model impacts the prison, prisoners and staff. The research suggests that there are powerful and important changes for both individuals and institutions. It is apparent that a working council acts in a holistic way, with the ability to support positive transformation in prison and promote personal responsibility, collaborative work between prisoners and staff, and improve systemic functioning. Treating prisoners as citizens — people with value, worth, and purpose that can productively contribute to their communities has already been shown to reduce recidivism and improve prison functioning without the need to compromise security or custodial obligations, the User Voice council can make a significant contribution to this process. Enabling prisoners to reconceptualise their identities through new and positive roles increases personal and collective accountability and lessens dependence on the institution. A User Voice council has significant implications for prison life and reversing potentially damaging penal practices of identity stripping through 'civic death' and forced helplessness. Indeed, preparing prisoners for re-entry to society requires interventions that promote civic bonds through the fostering of mutual obligations and commitments to mainstream values.

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11. Toch (1994:68)'Democratizing Prisons', *The Prison Journal* 73(1): 62-72.

# The Importance of Maintaining Family Ties During Imprisonment

## — Perspectives of Those Involved in HMP New Hall's Family Support Project

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### Introduction

**In recent years, the relationship between prisoners and their families has received increased interest from academics and policy makers. Particular attention has been paid to the role of families in reducing re-offending, the potential for inter-generational offending, and the impact of imprisonment on children and families. Initiatives to sustain family ties during custodial sentences are likely to have beneficial consequences for society, with a decrease in re-offending being associated with a reduction in the number of victims of crime and in costs to the Criminal Justice System. They are also likely to result in improved outcomes for prisoners and their families, with fewer family breakdowns and positive implications for mental health, thus incurring a saving to health and welfare services.**

This paper presents an evaluation of a Family Support Project (FSP) delivered at HMP New Hall, and managed by Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT) since 2009. HMP New Hall is a closed female prison in West Yorkshire. The establishment has an operational capacity of 446 and holds adult female prisoners of all categories, and Young Offenders.

One female Family Support Officer (FSO) was responsible for the delivery of the FSP. Its aims included: enabling residents to re-establish and maintain contacts with children and families, particularly during times of crisis; enabling families to access prison visits; and

promoting positive parenting skills. The FSP also strived to build links with local community organisations to support residents upon release.

### Review of the Literature

There remain concerns about the unprecedented number of people receiving custodial sentences, and the high proportion of these who reoffend shortly after their release. In 2012, the prison population in England and Wales was in the region of 86,000<sup>1</sup> and this represents the second highest rate of imprisonment in Western European Union countries (with the exception of Spain)<sup>2</sup>. Over half of all repeat offenders in England and Wales have 11 or more convictions, and around half of those released from prison are reconvicted within one year<sup>3</sup>.

Despite women only representing 5 per cent of the prison population in England and Wales<sup>4</sup>, they present significant needs with regards to children and family. A recent longitudinal survey revealed that 54 per cent prisoners have children under the age of 18<sup>5</sup>. Although there was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of men and women with children, analysis of the 2004 Resettlement Survey indicated that female prisoners were about twice as likely as males to report needing help with problems concerning family or children<sup>6</sup>. This perhaps reflects the higher percentage of women living alone with children prior to imprisonment (58 per cent compared to 43 per cent of men) and the subsequent disruption to care-giving arrangements<sup>7</sup>. Most children (94 per cent) with a father in prison were

1. Ministry of Justice (2012) *Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin*, January to March 2012, England and Wales. London: Ministry of Justice.
2. Tavares, C., Thomas, G. and Bulut, F. (2012) *Population and Social Conditions: Crime and Criminal Justice 2006-2009*. Luxembourg: Eurostat.
3. Ministry of Justice (2012) *Proven Re-offending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin*, January to March 2012, England and Wales. London: Ministry of Justice.
4. Ministry of Justice (2012) see n. 1.
5. Williams, K. Papadopoulou, V. and Booth, N. (2012) Prisoners childhood and family backgrounds: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners. *Ministry of Justice Research Series 4/12*. London: Ministry of Justice.
6. Williams, K. Papadopoulou, V. and Booth, N. (2012) see n. 5.
7. Williams, K. Papadopoulou, V. and Booth, N. (2012) see n. 5.

cared for by their mother/step-mother. This compares to 27 per cent of children with a mother in prison who were cared for by their father/step-father; with many going to live with other family members and a small proportion being taken into care.

Female prisoners have also been identified as having particularly chaotic backgrounds, where childhood abuse, domestic violence, and substance misuse problems are not uncommon<sup>8</sup>. Combined with the emotional distress of being separated from their children and family, concerns for their children's welfare, and the stress of trying to manage their family from within the prison, this makes them a particularly vulnerable section of the prison population.

A substantial proportion (43 per cent) of sentenced prisoners are reported to lose contact with their families during their time in custody<sup>9</sup>. Due to the small number of female establishments and their geographic location, women tend to be located further from home than men, making it more difficult for family members to attend visits<sup>10</sup>. Just over two thirds of prisoners surveyed believed that support from their family and contact with their children would help prevent them from re-offending<sup>11</sup>. Women were more likely than men to see sustaining family ties as a deterrent for future offending (51 per cent compared to 39 per cent).

Prisoners who had received at least one visit during their time in custody were also found to be 39 per cent less likely to re-offend than those that had not received any visits<sup>12</sup>. Contact with family was also found to be associated with other factors demonstrated to protect against re-offending. Prisoners, particularly women, who had received at least one visit from a partner or family member, were significantly more likely to have accommodation and education, training or employment arranged for release than those who had not received any visits<sup>13</sup>.

Data relating to the parental status of prisoners is not routinely collated as they are often reluctant to

disclose this information as part of prison reception procedures, but it is estimated that in 2009, 200,000 children were affected by parental imprisonment<sup>14</sup>. The Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development revealed that individuals who had experienced parental imprisonment during their childhood were at increased risk of criminal or antisocial behaviour in adulthood<sup>15</sup>. The likelihood of inter-generational offending was also found to be greater when the parent was in prison as opposed to just receiving a conviction, and for longer periods of imprisonment. Some studies have found that children of imprisoned mothers were more likely to be convicted than children of imprisoned fathers<sup>16</sup>.

Parental imprisonment has also been demonstrated to have adverse implications for children's mental health. The nature and severity of the impact varies but can include a sense of loss and confusion, stigma leading to feelings of shame and low self-esteem, social withdrawal, anger and aggressive behaviour, and decreased school attendance and performance<sup>17</sup>. The impact on mental health has also been found to be long-lasting, with children of prisoners showing higher levels of depression and anxiety in adulthood, and being disproportionately represented in clinical populations<sup>18</sup>.

The value of sustaining relationships between prisoners and their families has received increased recognition in recent policy documents. The 'National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan' identifies 'children and families'<sup>19</sup> as one of the seven pathways to reducing re-offending<sup>20</sup>. The document also places responsibility on prisons to protect the welfare of children attending visits, and invites the commissioning of voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to deliver family services.

The role of families in reducing re-offending and the duty of prisons to ensure children's wellbeing is reiterated in 'Reducing re-offending: supporting families, creating better futures'<sup>21</sup> and the Coalition Government's 'Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation

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8. Home Office (2007) *The Corston Report: A Report by Baroness Jean Corston of a Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System*. London: Home Office.
  9. National Offender Management Service (2005) *The National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan*. London: Home Office.
  10. Prison Reform Trust (2010) *Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile*. London: Prison Reform Trust.
  11. Williams, K. Papadopoulou, V. and Booth, N. (2012) see n. 5.
  12. May, C., Sharma, N. and Stewart, D (2008) Factors linked to re-offending: a one-year follow-up of prisoners who took part in the Resettlement Surveys 2001, 2003 & 2004. *Ministry of Justice Research Summary 5*. London: Ministry of Justice.
  13. Niven, S. and Stewart, D. (2005) Resettlement outcomes on release from prison in 2003. *Home Office Findings 248*. London: Home Office.
  14. Williams, K. Papadopoulou, V. and Booth, N. (2012) see n. 5.
  15. Murray, J. and Farrington, D.P. (2005) 'Parental Imprisonment: Effects on Boys' Antisocial Behaviour and Delinquency through the Life-Course'. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 46 (12): 1269–78.
  16. Dallaire, D. H. (2007) 'Incarcerated Mothers and Fathers: A Comparison of Risks for Children and Families'. *Family Relations* 56 (5): 440–53.
  17. See for example, Boswell, G. and Wedge, P. (2002) *Imprisoned Fathers and their Children*. London: Jessica Kingsley; King, D. (2002) *Parents, Children and Prison: Effects of Parental Imprisonment on Children*. Dublin: Centre for Social and Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology; and Philbrick, K. (2002) Imprisonment: The impact on children. *Issues in Forensic Psychology* 3: 72–81.
  18. Murray, J. and Farrington, D.P. (2008) 'Parental imprisonment: Long-lasting effects on boys' internalizing problems through the life-course'. *Development and Psychopathology* 20 (1): 273–290.
  19. National Offender Management Service (2005) see n. 9.
  20. National Offender Management Service (2005) see n. 9.
  21. Ministry of Justice and Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) *Reducing re-offending: supporting families, creating better futures. A framework for improving the local delivery of support for the families of offenders*. London: Ministry of Justice.

and Sentencing of Offenders'<sup>22</sup>. The first report makes a series of recommendations on how establishments should support contact between prisoners and their family, including facilitating positive visiting experiences, and assisting prisoners to communicate via telephone and letter. The report also specifies that prisoners should have the opportunity to complete parenting courses as part of their sentence plan objectives. With specific reference to female establishments, it was suggested that trained family support officers with an understanding of children's services and care proceedings, and the necessary knowledge to link with external agencies, should be made available.

Working in partnership with VCS organisations, prisons have developed numerous initiatives to support the maintenance of family ties, including the provision of visitor centres and family days. There has been increased recognition of the need for individualised and sometimes long-term support for prisoners and their children. One example of such a service is Integrated Family Support Workers (IFSWs) operating at eleven prisons, delivered by the North East Prison Aftercare Society (NEPACS) and the Prison Aftercare Trust (Pact), and funded by Department for Education and National Offender Management Service. The support provided by the IFSWs falls into three broad categories: facilitating contact between prisoners and their families; providing information and emotional support to families; and resettlement work such as assistance with accommodation, employment and finances. Independent evaluators have commended the IFSWs for their ability to overcome scepticism displayed by some prison officers; and to operate fluidly with agencies both inside and outside the prison, such as substance misuse teams, faith-based organisations, schools and social work teams<sup>23</sup>.

### Methodology

This evaluation, conducted in 2012, was commissioned by Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT). Its purpose was to explore the aims and objectives of the FSP; its delivery and perceived successes and challenges; the needs of residents and their families and how the FSP addressed these; and how the FSP worked with the prison and external agencies.

There has been increased recognition of the need for individualised and sometimes long-term support for prisoners and their children.

There were six strands of data collection:

- i) Semi-structured interviews with the Family Support Officer (FSO) and her line manager (the LAT Resettlement Services Officer);
- ii) Semi-structured interviews with eight current residents who had accessed the FSP within the previous twelve months. These participants were randomly selected to reduce selection bias;
- iii) Two focus groups with a total of thirteen residents (including those serving indeterminate sentences);
- iv) Telephone interviews with representatives from six families who had engaged with the FSP;
- v) Telephone interviews with two children's Social Workers and one Probation Officer and
- vi) A semi-structured interview with one Prison Service Senior Officer (SO).

With the consent of participants, interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. A broad thematic analysis was undertaken.

Additionally, data from the COPING project, an investigation into the impact of parental imprisonment on children funded by the European Union FP7 Framework was made available for the evaluation.

### Findings

Overall, the evaluation found that the FSP was valued highly by residents, family members and the prison and viewed as an important resource to help maintain family ties. Six dominant themes emerged and these are discussed below.

#### *The Remit of the FSP*

Prior to the FSP, there had been no family support provision at the establishment. Funding for the FSP was fragile and relied on successful grant applications. At the time of the evaluation, a three year funding term had recently ceased, and the Prison was providing temporary funding while new funding opportunities were being explored.

Ease of access was particularly appreciated, and residents described how they were initially informed about the FSP by 'word of mouth' from other residents who had met with the FSO. The Senior Officer (SO) described how the establishment recognised the importance of helping residents to maintain family ties

22. Ministry of Justice (2010) *Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders*. London: The Stationary Office.

23. Barefoot Research and Evaluation (2012) *Integrated Family Support in the North East Evaluation Report*. Newcastle: Barefoot Research and Evaluation; and Estep, B. and Nicholles, N. (2012) *Economic study of Integrated Family Support Programme (IFS)*. London: nef consulting.

during their sentence, with prison staff now routinely referring those with family issues to the FSP.

The level of support provided by the FSP was dependent on the residents' individual needs and concerns. These were assessed through an initial consultation and thereafter cases were prioritised accordingly. The interviews with the FSO and their line manager indicated that many of the residents experienced complex and sensitive issues in their background which might affect current efforts to re-establish or even maintain family ties.

Sometimes it was sufficient to provide general advice at the initial consultation, but support also extended to longer periods of engagement, with ongoing review meetings. One example of extended engagement was to re-establish regular contact between a mother serving a long sentence for a serious offence and her 10 year old daughter whom she had previously met very infrequently. Another resident described how the FSO had helped her repair her relationship with her grown-up daughter:

*Because I had been arrested, my daughter had fallen out with me because she was annoyed that I had got myself in this situation. [The FSO] was the one that got through to my daughter, and then eventually my daughter has come to visit me and it has been alright. But it was [the FSO] who had done the link with Social Services, because they were involved...It was a big, big breakthrough for me that was. But who else would I have gone to in the prison? There would have been no-one else.*

A key role of the FSO was to ensure that residents were included in the future plans for their children, which often involved communicating with many individuals (e.g. family members) and agencies (e.g. Social Services).

The SO had also commissioned a range of other services, co-located inside the prison, to support residents in other aspects of their welfare such as: Through the Gate, Housing Associations, Citizen's Advice Bureau and After Adoption. This complemented the one-to-one support provided by the FSP.

#### Final Contact Visits

In addition to providing general advice and support to residents, the FSP organised and facilitated Final

Contact Visits. In some instances, it was not possible for the resident to maintain contact with their child and the decision was taken to place the child for adoption. Initially, project staff had been concerned that Final Contact Visits were held as part of regular visiting hours in the main visits hall. Consequently, scant attention was paid to the particular needs of the residents and their children at this emotionally challenging time. In response, the FSP developed a protocol to ensure that these visits were carefully planned to provide extended visits, where the mother and child had private time together, supervised by the Social Worker or FSO.

The Resettlement Services Manager commented on how the FSP had now facilitated *'a much longer goodbye, a much more qualitative goodbye and a dignified one as well'*. Women were able to access support from the prison chaplain following these visits, to support themselves when they returned to their cells, for example by working on memory boxes and life stories. Residents appreciated the support available and expressed confidence in the arrangements that had been made. One of them said: *'I don't want to hand the baby over to anyone but you [FSO]'*.

#### Family Days

The FSO also organised and facilitated Family Days to proactively help residents maintain family ties. Family Days were longer and more relaxed than domestic visits, as highlighted by one resident who stated: *'There's*

*no pressure like a normal visit'*.

Residents and family members equally recognised that Family Days were instrumental in sustaining relationships. One family said that they felt that Family Days were imperative and that they had:

*...dramatically added to the bond between [resident] and the children, providing a touch of normality.*

Family Days were also commended for including different activities that kept the children engaged:

*My son would never sit on a normal visit. I get to interact with him and do different stuff. Like he was playing in the sand pit...*

On the whole, Family Days were considered to be well run, but family members had some critical

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observations about reception arrangements and lengthy security processes, which reduced the amount of time the visitors had to spend with the resident.

