QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

WINTER 2021 EDITORIAL

First and foremost let me apologise for the late arrival of this Winter edition of the newsletter. Due to staff shortages in my own organisation I've been holding down the "housing advice for prisoner's" fort at multiple prisons instead of just my usual one, so many things have been postponed a little including the newsletter.

That being said I hope you will agree that it has been worth the extra month's wait. After a last minute call for articles, I was inundated once again by your generosity and in the end I had too many (once more) to print in a single edition.

When I read the submissions, I'm always impressed by the breadth of involvement our members have, in a positive way, in the field of Criminal Justice. For a small Quaker and Quaker adjacent gang, we are certainly very active and engaged.

Melanie deserves a special mention this edition for her multiple submissions all of which are very worthwhile reading. These include information on the Justice Interim Group and also the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill (It should be noted that she sat through the entire 6.5 hour 2nd Reading in the House of Lords. Now if that isn't dedication I don't know what is!!!)

There is more information on the QICJ Conference 2022 which is being held in person at Ammerdown. So far we have had good interest and responses from those planning to attend, but we need to get figures finalised fairly soon. So the committee would really appreciate it if you could complete and return the short form on page 9 (just print off the page and send it to Simon via email or snail-mail). Alternatively contact Simon and he can guide you through the application.

Once again a big thank you to all our contributors and just to say it is never too early to start sending me stuff for the Spring edition :-)



Jonathan Lamb Editor

ARTICLES

1 - Editorial

2 - Dear QICJ

3 - Reflections On My Career As A Probation Officer

5 - A Walk To Rehabilitation

6 - The Lifer's Club - Book Review

7 - Prison & Reform - A Contradiction In Terms?

8 - Membership Update

9 - Conference 2022

10 - IPP Sentences - A Prisoner's View

12 - The New Jig (Is Not A Dance)

14 - The Bromley Briefings

17 - After The Sentencing, Take Him Down!

18 - Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Bill

20 - Criminal Justice & The Prison Estate

22 - Prison Policy Network

24 - Contact Details

DEAR QICJ



Dear QICJ

Reformers can make a 'case for the prosecution' (how awful the present system is), or try to humanise its worst aspects, which seemed to be the main focus of the Friends' Crime and Justice Committee on which I served for a short time, or try to change the whole system, up to and including abolition. That comment could more or less apply to slavery as well as to prisons. But could they be transformed?

The TV series 'Time' seemed to me a very credible account of how prison at its worst can turns people into criminals. It is probably available on i-Player. It was realistic because it didn't demonise prison officers, but accepted that there are some who try to treat prisoners decently in an unhealthy environment.

I haven't claimed to be a prison abolitionist, for much the same reason as the Norwegian criminologist Nils Christie : there are some people for whose liberty I don't think I could argue - not to punish them but because they are unpredictable and dangerous. I would try to square the circle by saying that if a humane parole board didn't feel they could safely be released, they would have to remain in detention, but in a place quite different from most prisons - more like Grendon or the Barlinnie unit, perhaps? Or Norwegian prisons? Is that a cop-out?

Perhaps the way forward is to accept some form of detention (it's felt to be inevitable in some cases of mental illness, after all) and talk instead about abolishing punishment., as the Six Quakers proposed some years ago. I have two books entitled 'The crime of punishment', one by a psychiatrist (Karl Menninger, 1966), one by the wife of a prison governor (Margaret Wilson, 1931). Do you think the great British public would 'buy' replacing punishment with reparation? Perhaps we could also avoid arguing about the idea of justice, which confuses the debate by getting mixed up with retribution? There are parallels with Monty Roberts, the 'horse whisperer', too (The man who listens to horses, Arrow Books 1997), who operated by getting the confidence of horses rather than by breaking their spirit, but that would get ridiculed if one tried to use it in public debate.

Yours sincerely,
Martin Wright

Dear QICJ

I wonder how many others involved in Criminal justice work were as dismayed as I was when I read the full page BYM advert for 3 Local Development Workers.
BYM are offering a total of £56,000 a year !
This at time when they reduce the amount of support for CJW to a grudging 1 day a week and things like homelessness, care for asylum seekers and other disasters as in Madagascar for instance, are crying out for support.
I was at the Frome Zoom meeting last Monday (name came up as ipad) . Why do I get the feeling that only the converted are talking about this? I am sure there are a lot of grass roots Members who think this way too, but are not aware of what's happening or are unable to get their voices heard. In our AM there seems to be a reluctance to bring it out in the open for a proper discussion.
Thank you for being there and giving us a voice.
(I have written to the Editor of The Friend before writing this.)

With best wishes,
Margaret

Dear QIJC

John Howard's footnote: The notion that convicts are ungovernable, is certainly erroneous. There is a mode of managing some on the most desperate, with ease to yourself, and advantage to them. Most of them are shrewd and sensible: manage them with calmness, yet with steadiness: shew them that you have humanity, and that you aim to make them useful members of society. (The state of the prisons, 4th ed., 1792, p.. 39.)

(sent by a member who felt it was helpful reminder to those working in the sector)

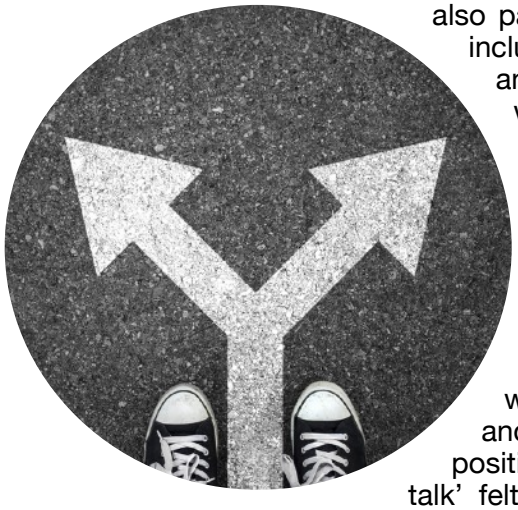
REFLECTIONS ON MY CAREER AS A PROBATION OFFICER

Penny Peters (nee Lawrence)

I have recently retired as a probation officer, three months short of 30 years, having qualified in 1991. These are a few reflections on my career.

I started out thinking that people could change and wanting to help them do that. I was pleased, at the time of my retirement, to firmly believe that this was possible, having seen it happen time and again throughout my career.

From the time of my training, a phrase has stuck in my mind, from a book I read on social work theory and practice by Bill Jordan. This went along the lines of 'the only justification for social work is time and attention freely given'. This was written in the context of the 'care and control' debate and whether state intervention in people's lives could be justified or is indeed helpful. As a probation officer there is no avoiding the control part, which is inherent in the powers of the job. However, I have always tried to follow Bill Jordan's advice in order to provide a helpful service which felt relevant to the people I was working with. This approach also paid off in terms of gaining the nuts and bolts of information to include in the probation risk assessment and risk management plans and to make these relevant and effective. In this way I felt that I was both helping the individuals that I was working with and wider society by managing risk, balancing the two requirements of care and control.



