

## **Editorial PQ28**

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# Welcome to Probation Quarterly Issue 28



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## Editorial

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I have said before how people with lived experience of probation should be able to influence policy and practice. But 'lived experience' should not be taken for granted, nor exploited to simply legitimate existing systems of harm. Yet, as Warr (2021) has argued, 'the idea of 'lived-experience', the 'convict voice', has been hijacked and heavily fetishized here in the UK'. We are fortunate, then to include an article from Andi Brierly in this issue of *Probation Quarterly*. Andi discusses some of the difficulties he has faced when navigating the path between having both 'lived' and 'professional' knowledge of the criminal justice system, helping us to think about how certain forms of knowledge are validated and put to use. Such ideas should help prevent situations in which the multiplicity of experiences are denied in favour of a 'monolithic lived experience' with which all must identify (Warr, 2021).

Probation in England and Wales has evolved considerably from its roots in the 1907 Probation of Offenders Act. What we don't often think about is how probation services and systems in other countries share those roots - as a result of British colonialism - but may have diverged in the way they operate whilst remaining shaped by the legacies of colonial rule. In this issue we are provided with an insight into how probation is operating in three such countries. We thus have an article from Debbie Golden and Summer Machon on probation in Guernsey as well as an article from Fiona Campbell, Laura Aston and Nicola Robinson on probation in the Falkland Islands and St Helena. They conclude their article with an invitation to join their newly formed network of people interested in probation in the British overseas territories.

Whilst Wales is formally the same jurisdiction as England and is much closer to home than the islands of the Falklands and St Helena, Jake Thirkell's article highlights how probation is being delivered differently in Wales and highlights some valuable insights for the One HMPPS programme as it is implemented in England.

A number of articles in this issue focus on the vulnerabilities that people on probation face. Thus, Karen Slade provides a useful summary of her research on the people who are most likely to die whilst under supervision. Laura Sanders' research highlights the importance of supporting men under supervision through a trauma-informed lens, while Hannah Darby focuses on the 'pains of probation' as experienced by young men under supervision for a sexual offence. Andrew Fowler's review of the recent book *Probation, Mental Health and Criminal Justice* provides further evidence of the vulnerabilities that people on probation face and underscores the argument that mental health support needs to be a cornerstone of quality probation practice and service delivery.

Mike Guilfoyle's account of his struggles around managing the tension between the desire for summary justice with the need to ensure that people in court are treated fairly and provided

with the opportunity to participate in their hearing further highlights the difficulties of 'delivering' justice in the context of the modern criminal justice system. A group of former practitioners from de Montfort University have collaborated on an article which explores the concept of professional curiosity and – specifically – the challenges that less experienced practitioners face when trying to be professionally curious. Finally, Michelle McDermott and Laura Haggart tackle the difficult problem of trying to understand staff turnover in the Service and highlight some important ramifications for both recruitment and retention policies.

The next issue will have a themed section on probation in the devolved nations. If you have anything you would like to submit please do get in touch. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

## References

Warr, J. (2021) 'Many rivers to cross: why I'm not a convict criminologist', American Society of Criminology Division of Convict Criminology, annual newsletter. Available at: <https://concrim.asc41.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2021-spring-newsletter.pdf>