All interviewees stated that Family Days should occur more frequently. As one resident commented:

*I think they are brilliant! I think there should be more of them!*

However, the SO acknowledged that this might be difficult to achieve taking into account the time required to organise them, and the FSO's workload, as discussed below.

#### *Demand and Capacity*

The interviews conducted with both the FSO and their line manager highlighted the high level of demand for the FSP within the establishment. A review of the FSP 'Attendees Register' indicated that in the year up to March 2012, 121 residents had accessed the service. This comprised 87 initial consultations and 289 reviews.

Issues of capacity were raised throughout the interviews, focus groups and the evaluation more widely. Initially, the aim of the FSP was to adopt a holistic approach to supporting residents throughout their sentence and resettlement. However, owing to the demand for the service, the FSP had to focus solely on the immediate needs of the residents within the prison, prioritising and responding to issues raised.

Although the residents applauded the work of the FSP, several expressed concerns regarding the FSO's heavy workload and suggested that more staff were needed:

*Eighty per cent of imprisoned women have children. I think that [the FSO] could do with someone helping her. She is on her own with how many women?*

*I feel for her. There are 450 women in here. How can you cater for all (of) them? But she does it.*

#### *Personal Attributes*

During the course of the evaluation it became apparent that part of the success of the FSP could be attributed to the personal attributes of the FSO. Residents and family members spoke positively about the FSO's friendly and approachable manner:

*You can just come over here and knock on the door. There is access — human access. She puts the girls back in touch with their families and she wants us to be happy and if there is anything else she can do, she asks us and I think she is really good for me. I have never met anyone like her.*

Another resident commented:

*She just makes you feel at ease and you don't feel like you are in jail. She treats you, like, you give her respect and she will give you respect...I don't approach many people, but she is just... a likeable person.*

The FSP's ethos was to empower women to take action on their own behalf, while balancing the needs of the child and resident, qualities recognised by residents:

*She can see things from our point of view and she can also see it from a child's point of view and the school's point of view...*

*...She is realistic as well. She will tell you — if you want something, she'll say 'well really, you know, we can't really do that but, how about this instead?'*

#### *Partnership Working*

The SO expressed a high level of confidence in the FSP, which liaised closely with other prison based services. Initially, some prison staff were suspicious of the FSP and of potential conflicts with prison security. However, the FSP had demonstrated full awareness of prison security requirements, and its credibility within the prison improved markedly.

Owing to the complex needs of the residents it was often necessary to liaise with external agencies. Residents described the range of help which they received, including establishing links with schools, solicitors and Social Workers:

*... she got in touch with all the different parties like the schools, (and) the counsellor, and then she sorted out for me to see a solicitor...I mean it has took a while to get there but we got there in the end, so it was worth it.*

Three external agencies were interviewed (one Probation Service Officer and two Children's Social Workers). Ordinarily, it could be difficult and time consuming for them to communicate with their client, but the FSO provided a link into the prison and ready access to residents and up-to-date knowledge about their concerns.

*..... [It is] so much easier having somebody inside the prison who can make immediate contact with the residents.*

The Social Workers and the Probation Officer also commented on the energetic approach of the FSO in advocating on behalf of residents, whilst still maintaining

a primary focus on the needs of children. Additionally, they described the FSO as *'very persistent in contacting Social Services — like a dog with a bone'* when contacting them to obtain information on behalf of their client.

## Discussion and Conclusion

At least half of the residents in a women's prison such as HMP New Hall are likely to be mothers, and three quarters of their children are likely to have experienced disruption as a consequence of maternal imprisonment. Given that women are more likely to be living alone with children prior to imprisonment this causes greater disruption to children's care giving arrangements, and consequently the demands on family support services are likely to be high. The chaotic backgrounds of many female prisoners mean that they are likely to present with complex needs. The literature has documented the benefits of maintaining family ties in reducing re-offending and this has been recognised in policy.

HMP New Hall welcomed the FSP as it had the potential to fulfil Prison Service targets to improve family ties with a view to reducing reoffending rates. The FSP helped the Prison to further recognise that women required support in their role as mothers if they were to be successfully rehabilitated.

Family Support Projects can be based inside the prison, as at New Hall, or can be community based, the model preferred by NEPACS. Residents at New Hall clearly valued the FSP being based within the prison as it was easy to access. Initial consultations ensured that residents with the highest levels of needs were successfully prioritised. Thereafter, the level of intervention was tailored to the resident's individual needs, and ranged from 'one-off' meetings to provide advice, to ongoing regular engagement.

The FSP was entrusted with responsibility for improving Family Visits and Final Contact Visits. Residents and their family members appreciated Family Days because of the opportunities provided to spend quality time together in a more relaxed environment. Through the work of the FSO, Final Contact visits became a more private and personal experience, allowing for a proper farewell. Perceptions of the FSP were based on the dedication and motivation of the FSO, her ability to

ensure the resident had realistic expectations, and to find a balance between the rights of the residents and their children's needs.

There was evidence of some tension between security and family support objectives within the prison in the frustrations voiced by relatives experiencing delays during extended Family Day visits. However, relations improved, as evidenced by the Prison referring complex family and contact issues into the FSP.

The FSP enabled residents to communicate more effectively with external agencies, and where necessary the FSO was persistent in her approach to help facilitate this. External agencies also benefited from the FSP as it was easier to obtain updates and information about their client.

There was no shortage of ideas about expanding the FSP, such as more frequent Family Days, but consistently high demands for the service and the fragility

of the funding base constrained these ambitions. Perhaps the initial FSP brief was too wide for one person to deliver. All of the FSO's energies were allocated to working with residents on family links and supporting relatives on visits, with no time left for post release rehabilitation. At HMP New Hall this mattered less because the prison had a progressive policy for co-locating other community organisations with the FSP in the prison, focussing on residents' welfare post release. This is a model which other prisons may wish to consider.

HMP New Hall welcomed the FSP as it had the potential to fulfil Prison Service targets to improve family ties with a view to reducing reoffending rates.

A main limitation of this qualitative evaluation was that it was not possible to assess longer term project impact on re-offending rates. Useful, if speculative, indicators from the evaluation included: residents' accounts indicating that they welcomed the humanising influence of the Project, and which may have provided some benefits for the prison overall; residents' having positive experience of family support within the prison which may have improved their capacity to work with support agencies subsequently; and residents having good experiences of final adoption visits, which may have helped them approach being parents again in the future more positively.

For the future, there is a strong argument for the prison and welfare services to allocate more funding to supporting female residents, both during sentences and as part of rehabilitation.

# The Invisible Child:

## Perspectives of Headteachers about the role of primary schools in working with the children of male prisoners

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### Introduction

**It is estimated that there are approximately 160, 000 children with a parent in prison<sup>1</sup> and two recent texts<sup>2</sup> illustrate the difficulties children of prisoners face. Yet these are rare: much research considers the impact on families of prisoners as a homogenous group<sup>3</sup> with little discrete reference to children themselves. This is reflected in the fact that only three per cent<sup>4</sup> of all Local Authorities’ Children and Young People’s Strategic Plans mention prisoners’ children in spite of the fact that over seven per cent of an average school population will experience the imprisonment of a parent. A report<sup>5</sup> in 2007 drew attention to the lack of existing support for children of offenders. It also highlighted the lack of shared information about children with a parent in prison: 70 per cent of schools hear about the imprisonment of a parent directly from the family or indirectly from the community; and only two schools in the study were informed by the relevant agencies. This seems to echo the conclusions of an earlier study which identified that,**

*One of the biggest challenges in considering the response of schools and teachers to prisoners’ children is that there is little published research into the experiences of prisoners’ children in school and little identification of good practice in teaching and pastoral care. (p160)<sup>6</sup>*

### The Study and its findings

This study was carried out as part of a wider PhD study at the Institute of Education, London and

examined the perspectives of eight Headteachers in relation to their work with this group of children. Part of the wider study considered the involvement of imprisoned fathers in the education of their children. This element was conducted using purposive sampling<sup>7</sup> of schools in the North-West of England to ensure a broad range of schools were approached. Each of the semi-structured interviews with the Headteachers lasted between 45 minutes and one hour.

#### *Informing schools*

Gaining information from parents was a central challenge shared by all Headteachers interviewed. This was particularly evident in relation to the children of prisoners. Several of the Headteachers commented that *‘It’s rubbish’* and *‘It’s guess work’*. (HT School B).

*It is just pot luck if we get told or not. We are always telling all parents that it is important to tell the school about any changes in a child’s personal circumstances that might have an effect on school life —sometimes they do but often they don’t. (HT School A).*

*I am not aware that we currently have any children in this position. We aren’t in an area where this is a regular occurrence — although I realise that this sounds bad! However, that isn’t to say there aren’t any — just that I don’t know of any — round here, it isn’t something that parents would be keen to admit to as you can probably imagine. (HT School D).*

It is acknowledged that strong lines of communications between schools and parents are very important

1. Prison Reform Trust (2011) Bromley Briefings Fact file. London: Prison Reform Trust.
2. Condry, R. (2012) in Crewe, B. and Bennett, J. *The Prisoner*. Routledge: Oxon; and Billington, R. (2012) *Poppy’s Hero*. Frances Lincoln Children’s Books: London.
3. Codd, H. (2008). *In the shadow of prison: Families, imprisonment and Criminal Justice*. London: Willan; Scott, D and Codd, H. (2010) *Controversial Issues in Prisons*. McGraw-Hill Education, Berkshire.
4. Action for Prisoners Families Statement 2007.
5. DCSF/MOJ. (2007), Children of Offenders Review. London.
6. Codd, H. (2008). *In the shadow of prison: Families, imprisonment and Criminal Justice*. London: Willan.
7. Oliver, P. (2006) Purposive Sampling in Jupp, v. (ed) *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods*. London: SAGE Publications.

in involving parents in their children's education<sup>8</sup>. All the Headteachers interviewed indicated that this is often not the case in relation to children of prisoners. Schools are not aware of all (if any) children who have a father in prison. Of the eight Headteachers interviewed, none were able to give a precise figure for their school. They highlighted that they were very reliant on the child or parent informing them.

#### *Behaviours and the 'invisible child'*

All the Headteachers commented that behaviour visibly changed when a parent was imprisoned.

*Behaviour always changes [but] that varies massively from child to child. For my child in Reception he just gets really teary when he is tired and says he misses his Dad (although he doesn't know why he is away) and wants to give him a hug. Sometimes I see him clinging to his Mum in the morning when she drops him off, he doesn't want to come into school and leave her. I think he is actually worried that she'll go off and leave him as well. (HT School E).*

*It could be that they are withdrawn or weep or fall out with their friends. [Some are] extra sensitive and not really concentrating on their work. (HT School C).*

It is evident that the imprisonment of a father can have a negative impact upon a child's behaviour, causing their behaviour to be noticeably out of character, within the school environment. However, the study also showed that the impact can be positive.

*I knew the eldest child well and it was so significant, Dad wasn't around for quite a long time ... [the child began to] show much more respect towards his mother and respect towards other adults, including supply teachers ... He didn't try to be the guy on the playground and he started to develop friendships, which was fantastic and he was really well liked. (HT School D).*

#### *Community and the 'invisible child'*

The local school is at the heart of many communities and therefore employs a large number of staff from the local area. While the school's knowledge of its area helps it understand how best to help its children, it can also inhibit the disclosure by parents of circumstances, including the imprisonment of family members. This makes the children themselves more vulnerable. One school referred to the wider community the family lives in and how that community is perceived by the mother. Often it appears they are perceived as making a judgement about the family and stigmatising the mother and the child.

*It is a relatively small community where people socialise together and sail together and play golf together and so this is not something a family would be willing to admit to. (HT School D).*

**Behaviour always changes [but] that varies massively from child to child.**

However, another school highlighted how the term community also relates to the wider role the community can play in relation to the children of prisoners. She demonstrated her discovery of parental imprisonment through the local community and the contacts staff had there. A third school referred to the community informing the school or the community supporting a family if they require it.

*It's because it's not unusual in this area, so if there isn't the shock factor in the community and we're not shocked are we? (HT School C).*

Partners of male prisoners are aware of the perception of them and their children within the local community. They perceive that they are 'guilty by association' as mothers but research highlights that we must not forget the 'secondary stigma' faced by children in relation to this — they are therefore victims of 'contamination' and 'shame by association' (p89)<sup>9</sup>. The reluctance of the mother in School D to share her personal family circumstances with the school due to her status within the community, has had a significant impact upon the child.

8. Hornby, G. (2000) *Improving Parental Involvement*. London: Cassell; Epstein, J.L. (2001) *School, family and community partnerships*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press; and Goodall, J. and Vorhaus, J. (2011) *Review of Best Practice in Parental Engagement*. London: Institute of Education.  
9. Condry, R. 2007 *Families Shamed: The Consequences of Crime for Relatives of Serious Offenders*. Collumpton: Willan.

### *Invisible child and 'cover stories'*

Two Headteachers used the term 'invisible child' to describe the children of prisoners. They implied that these were children whose full stories had not been told and who were not always obvious in school, unless schools were aware of their circumstances. Inevitably, schools it is more challenging for schools to support these children's needs unless they are aware of their family circumstances<sup>10</sup>.

*It worries me we don't know what we don't know. This is the invisible child. (HT School B).*

Cover stories were common. They provide parents with a way of preserving their reputation and of maintaining the children's peer relationships without the stigma of a parent in prison. Although in one school parents seemed far more willing to share these issues directly with the school (possibly because of the community's acceptance of imprisonment as a 'fact of life'), cover stories were generally part of the difficulties schools have to face in understanding all they need to know about a child.

*The girls were distraught. Grandma came and said that her Mum and Dad had gone to stay near [x] for a holiday but it was in the papers, the pictures were in. (HT School C).*

*It was actually really sad as the boy stopped coming into school for a while. That's when we knew something was wrong. Mum, we found, later on was keeping him home with her as she was distraught herself and didn't want to be left on her own. Also though, I think she didn't want to come into school and face the embarrassment. She said as much when we eventually did get hold of her. The parents here (mums particularly) at the school gate, do talk and she didn't want the shame for her and her son (HT School D).*

*She was a bit mortified that we'd found out from her son (we kind of knew from the papers already though). There was no way*

*she could keep it quiet — she knew that. (HT School E).*

Boswell and Murray<sup>11</sup> have shown how the stigma of having a parent in prison presents challenges to their children which include bullying and verbal and physical abuse. Murray re-emphasises this in his most recent research relating to the long-term impact this may have on children's life chances<sup>12</sup>. It is not surprising that some mothers have a concern about reputation.

Reputation is preventing the families and more importantly the children, gaining the support they need from the school both to be able to attend and be supported appropriately, but also to be able to maintain meaningful contact with their father through engagement in their education.

### *Training/Development*

The importance of staff development was raised in all interviews but it begs large questions not just about the cost and practicability of delivering the training but of who should receive it: should schools be expected to be able to perform a quasi-counselling role in providing support which the children of prisoners need?

*'... and I do feel it's important that children like that who are seen to be swimming along and everything's fine, have that opportunity to offload. I'm not sure that anyone in a school establishment has got those skills to do that. (HT School B).*

*'I think there is a lot of things here, that are potentially put on the school to have to do — more pressure for us to support families'. (HT School D).*

*I would imagine there are some very specific things that could be done to help children understand their circumstances. However, this is very hard if we haven't been told — all we can do is guess, and then we have to tread very carefully so that we don't upset parents or children. (HT School A).*

## Two Headteachers used the term 'invisible child' to describe the children of prisoners.

10. Boswell, G. (2002), 'Imprisoned Fathers: The Children's View'. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 41 (1), 14-2; Codd, H. (2008). *In the shadow of prison: Families, imprisonment and Criminal Justice*. London: Willan; and Codd, H. and Scott, D. (2010) *Controversial Issues in Prisons*. McGraw-Hill Education, Berkshire.
11. Boswell, G. (2002), 'Imprisoned Fathers: The Children's View'. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 41 (1), 14-26; and Murray, J. (2007b). The cycle of punishment: Social exclusion of prisoners and their children. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 7 (1) 55-81.
12. Murray, J. and Pardini, R.L.D. (2012) Parental Involvement in the Criminal Justice System and the Development of Youth Theft, Marijuana use, Depression, and Poor Academic Performance. *Criminology*. 50 (1) 255-302.

