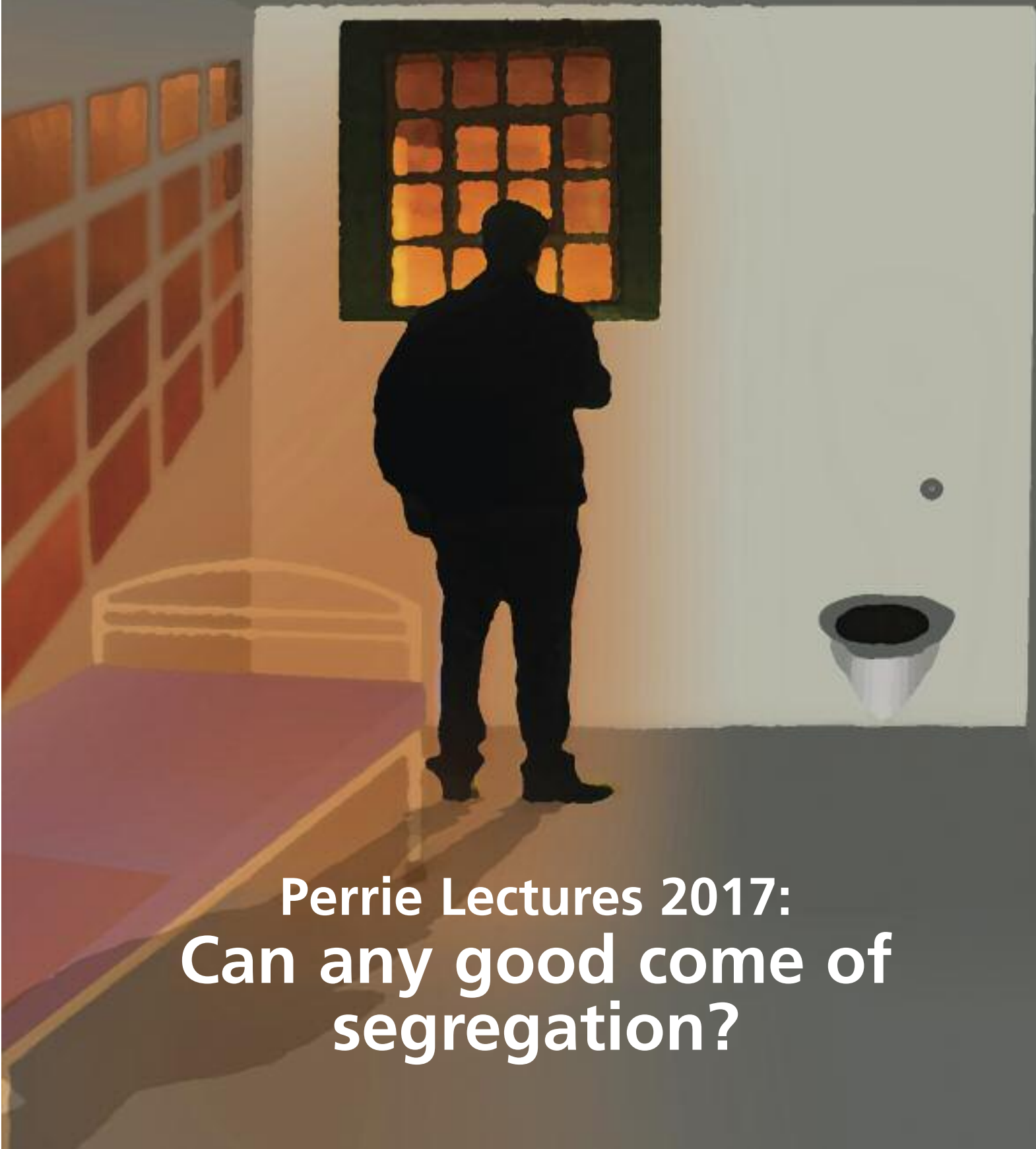


PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

March 2018 No 236



**Perrie Lectures 2017:
Can any good come of
segregation?**

Editorial Comment

Prison Service Journal has a long-standing partnership with the Perrie Lectures. Each year, articles are published based upon the annual lectures. This is a partnership of which the *Prison Service Journal* is proud.