During my career there were two further important strands that particularly influenced me. Soon after qualifying I went to two training events about Solution Focussed Brief Therapy, including the originator, Steve de Schazer and his colleague Yvonne Dolan. I could readily see the advantages of this way of working, which helped clients to look at their own experiences and identify from within themselves what might help to achieve positive change. Moving from 'problem talk' to 'solution focussed talk' felt like a light bulb moment and ever since I have been using scaling techniques, asking the miracle question about what life would be like if the problem disappeared overnight and other solution focussed methods. I enthusiastically encouraged the rest of my probation team in Hackney to receive training in this approach and it was so well received that within a few months managers rolled it out to all of Inner London Probation Service staff.

In 1999 I moved to West Yorkshire. Soon after I was encouraged, through a chance meeting with my first senior probation officer, to read a book about Desistance Theory by Shad Maruna titled 'Making Good'. This detailed a study in Liverpool in the 1980s of long term heroin users and why some people involved in crime desisted and carried on desisting and others didn't, researchers finding that the key factor being how they saw themselves and whether they believed they could move away from offending. The role of the probation officer or worker is to recognise and encourage this change in addition to providing opportunities to support this in terms of increasing social capital and all the other factors that would support this change such as stability in housing, job opportunities and help with addiction. This approach also fitted well with a solution focussed approach. I encouraged my colleagues to also take an interest in Desistance Theory and eventually this became a core part of West Yorkshire Probation Service preferred way of working. In 2012 a whole WYPS staff conference was held with a presentation by Fergus McNeil, a leading exponent of desistance theory in the UK.



Since the split of the probation service into the NPS and the CRC in 2014, I have seen less prominence given to Desistance Theory, with more emphasis on training and briefings on what felt like an endless stream of changing policies and procedures. Whilst the rise of 'managerialism' was evident throughout my career in the probation service, my experience was that this became more pronounced during this period.

When I was training as a probation officer my final project essay was titled: The Influence of Quakers on the Practice of the Probation Service. Amongst the people I interviewed were three members of QICJ: Ann Jacob, Mike Nellis and David Mathieson. I chose this subject to help me examine my own values and also to learn from others how their Quaker beliefs had helped shape their working lives. These interviews were inspirational to me starting out on my career and also put me in touch with QICJ. I was an attender at conferences for several years before family commitments took over. I think my Quaker values have been central to how I have worked throughout my career, particularly in the emphasis on the value of relationships, trying to find the good in people and working hard to make community interventions work and keep people out of prison.

At the time I left I felt that in recent years I and many of my colleagues had become exploited, with the probation service and CJS grossly underfunded, with unrealistic expectations of the amount of high risk and complex cases individual probation officers could manage at any one time. Without putting in many extra hours it no longer felt that I could give the time and attention that was required to my service users.

However, despite these concerns, looking back I am glad that my working life was in a public service and in probation in particular. It has been a rewarding and interesting job and a privilege to have worked closely and positively with so many people, colleagues and service users alike.

A WALK TO REHABILITATION

Philip Jones

I am a member of Rugby LM and until retirement in February was a Community Chaplain with Futures Unlocked a charity based in Rugby working to provide practical, emotional and spiritual mentoring support to men and women returning to the community of Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire after release from prison. I had spent most of my working life as a criminal defence solicitor and when an email came round from our clerk saying that Futures were looking to appoint another Chaplain I saw this as a reasonable extension of my previous work. I was with them for over 6 years retiring on my 70th birthday.



In October I embarked on a sponsored walk to raise funds for the charity and where possible raise awareness of it across the community. With the increasing prison estate, the lengthening of prison sentences, the reduction of rehabilitation programmes in prison and the effect of Covid the work of Chaplaincies such as Futures Unlocked is even more vital. I decided to map a route from reputedly the oldest prison in the country in Shepton Mallett back to the offices of Futures Unlocked in Rugby. This is a distance of 120 miles or, roughly, 10 half marathons. My plan had been to update across my just giving page and Facebook and use the walk as a metaphor for the rehabilitation journey and change curve philosophy. I mapped a route which was largely on B roads and by-roads and with my wife as support I began the walk on the 4th October. As an immediate analogy for how things can go awry on the day of release, my plan to be photographed at the gates of the prison were thrown when I found that the BBC were filming a drama at the prison. A very kind tech guy took my photo for me.

Over 12 days across the month I walked through Cotswold villages, up hill and down, across the Warwickshire plain to Rugby where I was met at the offices by the local MP Mark Pawsey and Rugby Mayor Councillor Mrs Deepah Brojomohun-Roberts together with Trustees from Futures Unlocked. I was supported by BBC Coventry and Warwickshire Radio who gave me 2 interviews and ran an audio diary. I met with some interesting people. An American couple were very engaged in hearing about the charity and the walk (when I said that our penal policy was very much modelled on the American, Ryan replied that it was not a good model). I later discovered they made a significant donation. Another lady mentioned her grandmother would, in the 30s, take in prisoners on release and for 1d a week would house and feed them for a fortnight to prepare them. A chap taking in his bins was interested and spoke of his uncle being in and out of prison. As I said to him, prison makes sense, the outside world does not. It transpired that the



Mayor had direct relationship with prison environment as her father had been a prison officer and an uncle had undertaken drug dependency work in prison.

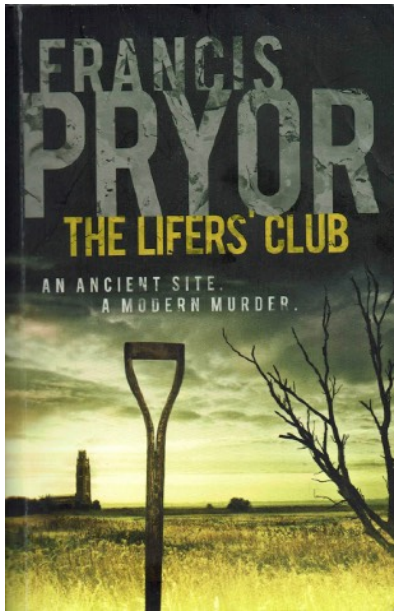
Two short videos I took spoke to the challenges facing ex-prisoners. In the first I show the long straight stretch of road I had been following leading, I believed straight on over the brow. However, as I approached the end I found there was a sharp bend followed by a brutal climb (1 in 7 I am sure!). As I said in the video this is just the sort of unplanned bend or bump in the road which can throw someone off and the need for support is vital.

I am close to my target for donations and am pleased with the response I have had by way of encouragement and support from F/friends and others with the profile of the charity raised.
The walk gave chance for reflection, meditation and communion with nature. I have had the opportunity to engage with men and women in the rural communities, to realise the solitary nature of work in and on the land. More especially I have had occasion “To walk cheerfully over the world answering that of God in everyone”.