One school directly questioned whether schools should provide the emotional support the children of prisoners need. Significant training would be required for implementation of this and for schools to grow in confidence in this area. An example of potential training would be Action for Prisoners Families' (APF) support for schools and those working with the children of prisoners through their *Hidden Sentence* Training. The learning outcomes of this training aim to help participants to be aware of the context of the current criminal justice system and the offender's journey; exploring the impact of imprisonment on family members and society; and recognising specific issues for children with a family member in prison which may present barriers to them achieving the ECM outcomes<sup>13</sup>.

This is a tall order for schools but even this does not provide the specialist counselling or support training that would be needed. HTB highlights that children often respond negatively if school staff attempt to take on this counselling role noting that 'children are very clever, they see lines ... the barriers come down, it is very frustrating'. (HT School B).

... children are very clever, they see lines ... the barriers come down, it is very frustrating.

### Conclusion: emerging themes

Central to the themes emerging from this study was parents' overriding concern about the local community and the perceptions of those within it. This appears to prevent mothers from sharing vital information. In turn this prevents the school from supporting children appropriately. This highlights the importance of trust in building strong working relationships with parents in schools<sup>14</sup>. It also illustrates how difficult it may be for 'the service resistant'<sup>15</sup> to trust anyone outside the family home. The conclusion to be drawn is:

*'... position all parents not as problems, or passive recipients of school advice, but as key sources of knowledge and understanding of the child. Developing a closer home-school relationship, acknowledges that the child is*

*part of a family and a local community as well as a pupil, and that their performance as a pupil is affected by their life outside the classroom'. (p28)<sup>16</sup>*

However, it is also beginning to be evident that the community has the potential to be viewed more positively and to be helpful in identifying if a family is in difficulty or if a parent has been admitted to prison.

*Another theme was the challenge of providing the professional development and training to enable schools to respond effectively once they are aware that a child has a parent in prison. This is a particular challenge for Primary Schools. With cuts of 27 per cent to their 'formula grant' from*

*Whitehall during the next four years<sup>17</sup> Local Authorities are making severe reductions in training. Where this is the case, schools are now looking to more innovative ways of engaging in CPD. Some primary schools are joining together and purchasing external training for clusters of schools. This presents an*

*opportunity for charities which work with or for prisons to be involved:*

*'non-governmental organisations provide invaluable help to prisoners and their families throughout the experience of imprisonment ... often they provide a link between the prison and the outside which otherwise would be underdeveloped or non-existent'. (p22)<sup>18</sup>*

APF for example have developed training for schools in supporting the children of prisoners, although currently very few schools have chosen to access this training<sup>19</sup>. To support those teachers who had not worked with the children of prisoners before, guidelines would be useful to ensure a consistency of approach<sup>20</sup>.

13. Action for Prisoners Families (2011) – Hidden Sentence Training Leaflet.

14. Estyn, (2009) *Good Practice in Parental Involvement in Primary Schools*. Cardiff: Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales; and National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (2010) *Leadership for Parental Engagement*. Nottingham: NCLSC.

15. Feiler, A. (2010) *Engaging 'Hard to Reach' Parents: Teacher-Parent Collaboration to Promote Children's Learning*. Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester.

16. Vincent, C. (2012) *Parenting: Responsibilities, risks and respect: An inaugural professorial lecture by Carol Vincent*. Institute of Education, University of London: London.

17. Stabe, M. and Jones, C. (2011) *Council Cuts: UK Local Authorities Respond to Budget Cuts – Financial Times* – 22nd March 2011.

18. *The Danish Institute of Human Rights* (2011) *Children of Imprisoned Parents*. The Danish Institute of Human Rights: Copenhagen.

19. Interview with Action for Prisoners Families, June 2012.

20. Morgan, J., Leeson, C., Carter Dillon, R., Needham, M. and Wrigman, A.L. (2011) *Support Provision in Schools for Children with a Father in Prison: A Case Study of One Local Authority in the UK*. Plymouth: University of Plymouth and Choices Consultancy Service.

One school highlighted the need for the Local Authority or other agencies to be involved in the day-to-day support of the children of prisoners. It is increasingly unlikely that this would be the case, given the public expenditure cuts.

It is evident within this small scale study that there is mixed practice in relation to the children of prisoners. Given that children attend school for a minimum of six hours per day, 5 days per week for a minimum of 185 days a year, schools potentially have

a significant role to play in supporting the children of prisoners in adjusting to their personal circumstances while still encouraging their academic and social development. For this to happen, families would need to feel they trusted schools enough to share this information, confident enough that the school knew how to help their child and the schools would need to be well trained enough to support each individual appropriately.



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# Pentonville Revisited:

## An Essay in Honour of the Morris' Sociological Study of an English Prison, 1958-1963

*Alison Liebling is Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice and Director of the Prisons Research Centre<sup>1</sup> at University of Cambridge.*

**Pentonville is a prison in which reformist, punitive and apathetic attitudes are quite fantastically confused...<sup>2</sup>**

### Introduction

**In this article, I consider the significance of Terence Morris' sociological study of an English prison, Pentonville. As preparation, I re-read Pentonville; visited the prison, for the second time in my research life, consulted the collection of 'reactions to Pentonville', (thanks to the penology lecture notes Tony Bottoms bequeathed to me many years ago). These several reactions were published shortly afterwards, as Terence and others will remember well. I read his own recent deliberations on the study (published in this edition of *PSJ*), and reflected on the study's significance to the fields of penology and prisons research. I talked with several professional friends, who (it turns out) were 'brought up' on Pentonville, and who also remember it well. Several confessed to having been persuaded into their prison governing careers by it. Another said he owed his career change from Classics to Criminology to a conversation with Terence Morris following a public lecture in Cambridge in 1962, as well as his long interest in prisons research, to Pentonville. Since I owe my own interest in prisons research to him, then Pentonville is firmly in my academic family tree: a kind of 'scholarly grandparent' or (since I have recently returned from a research trip to remote Aboriginal prisons and communities in Australia's Northern Territory), a kind of book-shaped 'elder' whose wisdom provides clues and signposts to my own professional identity.**

### Pentonville and its context

Pentonville constitutes both the first English sociological study of a prison, and an important historical record of a very significant period in penal affairs as well

as in prison sociology. The research began with the support of Sir Lionel Fox, then Chairman of the Prison Commission, and as the White Paper for which he was apparently largely responsible, *Penal Practice in a Changing Society*<sup>3</sup>, appeared. When I first learned criminology, I learned that this Paper represented the high point of penological optimism: open prisons, Grendon, the concept of treatment and an interest in the effectiveness of different regimes, as well as the Cambridge Institute of Criminology, all owe their origins to this paper. The role and training of prison governors was in transition at this time, with a new generation of assistant governors with social science backgrounds soon to be working their way into the Service, with criminological training. It was a time of self-examination, official compassion, and in some ways, of the coming of age of a broadly understood Criminology as a welcome participant in constructive penal policy. Sykes published his *Society of Captives*<sup>4</sup> in 1958, and although his prison contained a different, long-term population, its architectural design was 'almost identical'. This study clearly provided 'a most valuable comparative stimulus' to the Morris'.

The prison itself is also of huge significance. It is celebrating its 170th birthday. Staff and governors there today describe it as 'the oldest built prison in operation in Europe'. It represents the 'start of the modern penal system'. They say it has the 'biggest wing in Europe'. There have been brief periods in which its closure has been considered — part of the explanation for the lack of investment in its infrastructure, but that seems very unlikely in the current population climate.

What the Morris' Pentonville does, among many other things, is show how complex the meeting in practice is of this official penological optimism with the realities of a large Victorian prison infrastructure, staff culture, and the real prisoner community. The 'obsolete penology' inscribed in the dramatic buildings, lives on in the memories and identities of staff and prisoners, in the

1. I would like to thank Andy Barclay, Arthur de Frising, Tony Bottoms and Keith Bottomley for reminiscences about *Pentonville*, and the Governor of Pentonville, Gary Monaghan, for facilitating and hosting my visit.
2. Morris, T. and Morris, P. (1963) *Pentonville: A Sociological Study of an English Prison*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 256.
3. Home Office (1959) *Penal Practice in a Changing Society* (Cmnd. 645). London: HMSO.
4. Sykes, Gersham (1958), *The Society of Captives*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

thick walls and high landings, and the cells with tiny windows. The Morris' put it like this:

*Pentonville is in some ways like an archeological site, in that the remains of past theories are layered upon one another. But 'subsidence' and 'erosion' have created an uneven pattern. Relics of repression — the architectural structure — exist alongside recent innovations such as association, access to newspapers, and television. The overall atmosphere suggests not a coherent penal design, but rather an amalgam of entrenched tradition, minor innovation and shifting compromise<sup>5</sup>.*

As Richard Sparks<sup>6</sup> has noted, the constant return of symbolic notions of 'hard work and discipline', and 'less eligibility' in new guises makes it important to grasp their original meaning and form. It is striking that in the Morris' Pentonville 93 per cent of the prisoners were actively employed. You could more than halve that figure today. There are 650 'activity places' including work, education and domestic prison work like cleaning and painting, for its 1260 prisoners.

The research was officially sponsored, and welcomed, formally, but the Morris' give an uncensored account of the hostility and suspicion they encountered from some staff, in part because prison officers were encountering what the Morris' call 'a dilution of authoritarianism in the regime' at the time (that, incidentally, is still how they see things, on the whole). It is significant that their choice of prison was supported — there was no attempt to steer them away from a large London local 'possessing [some] pathological characteristics' into a prettier, smaller, more manageable site, although Maidstone (a smaller training prison) was included as a kind of partial pilot-come-comparator. There were clearly widespread assumptions higher up in the organisation, including among Governors, that prison sociology was potentially useful in the tackling of 'unwholesome' aspects of prison life. A wave of riots in the US in the early 1950s had reinforced a burgeoning interest in the social organisation of the prison:

*The explosive clash of traditional inmate culture with its elaborate system of graft and corruption and new 'reforming' administrative programmes opened up a new prospect, the study of the prison as a system of power<sup>7</sup>.*

It is important to remember how closely the sociology of deviance and the sociology of the prison were connected in these early days, although the Morris' describe themselves as more like social anthropologists, with some helpful social work training, than as either sociologists or criminologists. Their study explores the 'complex relationships between captor and captive', the adaptive roles assumed by prisoners, and the way power and authority work, imperfectly and unpredictably, in this environment.

Pentonville was, at the time of their study, termed a 'maximum security prison' for recidivist prisoners (star prisoners went to Wormwood Scrubs or Brixton), but this was of course before Mountbatten and the introduction of security categorisation. There were 39 escapes from the prison in 1959<sup>8</sup> — a figure that would have led to the sacking of the Governor, the Prison Commissioner, and even (at 39) the Home Secretary if it had happened today. Today it is a Cat B local — secure enough to be almost completely escape free. A prisoner did manage to escape from underneath an escort van two years ago — an incident for

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which there are still some recriminations today. It was, then, a 'prison for failures' — 'one of the sumps of the English prison system'. The prisoners are not glorified in any way — in fact, the account reflects a certain paternalistic kind of criminology. The authors observe that: 'one dominant characteristic of this recidivist population seemed to be a virtual inability to enter into mature and stable sexual relationships<sup>9</sup>'. (The assumption that the rest of the world are engaged in 'mature and stable sexual relationships' may be of its time). Their comment is trumped by Sykes, who writes that, 'order, like a woman's virtue, once lost, is never regained' ... This doesn't stop it being a brilliant book, but it might deter the occasional student from reading further. It is a problem with history.

5. Morris and Morris 1963: 161.

6. Sparks, R. (1996) 'Penal austerity: the doctrine of less eligibility reborn?' in R. Matthews and P. Francis (eds.) *Prisons 2000*, Macmillan.

7. Morris and Morris 1963: 2.

8. Morris and Morris 1963: 131n.

9. Morris and Morris 1963: 68.

There was clearly concern throughout the study about the effects of imprisonment on prisoners. The concepts of prisonisation, and institutionalisation (a kind of learned passivity) were recently accepted currency, giving rise to adaptations, and a subculture, that the Morris' describe vividly. They adapt Merton's classic typology in *Social Structure and Anomie*<sup>10</sup> in a slightly different way from Sykes' adaptation, adding 'manipulation' to the categories of conformity, innovation, two types of ritualism: identification with staff and dependence, retreatism, and rebellion. Becoming inauthentic in prison is a basic hazard, and yet prisoners also express their own deterrence theory — if prison were harsher, I wouldn't be here. That is still their instinctive position, often, today. The authors make clear the limits and damaging effects of a social system based on fear, absence and suffering:

*[The prisoner] suffers physical discomfort in varying degrees, but in almost every case manages to adjust to these problems. It is at the psychological level that imprisonment is a painful, depriving and destructive experience. The important point here is that while some prisoners actually experience a conscious sense of pain and deprivation, there are others who are, as it were, anaesthetised to the pains of imprisonment by frequent exposure to it resulting in their being in an advanced state of prisonisation and institutionalised neurosis. For these men the problems are serious in that, unaware of the way in which imprisonment is progressively reducing their chances of successful rehabilitation outside, they do nothing to mobilise their resistance to it. What is even more serious is that the prison itself lacks both facilities and staff resources either successfully to identify such individuals or to help them*<sup>11</sup>.

Their depiction of the slowly forming prison society as restrictions were lifted on the silence rule and a more overt form of communication grew, and leaders emerged, is deeply insightful. They argue, for example,

When an amplifier  
hiding home-made  
alcohol explodes at  
a Christmas concert,  
we are reminded  
that, however tragic,  
prisons are at the  
same time full of  
humour and  
humanity.

that the pattern of 'friendships' or groupings to arise depend on class, or cultural and ideological identity, in order to achieve equality — an essential element of prison relationships, and unavailable in the world outside. They report the often poetic words of prisoners describing the culture — always poised somewhere between solidarity and chaos, oscillating according to the particular constellation of individual relationships. This shrewd use of just the right word or analogy by staff or prisoners to describe a complex social phenomenon is one of the attractions of prisons research. The runners, traders, gamblers, alcohol brewers and 'bent' prison officers are all here, doing their thing. There is a thriving illicit economy. When an amplifier hiding home-made alcohol explodes at a Christmas concert, we are reminded that, however tragic, prisons are at the same time full of humour and humanity. 'Beneath the calm runs a constant and dangerous undertow of inmate conflict', marking the surface frequently, but kept 'in obscurity' most of the time. Their account provides an important reminder to current sociologists of the prison that power struggles in the prison have always been an extension of group conflicts outside, that race riots have happened many times before, that power and stability can never be taken for granted, and that even in 1959, 'if you have a fight with a ... gang member you have to go on and fight all the gang in turn if they feel like it'<sup>12</sup>. Even the operation of prison councils — with its problems and difficulties — is described<sup>13</sup>. We modern scholars of the prison need to remember that these initiatives and features of the prison community are not new.

The authors make visible much of what lies beneath the surface, arguing, also somewhat poetically, that:

*Because a common normative thread of attitudes and behaviour runs through the activities of each, the general effect from a distance is one of uniformity, whereas in reality, both staff and prisoner groups are like impressionist paintings in which dots of many different colours combine to produce a general effect*<sup>14</sup>.

