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**Special edition:
Security in prisons**

Effective police and prison collaboration

Jason Hogg is the Deputy Chief Constable of Thames Valley, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police. He is interviewed by Paul Crossey, Deputy Governor at HMP The Mount.

As Deputy Chief Constable, Jason Hogg is responsible for the three counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. Jason joined Thames Valley Police in June 2016 as an Assistant Chief Constable (Crime and Criminal Justice) before moving to be the Chief Officer lead for the South East Counter Terrorism Unit and Regional Organised Crime Unit.

Jason previously worked for Hampshire Constabulary where he held a number of roles as a Chief Superintendent including Head of Crime and Head of Prevention and Neighbourhoods. He started his police career at Cleveland Police in 1995 before transferring to Hampshire in 2001.

Jason has spent most of his career working in Criminal Investigation roles, serving as a Detective in every rank. He spent a significant part of his career investigating homicide offences and has delivered training on the National Senior Investigation Officer (SIO) development programme. During his career Jason has been on extended secondments with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) working overseas in Iraq. He is currently the National Policing lead for a number of areas including Prisons, Lifetime offender Management and Detective Resilience.

The interview took place in June 2020.

PC: What do you most enjoy about your work and how does it compare to other areas of policing?

JH: As the Deputy Chief Constable for Thames Valley Police, I act as Chief Operating Officer for a £450 million organisation and all the diversity that comes with such a large organisation. My role is to ensure that our front line teams are making a difference, keeping our communities safe and working hard internally to provide appropriate support to our those staff. I value that no day is ever the same in this role. As the National Policing Lead for Prisons, I enjoy building close working relationships with Her Majesties Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) and giving a voice for policing in prison settings. I also enjoy acting as an advocate for the HMPPS in liaising with Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners, with a view to increasing awareness about some of the challenges HMPPS faces and establishing what the Police can do to assist.

PC: Leaving aside the Coronavirus pandemic, could you describe the relationship between HMPPS and the Police? How has this changed in recent times?

JH: I understand that in the past, at times there was a somewhat tense relationship between the Police and HMPPS. I have heard stories of meetings between Home Office and Ministry of Justice officials and ministers, where the Police and HMPPS have turned on each other to blame each other for issues and problems. I have received feedback that relationships in general have improved significantly. I would now describe the relationship as having a significant degree of trust and understanding, at a senior level, between the Police and HMPPS. I now regularly receive telephone calls from somewhere in HMPPS around a particular difficulty that the local police force might be able to assist with. I think that overall, the relationship is as good as it ever has been.

PC: What has been the impact on this relationship and your work during the current Coronavirus pandemic?

JH: I believe that COVID-19 has seen limited impact on the relationship between HMPPS and the Police so far. Although prisons on an individual basis have had to significantly change how they work, there have been very few people being sentenced to custody through the impact of the pandemic on courts. This has allowed us the opportunity during this time, to work in the background on improving our outcomes as a partnership. Personally, I have been involved with the National Criminal Justice System Gold group, which is chaired by HMPPS, and my team have been active in working with Prisons and Probation on the End of Custody Temporary Release (ECTR) scheme, which focused on delivering early release plans to decant prisoners from custody who were coming to the end of their sentences. The good relationships that we have built in the preceding years have provided the foundation to allow us to work effectively together on this project, and in particular I was able to represent the views of local police forces at an early stage of the concept. The final model that was agreed on and implemented, from a policing perspective, was sound including the relevant checks, balances and risk

management around early release, and ensured that local forces could effectively manage those people in the community.

The pandemic has caused some tensions and stresses with other partners besides HMPPS, but reflecting on the work we are engaged in with HMPPS, I do not believe there will be a long-term negative impact. All parties will have to develop different ways of working in the medium to long term, and potentially there may be discussions to be had around the size of the prison population in response to the pandemic. Nationally, a number of police forces have been using the lockdown period to solve historic crime. For example, my own police force have significantly increase the arrest rate during lockdown, mainly due to officers being able to locate suspects much easier than before. As these cases progress forward through the justice system, that is likely to create further pressure for the prison service. It is therefore strategically important to ensure that each agency's efforts are joined up and there is mutual understanding of the impacts on each other. This is applicable to either releasing prisoners early or having more or fewer prisoners in custody.

PC: The level of assaults against prison staff is very concerning. In a number of cases, prisoners appear to be engaging in these acts as a means to an end, rather than a targeted attack based on a specific grievance. What is being done in HMPPS to assist successful prosecutions in these circumstances and are prosecutions a meaningful deterrent?

