

# Editorial

*Dr Flora Fitzalan Howard is a Chartered and Registered Forensic Psychologist, founder of KTA Research and Consulting, and Co-Editor of the Prison Service Journal.*

This general edition of the Prison Service Journal brings together a diverse range of content which will be of interest to our readers.

We start with an article, by **Dr Bronwen Frow-Jones**, which synthesises the literature on prison staff wrongdoing to understand the causes and correlates of such behaviour. After discussing factors which may increase vulnerability, developing a typology of wrongdoing and highlighting the barriers to reporting wrongdoing, Bronwen identifies five policy recommendations relating to recruitment and vetting, training, support for staff, and support for managers.

Next, **Dr Roisin Jack, Dr Louise Buchan, Julia Heeren**, and **Professor Tom McMillan** present their research findings relating to Scottish Prison Service prison officer knowledge about head injury, and the implications of this for staff training. They argue that the prevalence and potential consequences of brain injury amongst the prisoner population, alongside the insufficiency of staff knowledge about these, requires addressing.

**Samantha Rouche**, an architect in Melbourne, Australia, then discusses the increasing need for sustainable and climate resilient prison infrastructure to mitigate risk and providing humane and sustainable custodial care in the context of escalating extreme temperatures. Her work provide a secondary study of available literature and analysis by sustainable design specialists to establish the thermal context and performance of existing facilities, alongside anecdotal evidence on the risk of extreme temperatures to prisoner behaviour, staff well-being, and operating costs.

In our fourth study, **Dr Marion Vannier, Dr Helen Gair, Mercedes Lopez**, and **Harris Telford** discuss the impact of the early release scheme implemented in England and Wales in 2024 on prisoners who are not eligible (particularly life-sentenced individuals). Their research highlights the need for an equitable approach to early release policies, informed by meaningful consultations with prisoners, and which takes into account rehabilitation efforts and individual risk levels.

The importance of higher education for individuals in prison is then considered by **Omar Lobban**. Drawing on relevant literature, different international models, and his own experience, Omar's article examines the

transformative power of higher education in prison and argues for the establishment of higher education-focused prison facilities in England and Wales.

Next, the findings from a rapid evidence assessment of forensic and psychotherapy literature exploring the impact of the physical space on therapeutic processes are presented by **Rudi Singh**. This article highlights the scarcity of forensic research in this area, and offers several recommendations for simple and low-cost changes that can improve the space in which prison interventions are delivered.

**Dr Karen Harrison, Rachael Mason, Dr Lauren Smith, Dr Chloe Wilson**, and **Sydney Ward** shed light on the perimenopausal and menopausal experiences of women who hold senior prison governor positions. Despite menopause being a significant life transition that many people will experience, it remains a topic shrouded in silence, particularly in the workplace.

The next article is derived from a presentation given at the 2025 Perrie Lectures and features **Alice Dawnay's** call for the justice reform sector to reconnect with public sentiment on crime and justice. Drawing on her experience at Switchback and new research from the Common Ground Justice Project, Dawnay highlights the disconnect between justice professionals and society.

Our last article, by **Dr Sharon Shalev, Harry Lefferts**, and **Dr Toon Molleman** discusses the findings of a study to shed light on the use and necessity of isolation (segregation) in Dutch prisons, and the views of prison staff and management on the practice. The article charts the process of developing the study's findings and recommendations into a new policy on the use of isolation, which is now being implemented by the Dutch Prison Service.

Finally, we have four book reviews. The first is of *Ministry to the Incarcerated*, written by Dr Henry G. Covert and reviewed by **Ray Taylor**. This book takes a Christian theological approach to the work of prisons and of prison chaplains. Ray concludes that this work is likely to be of most interest to prison religious ministers, rather than to prison staff in general; in particular, those of the various Christian denominations and perhaps those committed to a ministry outside of prison. Our

second review is of *What are prisons for?*, written by Professor Hindpal Singh Bhui and reviewed by **Peter Dawson**, which includes considerations about, amongst others, who is sent to prison and why, modern penal history and its impact on policies, different prison systems from across the world, and different schools of thought about what the future of prisons ought to be. The third book, *Work, Culture, and Wellbeing Among Prison Governors in England and Wales* written by Professor Karen Harrison, Rachael Mason, Dr Helen Nichols and Dr Lauren Smith, is reviewed by **Dr Jamie Bennett**. This draws on interviews with 63 prison managers in the UK, focussing on the wellbeing of prison managers, describing how and why they experience stress and distress, how they cope with the demands of their work and how the culture and institution ameliorate or

exacerbate harmful effects. Finally, *Prisoner Leaders: Leadership as Experience and Institution*, edited by Dr Marion Vannier and Paula Harriot, is also reviewed by **Dr Jamie Bennett**. He describes this as an innovative book which explores the nature of prisoner leadership; both the exercise of power and influence within the informal prison culture, as well as more formal roles such as peer support and representation. This book will be of value to prison practitioners, researchers, and those interested in leadership, prison cultures and the potential of lived experience.

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY — Attribution) License which permits use and distribution in any medium provided the original work is properly cited. For more details please visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>