10. Merton, R. K. (1938) 'Social Structure and Anomie', *American Sociological Review*, 3 (5), 672-82.

11. Morris and Morris 1963: 183.

12. Morris and Morris 1963: 245.

13. Morris and Morris 1963: 250-53.

14. Morris and Morris 1963: 221.

One of the most controversial chapters in the book was on 'the prison staff'. 52 attended for interview, and 26 — particularly long serving and 'Pentonville only' staff — declined. At least 3 were 'intensely and actively hostile towards the research'. The controversies related to a depiction of the staff as very similar to prisoners in their backgrounds, values and culture (a case that has been made since). The comparisons are somewhat graphic, including an observation (actually made by a prison officer) that Pentonville is a 'dumping ground for the poorest officer material'<sup>15</sup>; and the authors hypothesise that the prisoner 'tends to be the expression of his own worst self'. Whilst the staff are portrayed also as victims, there is something harsh and unforgiving about the way in which prison officers are approached in the study. On the other hand, the account provided of a split between those with a vocation, and those trapped or hostile towards the job, of other conflicts and resentments between staff from different specialisms or areas, of the monotony experienced, their organisational 'malaise' or confusion, and lack of enthusiasm, their fear of the forces of permissiveness and nostalgia for discipline, and the despair of a then idealism in 'headquarters', is all utterly recognisable, and its implications still very real. The Morris' account of the way officers use 'an excess of power', decide on the worthiness of prisoners, and use formal reporting processes differently, and yet find that prisoners can make things happen that they can't, is insightful and sensitive and anticipates some of the important work done on prison officers done since — a focus that was lost for many years, to the detriment of the study of the prison.

The POA, meanwhile, are described as militant, tenacious and unreasonable, as dominated by the Committee members, and 'authoritarian in its penal views'. The authors argue:

*The 'function of the branch meeting at Pentonville .. is essentially to act as a safety valve for complaints and feelings of anger and frustration rather than as a democratic setting for constructive debate which might be*

The comparisons are somewhat graphic, including an observation (actually made by a prison officer) that Pentonville is a 'dumping ground for the poorest officer material'.

*subsequently channelled to reach national level'<sup>16</sup>.*

Little more needs to be said, here, about the continuing relevance of the Prison Officers' Union to understanding prison life.

They also say the following:

*This book is not an indictment, neither of the system nor the people within it. It is not accompanied by a conviction that 'heads should roll'. Rather, it is an attempt to show that in the maximum security prison all men are prisoners. The staff, like the inmates, are subject to the constraints of their institutional environment and what they do represents a functional adaptation to the demands of the social situation. Until the community re-writes the character of the prison system Pentonville cannot be otherwise than it is; it is the utterly confused state of penal philosophy in our society which is responsible for the pathologies of the maximum security prison'<sup>17</sup>.*

This sentence could be written today.

So the authors are harsh about the staff, mostly, but then so are Cohen and Taylor in *Psychological Survival*<sup>18</sup> ('and outside on the landing sat the plebs..') for similar reasons: a combined effect of clashing ideologies and backgrounds, and a kind of naïve self-belief that sociologists know better, and a zeitgeist that risked portraying prisoners as romantic heroes ... though the Morris are less rosy about prisoners than Cohen and Taylor. I can see why staff were offended. That is not to say that they don't make some shrewd observations about staff culture, or that the observations they make about conflict, status, discipline and values would not still stand, in some prisons and among some staff. That Pentonville scored lower than any other local prison on its last MQPL score suggests it still has problems of culture and resistance to overcome. On my recent visit, I met some of the most energetic, enthusiastic, committed and forward-thinking staff and Governors I have come across in a long time. I left the prison feeling reassured after

15. Morris and Morris 1963: 99-100.

16. Morris and Morris 1963: 218.

17. Morris and Morris 1963: 4.

18. Cohen, S. and Taylor, L. (1972), *Psychological Survival: The Experience of Long-Term Imprisonment*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

some far more depressing visits to other prisons and YOIs in the area. The reasons for staff indifference, brutality and intransigence, precisely because these aspects are not the defining characteristics of the prison officer but stand in contrast to staff at their professional best, still need to be much more carefully explored and understood.

### Staff-prisoner relationships

The Morris' recognise the significance of prison staff to prisoners, and their analysis of these relationships is a familiar account of the forces of liberalisation, reflected in modern training, clashing with 'the way we do things around here'. The more enlightened staff and governors knew their best chance of effecting change was a transfer out of Pentonville. Relationships were a bit gruff, but those officers who were assaulted were on the whole, believed to be asking for it, even by their less 'touchy' colleagues. Staff embodied authority. If they provoked prisoners, this showed a lack of skill or pettiness that was inappropriate. Relationships were at their best when staff and prisoners spent time together in small groups, working at tasks, in a way that compelled them to 'regard each other as individuals'. Even the risks of unthinking permissiveness are documented. In the more liberal and experimental H Wing, with its different kind of penal order, its much better conditions, and its contested status in the prison, there was too much tolerance:

*Without specialised staff training, explicit objectives, and the use of socio-therapeutic techniques such as group counselling, officers and prisoners sink into a dangerous tolerance of each other's shortcoming (p. 268)<sup>19</sup>.*

Ben Crewe, Susie Hulley and I have just published a paper<sup>20</sup> on this very theme — they are live issues in the understanding and management of prisons today, just as they were in 1959. There are strong hopes described in the long section on H Wing that excellent staff-prisoner

relationships are likely to have a 'high training value', or at the very least, to provide the required pre-conditions for training. The 'association of amelioration with 'reform' in the minds of staff and prisoners' is still a question in need of empirical and theoretical elaboration: precisely what combination of supportive, rigorous, and 'decent' prison environments leads to better outcomes after prison? This is an area my colleagues and I have stumbled into, as we enter yet another phase of high official expectations for the prison. The confusion of punishment, reform, hope and despair, desert and lack of it persists in practice, with new overtones of fear and risk-aversion, which together make for confused and angry prisoners as well as confused and cynical staff.

In short, the Morris' study lays many of the foundations for subsequent work on the prison. It shaped a generation or two of prison governors, and was still being read as part of their training course at least twenty years after it was published. That it is not always read today, by students or practitioners, has something to do with Paul Rock's observation that students no longer read 'the classics'. They think ideas become dated. This is far from true, perhaps especially in the case of the prison.

### Pentonville revisited

What struck me most on re-reading the book at the same time as my recent visit to the prison was the feeling of continuity. The authors describe Pentonville as follows:

*The facts about Pentonville are incontrovertible. The buildings are archaic and grossly overcrowded, there is not enough work for prisoners to do, the staff are short-handed, 'training' and social work provisions are rudimentary, and, in spite of its inhospitable character, familiar faces enter its gates again and again<sup>21</sup>.*

This sentence could have been written last week. The population when the Morris' conducted their study was 1,250, with 650 allocated three prisoners to a cell and the rest in single cells. When I visited in 2012 it was

19. Morris and Morris 1963: 268.

20. Crewe, B., Liebling, A., and Hulley, S. (forthcoming), *Heavy/Light, Absent/Present: Rethinking the 'Weight' of Imprisonment*.

21. Morris and Morris 1963: 4.

1260, mainly two to a cell. It would be interesting to compare the overall population figures and rate of imprisonment in 1958 with today's figures — both are very much higher.

The large bell remains a prominent feature of the centre, and its current governor described a 'real mix of violence and vulnerability' completely reminiscent of the Morris' account of the borderline disturbed-dangerous offender. The problems of the 'disturbed-disruptive' prisoner are carefully captured, and again, foreshadow the work of Hans Toch in this area. That the prison operates in exclusive and simplified categories — bad or mad, risky or trusted, redeemable or beyond redemption — or that apparent indifference is experienced as maltreatment — is one of its painful habits. 'Far from rehabilitating', argue the authors, 'Pentonville ... pushes the chances of rehabilitation further and further into the realm of pious optimism'<sup>22</sup>.

Some aspects of their account are fundamentally changed — the novelty of 'a woman' in the prison 'who walked around unescorted but interviewed prisoners alone, visited them in punishment cells and listened to evidence of obscene language at adjudications' has worn off. Now, at least 20 per cent of the prison staff would be female, and most of the education and many other support staff also. Two of the top three senior management team are fast-track young women, both accepted and respected by staff and prisoners. It is still the case that prisoners say 'sorry, Miss' when they swear, and staff look embarrassed when they do the same, thinking they are out of sight, but the basic controversy of being a woman in a man's prison, still prevalent when I began my own fieldwork in 1986, has almost disappeared.

A large portion of the staff at Pentonville (36 per cent) are from Black and minority ethnic or mixed race backgrounds. This is not all good, reflecting as it does another striking difference over time. About 3.5 per cent of the population were 'recognisably non-white' in the Morris' time. This compares with 45 per cent today. Attitudes of prisoners and staff are described in their study as primarily xenophobic. Plenty of examples are provided. Overt racism is much less prevalent in prisons, but the death of Zahid Mubarak in 2001 at the hands of his white racist cell-mate, and other such incidents, illustrate the deeply troubled and troubling nature of

living in a multi-faith, multi-cultural, divided, impoverished and selectively policed society. This is a significant change.

That there were two executions during the Morris' research is staggering to read. These events were controversial, dividing the staff, attracting protests, and persuading the research team to declare their anti capital punishment position — a choice which reinforced opposition from those staff who were already hostile. How this differs from what Jonathan Simon today calls 'life-trashing' sentences<sup>23</sup>: the 30 year tariffs that effectively end a life, but without the clarity of a formal state killing, it is difficult to judge. Are we more or less civilised in 2012? The routine practice of physically beating prisoners who assault staff described in the book is no longer tolerated. Today there is a different challenge, of staff experiencing sometimes violent or life threatening assaults having to return to work, sometimes to face the offending prisoner. Staff are required to do this professionally and without retaliation. It is 'right', we might say, but nonetheless emotionally challenging.

Suicide attempts are no longer a disciplinary offence — although being regarded as attention-seeking is still a serious hazard.

My day in Pentonville in May 2012 was something of a surprise. The average age of the senior management team has dropped significantly; all of them were bright, energetic, positive about staff, and determined to make improvements — if necessary, by forgetting the pressures facing the wider Service (as well as some censorship and constraints imposed by it) and concentrating exclusively on Pentonville's physical state, and its diverse regimes. New floors and lots of paint had lifted the tone and mood, and some newly functioning wings — a first night centre, and a drug free unit, had something of the atmosphere intended in H Wing all those years ago. The prison has a newly built health care centre — indistinguishable from the kind of centre you would find in the community. The prisoners were not complaining — but acknowledged how much change they had witnessed in the last few years.

The current senior management team are still tackling the tendency described in the Morris' study for the staff to be 'friendly but not helpful'. It still has a 'put an app in' culture. There is a 'fatalism' among staff,

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rehabilitating', argue  
the authors,  
'Pentonville ...  
pushes the chances  
of rehabilitation  
further and further  
into the realm of  
pious optimism'.

22. Morris and Morris 1963: 206.

23. Simon, J. (2001) 'Entitlement to Cruelty': The End of Welfare and the Punitive Mentality in the United States', in K. Stenson and R. R. Sullivan (eds.) *Crime, Risk, and Justice*, Cullompton, Devon: Willan.

about their own fates, and those of prisoners. They still say 'it sometimes feels that discipline has slipped', and there is a persisting problem of corruption. But there is also a pride and energy in the place, and prisoners said, 'there's no negligence no more'. The Governor said:

*We do have cockroaches here, but the prisoners know that we battle like hell to get rid of them. Everyone knows that.*

Prisoners can be generous in their assessments of genuine efforts towards legitimacy.

The prisoners' main grievances were to do with sentence lengths, and the imposition of custody on inappropriate populations. I did not hear one complaint against the staff (which is unusual). The presence of drug addiction and recovery in the prison was noticeable. The staff I spoke to were full of pride and energy — and related very informally and respectfully to prisoners, although they complained that ordinary front line prison officers in large local prisons were completely overlooked in reward and recognition schemes. You had to be 'doing a special project' in a 'fancy' prison, to get noticed. An officer with an operatic voice was singing his way through the centre, to the amusement of his colleagues.

I came away both pleasantly surprised and bemused by the continuing paradoxes of prison life: the best and worst of human nature, the confusion of purpose and effects, the friendliness and willingness to talk and share stories, and the sadness of lives being wasted and professional effort going unrecognised. There were still suicides, fights, risks, and challenges. Having just repeated a lengthy study of a single prison after a gap of twelve years, I have learned how haunting and intriguing it is to take your own body back to a place you once knew well, and find it changed. I wonder what Terence Morris would make of Pentonville today? In my case, the change in the prison I revisited was in the wrong direction. I read with feeling Terence's talk to prison visitors, included as an appendix to the book. He counsels them to 'tell him about yourself as well as getting him to talk' — an instruction to be human, to bridge the gulf, and to dispel fantasies prisoners may

have about lives lived by others on the outside. This wise advice is in tension with increasingly formal anxieties about giving information away, the risks of conditioning, and the dangers of being human in relationships with prisoners, especially in high security prisons. It is urgent that we remember the less securitised past

### Reflections on doing prisons research

I shall end with some reflections on the matter of doing prisons research, and on some continuities and discontinuities. The Morris' write of the emotional demands of fieldwork, the need for independence, the need for continuing presence, and the need to maintain the role of researcher rather than social worker, or any of the other roles that prisoners and staff draw out of us. All of these points are valid. What has changed is the nature of the penal project. Whereas in the 1950s and 60s, (and throughout the 80s and first half of the 90s, when I started my prisons research career) reform was 'in the air' the current climate is more sinister. This makes the role of the prison researcher politically complex. There may be some naivety in the assumptions of the 'social work' generation that their methods and theories were right, but today prisons operate almost without criminological theory. Economics is more dominant. That the bibliography in the back is called *The International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction* makes me both nostalgic and envious; to have lived in such an era, and believed in it, must have been very satisfying.

There is far more prisons research than there was, and I like to think the Cambridge Prisons Research Centre has stimulated as well as built the foundations of some of that. Questions of access are somewhat improved, but the politics of handling research results can still be tricky. There are new developments, including private sector competition, and the recent competing in particular of existing prisons run by the public sector, that require expert research attention. Whatever the context, it remains the case that 'the dominating concerns of the prison are not for tomorrow and the promise of rehabilitation and reform, but with the pressing burdens of today'<sup>24</sup>. We forget that important message at our peril.

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24. Morris and Morris 1963: 309.

# A Lifetime with Pentonville

*Terence Morris* is Professor Emeritus of Criminology and Criminal Justice in the University of London, was the first director of the Mannheim Centre and taught at the London School of Economics from 1955-95. His works include *Pentonville: the sociology of an English prison* (with Pauline Morris, 1963). Sadly, Terence died from Motor Neurone Disease in July 2013.

## Where it all began

**It is more than fifty years since I first had the idea of studying a prison. I was a prison visitor at the Scrubs at the time when under the benevolent regime of Gilbert Hair, who had come from Strangeways, outsiders like me could not only have a cell key, but wander around the prison to visit inmates on our list if they happened to be working their allotment gardens (later to become the dog track under the perimeter wall) or in one case, stoking the prison boilers. All the men I visited were serving long sentences, the majority 'lifers' reprieved from the gallows.**

But my connection with Pentonville goes a long way further back. When I was still quite a small boy, about seven I would think, my father was visited by a man of unusually gaunt appearance. When he left, I asked about him. My father replied that he had just done six months hard labour<sup>1</sup> in Pentonville for receiving a stolen gold watch. I asked what hard labour was and where Pentonville was located, so on a Geographia map spread out on the floor, we identified all the London prisons. In due course, I cycled round most of them. Twenty or so years later, the research began.

My experiences at the Scrubs and the publication of Gresham Sykes' *Society of Captives* (1958) together with Donald Clemmer's *Prison Community* (1940), all encouraged me to approach the Prison Commissioners with the idea of a comparable study of an English prison. The then Chairman, Sir Lionel Fox, and his successor Sir Arthur Petersen, were both enthusiastic, as was Duncan Fairn and the Chief Medical Officer. This positive support by the Commissioners for the research was immensely valuable when the going became difficult, as it did from time to time.

