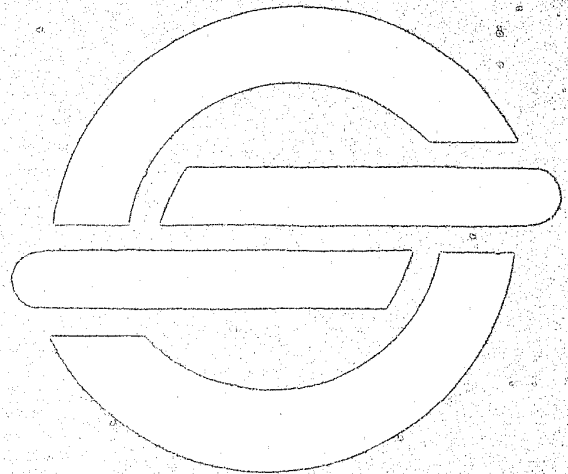


THE PRISON JOURNAL



Volume LXXX

Number 1

128204-
128216

“Long-Term Incarceration and
Long-Term Inmates.”

Spring-Summer
1990

THE PENNSYLVANIA PRISON SOCIETY

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

128204-
128216

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted material has been granted by

Prison Journal

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the copyright owner.

Contents

	Page
Preface	i
Timothy J. Flanagan	
The Good Old Days in the Joint 128204	1
Hans Toch	
The Long-Termers: Louisiana's Longest Serving Inmates and Why They have Stayed So Long 128205	9
Ronald Wikberg and Burk Foster	
Compositional Changes in a Long-Term Prisoner Population: 1956-89 128206	15
Timothy J. Flanagan, David D. Clark, David W. Aziz, and Bruce P. Szelest	
Difference in Response To Long-Term Imprisonment: Implications for the Management of Long-Term Offenders 128207	35
Frank J. Porporino	
Women Lifers: Assessing the Experience 128208	46
Elaine Genders and Elaine Player	
Using Multiple Perspectives To Develop Strategies for Managing Long-Term Inmates 128209	58
Michael J. Sabath and Ernest L. Cowles	
Addressing the Program Needs of Long-Term Inmates 128210	73
Ernest L. Cowles and Michael J. Sabath	
Situational and Social Approaches to the Prevention of Disorder in Long-Term Prisons 128211	83
Anthony E. Bottoms, William Hay, and J. Richard Sparks	
The Management of Life Sentence Prisoners in England and Wales 128212	96
Barry Mitchell	
Reports from the Field	
Managing Long-Term inmates in the Federal Prison System: Strategies To Accommodate Inmate Population Shifts 128213	109
J. Michael Quinlan	
Life and Death in Prison 112	112
Richard L. Dugger	
Problems and Challenges Posed by Long-Term Offenders in the New York State Prison System 128214	115
Thomas A. Coughlin III	
Programming For Long-Term Inmates 119	119
Kenneth L. McGinnis	
The Management and Treatment of Long-Term Prisoners in the United Kingdom 128215	121
Home Office, Her Majesty's Prison Service	
Commentary and Debate	
Employing Life Expectancy as a Guideline in Sentencing Criminal Offenders: Toward a Humanistic Proposal for Change 128216	125
Robert Sherwin	
On Confusing Justice with Mercy: A Reply to Professor Sherwin 128	128
James R. Acker	

Reports From The Field

The Management and Treatment of Long-Term Prisoners in the United Kingdom

*Home Office, Her Majesty's Prison Service**

The Prison System

The prison system of England and Wales consists of some 49,000 inmates held in 124 prisons throughout the country. This includes some 8,000 young men under 21 and 1,800 women who are dealt with in separate establishments. The prison systems of Scotland and Northern Ireland are run completely separately and are not included in this paper.

The majority of long-term prisoners, i.e., those serving over 4 years and especially those serving 10 years or more, are held in designated training prisons which are not overcrowded and which generally have good provisions for inmate training and treatment. These prisons range from maximum security (known as "dispersal" prison because a proportion of high risk prisoners — category A — are dispersed among the normal closed prison population) through category B (the normal secure cellular closed prisons), category C (medium security closed prisons) to category D open prisons which concentrate on preparation for release especially for life sentence and other long-term prisoners nearing the end of their sentence.

The Lifer System

There are currently some 2,700 life sentence prisoners and it is for this group that we have the most highly developed and systematic approach to training, treatment and preparation for release. The basic principles are:

1. Lifers are recognized in the prison system as a group with special needs which are met by close staff attention and regular reviews.
2. Every lifer (with the exception of a few who are very high security risks or very disturbed) will be thoroughly assessed during an initial period (at present approximately 3 years) in a *Lifer Main Centre* at Wormwood Scrubs, Wakefield or Gartree, each of which has a team of specialist staff and prison officers who are trained and experienced in interviewing and assessment of lifers.
3. Every lifer during his sentence will be assessed by different groups of staff in different situations and, subject to these assessments, will move progressively to lower conditions of security where there are opportunities for greater trust and responsibility. Virtually every lifer will move to release on licence through an open prison and finally to a period on a prison *pre-release employment scheme* hostel.
4. Every lifer has a specific *sentence plan* which outlines his proposed progression through the system, his training and treatment needs and most importantly those areas of concern which will need to be addressed before his first Parole Board review.

Lifers are managed centrally by a specialist unit at Prison Department Headquarters but all the detailed work with individuals is undertaken by prison staff and specialists in the selected training prisons designated to deal with life sentence prisoners. At most prisons lifers form only a *proportion of the population* and they live on the same

*The article was prepared by the Home Office, Her Majesty's Prison Service.

wings and take part in the same activities as other long-term prisoners but they are subject to the special attention and specific procedures outlined above.