JH: There is a significant challenge within prisons around the extent of violence and violent offences are at an all-time high. From the figures that I have seen there has been a more than 50 per cent increase in assaults on prison officers over the last three years. I think this is something we should all be concerned about not just those working within the prison sector because there are significant risks for the whole of the criminal justice system being undermined.

There are two key areas of work in relation to this. Firstly, in relation to assaults on prison officers, there are parallels with policing. Three or four years ago the attitude of police forces towards officers being assaulted was 'it's just part of the job'. However, as a

result of pressure and complaints from the police federation, forces now deal with assaults on officers much more seriously. We have developed a national seven-point plan about the minimum level of service an officer who is assaulted should expect to receive. I have shared this plan with HMPPS colleagues who have now developed and recently published an eight-point plan for HMPPS. I think HMPPS need to develop a culture whereby assaulting a prison officer is viewed as totally unacceptable and when it does occur, to ensure that the 'wrap-around' support is in place. I am not suggesting that policing has necessarily got everything right, especially when you consider the media reports highlighting the significant increase of assaults on police officers as a result of the pandemic lock down. However, I do believe that the mind-set within forces in relation to officers who are assaulted has changed and that police officers now receives a better service than in the past.

Secondly, in relation to the wider issue of violence in prisons in general, a Crime in Prisons Protocol was agreed in 2019 between the CPS, the Police service and HMPPS. This protocol sets out minimum standards about the types of crime police forces should investigate and which cases the CPS should be taking to court. I am very confident that when partners at a local level follow the guidance in that document, violence within prisons will undoubtedly be prioritised and will receive a more consistent service, with more offenders being brought to justice.

Clearly, for this to be a deterrent the outcome needs to be effective. Previously, what we found anecdotally is that there were some individual prisons that were over reporting crimes to the police, some of which could have been dealt with far more effectively through the adjudication system. For example, if somebody is already serving a long sentence, then spending time, resources and money through the police, CPS and court services, to secure a small number of days added to a sentence, would have a limited impact. However, we have also noted prisons who report very little crime to the police, quite possibly because of a lack of confidence based on the service they have received in the past. I believe there needs to be a deterrent and I think it's important, especially for more serious offences, that there is a clear sanction

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through action taken internally by the prison service or by the police. Prisoners who seriously assault prison officers should expect to be charged and receive substantial sentences regardless.

PC: The government has pledged £100million to improve prison security, most notably by introducing airport style screening processes in a number of prisons. In your view will this have an impact on security, crime and the illicit economy and what more needs to be done?

JH: It will undoubtedly assist in this area and I am very confident that, with the right funding, many of the routes by which contraband enters prisons could be 'designed out'. Clearly, the measures proposed will act as a deterrent and make it more difficult for, for example, visitors smuggling contraband into prisons. However, we know that prisoners are remarkably innovative when it comes to servicing the illicit economy and very effective at exploiting any vulnerability in the system. Therefore, we need to ensure for all agencies involved, that we have a dynamic, ongoing plan to quickly address emerging trends as prisoners find ways of working around the new security measures.

Remaining one-step ahead is a challenge but is not all about money. Even though I think with appropriate funding we could design out a majority of the issues, it is also about getting the basics right. In 2019 we published a report of best practice as a result of findings from the Drugs Task Force that visited prisons across the estate. The task force included a senior police officer seconded in to offer expert advice. For example, ensuring routine searching, joint operations with local police forces, sharing of visitor lists between the police and prisons and the examination of mobile telephone data to understand the criminal networks that are in operation, could all assist in us jointly using our resources more effectively and significantly impacting the supply of contraband. A good example of this was a prison that had agreed with a local police force to routinely park a police car outside the prison at visiting times. This car did not need to have an officer present, however, they did find that the number of visitors that arrived against those planned dropped between a third and half. After considering all other factors, they concluded that by that one car being there they reduced the number of attempts at trafficking with nil cost. I think that overall by having close working relationships with individual police forces

and individual prisons, we can make a difference without significant costs, just by working together more effectively.

PC: Serious and organised criminals use mobile phones, money service businesses and corrupt staff amongst other techniques to continue their criminality whilst in custody. Considering the challenges of maintaining the basic fabric of some sites, do HMPPS and the Police have the technical capability, flexibility and funding to meet this evolving challenge in prisons?