But this is not a simple tale, but one that has two threads — the prison and the gallows. My father was a life-long opponent of capital punishment, and it was from him that I came to learn of the trial and hanging in 1922 of Edith Thompson and Frederick Bywaters. Bywaters' bones, to the best of my knowledge, still lie within Pentonville's walls in a plot once marked on the

official ground plan as Crippen's Grass. When Holloway was rebuilt, Edith's remains were re-interred with decency in the woodland cemetery at Brookwood. It so happened that during the research, although there had been no executions at Pentonville for five years, two were to take place within weeks of each other. I had not anticipated that hardly had the work at Pentonville begun when not one but two executions would so suddenly and unpredictably come to dominate the entire scene.

I was in the prison, walking round the yard with an officer for whom the idea of hanging was repellent when, at 9 a.m. on April 24th, 1959, Joseph Chrimes<sup>2</sup> met his end. We looked at our watches, each, I suspect, sharing a mental vision of that moment when the trapdoor would bang open, and of a lifeless body slowly gyrating in the pit below until at last the prison doctor had certified death. Later that morning I found the Governor sitting in his office, utterly dejected. He had witnessed judicial killing for the first time. Then, on May 8th, Ronald Marwood was hanged for the murder of PC Raymond Summers.

Recruited by Alexander Patterson, David Waddilove had never served in a local prison before. His institutional career had been spent in the Borstal Service and his previous posting had been that of Governor at Hollesley Bay. 'Old Butcher', as his Deputy Governor was known, was a former Coldstream Guardsman with more than thirty years prison service behind him. He reminded me of a Company Sergeant Major I had once known, of stern bearing but great competence; certainly the sort of man you were glad to have around when things were not looking good.

If I seem to emphasise the importance of these two executions it is because in the last days of capital punishment the gallows cast a long shadow over almost every local prison in the country. In London the only prison without a gallows was Wormwood Scrubs. In spite of the enthusiasm that many of the staff expressed for it, equally there were those who were deeply troubled by it. But Pentonville recovered from the events of 1959 if only because as an institution it possessed the cultural wherewithal to take it in its stride.

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1. He would have almost certainly spent his time picking oakum, the fibres of tarred rope used for caulking the wooden decks of ships.  
2. Chrimes had killed in the course of a domestic burglary.

## The Maidstone Pilot

Before work at Pentonville began I spent six weeks at Maidstone. I slept in a cell in the hospital, had my breakfast with the staff and my mid-day meal with the prisoners. Prison fare I found well below what had previously been my institutional benchmark, namely that produced by the Army Catering Corps. In particular, I found unpleasant the practice at dinner time of pouring back into the huge metal teapot what remained in any mugs that were not completely empty. The contents were re-heated and served again later in the day. Tea, milk, sugar and possibly other liquids were all mixed together!

I worked alongside prisoners in the laundry, on the same machine, it so happened, as the late James Hanratty<sup>3</sup>. The laundry experience was invaluable. It demonstrated Sykes' theory that order in prisons is based as much upon a mutually co-operative consensus as it is on coercion. If we worked well as a team — and we did — the officer in charge of the laundry would ensure that we had a plentiful supply of biscuits with our mid morning tea break. He provided them himself.

Maidstone also introduced me to prison humour. One morning on his rounds, the Governor, Robin Ffinch<sup>4</sup> was baffled by the sight of us all in the process of taking one of the washing machines apart. It was explained to him that one of our number had accidentally lost his denture inside, and he was due a visit that afternoon and wanted to look his best.

I also met up with the Board of Visitors. The Chairman was the 77 year old Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt Drake (1881-1964), High Sherriff of Kent, twelve times Mayor of Maidstone, Justice of the Peace<sup>5</sup> and owner of Maidstone Zoo. The Deputy Governor, known affectionately as 'Jumbo' Harrison, introduced me to the Board meeting, explaining that my presence in the prison was with the complete approval of the Prison Commissioners. Tyrwhitt Drake would have none of it. 'Leave this room, both of you!' he commanded. Harrison protested that as Deputy Governor, he was in charge of the prison that day. The riposte from Tyrwhitt Drake was as sharp as it was

gratuitously offensive: 'You are merely a public servant!'

What, I suspect, had really enraged him was having learned that very morning that the Home Secretary, Rab Butler, had declined to approve a sentence of birching the Visitors had imposed some weeks previously on a prisoner found guilty of striking an officer. I was reminded of a line in Shakespeare:

*Man, proud Man, dressed in a little brief authority, most ignorant of what he's most assured*<sup>6</sup>.

Maidstone was then a prison for Corrective Training<sup>7</sup> so it had none of the short-term inmates who were a significant proportion of the Pentonville population. Overwhelmingly, those at Maidstone were young men with a growing history of property crime.

The atmosphere was positive and from the most junior discipline officer to the Governor grade there was a predominantly optimistic commitment to the goal of rehabilitation, in the belief that while they would not succeed every time, they would certainly do so some of the time.

Pentonville was bigger, noisier, dirtier, and an altogether more restlessly discomfoting place.

### The Pentonville contrast

The differences could hardly have been greater. Pentonville was bigger, noisier, dirtier, and an altogether more restlessly discomfoting place. The admixture of smells — cabbage water, stale tobacco smoke, the sanitary recesses, and unwashed bodies — hung like a pre-war London fog. For the cleaners on their knees scrubbing the landing floors and doing their best with recesses reeking of overnight urine and faeces, it was a labour of Sisyphus. The battle against dirt was unending and that against odours unwinnable, certainly as 'slopping out' was a routine activity<sup>8</sup>.

For David Waddilove it was a culture shock, as it was for me, not least since I had spent so much time at The Scrubs where the regime was driven by a positive commitment to the ideal of rehabilitation. The Scrubs, being the last of the London prisons to be built in the 19th century was constructed not on the radial design of Jebb, but with the separate blocks or 'Halls'

3. Hanged at Bedford 4th April 1962 for the so-called A6 Murder.

4. His name employed the archaic 'double lower case' as a substitute for the capital letter 'F'.

5. Justices of the Peace must nowadays retire at 70.

6. *Measure for Measure*. Line 114.

7. A sentence of three years duration, introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 1948.

8. Jebb's Pentonville of 1842 had lavatories and wash basins in every cell. They were removed in the 1870s under the regime of Sir Edmund du Cane (1830-1903), a military man of authoritarian character and short temper. See Seán McConville. *English Local Prisons. 1860-1900: Next Only to Death*. Routledge. 1994.

preferred by du Cane. I think this had a lot to do with the fact that in the 1950s it was an altogether quieter and less smelly place than Pentonville. In the 'ville' everything seemed to move at a frenetic and unremitting pace in order not to be overwhelmed by the pressures imposed from outside and the urgency of getting everything that needed to be done on the inside completed before the daily round began once more. Even when the prison should have been quiet, save for the footsteps of the night patrols, the silence might be rent by men shouting to each other. There was a sense that for most of the staff, just keeping the place going was their first priority, and there were few illusions about sending inmates out better than when they had come in.

Early every morning, excepting Sundays a group of men would emerge from the Gate on discharge. At the end of every day the prison vans, having gathered up prisoners from around the London courts, would distribute them around the London prisons. Through Reception at Pentonville would pass hardened villains, eventually to be transferred to Dartmoor, petty offenders, the mentally ill, and deteriorated alcoholics, the human detritus of the great city; Pentonville had accommodated them all. Coming or going, they were for the most part a sorry sight, reminiscent of Doré's<sup>9</sup> illustration of the exercise yard at Newgate in 1872. The *rite de passage* of reception with its public nakedness, compulsory, if brief bathing, and cursory medical examination, would conclude with the issue of prison uniform, every item of which, including underwear and shoes, would have been worn by some other inmate before.

I used to spend a lot of time in Reception, becoming used to the rank body odours and the pitiable sight of some for whom magistrates and judges thought prison was the only answer. For some Pentonville was their only experience of medical care, antiquated and inadequate though it was.

Yet even here there was humour. On being offered a shirt by the 'Red Band' inmate who was issuing them, one rather 'posh' newcomer inquired if there might be one with a size 15 collar. To this unusual request the reply came, quick as a flash:

*Two sizes in 'ere mate. Too big an' too fuckin' small.*

For a substantial proportion of its inmates, the great door of Pentonville was a revolving one.

I was reminded of this later when a prisoner remarked to me that when things in prison become too bad for tears, there is only laughter left.

Professor Liebling in her paper has succinctly reiterated how the overt objectives of the Pentonville regime in those days were handicapped by confusion and contradiction. Exactly how *do* you go about turning offenders into ex-offenders and eventually into law abiding citizens? And how, at the same time, do you resolve the problems raised by the need to protect society from its predators while yet marking certain actions as wholly unacceptable by the infliction of what is termed punishment?

Given the resources at the prison's disposal, the task was hampered not so much by the raw material — making the bricks without the straw — but by firing them in a kiln that could never reach working temperature.

Four years after the publication of *Pentonville* I was appointed to the magistracy in Inner London and for the next thirty four years I spent what seemed to be an increasing amount of my time in two courts in south London, Tower Bridge and Camberwell Green. Before 1966 appointment to the Bench had been essentially a matter of political patronage, there being

no mechanism for selection and no provision whatever for training. Both were introduced in 1966, but in my early days on the Bench I encountered a majority of those who had been appointed rather than selected and who declined the opportunity of training available to them<sup>10</sup>. I soon discovered at first hand why big city 'locals' like Pentonville were regarded as the penal equivalent of the municipal tip. Unfortunately, much of what was deemed suitable for such disposal returned in fairly short order as recycling. For a substantial proportion of its inmates, the great door of Pentonville was a revolving one.

For men sentenced to periods of less than a month, there was really very little that Pentonville could do for or with them beyond provide food, shelter and the most rudimentary healthcare. For the most part social derelicts, these were the human flotsam of the London streets, kept afloat outside on a tide of alcohol. The curtain had not risen on the drug scene. In the 1960s the list in every Magistrates' Court in London began with what were termed 'the overnight drunks'. But there was also an endless procession of petty

9. Gustave Doré. (1832-1883) did many sketches of the life of Victorian London's underclass.

10. When I raised this point in conversation with the then Chairman of the Magistrates' Association he replied; 'My boy, where there is death, there is hope'.

recidivists for whom, in the days before Community Service Orders, a short prison sentence was considered the appropriate norm.

The very first time I had myself to pronounce a sentence of imprisonment from the Bench, a vision of Reception at Pentonville came immediately to mind. What would this man make of prison but, more importantly, what would prison make of him?

Although the experiment of 'H' Wing was the jewel in the Pentonville crown, the majority of inmates had no experience of it. The workshops, in which most men spent their days had an atmosphere that belonged to the era, if not of Jebb, then certainly that of du Cane.

In the mailbag shop rows of men crudely stitched by hand the coarse sacks that were used by the Post Office. The manufacture of coir mats was more skilled and probably more rewarding. But the same could hardly be said of the dismantling shop where old telephone equipment was laboriously taken apart<sup>11</sup>. At the bottom of this industrial heap was the lightest labouring task — the rag shop where most of the illiterate and socially derelict prisoners would sit tearing up old clothing<sup>12</sup>.

Attempts were made to repair the shortcomings of educational experience with classes in simple literacy and numeracy. Progress was generally very slow.

At this time, when the idea of prisoners being able to make telephone calls was unheard of, letters were restricted and all visits were 'closed' in that inmate and visitor were separated by a wire grille. Physical contact was rendered largely impossible. Audio-visual entertainment came in two forms. Loudspeakers on the landings would reproduce, normally with a high level of distortion, radio programmes selected by the staff, while at weekends films were shown in the chapel that served as a cinema for this purpose. There was a flourishing library, with a selection of picture books for those unable to read. There was no television.

That for me, is what a young person might nowadays describe as 'a hard ask'. When one has passed 80, contemplating work begun when one was not yet thirty, demands not only a good memory but also scrupulous objectivity.

Re-reading passages of *Pentonville* I am astonished at how much ground we covered. Not only was the first draft of the book completed in longhand, but also we had a massive hand written card index of every staff member and every inmate with whom we had any conversation that enabled us to find the notes of those conversations. The notes, copied on a mechanical typewriter, were destroyed long ago, but the index cards only went to a certified confidential shredder in June 2012.

The work was achieved by a division of labour. Pauline Morris did about 80 per cent of the fieldwork on a daily basis while I did the remainder. Barbara Bieley, whose contribution was crucial, transcribed the notes and analysed them by topic. I wrote the text of the book.

Not all of the final report was published in that we were required to excise the chapter dealing with the disorder in the prison on the evening before Marwood's execution. Someone in the Press Department of the Home Office had stated that there were no disturbances that

night and as Arthur Peterson put it to me, he could hardly authorise publication of an account and analysis of disturbances that (officially) had never taken place! No doubt the minutes of the series of disciplinary hearings that subsequently took place were part of the same fantasy. An unexpurgated copy of the report was in the library of the Prison Service Training School at Wakefield for many years and to my personal knowledge at least one academic researcher was given access to it about twenty years later.

There is no doubt that some members of the prison staff, unhappy at our presence in any event, took great offence at some of the things that appeared in

There is no doubt that some members of the prison staff, unhappy at our presence in any event, took great offence at some of the things that appeared in print, especially the suggestion that both staff and inmates shared elements of a common culture.

11. Some of this was put to good use by a few skillful prisoners who built (illicit) crystal radio sets. One is illustrated in *Pentonville* between pages 158 and 159.  
12. Another source of prison humour. Question: 'Where is all this stuff going?' Answer: 'To be used by the Portuguese navy for engine room cleaning.'

print, especially the suggestion that both staff and inmates shared elements of a common culture. With hindsight, things might have been expressed better. It was felt by some that we were saying that prison officers were no different from offenders, which was not what we were saying. Better expressed, we might have said that they came from overlapping worlds that understood each other — the same can be said of the police — and it was never intended to have pejorative implications. Prison officers like policemen, certainly in those days, were well aware of the social and cultural features of the world of offenders.

I suspect one issue to which we paid insufficient attention was the way in which the research was perceived. No-one had ever done anything quite like this before. Some staff suspected the true motive for the study. If it had been approved by the Commissioners then there was clearly something in it for them, remembering that in the 1950s the Commissioners were perceived as the 'enemy without' whose default attitude to prison officers was seen as critical rather than supportive. Many prisoners, on the other hand, saw the research as some kind of forum to which they could bring their grievances. In those days the grievance was a basic issue of psychological kit, for the prisoner no less than the conscripted private soldier. The staff, aware of this, were presented with an additional concern. And while the perception of the researchers as 'prison reformers' was a positive thing for the inmates, it served only to increase the anxieties of some staff who were suspicious of the idea of penal reform in any event.

Objectively and half a century away from the situation, I am bound to admit that any evaluation of prison conditions is relative. I have mentioned the odours of Pentonville and they left much to be desired. But at least prisoners did not have to wash and dry their own laundry.

A few years later, when writing about a prison I had been asked to report upon by the Colonial Office, I found that inmates were obliged to perform that task themselves, hanging it out in the prison yard. I had to report that at high spring tides the town sewer that discharged into the ocean backed up and flooded the yard. On those occasions the inmates had to attend to their washing lines barefoot, and awash in raw sewage.

In contrast, I have come across prisons in North America that were spotless examples of social control from some Orwellian nightmare.

The problem for the researcher who comes in some way to identify with those whose lives he or she is researching is not new. Without exception, the great social anthropologists whom I was privileged to have as teachers all succumbed. Edmund Leach thought of the Kachins of Highland Burma as 'his people' as did Isaac Schapera of the Bantu of southern Africa. Raymond Firth was excited when he learned that the Colonial Office was sending me to look at prisons in the South Pacific. But the inhabitants of Pentonville were not one people, but two; captors and captives who shared a common social space. At times both were 'our people' and at other times, neither. The prison community is undoubtedly a place of shared existence, something that the wisest of prison officers readily understood though they might not always have articulated their keen awareness of it. To ensure that the prison ran as smoothly as possible, co-operation was not only preferable to coercion but the most efficient way of getting things done. This became clear to me during the Maidstone pilot study when I was working in the laundry when staff and inmates were united in making it clear to the puzzled Governor that dental recovery had, for the time being, priority over all else.