THE LIFER’S CLUB - BOOK REVIEW

William Waddilove

By Francis Prior
Sub titled ‘An Ancient Site. A Modern Murder’



In my school days I was I encouraged to join an ‘archaeological dig’ and spent several summers on digs on Iron Age hill forts. It cemented my interest in archaeology and I also worked in Cambridgeshire on The Fens. A year or so ago there were several programmes about the discovery of an Iron Age village in the peat of the fens and also on the radio was serialised a book called ‘The Fens’ by Francis Prior. We bought the book and have been reading it. It is in a very readable style. You may have seen the author on the Time Team programmes.

Within the book is a throwaway comment about ‘this site hut featured in my first novel’. That first novel is ‘The Lifers Club’. This is a detective murder mystery story.

The hero is a leading archaeologist and comes across an old newspaper cutting being used on the soggy floor of his current site office giving the name of someone he knew on a dig seven years earlier who had been given a life sentence for murdering his sister. He had also met the sister who at school age had also visited the dig. All this all seemed very untypical and greatly concerned him. The rest of the book is his investigation into this murder and conviction. All this is set within the world of contract archaeology.

In order to meet the convicted person he ends teaching archaeology in the local prison at the invitation of ‘The Lifers Club’. This is the group of lifers, who with the Governor’s approval organised meetings, talks and activities. The book certainly emphasises the feelings that newcomers to the prison service feel when entering the prison world. Behind all this is a very complex web of intrigue and the hidden social pressures in some communities.

It is a very readable novel and certainly so if you are like me, interested in the worlds of digs and the inside wheels of the justice and the prison service.

PRISON & REFORM - A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?

Sue & Chris Myers

REPORT ON A TALK BY MELANIE JAMESON FOR PRISONS WEEK, VIA ZOOM AND AT GLOUCESTER QMH

Melanie began by painting a picture of prisons today. In recent inspections, some prisons have been judged to have 'inhumane conditions' often linked to poor maintenance – this is due, in part at least, to the government's decision to outsource this function, and the bankruptcy of two leading contractors. Drugs are rife and self-harm and violence is widespread.

> "The degree of civilisation in a society can be judged by its prisons." Dostoevsky.

Another major long-term problem is shortage of staff. When he was Secretary of State, Chris Grayling reduced prison officer numbers from 23,000 to 18,000 which is not enough. Moreover, in 11 years, there have been 9 Secretaries of State for prisons, which is very disruptive.

We heard about the tests of a healthy prison, according to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons:

- Safety
- Respect
- Purposeful activity
- Rehabilitation and release plan
- A new one has now been added – the quality of leadership.

Moving on to major reforms, we looked first at the Corston Report 2007, which found that 80% of women in prison were not sentenced for a serious crime, stating:

"There are many women in prison, either on remand or serving sentences for minor, non-violent offences, for whom prison is both disproportionate and inappropriate. Many of them suffer poor physical and mental health or substance abuse, or both. Large numbers have endured violent or sexual abuse or had chaotic childhoods. Many have been in care. These are among the women whom society must support and help to establish themselves in the community".

The other reports are the Taylor Review in 2015 on the Youth Justice System (children under 18), the Coates Review in 2016 on education (34% of prisoners were found to have some sort of learning difficulty) and the Lammy Review in 2017 on fair treatment of black prisoners. Although accepted by governments, none of these reports have been fully acted on.

Another on-going failing is the underfunding of the Ministry of Justice, thought to be by 25% ed as it is does not have protected status, unlike several other key departments. Across England and Wales, it costs an average of £37,54 a year to keep a prisoner in jail. However, when people are released, there is little help apart from charities, and some will be homeless.

Recommendations

- It would be helpful to have a Secretary of State who is not afraid of the tabloids.

- Many children who have been in care or excluded from school end up in prison.
- Problem-solving courts are a more humane way of tackling problems.
- There are still Prisoners on indefinite sentences (IPPs) although this sentence was abolished in 2012, who need to be released or properly supported.
- Prisons remain overcrowded an understaffed – both of which need to be tackled.
- It would be good to have a radical rethink and sentence only dangerous people to prison and decriminalise addiction problems.

Many thanks to Melanie for this informative and interesting talk.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Simon Ewart

I shall start this membership update by copying in a report in the May 2019 newsletter from our then retiring Membership Secretary Ann Jacob, this is what Ann said "……What is less encouraging is how dilatory many members are about paying their subscriptions on time (or at all) - only 87 had subscribed for the current year, 24 last subscribed in 2018 and 24 not since 2017 and likely to be removed from the mailing list, which will leave our numbers unacceptably low and financially less viable. Friends, please attend to this!"

So, I am able to be positive in that we now have 149 members, (we just don't seem to get over that 150 threshold), with just 18 failing to let me have their cash, well of course you realise it's Rodney our treasurer who deals with that! The preferred way to pay is through standing order or BACS. This should be done at the beginning of the year in order that you do not have to put up with the (for some regular and unanswered) emails and letters attempting to prise the subscription suggested from your purses!!!



QICJ CONFERENCE INFO & APPLICATION

Annual Conference 25- 27th February 2022
Trauma, Dysfunction & Criminality

This year we are overjoyed to be able to meet in person again, and in the much-loved venue of Ammerdown, not far from Bath. Ammerdown (click the links for full details).

Our focus is something that affects many people caught up in the criminal justice system: the trauma of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE). We shall begin by listening to someone with lived experience of imprisonment and ACE, Richard Lambe. The other key note speakers are Sue Penna of Penzance Local Meeting Sue Penna and Caroline Mellon of Bristol Youth Offending team Bristol-youth-offending-team. How do professionals, academics and practitioners approach ACE? The speakers are from a range of backgrounds and experiences and will share their approaches.

As usual there will be a series of workshops and small group sharing opportunities. The conference will be wrapped up for us by Tim Newell, ex prison governor at HMP Grendon and Swarthmoor lecturer, Tim Newell.

In addition, we shall also have the opportunity to hear from the Head of Worship & Witness, Oliver Robertson, on the changes envisaged in central support for Quaker witness in criminal justice. Come and join us for a stimulating weekend.

Please Complete the details below and send by post or email qicjmembership@gmail.com to **Simon Ewart, QICJ Conference, Skewjack Barn, St. Levan, Cornwall TR19 6NB. 01736 871161** Please enclose your remittance of £250(resident) or £120 (non-resident) made out to **Quakers in Criminal Justice** or if by Bank Giro Credit: sort code **08 92 99** account number **65406034** Please send receipt if paying direct through your bank and mark the payment *Ammerdown*.

Name	Address	Tel: email details	Res/non-res?

I agree to my contact details being circulated to participants (x box if you agree)	

Any dietary requirements?.....

Details of expertise or interests:

IPP SENTENCES - A PRISONER'S VIEW

A Prisoner in HMP Leyhill

I write to highlight the issues of prisoners serving IPP sentences with what seems like no end in sight. I received a 2 year 42 day IPP sentence and am still in prison almost 10 years later.

