

Preventing mistreatment in detention: How is the UK doing?

Will McMahon

Report back from HMP Grendon and HMP Barlinnie

CENTRE FOR CRIME
AND JUSTICE STUDIES

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European Prison Rules

- European Prison Observatory
- What are the EPRs?
- Aim to discuss with participants how far the EPRs were being followed
- What examples of positive initiatives did participants know about?

Framing the discussion

There are 108 rules so we framed the discussion through three subjects areas:

- Health
- Work, education and activities
- Conflicts, security and the use of force
- We will be publishing a full report in the new year – today is about the key points raised

Who attended?

- Around 100 people came to the two days
- About 40 per cent were prisoners
- A third practitioners
- The rest a mix of prison staff, CCJS staff and researchers
- We had three groups of people, with 15 to 20 in each, with a mix of the above

Differences between Barlinnie and Grendon

- Opposite ends of the prison experience
- Grendon – small and therapeutic
- Barlinnie – large, with mixed categories
- Approach of staff
- Clear differences in relationships

Limitations and focus

- Limitations of the workshop format
- Clear focus on the views of the prisoners
- Why did prisoners attend?
 - a) Contribute
 - b) Complain
 - c) Boredom
 - d) Lunch

Overall: EPRs not followed

- a) Overcrowding
- b) Staff ratios
- c) Staff training
- d) Visits
- e) Punishment and warehousing
- f) Grendon is exceptional – very different

Health

- Mental health
- Continuity of care
- Medication
- Grendon as an outlier

Work, education, activity

- No objection to work – just exploitation
- Poor education and training
- Time outside cell – variable

Conflict and the use of force

- 'Us vs them' mentality
- Far too much use of violence to control
- Complaints process not effective

Concluding thoughts

- Grendon is exceptional
- Prisoners' views – who were we hearing?
- Disconnect between EPRs and reality
- Positive examples