JH: I am unable to go into significant levels of detail, however, there have been significant strides ahead and enhancements within HMPPS around how serious organised crime is tackled. We now have the HMPPS Serious and Organised Crime Teams (SOC) in place across the country, with specialist capability in a number of areas such as financial investigation. Those HMPPS SOC teams align with the nine regional police Regional Organised Crime units which assist partnership working at a local level. Furthermore, within the last twelve months we have signed a new memorandum of understanding around corruption cases and intelligence including how intelligence is

shared between the police and HMPPS and how we work together to manage corruption. Those two things in themselves are leading to a much more joined up approach in how we tackle serious and organised crime linked to the prison estate. I am very confident in terms of progress we have made and certainly some of those cases the teams are starting to resolve.

PC: Prison staff corruption can undermine trust from prisoners, colleagues and the public in the effective operation of prisons. What more can be done to protect vulnerable staff and deter or catch those determined to engage in misconduct in this way?

JH: The relationship between prisoner and prison officer is quite unique and very different from the relationship that police officers have with offenders. It is important to set expectations from the start around behaviour and creating the right culture particularly focussed on upholding ethical standards. Secondly, I think it is important to have a robust vetting process, which needs to be regularly reviewed, as individual personal circumstances can change, leaving them

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vulnerable to an approach by an organised crime group. What we have found in the police is that by regularly re-vetting our staff, particularly those in high risks posts, we come across issues such as debt which is a real indicator of risk. I think it would be no different for our prison officer colleagues. Thirdly, I think there needs to be an investment into proactive monitoring and resources in place that can develop intelligence and target staff who are suspected of being corrupt, making sure there are anonymous reporting lines in place and being used. Probably more importantly, there is a need to ensure that staff who are put under pressure or receive threats, for example, can access support for themselves and their families. Staff confidence to report inappropriate approaches by prisoners is essential.

In those few cases where there are corrupt prison staff who are arrested and charged and dismissed, there is a need to ensure that we maximise opportunities for publicity as a deterrent. There have been a number of cases recently where members of prison staff, including those who have only been in the service for a matter of months, have received substantial sentences at court. Therefore, there is a need to balance awareness of the risks prison officers face but also a clear awareness of the impact and consequences of that type of behaviour.

PC: Given the recent change in legislation to extend the custodial element of terrorism related offences, what work is being undertaken across HMPPS and the Police to prepare for the eventual release of these prisoners?

JH: We have seen several terrorist attacks in recent months linked to prisons or recent prison releases. Counter terrorism work has led to the police, prisons and probation services developing extremely strong links and established working practices. The release of prisoners is managed through the Pathfinder process, which is reviewed every time there is a terrorist incident linked to prisons, to identify learning and how we can develop the system further. However, the main issue is the problems associated with lone actors who present unique challenges and one of the highest risk areas around the terrorism threat. However, I am very confident that there is an absolute commitment to the

agencies working together to make ongoing improvements in relation to the pathfinder process.

PC: How should HMPPS respond to the issue of those prisoners who are prepared to become martyrs during violent attacks, potentially whilst in custody, when the basis of good order and discipline in prisons is based on good relationships between staff and prisoners?

JH: It is crucial to take a two-fold approach. Firstly, it is important for good order and discipline that prison officers endeavour to have professional relationships with prisoners, particularly those deemed dangerous. Having those relationships is an opportunity in itself to gather intelligence on prisoner mind-sets and behaviour. Secondly, there is a need to be proactive at gathering intelligence on their backgrounds and associations. We then have a more complete picture of the mind-set and ideology of terrorist prisoners. Clearly, predicting how an individual is going to behave is very difficult and in some ways counter terrorism is no different from other areas such as sex offenders. In reality the people who tend to reoffend and commit further serious offences are not the high-risk individuals. The reason for this is that those high-risk individuals have a significant amount of resources invested in them, providing support and ongoing monitoring. The very serious offences tend to be committed by medium risk offenders and clearly with the resources we have you cannot give the same level of service to every single nominal. Therefore a joint, overt approach and covert approach I described above, is the best way to really understand the mind-set of these individuals.

PC: Thousands of Police officers in the community have been issued with Tasers for over ten years. Based on this experience and recent serious incidents in prisons such as HMP Whitemoor, what are your views on the planned introduction of PAVA spray and rigid bar handcuffs? Would you advocate the use of Tasers in a custodial environment?