The latest figures show there are currently around 1,995 prisoners on n IPP sentence who have never had the chance to prove themselves by being released. Many of these are more than 4 years over tariff. The onus is on the prisoner to prove to the parole board they are not a risk and can safely be released to live a risk free life. I would agree with Ken Clarke, on 30th May 2016, who told Radio 4's Today programme:

"It is quite absurd that there are people who might be there for the rest of their lives, in theory, who are serving a sentence which Parliament agreed to get rid of because it hadn't worked as anybody intended. The trouble is this ridiculous burden on the Parole Board of saying they can only release people if it's proved to them that they're not really a danger to the public."

"No prisoner can prove that - you never know when people are going to lose their control, what's going to happen to them when they're released." He added that the key thing was to protect the public by making sure fewer criminals go on to reoffend, through helping them find work and accommodation upon release from jail." [Quoted in briefing paper to the House of Commons no 6086 6 June 2019]

Even David Blunkett, the mastermind mind behind this sentence in the Criminal Justice Act of 2003, admitted that 'we certainly got the implementation wrong'. When Mr Gove, briefly serving as Minister of State for Justice, delivered the annual Longford Lecture on 16 November 2016, under the title "What's really criminal about our justice system?", he turned to the subject of IPPs. He proposed that the Government should use the power of executive clemency to release those IPP prisoners who have been in prison for much longer than their tariff:



"In terms of pure justice and fairness, there are far too many prisoners, who were sentenced under the IPP - Imprisonment for Public Protection - indeterminate sentence provisions who have served far longer than the gravity of their offence requires and who should be released."

"I would recommend using the power of executive clemency for those 500 or so IPP prisoners who have been in jail for far longer than the tariff for their offence and have now – after multiple parole reviews – served even longer than the maximum determinate sentence for that index offence."

5 years later nothing has changed - except the ministers responsible for Justice and prisons.

When a person on an IPP sentence is eventually released, it seems it seems that probation offender managers are quick to recall them. Over 1,200 prisoners recalled by the end of 2019 were IPPs and nearly 60% were released again by the parole board.

The rate of self harm by IPP prisoners is nearly 3 times as high as those with determinate sentences. 63 IPPs have committed suicide. Mental Health provision in prison is insufficient and I imagine not many people are aware that it is sub-contracted to a private company by the NHS. In this prison you are constantly reminded that the mental health team is not a crisis team. If you are put on n ACCT – what used to be called suicide watch – you might be removed from open conditions to closed as unmanageable. Your progress towards release if you are IPP is effectively halted. This happened to me.

There is hardly any awareness or support for residents with neuro-diverse conditions – autism, Aspergers syndrome, dyslexia etc or for people with learning difficulties. I feel you are seen as difficult or a problem and, instead of being supported, are viewed as manipulative, deceptive or demanding.



Prisoners in open conditions have opportunities to be released on temporary licence either for the day or overnight and the parole board rely heavily on these as an indicator of risk. Most prisoners will not get recommendations for release if they have not gone through the process of having days outside the prison, escorted and then unescorted for a day or for several days, staying in a probation hostel overnight. I think these ROTLs would be a more reliable test if prisoners did not get away with the magic words, “everything went well”. Talking through the details of the day more thoroughly might reveal broken licence conditions such as drinking alcohol or making forbidden contacts and more rigorous searching on return might pick up those who bring in drugs, USB sticks of pornography or alcohol. These prince-charming seem to get away with their deceptions and are supported by their Prison and Community Offender Managers at their parole hearings and recommended for release.

The shrinking of the officer population by cuts and then covid also has been hard on IPPs. Stressed staff on the wings find it hard to deal with our issues and queries or personal officers to find time to give to the residents assigned to them. Positive behaviour can be overlooked and not be recorded so it can be included in reports to the parole board. I have a parole hearing listed for the early part of next year and was feeling optimistic but so many errors occur under stress and the effect of my autism does not seem to be understood or taken into account, that I wonder if optimism is misplaced.

THE NEW JIG (IS NOT A DANCE)

Melanie Jameson

JIG is the 'Justice Interim Group', an informal group of Friends with experience in criminal justice (CJ) matters, who are meeting to consider the future of our Quaker CJ witness. We have been joined by Clare Wood, one of two Operational Managers, working under Oliver Robertson, Head of Worship & Witness.

JIG has been convened by Kate Philbrick, Clerk of the Social Justice Sub-Committee (SJC) and me; we have now met twice and are tasked with responding to the challenging request from QPSW Central Committee (CC) to work out how 'to do Quaker CJ work differently', before SJC is laid down.



The background to this state of affairs has already been shared with QICJ members and written up in the previous newsletter; it was considered (belatedly) at Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) in July following the receipt of around a dozen Minutes which you had initiated. It all relates to the QPSW Restructuring Strategy, the development of which will be an important agenda item at a forthcoming QPSW CC meeting. This is likely to be followed by a consultation period on any new arrangements, stretching into the new year. By the time of our Ammerdown Conference at the end of February the dust should have settled; we have therefore invited Oliver to update us and take any questions.

At the July MfS, an admission was made that communication from the centre could be improved. Workshops and regional consultations are currently being offered to Friends, both by BYM Trustees on Simpler Governance, and by QPSW CC. Some of the outcomes could well be relevant to our deliberations.

Meanwhile, groups of Friends are exchanging ideas – I'll give two examples: Teresa, based in Friends House, has been working on Transformative Justice as an approach which draws together the threads of inequality and social injustice, along with over-use of prisons, and promotes restorative initiatives to heal our divided communities. Nicola (of W Wilshire & E Somerset AM) recently ran a session entitled Exploring Justice for her Area Meeting at which Juliet Lyons and I spoke about our CJ witness, the situation in prisons and the need to speak out against injustice. "There is a distinctive Quaker voice, rooted in values and principles", Juliet said, "which is 'seasoned', respected and listened to". Participants stressed that speaking out is

vital at this time, as the government, with media support, becomes ever more punitive in outlook.

So, where have we got to?

We have taken the view that JIG should continue to hold and advance the CJ concern, at least until new arrangements are discerned. During this transitional stage it's difficult to know how our CJ witness will evolve or where any new group would fit. Possible models for JIG include that of Quaker Concern for Torture, tasked by MfS to work on their core issue. Perhaps JIG, or its successor could end up as a Quaker Recognised Body, like QICJ, but the two groups must be differentiated.

We believe that a central (employed) post is fundamental, in order to co-ordinate any work, undertake necessary research, map which organisations are working on what and represent Quakers on various CJ networks. This need for co-ordination and dissemination extends to international CJ work, through the Friends World Committee for Consultation and Geneva's Quaker United Nations Office. Unfortunately, it seems most unlikely that this paid role will continue – which will exercise JIG at our next meeting.



However, JIG has been informed that various forms of central support could be available, throughout this transitional stage and maybe beyond, including annual / six-monthly reviews of CJ issues by QPSW CC to pick up concerns centrally. (Once SJC is laid down, the link with QPSW would otherwise be lost.) An essential issue that I have raised from the start is this: can we find Friends prepared to put in additional hours on CJ work?

