

A low-angle shot of numerous black graduation caps with blue tassels falling through a clear blue sky. In the bottom right corner, the hands and arms of graduates in blue gowns are visible, some reaching up towards the falling caps. One hand is holding a rolled-up diploma.

PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

November 2018 No 240

Editorial Comment

This edition of *Prison Service Journal* has an eclectic mix of contributions from UK and around Europe. Some of the articles echo themes of recent editions, while others open up new issues and questions. As always, it is intended that this offers a source of ideas and evidence that promotes a constructive and humane approach to imprisonment.

The first article is contributed by Anita Holm Riis, a Lecturer in applied philosophy at University of Aalborg, Denmark. It is concerned with autonomy and exclusion among Danish prisoners in education. The research included interviews with men undertaking learning inside and outside of the prison from school leaver level to degree level. The article explores the tensions that the men experienced between being a 'student' and being a 'prisoner'. This was experienced in the nature of the application, selection and supervision processes, but also in their relationships with their peers. Riis identifies that undertaking education requires an extraordinary act of will by individuals, but is often at the cost of them having to exclude themselves or limit contact with peers inside and outside of prison, in order to focus on this and develop their own sense of identity. This article is an important contribution to understanding the experience of learners and particularly highlights how the social milieu can play a wider role in supporting or impeding learning. In previous editions of PSJ, similar issues have been raised, particularly in articles on initiatives such as Learning Together, where students from universities and prisons undertake courses together, which is concerned with the social connections that can be forged through learning as much as the intellectual development. This article raises questions for practice and in particular how prison managers and educationalists can take action to build communities of learners and reinforce social support.

Professor Michael Brookes and Zebunisa Sheik, both from Birmingham City University, report the results of a qualitative research study into a public speaking club, Gavellers, delivered at the therapeutic community prison, HMP Grendon. The results revealed improvements in a number of key areas: confidence, team-working, self-esteem, perspective taking, problem solving, communication skills, improved attitudes and motivation to change. Participants therefore experienced both an enjoyable, constructive regime activity and wider therapeutic benefits. This example of a modest regime activity demonstrates that significant benefits can be accrued for individuals and can contribute to a wider rehabilitative culture in the institution.

A more unconventional approach is taken by Lucy Baldwin and Christina Quinlan from De Montfort University,

Leicester, in their reflections on women's experience of imprisonment. The article draws upon poetry, photography and quotes in order to offer a more emotionally connected and profound insight into the experience of women in prison. As Baldwin and Quinlan argue, their work offers a sense of their identities, a sense of who they think they are and what their prison experiences mean to them'. This work is an important follow up to the previous edition of PSJ, a special edition on arts in prisons. Baldwin and Quinlan offer an approach to deploying arts as a research technique and a way of nurturing dialogue within prisons.

Emily Phipps and others have contributed a scholarly medical and public health article on managing tuberculosis on prisons. As the article identifies, there is a relatively high rate of TB in England and Wales in comparison with other Western European countries and this is manifested disproportionately in prisons. This article explores an important public health issue with a sound, practical overview for those who work in prisons.

The final article is offered by Professor Martine Herzog-Evans and is an overview of the French parole and 'sentence management'. This is a valuable supplement to the recent PSJ special edition on parole. Given the controversies that parole has generated in England and Wales during 2018, and the current consideration being given to significant reform, it is valuable to draw upon examples from practice internationally.

In the review section, Professor Alison Liebling of University of Cambridge, provides an assessment of Dr Luigi Gariglio's ethnography of prison officers in Italy. Liebling's own work has included well-regarded publications on prison officers. Gariglio's work focusses on the use of force from the perspective of prison officers, a focus that Liebling suggests is unique. The review addresses the use of force, and threats of force, in contemporary prisons and how this was used historically. The review also reflects upon the nature of prison research, including the emotional impact on the researcher, the risks taken by the institution, and the dynamics between the players.

Finally, this edition closes with an interview with the prisons minister Rory Stewart, conducted by Paul Crosse, Deputy Governor of HMP Huntercombe. This interview explores the contemporary policy and operational challenges faced by prisons in England and Wales.

With such an eclectic mix of articles, reviews and interviews, it is intended that there should be something to stimulate, provoke and inspire readers. As ever, PSJ intends not only to offer these contributions as a detached intellectual enterprise, but instead to encourage better, more imaginative and more humane practice.