

***Annual Stress  
Network Conference  
2011***

***From Recession to  
Depression?***

Prison Officer Mick Longstaff – HMP &  
YOI Low Newton

Prison Officer Steve Wrighton – HMP  
Bullingdon.

- Working in the Public Sector is difficult with the possibility of "outsourcing" of areas of your workplace.
- What happens if the entire workforce will be subjected to market testing? That's what is happening to the Prison Service at an alarming rate. Nine prisons are subject to this process at the present time and Kenneth Clarke has stated that it is his ambition to do this to over 70 prisons by the end of this Parliament.
- Staff are expected to work more for no extra reward with less staff, poorer pensions and the risk of even successful establishments reducing their staffing levels by 50%.
- Add to all this, the violence, self harm and mental health problems we face from a clientele who do not wish to be there.
- The purpose to this workshop is to devise a strategy to challenge all these issues within the Public Sector ensuring the safe working and living environment to all concerned in any area of employment.

# Scale of Private Prisons

- We already have 13 private prisons holding 15% of the prison population. This is a worldwide record – the USA has 9%.
- If the eight prisons now being market tested go to the private sector, this will increase to around 20%. This density increases if the prison population decreases as the private prisons will have their population level protected and it will be the public prisons that face closure.
- Furthermore the scale of privatisation includes the vast sums paid to private sector via use of consultants and escorting, and billion pound contracts are currently on offer for electronic tagging, first used in 1999, (over 20,000 offenders are electronically tagged by private security firms).

- Michael Spurr, NOMS Chief Executive Officer said: “NOMS has considerable experience of running successful, open and fair competitions. The process that has started today will enable all interested organisations to participate fully in the competition.”
- “The competition process will bring about increased efficiency and value for money for the taxpayer and also encourage innovation and better ways of working.”

# Open and fair competitions??

- Governor of HMP Moorland (up for bidding) – took the 30 pieces of silver and left for the Private Sector.....
- Governor of HMP Frankland (3 miles from Durham) – took the 30 pieces of silver and left to lead the Private Sector bid for HMP Durham.....

# HMP Moorland

**“You could cut the atmosphere with a knife. Staff have been badly let down and betrayed by a man who said he was committed to the public sector and opposed to privatisation. Clearly, the 30 pieces of silver was too much of a temptation. Governor (Judas) Kellet leaves with a full working knowledge of the prison regime, budget and staff, which will give his new employer a distinct advantage during the competition dialogue process”.**

# Market Testing favours Private Sector

- The government have recast market testing into a far more favourable light for the private sector
- The anticipated civil service pension cut makes the private sector bid more competitive, as it reduces the cost of providing a comparable pension (TUPE obligation). Government abolished the two tier code in December 2010, crucial for private sector success.
- The code, which regulated the employment benefits of new staff recruited by contracted providers of outsourced public services, will be replaced by new Principles of Good Employment Practice which provide a more flexible guide giving employers the power to build a motivated workforce.
- Contracts are for 15 years – the longer the contract the better for private sector as staff with TUPE protection leave and are replaced with new entrants on lower pay and conditions. Despite having costs added on to its bid the Birmingham in house bid was cheaper than G4S bid until five years into the contract, when new recruits come into play and reduced G4S costs.



# **The Level Playing Field and Principles of Competition**

On 1 October 2011 HMP Birmingham was handed over to G4S, following their successful market test bid, where the in house bid was defeated. Under the Principles of Competition which governed the tender process, the in house bid had between 13% and 21% added to its cost to create what was termed a level playing field.

“This competition will bring about £216m savings and has seen the start of a new payment by results pilot at HMP Doncaster, which was retained by Serco. HMP Birmingham has now successfully passed from public sector management to G4S, while new contract arrangements are being implemented at HMP Buckley Hall, which was retained by the public sector.”

“To give an example of a change that has been made, the ‘working prison’ model detailed within the bid promised to deliver 25% of the prisoner population with a 37 hour working week. To achieve this, some workshops are going to be remaining open throughout lunch and some will be open at weekends, a new pay policy has been designed, new partnerships have been agreed and put in place and supervision levels have been reviewed.”

# Encourage innovation and better ways of working.

- Reduce staffing levels?
- Lower pay?
- Poorer terms and conditions?
- Inferior pensions?
- Unsafe practices?
- Lack of accountability?
- Use of Sickness / Attendance Policies?

# What has it actually done?

- - Obesity
- - Alcohol dependence
- - Poor mental health
- - Poor health functioning
- - Increased sickness absence
- - Coronary heart disease
- - Sickness absence (long spells)
- - Diabetes

The purpose to this workshop is to devise a strategy to challenge all these issues within all the Public Sector ensuring the safe working and living environment to all concerned in any area of employment.

Where do we start?

Reduce staffing levels?



Lower pay?  
Poorer terms and conditions?

Inferior pensions?

# Unsafe practices? – How do we challenge them?

- Risk assess activity
- Challenge bad practices
- Stress risk assessments
- Identify hazards / stressors
- Put processes to control hazards
- Network best practices
- Refuse to do it – quote Legislation
- Throw their own policies back at them
- Keep records of bad practice
- Use DDA where necessary

Lack of accountability?

# Use of Sickness / Attendance Policies?

There was varied policies and practices from within the sub groups, all of which used the policies as a stick to beat / dismiss employees rather than help them back to work or prevent their absence.

Presenteeism is seen as a growing problem.

Challenge with both risk assessments, robust challenges by safety reps and use of Health and Safety legislation.

# What can we do about it?

- “Fair and Sustainable” a new working practice.
- “A downward driven plan”
- New staff on terms and conditions similar to the private sector.
- Lifetime protection for existing staff.
- .....unless you are promoted, declared surplus or apply for a transfer!!!!!!!