Prison Chaplains

At every stage, JIG has highlighted the important frontline work undertaken by our Prison Chaplains. It is vital to ensure that they are well supported and that their voices are heard. Meanwhile QICJ will renew links with the Prison Chaplain Committee to assist in this process.

In Conclusion

The outcome of JIG's discernment so far is that we should remain an informal group, 'keeping things loose' and not being overly bothered about where JIG could fit into Quaker structures while Simpler Governance and Restructuring initiatives are underway which may change the landscape. Our focus for now is, therefore, on issues, not 'process'. These issues are likely to include a new White Paper on Prisons, punitive sentencing measures in the Police Crime Sentencing & Courts Bill and threats to the Human Rights Act. Any statement from Quakers in

Britain goes through a checking and sign-off process to be delivered through our Parliamentary Advocacy Manager; JIG would participate in this, when necessary.

A possible role for JIG to undertake at some stage is a mapping of CJ expertise within Quakers, to assist with any central responses. Although not a priority for now, this bank of experienced Friends would represent an important resource.

Kate and I have taken feedback from JIG members, enabling us to finalise and dispatch a joint SJC/JIG document entitled: Submission to QPSW Central Committee for consideration on the future of crime, community and justice work at its November 2021 meeting. I hope to be able to share it via the QICJ website.

Meanwhile JIG awaits the outcome of the crucial QPSW CC meeting on November 26 and will continue to formulate what steps are needed to ensure that our Quaker CJ witness remains strong and authoritative. This is your JIG too, please dance with us!

To comment, make suggestions or to receive further info, please contact Melanie Jameson on melanie-jameson@outlook.com

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THE BROMLEY BRIEFINGS

Frances MacCann

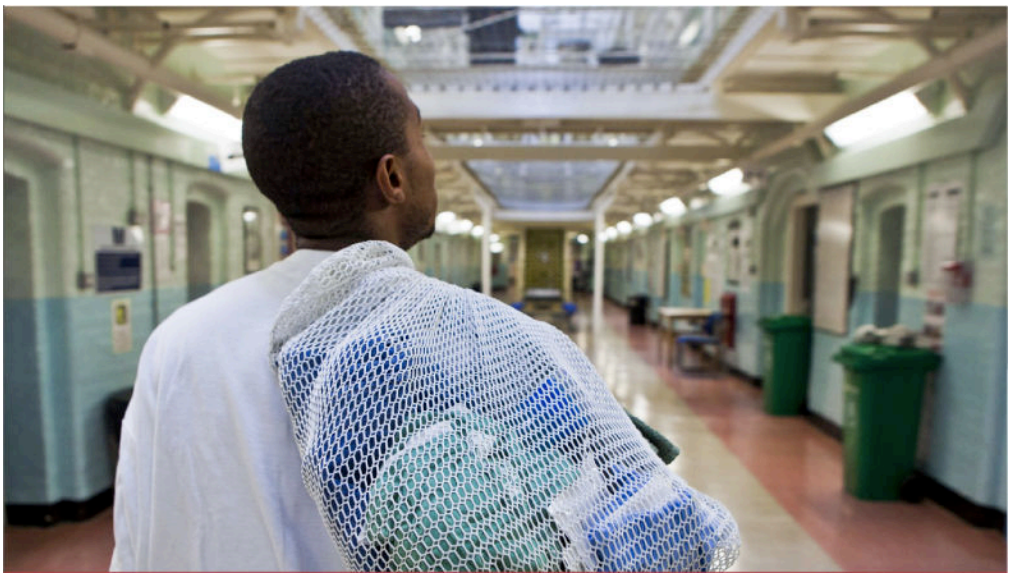
The Bromley Briefings - The Long View, 2021

In October (2021) I participated in one of the BYM Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee on-line consultation sessions. There were at least 5 other QICJ members at the meeting. Each of us, in our own way, expressed disappointment that a decision had been made to lay down the Criminal Justice Sub Committee and that there was no direct reference to the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in the 5-year strategy plan being proposed for QPSW. As well as expressing their concern about this QICJ members and others present did suggest ways in which we can continue the Quaker work in maintaining awareness and drawing attention to developments within the CJS that are increasingly punitive, discriminatory and in-humane, and work to promote compassionate and rehabilitative practices.

This means that there needs to be opportunities for all concerned Quakers to be able to stay informed of opportunities and developments so as to engage with effective change. As well as a suggestion that LM's and AM's considered becoming members of QICJ, a suggestion was also made that Meetings could become members of The Prison Reform Trust.

I thought it would be useful to write about the important work undertaken by the Prison Reform Trust and published twice yearly as "The Bromley Briefings"

The Bromley Briefings are a comprehensive distillation and analysis of facts and figures concerned with crime, sentencing and prisons in England and Wales, primarily obtained from



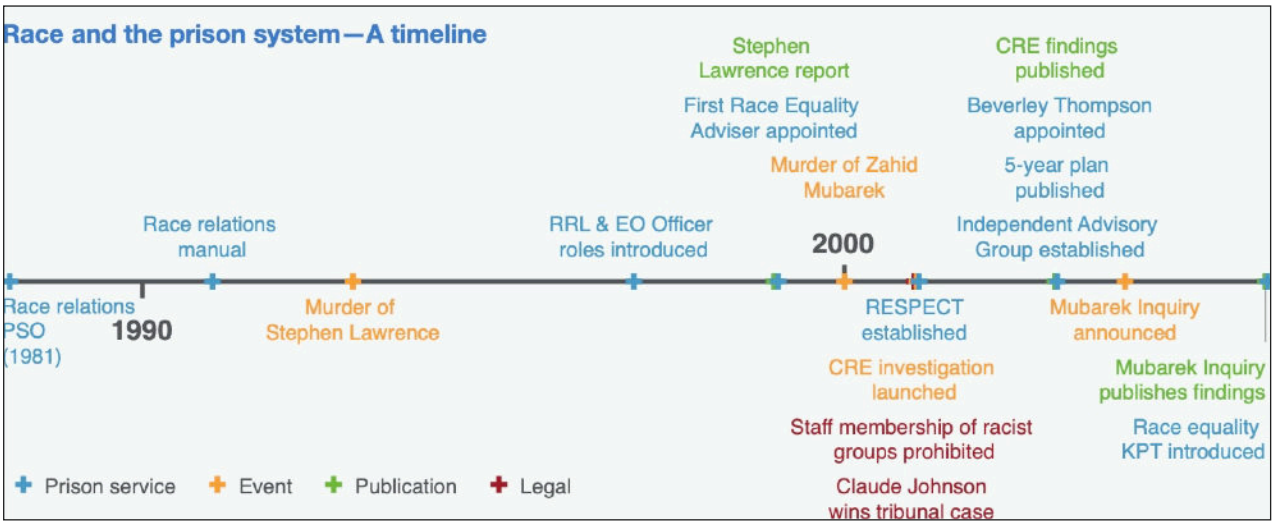
government sources. The Briefings cover matters such as State and private prisons, the use of custody in sentencing, recorded crime and sentencing, the use of custody for women, children and young adults, the age, health and social profile of prison populations, also re-offending and rehabilitation data. They include commentary and input from a wide range of stakeholders stakeholders in the CJS and offer some comparisons with other jurisdictions.