JH: It is not appropriate for me to advise HMPPS on what protective measures need to be put in place in individual prisons. However, there is a difficult balance between equipping staff to ensure they are protected

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appropriately, without creating an environment where high levels of force are used routinely. Any increase in the levels of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or protective measures need to be matched by ongoing governance of use of force to make sure confidence is retained in the individual prison and the system. When it comes to Tasers, despite what we often see on social media, their actual use is surprisingly rare by the police. In the majority of occasions where it is used, the officer points it at someone and never actually deploys it, yet that remains an effective deterrent in itself. I could envisage a Taser being used in an extreme case on a single violent offender and that's where it tends to be effective. However, that would need to be considered very carefully because of the risks involved in effectively having weapons within the prison estate.

PC: Sexual assaults that occur in prisons could well be one of the most underreported crimes in prisons¹. Given the difficulty of prosecuting sexual crimes in the public and the 'prisoner code' of not informing or appearing to be 'weak', how can prisons best support potential victims?

JH: I think there may be some learning from the police service. The police approach to managing offences of rape and other sexual offences has developed significantly in the last thirty years, based on academic research and insights from organisations who support survivors of abuse. As an example, my own force (Thames Valley) use behavioural economics research to encourage the ongoing engagements of survivors of rape with the police. It is important that we work with support organisations to lead awareness campaigns to improve confidence in reporting sexual offences. We have seen a significant rise in reports of rape across the UK over the last ten years and these reports continue to increase as a result of increased confidence amongst survivors to report those incidents. When there are cases within the custody estate, it is important to publicise clear messaging to demonstrate what will happen when someone does report an incident. I think using those cases for ongoing communication and publicity is really important to help build that confidence.

PC: The police are recruiting intensely to meet targets set by the prime minister on officer numbers and anecdotally a number of prison

officers are leaving to take up these roles. What can the prison service learn from the police to help recruit and retain our staff?

JH: I think that it is fair to say that the Police Service does not have a problem recruiting sufficient numbers of officers. Most forces will open their recruitment windows for a short space of time and regularly receive ten to twenty times the number of applications that are needed to fill vacancies. The challenge the police have is recruiting people who are representative of local communities. A number of police forces are sending dedicated teams of officers into some of our most diverse communities and building greater trust, encouraging people to apply, putting positive action measures in place and providing more support to applicants from BAME backgrounds to help them through the application process. That is showing some early signs of being effective. There are some communities that are hard to reach and we have to invest resources and work harder if we really do want a representative workforce.

A far bigger challenge than recruitment in the police is retention. Police officers gain highly marketable skills as part of their training, which can encourage them to consider other professions. Therefore, it is ever more important, not just in policing but in the wider public sector, to create an organisation where people feel valued at work. Everybody joins the police service or the prison service because they want to make a difference and make society a better place. I believe that it is important to keep reminding people of this and making sure people feel recognised, thanked for their work, that there's proper training, personal protection, flexible working opportunities and ongoing career prospects. There is a great deal of research, which highlights the value of giving people a sense of autonomy in the work place as well as opportunities to develop their career. This certainly applies in the public sector, where sadly our pay is not what it is in the private sector, therefore we need to work hard at retaining our staff by making sure that the working environment is supportive and people are given development opportunities.

PC: In February 2020 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) said the public is increasingly losing confidence in reporting crime to the police

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1. Stevens, A. (2015) *Sex in prison: experiences of former prisoners*. London: Howard League for Penal Reform, Commission on Sex in Prison. See <https://howardleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Sex-in-prison-web.pdf>

as they struggle to investigate all crimes. Is this the case for prisoners and staff in custody or are there differences?

JH: The recently developed HMPPS Crime Data tracker will provide more accurate statistics to address this issue. However, anecdotal data suggests that there is significant disparity in the reported crimes from individual Prisons. I believe that results from a mixture of some over reporting of crime that could be more effectively dealt with via internal means using the adjudication system, and a lack of confidence in the police and CPS being able to produce results when crimes are reported. That is why the Crime in Prison Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was agreed in 2019 is so important. I am confident that if individual prisons and police forces follow the principals of that MOU, it will significantly improve the issue around consistency. We already know what works and best practice in this field include those police forces that: have dedicated crime surgeries on a regular basis; meetings between dedicated prison staff and investigators who understand how to investigate crime in prisons; ensuring workloads are regularly reviewed; assessments are made about how to make referrals; victims receive regular updates; and any issues around prisoner transfers and prison officer statements are addressed.

PC: Professor Dame Carol Black's recent report² suggested that the illegal drug supply cost the UK £20 billion with only a small fraction of that spent on treatment and prevention. She suggested that enforcement activity can have unintended consequences. Is there more that could be done by enforcement in prisons and is there anything prisons can learn from the police and wider community to help prevent illegal drug supply and demand in prisons?