It is still worth considering the maxim of Sir Alexander Patterson, that men go to prison

as and not *for* punishment. The punishment of prison is the deprivation of freedom and personal autonomy; a prison sentence is the imposition of a mark of shame, often upon a wider group than the prisoner himself. But if the rehabilitative ideal has any reality, it must make demands upon the offender. It may be an uncomfortable option to be required to undergo critical self-examination, dispensing with those techniques of neutralisation that are persuasive that all is the fault of others and never of the self.

It is because so many of those who still adhere to the simplistic view that crime merits nothing but punishment, whether that punishment has any effect or not, that the rehabilitative ideal is perceived as a soft option. Reflecting upon the comment of one Visiting Magistrate in a northern prison who commented that inmates 'ate like fighting cocks', I was minded that for

The prison community is undoubtedly a place of shared existence, something that the wisest of prison officers readily understood though they might not always have articulated their keen awareness of it.

magistrates nowadays an alternative source of hope comes in the form of statutory retirement at age 70.

### What future is there for prisons?

I have been genuinely surprised and indeed gratified recently to learn that *Pentonville*, notwithstanding controversy at the time, has played some positive role in the thinking of prison staff, although re-reading passages myself, I am only too aware of some of its shortcomings. Prisons have moved on since the 1950s although I cannot say necessarily for the better.

This prompts me to succumb to the temptation of another kind of re-assessment. Half a century ago, I saw no fundamental conflict between the ideas that were infused into the prison system from the top and the visions of those who were committed to what was broadly termed 'reform'. Rab Butler and the majority of his immediate successors at the Home Office, independently of their party political persuasion, were committed to rehabilitation as a priority, while taking into account the need for public protection against the most socially dangerous offenders. If reformers had any quarrel with that, it was in respect of the execution of that policy, not the policy itself.

There is no doubt but that some things, like sanitation, have changed for the better. I suspect prisons are cleaner, too. I recall once interviewing an inmate at Armley while watching the soot particles coming through on open window fall on my notebook as we talked. I remember, too, finding on my first visit to Parkhurst that cell lighting consisted of a gas jet set behind a glass pane in the wall, lit from the landing outside.

A great deal is indeed now changed, though, I would argue, by no means necessarily for the better.

The seismic shift in penal philosophy was first felt in America when the United States was converted to the politics of neo-liberalism. Social rehabilitation was derided and social incapacitation lauded. The solution was simple; 'Just bang 'em up!' Offenders behind bars cannot prey on the community, so three strikes and you're out perhaps for 25 years, even if this time you did only steal a hamburger. And at the same time, capital punishment came back into fashion along with life sentences without possibility of parole. By the 1980s variants of this deadly philosophical virus had crossed the Atlantic. We were to hear the proclamation 'Prison works!' along with the injunction 'if you don't want to do the time, don't do the crime'. It was a

blending of an extreme form of the theory of social defence as used by the Classical criminologists in the late 19th century with a theory of deterrence belonging to the 18th, that mankind seeks pleasure but avoids pain. I leave the reader to speculate on how it is that the prison population has risen four fold since the 1950s.

Leaving aside whether what I would term the 'warehouse/archive' theory of penology has any identifiable merits, I am tempted ironically to observe that the re-introduction of widespread capital punishment might well be a better solution. Dead men (and women) cannot commit further offences, and when compared with the overall cost of long and indeterminate prison sentences, might well be the cheaper option.

Mercifully, such notions are for the vast majority of us the stuff of nightmares. But there is another element to be considered besides whether or not the penal pendulum should once more swing in the direction of

the rehabilitative ideal and away from the warehouse solution. That, shortly stated, is the involvement of what is termed the 'private sector' but what I prefer to call the commercial prison industry.

The saying attributed to George Santayana, that those who know no history are destined to re-live it, may have some relevance here. The office of gaoler in the 18th century was an office of profit. The

administrative confusions of local and convict prisons in Victorian times led to the establishment of the Prison Commission in 1877 that introduced a consistency into the prison system that made possible the 20th century reforms of Alexander Patterson and his disciples.

The re-emergence of a market in the sub-contracting of prisons is merely one instance of the neo-liberal political philosophy that regards the state as the natural inferior of the market. The market in prison services is likely to be followed in short order by an extension of the market in security services including aspects of policing. And why stop there; might not consortia of law firms be able to run the court system, perhaps? Already probation is under consideration for 'marketing'.

If the 18th century gaoler could charge for the provision of bedstraw and candles, what, in terms of 'marketised' model of prisons, is there against a charge for the provision of TV sets and computers?

I have yet to be persuaded that the provision of public services for profit is preferable to public services, publicly provided for the common good. Those

A great deal is indeed now changed, though, I would argue, by no means necessarily for the better.

fundamental things that it is the duty of the state to ensure for its citizens ought to be, unequivocally, the transparent responsibility of the state.

### **A future for prisons, especially big ones**

Given the size of the prison population there is little hope of the prison estate divesting itself of any surplus property and from an economic viewpoint an extensive programme of demolition and rebuilding is out of the question<sup>13</sup>. So we are left with a series of buildings now well into their second century. Who will be contained within them?

At the time of writing the Minister of Justice is suggesting changes in the law that would provide for mandatory life sentences for repeated offences of certain kinds. It might be objected that the prison system has enough lifers already, never mind those prisoners subject to IPP, a proportion of whom are already 'over tariff' through no fault of their own. If the pattern shifts, such that the majority of inmates are long termers, short sentences becoming the exception rather than the rule, then it may well be that what used to be the 'big city locals' may have to adapt their regimes to those of long term imprisonment.

There is always the possibility that one or more of the trans-national conglomerates that already provide prison facilities on a commercial basis might well become involved in some form of private finance initiative to rebuild some urban establishments, but green field sites remain more attractive. What seems

more likely is that should 'two or three strikes' legislation take effect, the slow moving lifer/long term population will ensure the steady growth of the prison population as a whole.

It is, of course, an ironic paradox that what is a problem for the state is at the same time a positive opportunity for those companies who can provide incarcerare services on a commercial basis. That is essentially a political as much as a practical choice.

As a general rule, the smaller the human group, the easier it is to manage most aspects of social activity and interaction. But if the prison population is inexorably to rise, the pressures to house it in ever larger institutions that can achieve economies of scale will be no less. The character of the prison will, of necessity, shift towards becoming not so much that of the warehouse where the stock at least moves on and off the shelves, as the long term storage depot where nothing moves save at rare intervals. The North American experience is not encouraging.

All of which leaves me with this thought. The idea that 'progress' is inexorable is a myth. Society has more than one reverse gear in the box. The Victorians brought things forward from the inefficient squalor of the 18th century. The reformers of the early 20th century continued with the task. And since the early 1980s, we have largely gone backwards, and at best stood still. The blame can scarcely be laid at the door of the prison service, or indeed the judges. The address for delivery is London SW1A 1AA.

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13. A falling prison population and prison closures were a brief quirk of the 1930s.

# Interview: Gary Monaghan

*Gary Monaghan is Governor of HMP Pentonville. He is interviewed by Dr Jamie Bennett, Governor of HMP Grendon and Springhill.*

**Gary Monaghan has been Governor of HMP Pentonville since 2009. He joined the Prison Service in 1991 as a prison officer, later gaining a place on the Accelerated Promotion Scheme. He has held a number of posts including Governor of HMP Everthorpe, a category C prison. Immediately prior to taking up post at Pentonville, he was responsible for the national roll-out of NOMIS, the electronic prisoner record system.**

**JB: What did it mean to you to be appointed Governor of Pentonville and why did you want to do it?**

**GM:** I worked here previously as a Senior Manager between 1999 and 2001. I thought it was an interesting place with many positive staff, although the conditions were difficult. At the time there were lots of issues in other London prisons and Pentonville was one of the stronger local prisons. Subsequently, it seemed to have a chequered history. I wanted to come back because I wanted to be part of it being restored to being one of the best, if not the best, of the London locals. I also experienced here a diverse prisoner and staff group and I enjoyed working in that environment. Having moved North out of London, I had missed the diverse working environment. Pentonville is about as diverse as you can get. I was also attracted to the history. It is a very historic place.

**JB: How would you describe your role as Governor?**

**GM:** My job is to improve the performance of the establishment, develop the work we do so that we improve in reducing reoffending. I have to try my best to improve the conditions for prisoners and staff. I also have to develop innovation with our community partners to get more joined up, through the gate work.

**JB: Pentonville was built 1840-2 by Joshua Jebb and stands as the oldest built prison in the country, constructed at the time of the birth of the modern prison system. How does the history and symbolism of the prison shape it today?**

**GM:** We were 170 years old last year. A lot of people who work here have a pride that the modern prison service started at Pentonville. There have also been a lot of famous people associated with it, for good or bad, over the years. This was brought home to me a few years ago when I visited an old prison back home in Dublin which has been turned into a museum,

Kilmainham. Most of the talk as we were being shown around was about how practices and structures had been modelled on Pentonville. The radial design spread through this country too. So there is a sense of history and people take a pride in that.

**JB: Pentonville is one of the largest prisons in England and Wales, holding 1310 prisoners. What are the particular challenges of running a prison of this scale?**

**GM:** There are particular challenges at Pentonville. It is difficult trying to run any large establishment. When I came here we were not in a great place, there had been a number of operational failures and the establishment has not benefitted from much capital investment so the fabric is behind other sites. In contrast, Wormwood Scrubs has had substantial refurbishment. We are usually one of the busiest prisons in the country. We are dealing with between seven and seven and a half thousand people a year. There is an average stay of 55 days. That in itself is challenging to keep people safe and do something with them to try to stop them coming back in to custody. We also have the biggest mental health case load in the country and the biggest substance misuse service. So, there is a degree of complexity and vulnerability in the prisoner population.

**JB: It strikes me that the simple logistics of providing the basic needs of that number of people is a challenge in itself; making sure that they have food, bedding, clothing, telephone calls and other immediate needs is a big task.**

**GM:** It consumes a lot of time because there are many repeat processes that have to take place in a short period of time. That in itself is a massive administrative burden and one that is not properly captured by the organisations operating model. It is not always fully appreciated what demands that places upon staff and the establishment.

**JB: What are the challenges of operating an old prison site in the contemporary world?**

**GM:** It is difficult. When we start considering the regime and activity, we just don't have the footprint or buildings to provide this. Even in terms of offices and administration, it is cramped and insufficient for the requirements of a contemporary prison. Association space for the men is challenging because we physically don't have enough floor space. All of that makes it a challenge. I am struck by the contrast with a brand new prison such as Thameside, which has opened in London.

The facilities there, the in-cell facilities and the quality of accommodation is much better. Their basic regime on the incentives and earned privileges is not that far away from what we can offer to people on the enhanced level.

**JB: What are the particular challenges of managing a prison population described by the inspectorate as 'drawn from some of London's poorest boroughs' and with 'amongst the highest incidence of mental ill health and substance abuse of any local prison in the country'?**

**GM:** For myself and the senior management team, the complexity of the population is not always fully appreciated by commissioners in prisons or health. The impact of our population and the extent of their needs cannot be fully understood and reflected in current commissioning. For example, Holloway is half the size of Pentonville but has a similar size health budget. Whilst I appreciate women prisoners have additional needs, the disparity is stark and the level of service available in the prisons is very different. For a member of staff there are some difficult gang issues imported into the prison, so we have violent men alongside the very vulnerable people we also hold. We have a pull from one end to the other and have to maintain control and order against this backdrop. This takes a lot of time and places demands on staff and managers. We have 130 prisoners on the Care Plan Approach, who would basically be care in the community cases. They are living on the wings and that would be a challenge anywhere. For prisoners themselves, we have a diverse group with a wide variety of cultures, nationalities and needs. We work hard to manage those relationships and the dynamics that creates. Additionally, the high level of substance misuse shapes not only our approach to health and social care, but also to security.

**JB: London is a diverse, multi-cultural city, how is this reflected in the population at Pentonville and how does the prison respond to this?**

**GM:** We carry out a massive amount of work promoting diversity, celebrating cultures and educating people. We focus on all strands of diversity. That takes ongoing energy and time. Our population is around two-thirds from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. That makes Pentonville unique in terms of the cultural and religious events that are important to our prisoner population. We want to be fair to everybody. We also have a lot of foreign nationals, so have to work hard on communication and dealing with the additional vulnerability amongst these people. About a third of our staff are from BME backgrounds, which is higher than the general population of our local community. We develop all of our staff and invest in building their skills to deal with the population we have.

**JB: How would you describe the inmate and occupational cultures of the prison? Do they differ to other prisons?**

**GM:** We have lower levels of prisoner work in the establishment and also a short-stay population with a high turnover. This means it is difficult to encourage desistance and challenge cultures. We have to be structured and have had to be clear about boundaries, behaviours in the prison and compliance with sentence plans. In prisons where there is more activity, that tends to have a positive impact on prisoners being more motivated and compliant as well as less vulnerable.

The staff here are noted to be polite and friendly, which is more positive than some other similar establishments. Each prison has its own culture to some degree, depending upon their history, structure, the prisoner population and also the region of the country. Many prisons might therefore claim to have a unique staff culture and we would claim that too.

**JB: Terence Morris produced a seminal study of Pentonville in the 1960s, have you read this? How far does it reflect the Pentonville you know?**

**GM:** I have read a synopsis of the study. Although much is outdated, there are echoes that ring true today. The administration of the establishment is still complex and demanding and that is a feat in itself to achieve that everyday. Some of the cultures and practices have moved on but the boroughs we serve and the levels of social deprivation we see in our population remain the same.

**JB: What do you see as the role of Pentonville today?**

**GM:** We are trying to gear towards our short-term offenders but there is limited research on this. We are also engaged with our local borough, Islington, on criminal justice and on troubled families. We are trying to reduce reoffending and help the community through these links. We are trying to expand this into other boroughs. So we are trying to look internally at short-term offenders but also develop our outward focussed community links.

**JB: How do you see the future of Pentonville in the modern prison service?**

**GM:** If we fulfil our plans, we would be a leader in dealing with short-term offenders, reducing their reoffending. This is the only group where prisons are not having a large impact on reoffending. With the community engagement work I can see a future in developing improved through the gate work. We can build and improve on the integrated offender management work. It will then be for senior officials and ministers to decide strategically about the future. They will decide at which point they have had sufficient value for money from Pentonville — after 170 years.

# Reviews

Book Review

## ***Homicide and the Politics of Law Reform***

by Jeremy Horder

Publisher: OUP (2012)

ISBN: 978-0-19-956191-9  
(hardback)

Price: £60.00 (hardback)

Jeremy Horder's fascinating book about the process of reform of the law of homicide has two purposes. The first is to tell the story of the reform of the law of homicide in England and Wales. The second is to critique the process of reform, and in particular the degree to which the process may be hijacked by pressure and interest groups and the various contributions of the 'elite'.

Horder is a professor of criminal law at King's College London and was a Law Commissioner for England and Wales from 2005 to 2010. His story begins with the appointment of the 1819 Select Committee on Criminal Laws. The appointment itself is worthy of note, not least because the Bill creating the review represented a defeat for the government. In 1819 there were thought to be some 200 offences that would result in a capital sentence. The job of the 1819 committee was to consider the effectiveness of hanging so many non-violent felons — or not, since in many cases, juries were known to wrongly acquit in the face of a mandatory death sentence.

More important, to Horder, was the approach adopted by the Select Committee. Not only did the committee membership exclude any judges, but no evidence was taken from any. According to Horder, the approach included forgoing the easy option of

consulting the great and the good. Instead the Committee decided to proceed by an investigation of public opinion, the witnesses being 'carefully selected from different social classes and professions.'