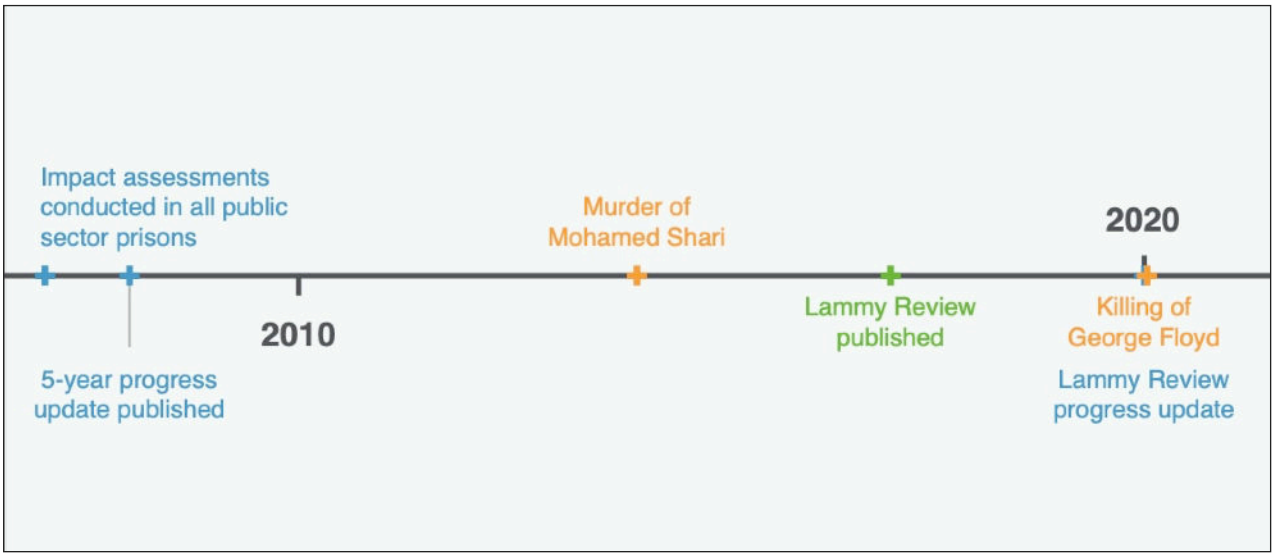
Two themes are foregrounded in the Winter 2021 publication: the Covid pandemic and prisons and the over representation of Black and Ethnic Minority people throughout the prison population. There is a wealth of detailed and well referenced wide reaching information in this 63-page publication, just a quick scan of it gives immediate cause for concern. Drawing on material in the report I have chosen to offer a very brief focus on how racial injustice is clearly evident today in the CJS.

The report opens with a retrospective view from Beverley Thompson OBE of how the prison service, having previously been so innovative in practices to tackle race discrimination, has allowed other matters to take priority. She relates how, in the three decades since the since inclusion of the Prison Service Race Relations manual that was introduced as part of Prison Service performance management, the progressive work taking place 1990 – 2008 has lost momentum, and that in many respects the ground gained over this period has been lost with increasing proportions of people from Black and Ethnic Minority (BAME) communities being in custodial settings.

Following the publication of two reports by the CRE (Commission for Race Relations) into racism in a number of prisons in 2003 the CRE and The Prison Service agreed a 5-year action plan to engage with racial discrimination providing practical support and advice to individual prisons alongside national monitoring and further policy development. As an outcome of required reporting it became evident that there was a disproportionate use of force and the use of disciplinary procedures against BAME prisoners. To address this, and other discriminatory factors, the Prison Service introduced new requirements for the prisons to completed impact assessments for all key policies highlighted by the CRE. An active engagement in an ambitious programme of challenging and changing practice of racial discrimination was actively engaged with across the prison estate.

Sadly, the author ends with some very sobering comments, reflecting that in the past decade there is clear evidence of a significant loss of ground gained in tackling race discrimination





throughout the CJS. Of particular concern is that, although the number of children, young people and young adults in custodial settings has fallen, the proportion of those from BAME communities has increased substantially. In 2017 David Lammy published his final report following the independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals in the CJS. His findings, some of which were shared by the CRE back in 2003, should serve as a reminder to the prison service that there is still a long road to travel.

In my work as a mental health practitioner with young people I did not work directly with the CJS, but what I did see was the impact on already disadvantaged families of the punitive, under resourced, and often harmful treatment of family members by the CJS. I suggest that the Bromley Briefings, along with the QICJ Newsletter, can provide Quakers with the evidence that the injustices and harms of the CJS are a place where inequalities and social injustices in British society are actively being enacted.

http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Bromley%20Briefings/Winter%202021%20Factfile%20final.pdf

AFTER THE SENTENCING, TAKE HIM DOWN!

A Prisoner in HMP Dorchester

Into the sweat box,
bounce off its walls
clunk at the prison gates
open and close
to reception, no hotel this,
number given, prisoner RM 932
Stripped
Another search, prison clothes
No stripes today

Clank of keys
Click of camera, id card issued
No names here, just RM 932
Then
To holding cell graffiti daubed,
No pens though, thinks,
Tea stains I hope nothing else?
Light without, peeks through grim window,
Filters in.

The light within
Elizabeth Fry will you give me hope
Oh why, oh why am I here?
Taken through iron gates
Oppressive corridors and jeering noises off.
Where will I lay my head
Who will be there?

My faith, my trust,
Help me bear my cross,
Carry mine just now dear Jesus
I seek the eternal Light Within

Then I remember
My Greenham friends they sang.
“You can’t kill the spirit
We are Women We are strong”
They are a memory but you inspire,
They can’t kill my spirit
It knows no bounds.
I will endure.



POLICE, CRIME, SENTENCING & COURTS BILL

Melanie Jameson

This is an extraordinary mishmash of a Bill, which is leaving the Lords quite gobsmacked. Me too! It is over 300 pages long and bits are still being added in.

What are its origins? In September 2020 I was alerted to the 'Smarter Sentencing' White Paper - the 18th piece of legislation on sentencing. It was not preceded by a Green Paper (which outlines ideas and proposals). There had been no consultation – criminal justice charities were outraged. Not surprisingly, the direction of travel was all wrong, with longer sentences rather than any concerted attempt to engage in measures that reduce reoffending such as skills training, trauma counselling, accommodation, job opportunities, clinics for mental health and addiction problems.