JH: HMPPS staff often tell me that drugs are the root cause of the violence in prisons. We know that 20 per cent of prisoners who have random drug tests test positive and approximately some prisoners report leaving the prison estate with a drug problem. At the same time drug seizures in Prisons (prior to COVID) the

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highest that it has been since records began. Across government and the effected agencies there is an increasing appreciation that prosecution as a sole solution, will not work to tackle the problem of drugs. Dame Carol Black's report discusses how the importance of more investment in treatment and recovery, in line with the Government's Drug Strategy, will reduce the need for enforcement and supply. Within police forces there is a greater emphasis on a public health-based approach to drug possession. My own force, Thames Valley Police, are part of an initiative where we do not arrest individuals who are found in possession of drugs, including class A drugs, and instead divert them to a health-based drug advisory service. I would encourage a similar approach within prisons. The clear aim for prisoners to stop taking drugs and we need to be open to any approach that is effective in making this happen. I feel that a health-based alternative is more likely to be more effective in the long term. I believe enforcement will always have a role because there will always be some people who are not prepared to be helped and it is important to restrict the supply by targeting those smuggling drugs into prison.

PC: In his last annual report, the chief inspector of prisons said that 'last year...too many of our prisons had become unacceptably violent and dangerous places. The situation has not improved — in fact it has become worse'. What are the key solutions to the prison crisis and can we learn anything from policing? Are the solutions financial, strategic or moral?

JH: Many of the prison officers I speak to would agree with the findings from the chief inspector of prisons around prisons being violent places to work in. There are no easy solutions to this and there is no one thing that would solve the problem. Firstly, I believe that with appropriate funding we could design out some of the violent behaviour. Secondly, I think there needs to be a way of controlling the extent of the violence so that prison officers have the time and space to focus on the rehabilitation of offenders. If that is not possible, prison officers will spend their time fire-fighting

2. Black, C. (2020) *Review of Drugs*. UK Government. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/independent-review-of-drugs-by-professor-dame-carol-black>

demands, dealing with drugs and violence constantly. There is an issue about the wider criminal justice system being undermined if violence is allowed to continue unchecked. We cannot prosecute our way out of this problem and often these offenders are already serving long sentences.

However, targeting police action can help. For example, in the South West region there was a particular problem of prisoners carrying weapons. By utilising the Crime in Prison Protocol, that issue became a local priority for individual prisons in that region. The local police force(s) prioritised investigating those cases where prisoners were found in possession of weapons which lead to a decrease in violence in those prisons because prisoners knew with certainty that they would face swift punishment if they were caught. This approach was effective because it was used in a more focussed way on investigating priority crimes, rather than trying to investigate all crimes of violence.

More widely, the main learning from the police approach towards managing violence in our communities, is an offender management approach and in particular our dedicated offender managers managing our high-risk offenders. We have become better at predicting the times and places where violence occurs and identifying those individuals that pose the most risk in terms of violence. I am aware that this happens in prisons already, but it is crucial to invest in improving understanding of prisoners who are likely to behave in a violent way and having more bespoke plans that prevent violence occurring.

PC: The Lammy review pointed to evidence that safety in prison and reoffending rates can be

improved if all prisoners feel that they are being treated fairly. How can we improve trust in prisons for BAME prisoners in light of the issues surrounding the Black Lives Matters protests?

JH: This is a significant challenge not just for HMPPS or the Police but also wider agencies across the nation. Firstly, we need to ensure that we are representative of the communities we serve. There is a great deal of research that links trust and confidence in public sector organisations and with levels of representation. People need to look at the police or the prison service and see themselves represented there to have confidence that they will be treated fairly. That requires a great deal of proactive work. In policing, initiatives over the last 20 years to support this have not delivered the progress we would have liked, so we need to be more innovative in finding different ways to encourage more applicants from some of our more diverse communities.

Secondly, it is important that we develop the independent scrutiny of our processes, policies and working practices. It is not only important that these independent advisory groups are in place, but also that they are made up of the right people. This means they need to be both representative and have the voice of lived experience, which includes ex-offenders. Progress in this area is being made, but it is slow. Those of us in leadership roles across the agencies need to work a harder at this challenge. I think that the Black Lives Matters protests are both a challenge and an opportunity for us as a catalyst to do something different to make sure we are representative of our local communities and provide a fair and equitable service to all.