The Perrie Lectures is an annual event which has the purpose of stimulating dialogue between criminal justice organisations, the voluntary sector and all those with an academic, legal or practical interest in offenders and their families. It is hoped that the event will contribute towards improving the care of offenders, and advancing penal policy, in its broadest sense. The Lectures are named in honour of Bill Perrie, who retired from the Prison Service in 1978. He worked as a prison governor for 32 years, latterly at HMPs Hull, Long Lartin, and Birmingham. He was noted for his contribution to the development of hostels, working out schemes, and regimes for long term prisoners.

The 2017 the Lectures took the title of 'Tackling Segregation: Can any good come of isolation?'. As the speakers illustrate, this question may be approached from a number of different perspectives. What are the different forms of segregation that take place in prisons in the UK and elsewhere? What are the reasons for segregation and the potential benefits, or at least the necessity, of this to the organization and prison community? What are the harmful effects of segregation on those who experience it and those who administer it? How do different people respond and adapt to segregation? How can the use of segregation be minimized and the harms be ameliorated?

The speakers included international expert in segregation and supermax, Dr. Sharon Shalev, who draws upon research in the UK, US and New Zealand. She sets out for principles against which practice should be assessed: solitary confinement should only be used in very exceptional cases, as a last resort, and for a short a time as is absolutely necessary; segregated prisoners should be offered access to purposeful activities and have meaningful social interactions; segregation units should place reintegration at the heart of their functions and improve 'exit' strategies, and; segregation must not be imposed on vulnerable people, on those at risk of suicide or self-harm, or on anyone awaiting assessment for transfer to a secure hospital. Richard

Vince, Executive Director of the Long Term and High Security Estate, and Russ Trent, Governor of HMP Berwyn, both offer examples from practice of how they are attempting to put those principles into practice. Both of these accounts offer distinctive examples of value-based prison leadership. These deserve to be read by practitioners as a source of guidance on pragmatic and principled actions that can be taken in prison segregation units.

In his lecture, Dr. Kimmett Edgar of the Prison Reform Trust, focusses on those prisoners who are 'segregated by choice'. That is those who engineer the use of segregation and resist attempts to reintegrate them into the mainstream prison regime. Drawing upon interviews with prisoners, Edgar offers three primary reasons for segregation by choice. The first is 'structural crisis', this is the wider problems of prison regimes, violence and drugs. The second is 'conflict management', that individuals have needs they want to be met and segregation is a way of drawing attention to these and creating pressure to have them met. The third is 'individual meanings', where those in segregation are attempting to manage themselves and their own wellbeing by accessing segregation. Edgar offers a way of thinking about this particular problem and provides examples of how this has been addressed in practice.

The regulation of segregation is addressed in articles by Dr. Laura Janes, Legal Director of the Howard League for Penal Reform, and Alex Sutherland, Chair of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Whitemoor. Dr. Janes provides an account of the use of legal systems to challenge the use of segregation, particularly against children. This has led to some practices being declared unlawful, although Dr. Janes observes that such judgements are not always acted upon in practice. Sutherland offers an account of the role of Independent Monitoring Board members in observing and reporting on the use of segregation in prisons. He is candid in recognizing the limitations of this and the struggles that IMB members have in having their concerns acted upon effectively. Both of these accounts highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the systems for regulating the use of segregation.

This edition also supplements the lectures with two additional articles. The first, by forensic psychologist Flora Fitzalan Howard, is an overview of

international research on the effects of segregation. The conclusions are rather stark: segregation can have some significant negative effects on people's psychological health, particularly for anxiety, depression and self-harm; using segregation to manage custodial misconduct may be ineffective, and; it may also increase people's risk of future serious or violent recidivism. Jack Merritt from University of Cambridge addresses the segregation of children and young people. While this covers the same theme as Dr. Janes article, it takes a different approach, looking from the perspective of an academic lawyer rather than a practicing lawyer.

The *Prison Service Journal* is proud to publish these articles and to continue the partnership with the Perrie Lectures. The 2017 Lectures provide a diverse and illuminating perspective on the critical issues facing those who live and work in prisons today.

Finally, this edition sees the announcement that Dr Laura Kelly, Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Central Lancashire, has won the *Prison Service Journal* Prize for Outstanding Article 2017. Dr Kelly's article 'Suffering in Silence: The unmet needs of d/Deaf prisoners' was voted as the article published during the year that best reflected the aim of the journal to inform theory and practice.