This White Paper suddenly morphed into something quite different, with the addition of an unprecedented increase in policing powers. The sentencing measures were now simply Part 7 of the 12 part Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021.

No doubt readers will have come across – or contributed to - the outrage concerning Part 3 of this Bill on public protests. Even a single-person protest can be criminalised, as will a noisy protest (is there any other sort?) and protests which disturb the communities they take place in or pass through. Whereas Part 3 clearly has Extinction Rebellion in its sights, Part 4 on 'unauthorised encampments' is directed against the Roma, Gypsy Travelling populations and includes the possibility of towing away vehicles which could also be their homes. Many commentators point out the lack of lawful sites that criminalise these groups.

Unsurprisingly, many organisations and charities have united to oppose these provisions; an Open Letter attracted 241 signatories. In contrast, the punitive sentencing measures (Part 7) have drawn very little criticism. Let's take a look at some of them:

1 Changes in Automatic release for serious crimes – this will take place at the 2/3 point of the sentence, not halfway.

2 Life sentence tariffs – longer period before considered for release

3 Whole life Orders for child killers (including 18-20 year olds) this would appear to admit no possibility of redemption or turning round your life.

4. No automatic release of offenders who are thought to pose a terrorist threat

5 Increasing the starting point for determining sentence length for 15-17 year olds who commit murder, so these are in line with adult tariffs.

6. New ten-year maximum sentence for defacing a statue or memorial (!!)

7. New sentence for serious injury caused by careless driving and life sentences for those who cause death by dangerous driving

8. New House Detention Order, which includes a lengthy and restrictive curfew

9. Increase in curfew periods, enforced through electronic monitoring

You may think that I need to 'get a life', but I sat through all 6 ½ hours of the 2nd Reading in the Lords where more and more objections and amendments were articulated – the main one, repeated many times, being the sheer size and complexity of the Bill. Several key misgivings were voiced, summarised below, all of which should alarm members of Quakers in Criminal Justice.

- The new measures will add to the chronic overcrowding in our prisons
- The aging infrastructure of prison estate is already under pressure
- As the official Impact Assessment on Part 7 points out, there will be less chance of effective rehabilitation in an overstretched prison system.
- Some measures disproportionately affect black and Muslim men
- Lord Bradley stresses that 9/10 prisoners have at least one mental illness – they need community sentences with treatment requirements as laid out in 2009 Bradley Review. Compare: if we failed to address people with serious physical illnesses.
- Many Lords raised the issue of children of imprisoned mothers and the failure to implement the Corston Report on women in the CJS which recommends community provision. So why are 500 more female prison places being built?
- 66 Lords spoke in all – the final speaker making the point that more custodial sentences and longer terms pander to the tabloid view that longer sentences reduce re-offending. This 'sentence inflation' - including for children (under 18s) – flies in the face of evidence which shows that harsher sentences do not lead to deterrence.
- Of paramount importance is the point made by Lord Beith, namely that as certain sentences lengthen, there will be a knock-on effect as other sentences become out of kilter and lengthen also.

As readers are probably aware, both England & Wales AND Scotland already have the highest per capita level of imprisonment in Europe. In the last ten years, the average prison sentence has increased by almost 2 years and the number of people sentenced to over 10 years has more than tripled. And then along comes another Bill exacerbating this unsustainable situation!

In a futile attempt to gain some balance, I should point out that there are a three positive measures in this Bill, namely: the increased use of problem-solving courts, more funding for Community Sentence Treatment Requirements and limited reform to criminal record disclosure.

An 'Opportunity Missed'

Three important issues were raised by a number of Lords at the 2nd Reading as 'an opportunity missed', which should be incorporated into Part 7 of the Bill:

1. Repeal of the 1824 Vagrancy Act which criminalises homelessness

2. Dealing with the situation of people imprisoned under Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) measures. Although this sentence was abolished in 2012, around 1,700 people are still imprisoned under its provisions, most of whom are well over tariff, plus around 1,300, recalled for minor breaches. High suicide and self-harm rates prevail.

3. Full pardon for those who received a conviction for same-sex offences which have been

removed from the statute book.

Where are we up to now (Nov 2021)?

At the time of writing, the Bill reached the Committee stage in the Lords on Oct 20; the contentious nature of this Bill has ensured that further passage will be a prolonged business – already extra days have been allocated for consideration of the numerous amendments by the Committee, stretching into November.

This will be followed by the Report Stage and 3rd Reading in The Lords, before returning to the Commons for consideration of Amendments and, finally, Royal Assent.

Meanwhile, Priti Patel aims to add additional measures in response to the disruption caused by the Insulate Britain roadblocking protests. This will not go down well in the Lords where the key objections are the massive length and hotch-potch nature of this legislation, the affront to democracy and the power devolved to whoever is Home Secretary who has flexibility in determining what certain wording implies. I shall need to keep a careful eye on these proceedings, as this misbegotten Bill evolves.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & THE PRISON ESTATE

Reports, commissions, statistics - swamped by evidence

Polly Lowe

Over the Centuries Quakers have played a significant role in Prisoner support and prison reform.

This commitment to social justice for those incarcerated and disenfranchised was in part influenced by the experience of those early Quakers who were imprisoned in the Seventeenth Century. They endured inhumane and barbaric treatment but their lives were a powerful witness and testimony to the 'light within'. Quakers have resolutely continued to shine this light upon the prison estate-a recurring concern within Quaker Faith and Practice:

Imprisonment…offers some protection to society by removing the offender. But consider how limited that protection is compared to what it could be. It puts the offender against property into a place where he is deprived of opportunities to practice social rules about property; it puts the violent man in a subculture which is governed by violence; it puts the defrauder into a power system where corruption is rife; it puts the sexual offender into a place where sexual relief is only obtainable by substitutes;…..it puts those who need to learn to take control of their lives into a situation where all significant choices are made for them; and it puts the offender who is likely to reform into a milieu where most of the influences on him or her are criminal ones… restraint and containment should be carried out in a life - enhancing spirit of love and care.QFP 23.101 - 02

So many prisoners experience a life in prison that is harsh and painful and for many it is one of squalor, desperation, self harm, and hopelessness. Violence and drug abuse is endemic within a dysfunctional system that is unsafe, unstable and crushes both staff and prisoners. For many the spirit of love and care is starkly absent.

'I tell them I'm ok, that's all they ask 'are you ok?'I have someone sitting watching me for 24hours, lying in a chair, feet up agains the bars, watching me. I'm dragging my pain, I've lost my daughter. I can't see a future. I sit on my bed and a cut eases it'

England and Wales continue to incarcerate more individuals than any other European country, with figures doubling over the past twenty years. The current prison population (Oct 2021) in England and Wales stands at 78.000, with 4% of women contributing to the figure. Lower capacity in a reduced number of courts and a less opportunities for crime during Covid may well be a factor in a 6% reduction in prison population numbers.

Safety and Custody statistics contain disturbing evidence concerning deaths in prison in the year up to Sept 2021 There were 396 deaths, an overall 40% increase with a 13% increase in people taking their own lives. Deaths by natural causes increased by 55% to 281 and of these 100 were related to Covid .