Quoting legal historian Leon Radzinowicz, Horder says most of the 61 witnesses were 'Shopkeepers and tradesmen, merchants and manufacturers, insurance brokers and brokers to merchants, and bankers,' Witnesses also included 'magistrates, clerks to magistrates, a solicitor, two prison chaplains, and two gaol keepers.' Not only is this moment in English legal history the start of Horder's story, it is also provides the beginning of the argument that law reform seldom takes full account of public opinion. For the 1819 study was, says Horder, the last time public consultation was a part of any law reforms for 150 years. To Horder, this early attempt to establish an independent criminal law reform body committed to public engagement 'withered on the vine.'

Another development in law reform prevailing from 1819 being, as Horder suggests, the ongoing dynamic between codification of the law in the face of what he calls the traditional common law trend. 'Common law', of course, refers to that law which is, in effect, judge-made in that decisions of the higher courts in cases where there are no precedents or statutory rules to refer to, are legally binding on all other courts. The offence of Murder, for instance, is still defined by common law in England and Wales, even though a great deal of the law relating to homicide offences has over the past two centuries been codified in detailed Acts of Parliament.

In advocating greater public input into law reform, Horder is quick to contrast what he calls genuine contribution from what he sees as the rantings of the tabloid editorial masquerading as public opinion. He is also at pains to point out the limits of experts. 'I conclude then, that homicide law reform is not best left in the hands of scholarly experts, any more than it is best left to judges.'

Although 'Scholarly legal experts come closest to bridging the legitimacy gap between, on the one hand, an enfranchised but inadequately (or wrongly) informed populace, and on the other hand, themselves, government, and the ruling elite, when they subject law reform options to methodologically sound empirical testing in the public domain.'

By this he presumably means researchers going out among the public and testing new ideas for law reform in that public arena.

Leaping forward to the present day, when Horder himself was a Law Commissioner, Horder criticises the Ministry of Justice for wasting resources repeating the consultation exercise in 2009 with largely the same interest groups initially consulted by the Law Commissioners, and a relatively small group of people at that. This, to Horder, amounts to a betrayal of the ideal of public consultation in good faith.

So, on the one hand, there is not enough public consultation and, on the other hand, there is often too much of the wrong kind of public consultation. Unfortunately there is little in the text to suggest what the right kind of public consultation is or should be. Speaking as a non-lawyer (and for that matter a non-scholar) I have

to say that I found Horder's arguments hard to follow. There seems to be little organisation to the narrative which has a tendency to switch from one thing to another with little care for the reader.

The book, however, does cover some important ground such as consideration of the boundaries between various homicide offences, joint criminal ventures, the importance of the offence of corporate manslaughter and development of defences and partial defences to murder.

In a chapter on the Law Commission's proposed three-tier structure for homicide, Horder provides detailed discussion and argument as to how and why the current two-tier structure of murder and manslaughter should be amended. This is, in itself, a complex matter to unravel and, unfortunately, Horder's narrative does not always help. His arguments are often contradictory. For instance, on the question of the codification of homicide law, Horder states 'Clearly wholesale codification of the law of homicide would not, as such be a bad thing. However, it is an open question whether codified law necessarily equals better or even simpler law.' How can wholesale codification of homicide law clearly not be a bad thing if the question of codification is still open?

Frustratingly, neither this nor many other important questions are answered in the book which lacks a concluding chapter to summarise the arguments. Perhaps this is a good thing, as the debate about the reform of homicide law continues. Overall, the book is a worthwhile read to anyone with an interest in this fast-developing area of criminal law. Not only does it provide a historical perspective on the development of the law of homicide in England and Wales, it also touches on a wide range of viewpoints as to the current and future need to reform homicide

law. In doing so, the book also advocates a greater involvement of the public at large in the law reform process. In order to achieve this requires, as Horder suggests, not just a genuine will to involve the public, but also an effective methodology for doing so.

**Ray Taylor** is a prison officer at HMP Pentonville in London.

#### Book Review

#### ***Psychopathy and Law: a Practitioner's Guide***

by Helinä Häkkänen-Nyholm and Jan-Olof Nyholm

Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell (2012)

ISBN: 978-0-470-97238-0

(hardback) 978-0-470-97237-3  
(paperback)

Price: £70.00 (hardback) £32.99  
(paperback)

*'Despite psychopathy being one of the most powerful predictors of violent and non-violent criminal recidivism .. psychopathic offenders are 2.5 times more likely than non-psychopathic offenders to be successful in their applications for conditional release.'*

This stark reminder of just how dangerous and manipulative psychopaths can be should perhaps be read aloud before considering any kind of custodial or pre-release risk assessment. The quote is taken from the tenth chapter of *Psychopathy and Law: a Practitioner's Guide*. But don't be put off by the title, which is somewhat misleading, particularly to a UK audience, used to lawyers being experts in law and avoiding expertise in other disciplines. In the USA, this work will no doubt be welcomed by any legal practitioner faced with the prospect of working on a case where a diagnosis of psychopathic personality disorder

is a factor. This valuable and insightful work might better have been titled *Psychopathy in a Forensic Setting*, or some such. Regardless of the title, this book provides some remarkable insight into the shady world of the psychopath. A collection of chapters from eminent specialists in the field, *Psychopathy and Law* reviews a wide range of new research and thinking on the subject as well as building on some of the established work in the field.

Edited by Finnish wife and husband team Helinä Häkkänen-Nyholm and Jan-Olof Nyholm, *Psychopathy and Law* brings together 12 essays from some of the top specialists around the world. Much of the content builds on the work of R.D.Hare, who is quoted in the editors' introduction as stating that more than half of all violent crime is committed by psychopathic individuals. A good deal of reference is also made, by several contributors, to Hare's Revised Psychopathic Check List (PCL-R) and its use as a diagnostic instrument. The editors state their intention of introducing practitioners (legal and clinical, one presumes) to the core areas of psychopathy and, for researchers, to provide the latest empirical information and case studies. The book also includes some ground breaking work on the interpersonal behaviour of the psychopathic individual in organised crime, war crimes and within the family environment. The editors, however, are understating the value of this work, which goes way beyond offering an introduction to the subject. Indeed, to a layperson, the reading is hard going, but worth the effort. This work introduces considerable new thinking and new research while building on existing scientific knowledge of the subject.

The opening contribution, by American academics Vitacco,

Lishner and Neumann, covers the all important issue of assessment and use of psychopathic tests in the US Courts, particularly in relation to the plea of insanity (the English version of which, incidentally, is currently under review by the UK Law Commission). The contributors make a clear declaration at the outset, that prevailing research does not support the use of psychopathy to mitigate *mens rea*. Indeed, they go on to express the view that, in some circumstances, evidence of psychopathy could warrant more stringent sanctions, given the higher risk of violence and recidivism. The chapter offers cautionary advice about the misuse of PCL measures and misunderstanding of the limitations of such instruments. For instance, according to the contributors, high scores on PCL measures do not always indicate a high risk of violent offending and that, conversely, low PCL scores do not mean low risk of violence and, furthermore, that presence of psychopathy cannot always be taken as a predictor of violent behaviour at all. A greater depth of knowledge is required to make the link between PCL measures and the likelihood of violent behaviour in specific circumstances.

Several contributors go deeper into the use of PCL and other instruments. Chapter Three, by Patrick, Venables and Skeem of California and Florida Universities, considers research into the relationship between PCL and other measures of psychopathy and evidence of neuroanatomic abnormalities, as well as dealing with others aspects of structural and functional neuroimaging studies. The contributors go on to assess the extent to which current knowledge about brain function in psychopathy can add value to (or replace) instruments such as the PCL-R. The answer it seems, is not much and, it is suggested, attempts to apply current neuroscientific

knowledge about psychopathy to legal decisions about criminal responsibility and sentencing are premature.

One of the problems of dealing with psychopathy is that it tends to be recognised only in its extreme manifestations. Thus many, if not most, psychopaths in custody and in society at large, go unnoticed and undiagnosed. The not surprising conclusion is that more work needs to be done to develop the science in this area and that this could be of considerable value in developing effective treatments and in combating 'entrenched and exaggerated therapeutic pessimism about psychopathy.'

Baskin-Summers and Newman, of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, are also concerned with theories of culpability and post-release risk. They touch on the question of treatments, with a special focus on work to address skills deficits specific to psychopaths, arguing that behavioural and cognitive treatments are ineffective at best, counter-productive at worst. They cite evidence to suggest that such treatment sometimes make psychopaths worse, for instance by presenting greater opportunities to manipulate and deceive others in group therapy. The contributors also remind us how common psychopathy is, affecting some 1 per cent of the general population and 25 per cent of male prisoners.

A revealing chapter — co-authored by Caroline Logan of Greater Manchester West Mental Health Trust and Ghitta Weizmann-Henelius of Turku, Finland Abo Akademi University — tackles the vexed question of psychopathy in women. As they note, although there is some literature on women and psychopathy, there is a tendency to examine the construct as defined in men, which begs the question: is psychopathy as prevalent among women as among

men and does psychopathy manifest itself in the same way with women as with men? Not only does this bias lead to misdiagnosis of psychopathy among women, it is also possible, argue the authors, that important aspects of the core construct of psychopathy may be missed. 'A pre-occupation with descriptive features typical of the expression of the disorder in men but less so in women, has been a distraction from understanding the form of the core pathology.' Part of the problem is that currently available instruments such as PCL-R do not help in diagnosis of women psychopaths. The diagnostic threshold, above which the PCL-R is taken to indicate psychopathic personality disorder has not been established for women. A related problem exists in dealing with psychopathic features in adolescents and this is the theme of Nina Lindberg's contribution. Lindberg, from the Helsinki University Central Hospital Finland, deals with the relationship between psychopathic traits in childhood and adolescence with conduct disorder and antisocial personality disorder.

Further chapters deal with the more familiar territory of psychopathy and violence and psychopathy and predatory violence. More specific work on violence is provided by the joint editors, looking at psychopathy in economic crime, organised crime and war crimes. They include several case studies to illustrate how psychopaths are able to maintain control of violent criminal organisations and one particular study of Serbian war-criminal Ratko Mladic.

Julia Shaw and Stephen Porter of the University of British Columbia-Okanagan, take up the question of psychopathy and the criminal career trajectory, asking whether psychopathy is stable over time. They deal with some pertinent issues such as the

recidivism risk for violent psychopathic offenders, noting that, in one study of offenders in a forensic psychiatric unit, 78 per cent of individuals scoring high on the PCL Screening Version were reconvicted, 53 per cent for a violent crime. In a chapter on psychopathy in prisons, Hannu Lauerma, of the University of Turku in Finland, discusses the many challenges that psychopathic prisoners create and cause for prison authorities, including attempting to form relationships with prison staff, bargaining with prison managers and making threats to achieve their goals. Coverage includes measures that can be taken to protect against the many harms that can be caused by psychopaths in prisons.

Psychopathy is not often thought of in the context of family relationships and family proceedings, which is why the chapter on the subject by Helinä Häkkänen-Nyholm is particularly fascinating. She deals with issues such as psychopathy in intimate relationships, the effect of psychopathy on parenthood, and lists a number of case studies. In one, an unsuspecting husband is shocked to be confronted by his wife's unfaithfulness. The wife has been seeing one of his work colleagues and has boasted to friends about her antics, which include having sex with two different men within an hour without either of them knowing. She fails to understand her husband's objections but, by way of apology, buys him two pairs of underpants from a market stall.

The final chapter in this book is a joint contribution from co-authors Nyholm, who tackle the tricky problem of interpersonal aspects and interviewing psychopaths. As anyone who has dealt with psychopaths will realise, interviewing can be problematic. Given the manipulative, threatening and deceiving traits

indicative of psychopathy, a great deal of care is needed, not least because of the risk of a violent outburst, particularly if the purpose of the interview is to discover an aspect of deception. A psychopath will typically lose his cool and drop the superficial charm the moment that it has been made clear that the veil of deceit has been lifted. The chapter has several case studies of interviews with psychopaths and concludes with a list of 11 practical tips for interviewing psychopathic individuals. It would be worth buying the book, just for this essential guide to interaction with anyone who might show any signs of psychopathic personality disorder. Greater appreciation of the risks posed by psychopaths could prevent many harms and even save lives. To conclude, I would say that *Psychopathy and Law: a Practitioner's Guide* makes fascinating, but not easy, reading. It considers some of the less obvious aspects of the disorder as well as tackling some of the more familiar themes in far-reaching narrative. It reviews much of the current thinking on the subject and must surely add to the pool of knowledge in this difficult area. Although ostensibly aimed at lawyers and clinicians, the scope of the work extends well beyond this limited audience and would be of immense value to anyone who deals with psychopaths in forensic clinical settings, in custody, or in the community at large, or who has an interest in knowing more about psychopathy. Although described as an introduction to the subject, it is as much of use to those with considerable knowledge of the area already as it is to the novice. A valuable collection and essential reading for those with a need to know.

**Ray Taylor** is a prison officer at HMP Pentonville.

Book Review

***Electronically monitored punishment: International and critical perspectives***

Edited by Mike Nellis, Kristel

Beyens and Dan Kaminski

Publisher: Routledge (2013)

ISBN: 978-1-84392-273-5

(hardback)

Price: £80.00 (hardback)

Electronic monitoring is a form of punishment that has captured popular imagination. It is both modern and post-modern in the way that it encapsulates both the expanding web of information technology in everyday lives and the spreading of surveillance and penalty beyond prisons. It feels, to some degree, like science fiction come to life. This in-depth book goes beyond the imaginary and captures the real experience of electronic monitoring around the world.

The book is an international collaboration drawn together by Mike Nellis, Professor at University of Strathclyde, Kristel Beyens Professor at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, and Dan Kaminski, Professor at University of Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. The contributors are drawn from four continents including Europe, Asia, North America and Australasia.

The largest part of the book is dedicated to nine chapters that offer detailed analysis of the introduction, development and future prospects of electronic monitoring in eleven jurisdictions. This is a detailed and deeply rewarding exercise. It might be assumed that electronic monitoring is a globalised form of punishment, and indeed it has been adopted in over 30 different countries. However, the chapters in this book illustrate that its precise form, contours and practices vary from locality to locality. Rather than being a unitary entity, electronic monitoring has been adopted in

various technical forms, such as static monitoring from a fixed point monitor, voice recognition, GPS tracking and combined technologies that also incorporate additional features such as alcohol testing. The uses to which monitoring is put also vary, including: pre-trial bail; stand along community punishment; temporary release and home leave; early release from prison; and, surveillance of high risk individuals. The extent to which this has been adopted and its integration with existing criminal justice practices is also variable. Together these chapters confirm that electronic monitoring is a globalised practice but also illustrate that there is an inter-relationship with local institutions, cultures and contexts that shape the ways in which this is incorporated in particular states.

The second section of the book offers four chapters that address critical themes. These include: the ethical challenges of electronic monitoring; the involvement of commercial organisations; the experience of staff and offenders; and evaluative research. These are all high quality pieces that offer challenging and illuminating perspectives.

This book is an outstanding contribution to the growing body of work on electronic monitoring. In terms of both the themes addressed and the geographic reach, it is an ambitious undertaking, which is impressively realised. *Electronically monitored punishment* is an essential resource to anyone with a scholarly or professional interest in practices and development of electronic monitoring.

**Dr Jamie Bennett** is Governor of HMP Grendon and Springhill.

Book Review

***Alcohol-related violence: Prevention and treatment***

Edited by Mary McMurrin

Publisher: Wiley — Blackwell

(2012)

ISBN: 978-1119952749 (hardback)

978-1119952732 (paperback)

Price: £70.00 (hardback) £32.99

(paperback)

Mary McMurrin is currently Professor at the Institute of Mental Health, University of Nottingham. During her career she has spent considerable time working with clients in both prison and secure forensic facilities, including 10 years working as a psychologist at HM YOI Glen Parva. Her specialism's lie in the treatment of individuals with personality disorder and the assessment and treatment of individuals who suffer from alcohol related aggression and violence. This book is a collection of essays from some of the world's most established practitioners in this field.

