

PQ33 Editorial

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WELCOME TO PROBATION QUARTERLY

PQ33 EDITORIAL: PROBATION RESET AND SDS40



Jake Phillips
Editor, Probation Quarterly

I am writing this editorial the day before around 2000 people get released from prison early under the Government's SDS40 scheme. As many readers will know, this policy is designed to reduce pressure on the prison system which has been at capacity for several months. In comparison to the previous government's attempts to deal with a high prison population, SDS40 is an improvement: at least there has been some time for planning so that fewer people will be released at a moment's notice, to insufficient support networks in the community. Depending on how many people end up being recalled, this should have a positive impact on the running of prisons. However, SDS40 simply pushes pressure onto probation and whilst the probation reset will

have created some capacity it is unclear as to whether it has done enough. Only time will tell what the impact of this will be on public safety, reoffending rates, peoples' experiences of probation and staff workloads. Many people are [predicting](#) the worst with Martin Jones, Chief Inspector of Probation, describing it as a 'roll of the dice' and that 'it is inevitable things will go wrong'. That said, the optimist in me can't help but think that - if successful - these developments could pave the way towards a more parsimonious criminal justice system which keeps people in prison for less time and supervises them in the community for shorter periods. Time will only tell which side of history my optimism will fall.

In this issue of PQ33 we have a range of articles covering evidence, mental health, probation capacity and more. The issue starts with a summary of an umbrella review of the RNR model for delivering probation from Seena Fazel and Louis Favril. The review finds that the evidence underpinning RNR is not quite as robust as published articles on the issue may suggest. Secondly, we hear from Coral Sirdifield, Charlie Brooker and Andrew Fowler on their work on mental health provision for people on probation - their article includes a useful map of what services are available which I am sure will be invaluable to practitioners. Loraine Gelsthorpe is well known in the field of probation, not least as chair of the Probation Institute. I was delighted that she agreed to be interviewed by myself for this issue of PQ: her insights into the challenges facing probation are well worth a read.

Vivian Gieran then provides us with a critical review of a report on building capacity in probation by Leo Tigges and Steve Pitts. We hear again from Joe Winkler in this issue: this time on the theme of sharing best practice in probation between the US and Europe. I was pleased to

present at a recent PI research event on SFOs and regulatory activity in probation: Anne Burrell has provided a useful write up of the event for those who were unable to attend. In our second review of the issue, Lee Morgan's review of *Memory & Injustice: Wrongful Accusations in the United Kingdom* sheds light on the concept of recovery memory syndrome and its implications for probation practice. The final article comes from Lyn Adamson and Matt Long whose article points the way for the current deleterious situation in probation to be used to reinvigorate the demand for a return to social work values and the avoidance of the reductionist agenda.

Finally, I am sorry to say that this will be my final issue as editor of *Probation Quarterly* as I move on to pastures new. Editing PQ for the last three years has been a highlight of my work, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the magazine over this time. Thanks also to Helen Schofield for her support and Richard Rowley's invaluable work on the production side of things. The PI is in the process of recruiting a new editor so watch this space for news on this in due course.