Similarly for self harm and assaults in the year up to June 2021. There were 53,290 recoded self harm incidents.However recorded self harm figures per 1000 male prisoners decreased by 13% whereby they increased by 16% in women's prisons.



During the height of the pandemic self harm in mens prisons also fell. In part because there was less stressful contact with other men and individuals actually felt safer.

Women, on the other hand, many with mental health needs, had very limited access to appropriate medical and mental health care. They experienced significant loss of access to children and wider family.They helplessly experienced bereavement and were isolated from the vital peer support of other women. An initial delay in providing video access to families also compounded the isolation.Factors that severely impacted upon already fragile levels of wellbeing.

Many women hadn't seen their children for months' Leading to the Joint Committee of Human rights surmising that curtailing access to Children could risk breaching Human rights.

A current report by six regulatory bodies (Nov 2021) highlights, once again, the inhumane way in which unwell and vulnerable male and female prisoners are being incarcerated within a regime that is damaging and painful. One where they are stripped of identity, separated from loved ones.Surviving in an environment that is constantly noisy, isolating and intimidating with limited access to appropriate support and treatment intervention. The report's conclusions along with so many previous monitoring and inspection reports, is that the Criminal justice system is 'failing mental illness at every stage'

One previous HMI report (11.02.21) charted 'a disturbing decline in the emotional, social and physical wellbeing' of prisoners, underpinned by hopeless and helplessness. The stark reality is that the denial of liberty, particularly under lockdown and particularly for women has had a profound impact. The findings here echo an earlier HMI report (05.20) who in a short survey across three female prisons reported on the prevalence of 'alarming levels of solitary confinement and set harm amongst women prisoners'

Whilst there are numerous positive interventions in prisons that provide vital support for individual self improvement and empowerment.Increasingly there are many voices, reports, commissions that are calling for prisons to be closed and support provided for most of those in custody within Custodial Community centres.

Strategic and operational partnerships working together to offer seamless and consistent provision.Individuals taking responsibility for themselves and others within dynamic and supportive custodial environments, reflective of policy and practice in so many other countries.

Melanie Jameson (QICJ Spring 2021 edition) highlighted a disturbing report by the Commons public accounts committee on the current state of play in prisons. Tim Newell also potently referenced the concept of hope and the need for it to be accompanied by its daughters anger and courage.

We certainly need to be very angry that so many incarcerated individuals are desperate and have no hope. Quakers have to courageously shout this from the roof tops

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PRISONER POLICY NETWORK

Ruth McFarlane

In the last newsletter, we were introduced briefly to the PPN and I wanted to give a bit more detail about this excellent work, hoping that Friends will be able to promote the network and / or get involved.

The Prisoner Policy Network (PPN) is an initiative led by the Prison Reform Trust (PRT) http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Projectsresearch/Prisonerpolicynetwork aimed at giving a voice to serving prisoners to contribute to policy development within prisons.

Launched in 2018 and led by academics who have themselves served a prison sentence, the network takes current policy issues and seeks views from prisoners and families about how the policy might be updated. Consultations are timed to align with national policy review within the MoJ and consist of a deliberately open-ended question with responses invited over a 3 month period. This allows time to share the question via prison channels (National Prison Radio, prison newspapers etc) time for discussion and debate, as well as responses which can be sent via letter or phone call to a free phone number or via face to face visits in many prisons (pre Covid !).



There have been four consultations held so far :
What incentives work in prison ? (January 2019)
What do you need to make best use of your time in prison ? (July 2019)
How can we reduce tensions, conflict and violence in prison ? (August 2020)
Who cares ? Exploring distress in prison from the perspective of people in prison (November 2020)

Each report comprises a summary of the key themes as well as some recommendations for policy change arising out of the feedback.

These notes from the Executive Summary of the first report (http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Publications/vw/1/ItemID/724) give a sense of the scale of responses and how they are collated :

The PPN asked prisoners to respond to the question 'What incentives work in prison?'. The existing Incentives and Earned Privileges scheme was borne out of Lord Woolf's report; and the timing of our consultation aligned with a national policy review of IEP. Responses from over 1250 prisoners were received.

We did not expect or seek a homogenous response. Prisoners' situations and views differ, and this report reflects that variety. It also deliberately reflects the views that we were given, not what PRT might think. But it does seek to identify themes and conclusions which emerged most commonly.

It finds that prisoners often rejected the whole premise of the question. This was because their experience was that the system was failing to deliver a foundation of reasonable basic expectations of decent, respectful treatment. Talking about incentives made little sense when your quality of life was actually dominated by the struggle to get clean clothes or access to fresh air.

The existing IEP system was generally held in low regard. Prisoners did not trust it to deliver what it promised. It was seen as a system of punishment, not reward. And it was criticised for a lack of consistency both between and within prisons, and for unfair administration day to day.
Ideas for reform included some specific privileges, but we did not get a "shopping list" of treats that prisoners would like. More realistic wages that would give prisoners freedom to spend on the things that mattered most to the individual was a frequent suggestion, as was the provision of higher quality visits to reduce the impact of imprisonment on families.

The fundamental issues raised by prisoners included a desire to see any new scheme moving from a punitive to a positive ethos. A willingness to acknowledge progress and effort should predominate. Prisoners wanted a culture of mutual respect, and particularly valued privileges which showed a preparedness to place trust in individuals. Incentives that directly impacted their future, and in particular the prospect of bringing forward release or allowing temporary release, were key, as were incentives that built personal self-worth and hope for a better life both in and out of prison.

I attended the launch of this report at HMP Coldingley at the end of January 2019, along with current and former prisoners, staff, HM Prison Service policymakers, inspectors, academics and charities. It represented the start of an ambitious project to ensure that the voice of prisoners is heard and can impact policy change. Subsequent plans have been delayed by Covid of course, but consultations are resuming. Now that things are starting to open up again in prisons, the PPN is keen to hold workshops in prisons or meet prison councils, and they have asked for partner organisations to facilitate discussions where possible. I hope Friends might feel able to engage with this work.

PRISON REFORM TRUST

You can contact Ruth on ruth@dwrm.org if you wish to learn more about this work.

Your Committee Members for 2021 are: Simon Ewart (Membership Secretary), Rodney Mahon (Treasurer), Alice Audsley (co-clerk), Sinead Bailey, Melanie Jameson (co-clerk), Teresa Parker (co-opted from QPSW Social Justice Group), Sue Barrance, Jonathan Lamb (newsletter editor) Hugh McMichael and Polly Lowe

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Newsletter Editor:
Jonathan Lamb
Apartment 807
College Central
4 College Avenue
Belfast
BT1 6BD
jonolamb@mac.com

Membership Secretary:
Simon Ewart
Skewjack Barn
St Levan
Nr. Penzance
Cornwall, TR19 6NB
qicjmembership@gmail.com