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Editorial Comment

There are a diverse range of issues addressed in this edition of *Prison Service Journal*, ranging from security and safety, to organisational change and rehabilitation. Each of the articles is based upon research and expert analysis. They offer a rich selection for those with an interest in prisons, and in particular for those working in the prison system.

The edition opens with an article by Laura Polley, a Lecturer in Criminology at University of Suffolk and Richard Smith, a Superintendent in the Metropolitan Police Service. The article draws upon research regarding prison officers' perceptions of body worn video cameras (BWVC). There is a growing body of knowledge about the use of BWVC, which demonstrates that used in the right way, they can be an aid to reducing violence, reducing complaints and increasing legitimacy. This research highlights that there may be cultural barriers to using BWVC in the most effective way, including scepticism about effectiveness and suspicion about the intentions of introducing BWVC. The article is a useful contribution which helps to understand some of the concerns and obstacles to more effective use of BWVC. The research, conducted by an academic who has worked in prisons and a police officer who undertakes research, is an excellent illustration of the potential for collaboration between academia and practice.

The second article by David Best and others focusses on strength based interventions including peer support, drug recovery and family connections. Best and colleagues argue that if these programmes are solely evaluated using 'hard' institutional measures, then they can often have a short lived and superficial impact. Instead, the authors suggest that measures need to reflect the more profound cultural changes that programmes can generate as it is through such transformations that sustainable benefits can be achieved. The article adds to literature that critiques managerial practices and seeks to expand the ambition of evaluation in prisons.

In a significant and timely contribution, Katie Hunt sensitively explores the experience of people suffering bereavement and grief while in prison. This article would be relevant at any time, but given the scale of loss brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, this is particularly salient. The experiences and processes described in the article are stark and distressing. Yet, this is not a polemical piece, instead it is a carefully judged assessment and call for attention and resources to be directed to those experiencing loss and grief.

In their respective articles, Helen Lepp and Alice Austin focus on personal growth and change. Lepp examines the motivations of students and teachers engaged in an educational programme in a Canadian prison. The article reinforces the findings of Dame Sally Coates, that 'If education is the engine of social mobility, it is also the engine of prisoner rehabilitation'¹. Austin offers the results of a small scale qualitative study exploring children involved with Youth Offending Teams, who then stop committing crime. The findings may be useful to practitioners working with children and developing practice and strategies to enable them to make good choices about their futures.

The final article by Paul Gray and Rob Ralphs considers the impact of the smoking ban in prisons. In particular, they pay attention to the potential displacement from cigarettes to other substances and the creation of illicit markets. The article is not an argument for reversing the ban on smoking, but is instead intended to highlight the ways in which positive and progressive change can have unintended or collateral effects. This article prompts reflection on the process of planning and managing change in prisons.

As well as the main articles, this edition includes a number of book reviews. Several of these are autobiographies written by people who live and work in prisons. This is a growing field that clearly has commercial and popular appeal. Although the reviews in this edition are generally positive about the individual texts, this is a field that warrants closer critical attention. How were the texts written and what are the ethics of writing about other people in prison? What claim do these texts have to authority, authenticity and credibility? What are the editorial and commissioning processes that select and produce these texts? What does the consumption of these texts by readers reveal about the place of prison in society?

Finally, this edition closes with an interview with David Lammy MP, the Shadow Secretary of State for Justice and author of the Lammy Review², an independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system. The interview covers race in the criminal justice system, reform of prisons and sentencing, and the response to the coronavirus pandemic.

This edition offers a wide range of material, intended to stimulate reflection and debate about contemporary penal practices and values.

1. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unlocking-potential-a-review-of-education-in-prison>

2. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lammy-review-final-report>