The date for a lifer's first Parole Board review (with the possibility of release on licence) varies from one case to another depending on the gravity of the offence but in as many cases as possible it is our aim to progress the lifer to a medium security category C training prison well before the crucial first review of his case. We have therefore given particular priority to staff training, strengthening the regime and developing good specialist provision at each of the Category C prisons so that each lifer may be thoroughly assessed before his case come to the Parole Board.

If the lifer has responded well during his sentence and achieved some measure of personal development and maturation and everyone is satisfied on the question of risk, he will following the first review of his case, move forward to an open prison where he will be tested and assessed in conditions of maximum trust and responsibility so that a final decision can be made about release on license. The lifer is then normally given a provisional release date and undertakes a period of intensive preparation for release including a final 6 months on a prison working-out hostel where he works full-time in the community and spends weekends at home while still under the supervision and guidance of prison staff.

Every life sentence prisoner is released on license and subject to the close supervision of a probation officer for the first 4 years at least. He remains liable to recall to prison for the rest of his life if he commits further offenses or if his behavior gives rise to concern.

Staff and Prison Programmes for Lifers

A wide range of staff at each prison have a responsibility for assessing and reporting on lifers, and lifer procedures are designed to encourage a *team approach*.

The *main grade officers* on the wing and at work have the closest and most continuous contact with the lifer and *their role is crucial* in the assessment of lifers. Many of these officers will have long experience of working with lifers and other prisoners and as many as possible will be specifically trained in interviewing and report writing. Some 300 officers (many of them at lifer prisons) have been trained as tutors for social skills courses with prisoners and this number will steadily increase. The main grade officers are supervised and supported by the Senior Officer and Principal Officer Wing Managers with overall direction by an Assistant Governor who in turn works through the Deputy Governor to the Governor of the prison. Each of these officers is expected to contribute to the lifer review procedures and the Governor or his Deputy will be a member of the local review committee considering lifer cases.

Every prison has a *team of Probation Officers*, led by a Senior Probation Officer, and they have a special responsibility for casework and resettlement planning. The role of the prison Probation Officer in relation to lifers is particularly important and the home Probation Officer is encouraged to work with the prison team throughout the sentence. In many lifer prisons the wing officers have a close working relationship with their Probation Officer colleagues and in a number of prisons there is *shared working scheme* which enables prison officers to take a wider welfare role.

Every lifer prison has a well developed education program run by a *team of full-time and part-time teachers*, and most lifer prisons have good sports and gymnasium facilities and an lively programme of activities run by a *team of prison officer PE instructors*.

Every lifer prison has a full-time or part-time *Medical Officer*, supported by a team of prison hospital officers. *The reports of the Medical Officer and Psychiatrist are of course of crucial importance.*

Many people from the community work with the Chaplain and the Probation Officers as *prison visitors and voluntary associates* and make a very important contribution by befriending individual lifers and encouraging a positive response from them.

With steadily increasing lifer numbers and the introduction of lifers into a number of new prisons there is a need for a substantial programme of staff training and reinforcement. This will be a priority during the next 2 years.

The pattern of daily life in a training prison is based on an 8 am to 4 pm working day and most lifers will work in workshops, laundry, kitchen, etc., or on the prison gardens or some other domestic work. Some will undertake trade training courses run by civilian instructors (who are also able to get to know the man well and to contribute to the review procedures) and many will undertake day time education —everything from Open University to remedial work. There is also usually a wide program of evening classes.

In the *closed training prisons* the lifer is confined within the boundary and inevitably limited in the range of activities he can undertake. The scope in the *open prisons* is very much wider, there is great emphasis on *trust and responsibility* and lifers are given increasing opportunities to go out into the community and to demonstrate that they can behave in a controlled and reasonable way. After the first few months at the open prison a lifer will go on a *familiarization trip* to a local town accompanied by his wing officer to see how he copes with life outside after years in prison. In successful he will then have the opportunity to go out with staff on sporting and other activities in the local community. If that goes well he may then have the opportunity to go out unsupervised, either on his own or with a small group of prisoners, to take part in local voluntary projects. Finally, he may be allowed to undertake an *educational course* at a local college or polytechnic for up to 2 days a week. When he has a provisional release date he may, during his last 3 months at the open prison, go onto a *full-time job familiarization scheme*, full-time unpaid work with a local employer.

As far as possible every lifer is put through this programme and *staff very carefully monitor his response. The testing is very careful and very thorough* and staff are quick to report any signs of instability or dangerousness. It is only when he has successfully completed this sort of programme at the open prison that he moves forward to final testing and assessment before release on licence.

Programs For Other Long-term Prisoners

Lifers of course have a great *incentive* to co-operate in treatment programs because their eventual release depends on their response to training and treatment and the assessment of the staff team. They are recognized as a particularly important and sensitive group because Home Office Ministers (who are answerable to Parliament) personally approve the release of each individual life sentence prisoner. They are therefore given the highest priority in relation to training and treatment resources.

Other prisoners serving determinate sentences are of course in a very different position. They have a fixed sentence with a predetermined release date and are not normally subject to supervision unless they are released early under the Parole scheme. Training and treatment and preparation for release therefore largely depends on the *prisoner's* initiative. The sort of programmes that are available to lifers are offered

wherever possible to other long-term prisoners and many take advantage of them but resources are limited, lifers have priority and we are concerned that we are not reaching many of the other long-term prisoners. Taking lifer work as a model, there are now firm plans to extend individual sentence planning to long-term prisoners serving 10 years or more as a first step and we hope in the coming years gradually to build up a more comprehensive and systematic approach. Our Parole system has also recently been reviewed and there are indications that in future many more long-term prisoners will have the opportunity to serve the final stage of the sentence under supervision in the community which should provide the incentive for active co-operation in programs of training and treatment and preparation for release.