The book is aimed at practitioners who deliver services to violent offenders, with implications for current treatment models and practices associated with harm minimisation in a wide range of settings from barrooms to families and individual therapy.

This is definitely a book about better 'prevention', and not just a social commentary on a centuries old problem. The subject is examined in relation to interagency working, policy, policing, and the creation of safer environments. Detailed articles are included on specific treatments for perpetrators of violence in the community and prisons, as well as the varying circumstances under which the harm manifests itself including intimate partner violence and sexual violence. There is coverage of specialist groups such as those with intellectual disability, dual diagnosis and perpetrators at the wheel of a vehicle, as well as developmental

issues in adolescence and gender differences.

There are a number of articles associated with personality and development of patterns of behaviour associated with alcohol abuse and subsequent violent behaviour. In particular there is examination of the profound impact of early alcohol abuse on later development, and the compounding effect of slowed maturation and loss of self-control and inhibition control as well as impulsivity. Of course for many, further exposure to alcohol simply compounds the deficits that already exist.

A major problem in our understanding of this area is the difficulty in accessing 'real information'. Clients are rarely if ever accessible when experiencing acute episodes, and our understanding of events is subject to variances that inevitably occur in a field which is subject to the judgements of victims and perpetrators and wildly varying degrees of interpretation. In one chapter, Dingwall gives the interesting illustration: 'a study of hospital admissions for alcohol-related violence in South Wales found that 30 per cent of those admitted suffered serious injuries..and a glass bottle had been used in 10 per cent of cases.. the(se) statistics throw doubt on the claim that no injuries were caused by glass bottles in the British Crime Survey analysis.' In any case there is underreporting of alcohol associated violence ( only about 56 per cent cases are ever reported) and far fewer cases lead to prosecution. The book describes how there is little evidence that policies which rely on deterrence or punishment have impacted positively on the levels of alcohol related violence.

The darkest point in alcohol related violence is undoubtedly the impact on families and children. It is also the area which is most hidden.

Estimates from alcohol concerns suggest that between 900,000 and 1.4 million live with a parent with a serious alcohol problem. Other studies indicate that as many as 3.5 million UK children could be living with at least one parent with some sort of alcohol problem. Forrester and Glynn argue that this large number rather than energising society has the impact of providing barriers to engagement largely through ambivalence. There may be recognition of the need to change but little motivation or commitment to make this happen, often the focus diverting to the 'social' dependence and perceived benefits that alcohol brings. More importantly interventions that have been 'popular' such as confrontational or educational therapy actually tend to make drinking worse. Other interventions (particularly those that involve the victim being isolated) can also be risky — a key time for domestic violence occurs after she has left her partner.

Disappointingly most contributors conclude that there is little evidence supporting the

effectiveness of any intervention aimed at reducing violence from men, in the community at least, at the same time risks increase for the family of men in therapy. And where alcohol use is related to violence it is not appropriate for men to attend alcohol treatment without their perpetration of domestic abuse being addressed. Equally treatment programmes for violent men have generally poor outcomes. There is debate about why this may be the case: inconsistent or ineffective programme delivery, inappropriate treatment milieu or just high dropout rates. Conversely programmes that are client centred and take a more holistic approach to treatment are showing some promise. These programmes are empathetic rather than challenging and support more general research in family therapy. The conclusion: interventions need to focus on wider issues for both perpetrator and (potential) victims.

On a positive note some studies have shown more promising results for treatment of inter-

partner violence using therapeutic models based on couples therapy and 'sobriety contracts', where the family are involved in the treatment process rather than external to it. This seems to hold true even where partner violence was not specifically addressed as part of the treatment. Similarly motivational interviewing with probation clients seemed to show positive results in at least half of the studies reviewed by McMurrin, and some very new work with those in custody shows similar positive outcomes. The lessons seem to be that a more targeted approach using specific treatment methods whilst recognising the risks involved is the way forward in this developing area of work.

Overall a well written and researched piece of work, which brings together current best practice and knowledge of what does and doesn't work. Recommended reading for practitioners and providers of services.

**Steve Hall**, *Serco New Zealand*.

# The Last Days of Camp Hill:

## Interview with Andy Lattimore

*Andy Lattimore is the Governor of HMP Isle of Wight and is interviewed by Dr Jamie Bennett who is Governor of HMP Grendon and Springhill.*

**Andy Lattimore is Governor of HMP Isle of Wight. He joined the Prison Service in 1988, after graduating in psychology from the University of Durham. He was recruited onto the first Accelerated Promotion Scheme. He has worked in a range of establishments including local prisons, high security, category B training prisons, women's prisons and young offender institutions. He also held a post in the private office of the prisons minister.**

In 2005 he took up post as Governor of HMP Winchester, a category B local prison, before moving on to govern HMP Bullingdon, another local prison, in 2009. He took up post as Governor of HMP Isle of Wight in January 2013. At the time of his appointment, this was a cluster of three formerly separate prisons: HMP Albany, HMP Parkhurst and HMP Camp Hill. A week after he arrived, the decision to close the HMP Camp Hill site was announced by the Secretary of State for Justice.

This interview took place in June 2013.

**JB: Could you describe your first week at HMP Isle of Wight?**

**AL:** Albany, Camp Hill and Parkhurst prisons were amalgamated as one establishment in April 2009. I took up post as Governor of HMP Isle of Wight on 2 January 2013 and had planned my first week around getting out and about in the three sites to meet as many people as possible, to get a feeling for how the place worked and its issues, and to meet with key staff and stakeholders to introduce myself and hear from them. I was certainly in 'look, listen and learn' mode, getting to grips with a large and complex organisation responsible for over 1500 prisoners and 750 staff.

**JB: Was there any anticipation Camp Hill or any of the Isle of Wight prisons would be affected by the announcement regarding prison closures?**

**AL:** No there wasn't. While it was well known throughout the service that a closure announcement was to be made and that that no prison was immune from consideration, I don't think anyone locally was concerned that we would be included. Indeed a strategic plan had been proposed by my predecessor for unifying the offender profile across the Isle of Wight sites and I was keen to review this and in all likelihood look to take it forward.

**JB: How were you informed that Camp Hill would be closing?**

**AL:** It was the evening of 9 January and I was in the local supermarket when I got the call from my DDC.

It was quickly apparent that this was one of those 'are you sitting down?' conversations so I went out and sat in the car to take the call.

**JB: How did you feel when you heard that news?**

**AL:** Certainly it was a shock and my mind started racing almost straight away about all the risks, tasks and responsibilities that there would be to manage. A personal concern was that as I was so new in post I did not know my people well and who would be best suited for what task. I also knew that this would be huge and distressing news for staff and I was concerned for their well-being, both on hearing the news and in the longer term. For the prisoners, while many did not like being located on the Isle of Wight away from their home area, a significant proportion were fully engaged with the regime and addressing their offending and resettlement issues and I was concerned at how we could manage their transfer to other prisons in as supportive a way as possible.

**JB: What plans did then make to announce that to staff and how did you do that?**

**AL:** This was carefully co-ordinated as my communications locally had to tie in with the Secretary of State's announcement to Parliament which must come first. On confirmation that this had been done I spoke at a staff meeting on site at Camp Hill. I then did it all again with the rest of HMP Isle of Wight staff a short time later. I was supported by headquarters and regional staff who brought with them that morning a pack of communication materials, including speaking notes for me. This was helpful but I had literally minutes to look these over and prepare. I knew what, when and why were the immediate things people would want to know but I also wanted to set out how people would be supported through the process as best as I knew it at the time.

**JB: How did it feel having to make that kind of announcement to staff, having been there for such a short period of time?**

**AL:** It is never easy to impart difficult news but I knew I had to do my best give confident leadership at such a challenging time. I was conscious that only two days previously I had held my first full staff meeting as the new Governor and had talked positively about HMP Isle of Wight's achievements and the future.

**JB: How did staff respond to the news?**

**AL:** There was an audible sound of shock and some staff were in tears. Many people had served a

long time at Camp Hill or certainly on the Isle of Wight and this went across families and generations. Senior managers in the Prison Service come and go but throughout my career I have always been aware of quite how much investment staff have in their workplace where it is not unusual for them to spend most or even all of their working lives in one place. At a personal level I was quite humbled by the number of staff in the following days who expressed sympathy for me picking up this issue so new in post and who were concerned as to whether I would be impacted by the announcement either as the Governor or in terms of my plans to move my family. I tried to give staff a little time after the announcement to come to terms with the news, but we still had the prison to run and I have to say staff were absolutely brilliant in the circumstances, carrying on with the duties and tasks of the day.

**JB: How was the news announced to prisoners and how did they respond?**

**AL:** We had prepared information notices for prisoners to publish on the day and then it was about getting as many managers as possible out and about to be visible to both staff and prisoners, giving them as much support and assurance as we could. The prisoners' response was varied. While many were pleased to be returning to the mainland, a significant number had concerns — the courses or programmes they were on, impact on their HDC or resettlement plans and where they might be sent to. A very few were quite unpleasant to the staff and that was a challenge to deal with.

**JB: What was the impact on staffing on HMP Isle of Wight and what was the approach to managing that?**

**AL:** Achieving the necessary staffing reductions turned out to be the biggest and most challenging aspect of the closure. I was clear from the start that it was not just those based in Camp Hill that would be affected. We were one prison and one staff group. However, as a part-closure in relation to the rest of HMP Isle of Wight, and with our island location this was both a highly complex task as well as a personally very difficult one for individuals. At most prisons, redeployment to another establishment within commutable distance is a realistic option for people. Not so for the Isle of Wight, especially as HMP Kingston in Portsmouth was also closing which might just have been feasible for some. Nevertheless, I was determined that we should manage reductions by voluntary means if at all possible, either via the VEDS scheme or

supported redeployment elsewhere even though this would mean moves of home. We had to re-profile the prison at speed to determine what our new staffing levels should be — and this entailed being clear about what we had as staff fixed costs for the whole prison and what was Camp Hill specific. For example, as Governor I was a fixed cost as I can't be cut by a third! We also wanted to help people to consider their options and an open day for staff and their families where careers advisers, further education providers and the like were available proved to be very valuable. There were delays in processing VEDS applications which drew out the uncertainty for people but in the end we were able to achieve the reductions with volunteers. It was very pleasing to me that many I said goodbye to had new opportunities to move on to that they were looking forward to.

**JB: What was the response of unions and what role did they have in the process?**

**AL:** Like everyone else, the local unions were also shocked by the news but obviously wanted to do all they could to support their members. We facilitated meetings for them and with them regularly and tried to get communications right. I was very ably supported by regional and local HRBPs who took on much of the staffing issues and who also

worked hard to address issues with union involvement. I was keen for the unions to be directly involved in re-profiling work and they agree to this which was helpful as a matter of joint interest.

**JB: How was the transfer of prisoners managed and what were the main challenges?**

**AL:** We worked very closely with national population managers and they fully supported the task. 467 prisoners were transferred to 15 different establishments in 40 days, almost all to their home areas for their eventual resettlement and we only lost one day due to bad weather. All prisoners were seen individually to take account of their issues and concerns and we worked hard to be considerate of work they were undertaking or their release plans. For example, it made no sense to transfer a prisoner who was due for release before the final closure date or to disrupt an offending behaviour programme if it could be completed in time. A few individuals presented particular challenges but all departed peacefully in the end, thanks largely to the fantastic job staff did with them. The last prisoner to go asked if he could turn the lights out!

Achieving the necessary staffing reductions turned out to be the biggest and most challenging aspect of the closure.

**JB: What physical work needed to be carried out in order to decommission the site as a prison?**

**AL:** The physical de-commissioning was a mammoth task in its own right. Basically if an item wasn't bolted down it had to go. The scale of this is best illustrated by some figures: 3.5 tons of shredding and 14.5 tons of paper recycling, the equivalent of 90 trees. 4000 files verified, logged, boxed and transported. Every sheet of 2800 prisoner files sorted and appropriately stored or disposed of in over 450 boxes. Every building stripped and cleaned with items re-distributed, refurbished or stored for future use. This included 1000 chairs, two pianos and even a small rocking horse — amazing what you find! Industrial equipment from workshops, locks, keys, radios, IT and telephony — the list is endless and often specific protocols for disposal had to be followed.

**JB: How did people respond to having to carry out the role of closure whilst dealing with their own uncertainty?**

**AL:** Staff were just brilliant at all levels of the organisation. I am immensely proud of their commitment and achievements and there was never a shortage of volunteers for the work that had to be done.

**JB: Whilst this was being managed, the work of the two other Isle of Wight sites had to continue and you had to introduce national changes including the implementation of Fair and Sustainable. How did you ensure that this 'business as usual' continued?**

**AL:** The only way to manage it was to split the senior team so that some retained 'business as usual' responsibility while others focused full-time on the closure. Some of the closure work hit a peak and then subsided so people could spend more time on their usual work as time passed.

**JB: What place did Camp Hill have in the wider community of the Isle of Wight? What was the impact on the wider community?**

**AL:** The Isle of Wight is a small community and the Prison Service is one of the biggest employers. On top of that there are local suppliers of goods and services so in all we are a major part of island life. This meant the closure raised political, media and broader community concerns. The main worry outside our walls was the

economic and social impact of a significant number of newly unemployed people and also questions about what would happen to the Camp Hill site following closure. I answered these questions as far as I was able and I think the economic impact was mitigated by the voluntary nature of the departures where, for instance, quite a number of staff went on to join or even start small businesses.

**JB: How did you mark the closing of Camp Hill?**

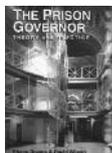
**AL:** This was really important to everyone and we held a closure ceremony on the day of handover to the Ministry of Justice. Staff, former staff and families came to see the place (a rare opportunity to do this) and speeches were given by myself, the Lord Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight and Ian Young as the last Governor of Camp Hill as a prison in its own right. The Last Post was played in memory of staff who had given their lives in war, we lowered the Union flag and staff marched out through the Gate. It was an emotional afternoon but I think a fitting occasion and I was keen to emphasise that the legacy of the work that staff had done would live on in the offenders who had been helped to live law abiding lives and staff's continuing efforts either elsewhere in prison work or in their future endeavours wherever they may be. We produced a book of photographs of the prison for people to take away and a commemorative badge. We also compiled a book of staff and offender memories — Camp Hill Tales.

**JB: What lessons would you take from this closure and what advice would you offer to a Governor leading a prison closure?**

**AL:** I was pleased that the Service did conduct a 'lessons learned' exercise in which both I and key members of my team were involved. The key issues for me were to assign clear roles and responsibilities to the local project team, that you can't do too much communication throughout the process and this needs a dedicated co-ordinator, HR issues will need most attention from the Governor and asset management/disposal will be the biggest task. Overall though, I learned not to under-estimate the huge capacity of our staff to rise to a task and deliver despite difficult personal circumstances and uncertainty. I am hugely proud of them.



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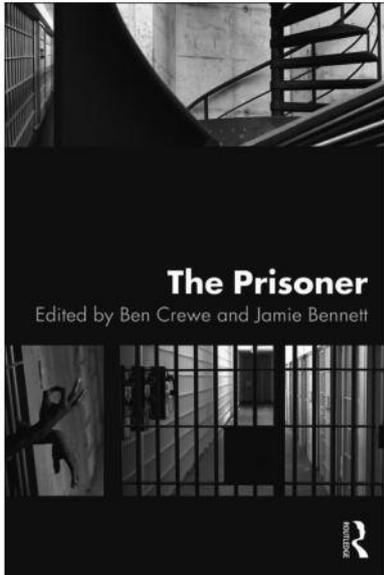
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