

An aerial photograph of a city, likely in the United States, showing a dense residential area with many houses and trees. In the center of the city, there is a large, multi-story institutional building complex, possibly a prison or a government facility, with several interconnected buildings and a large parking lot. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

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# Editorial Comment

There is a long-standing and proud history of collaboration between the Perrie Lectures and *Prison Service Journal*. The Lectures were established in 1986 and provide an opportunity for practitioners, academics and interest groups to come together in order to explore critical issues in prisons and criminal justice. In that respect, the Lectures and PSJ share aspirations and outlook.

This year the Lectures took the theme *Prisons: Where does the community come in?* This question invites consideration of a wide range of perspectives and issues. Which organisations do prisons and prisoners interact with and how can this be enhanced? How can relationships with families and communities flourish? What is the role of public accountability and scrutiny? How do prisons reflect and reinforce social structures including power and inequality? Such questions pick up the theme at practice, policy and academic levels.

This edition of *PSJ* contains the text of three of the lectures. The first is by Peter Wright, who discusses his work as Governor of HMP Nottingham. He has overseen the rebuilding and expansion of the prison and used this as an opportunity to strategically re-imagine the relationship between the prison and the community. This not only meant linking up with voluntary and statutory agencies but also having direct dialogue with members of the public. Importantly, he draws out the ways in which prisons reflect and reinforce power structures in society including inequality and discusses ways in which this might be thought about in a different way. The lectures by Nancy Louks, Chief Executive of Families Outside, and Javed Khan, Chief Executive of Victim Support explore the experiences of those who are not the direct subjects of imprisonment but are deeply affected by crime and criminal justice. Both argue for a more mindful and sensitive approach to developing practice and policy.

The Perrie Lectures Committee also presents an annual award to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the development of penal policy. This year the recipient was Dame Anne Owers, former Chief Inspector of Prisons. She is interviewed in this edition and discusses the purpose of inspection, the major challenges during her tenure, and the changes in prisons during that time.

The edition continues with other articles which are intended to contribute further to thinking about

the theme of the Perrie Lectures. The first is an article by David Faulkner, now at Oxford University but previously a senior Home Office official. In this, he critically discusses the limitations of contemporary criminal justice policy. In particular, he describes how a more punitive, emotive and populist set of policies have left gaps in effectiveness and fairness. He suggests alternative approaches to address these deficits and calls for a cooling of criminal justice policy making so that it is more rational.

Two articles discuss ways in which the voluntary sector engages with prisons. The first article by Beth Weaver and Dave Nicholson argues that co-operation between prisoners and the agencies they are working with is the most effective way of achieving change. This suggests that this should be encouraged through the setting up of mutuals or social co-operatives where prisoners, ex-prisoners and others have a direct stake in the organisations. The article draws upon international examples to make the case that this is both economically sustainable and provides an environment in which individuals can flourish. In contrast, Mary Corcoran explores some of the problems of third sector organisations working with the criminal justice system. These problems include that organisations become co-opted into state mechanisms and dilute or lose their distinctive philosophical edge. There is also a risk that in a larger market, smaller organisations become marginalised or absorbed by larger ones, or simply become a cheap option for service delivery. This article rightly highlights that whilst community involvement should be welcomed, this should not be done in a way that ignores the risks or the issues of power and diversity.

The edition closes with two specific examples of initiatives that link prisons and the community. Phillip Whitehead examines the development of community chaplaincy and Chris Murray looks at the employability of prisoners particularly as addressed through the work of a social enterprise. These provide discrete examples of the linkages between prisons and the community at the level of practice.

*Prison Service Journal* is proud to continue its relationship with the Perrie Lectures, not only in publishing the text of the lectures but also in picking up, exploring and responding to the issues and themes raised. It is in this mutually supportive dialogue that the relationship is at its best.