

SUMMER SCHOOL 2016 | FEEDBACK

We received 52 pieces of written feedback, mostly on the feedback form we sent out, though some were sent independently, by email. These are recorded (*verbatim*) below.

1. It was extremely rewarding to know that so much effort and study is put into prison officers and I actually felt proud to be there. Many thanks.

2. A fantastic and well organised event. Feel very fortunate to meet such wonderful people and would love to do it again.

3. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to attend this event. Learned so much and was made to feel so welcome and special.

4. Thank you for the invite to a brilliant two days.

5. A massive thank you regarding the Prison Officer School event, can I just say how professional and organised the event was from start to finish. I learned such a lot over the two days, too much to mention. I will feed back to my Governor when I can and will update him on what it was all about. There is one thing I was going to mention, I thought and read in your emails that it was a black tie and black jacket event on Thursday evening for diner, unfortunately there was only two of us with the correct attire on, never mind the whole evening was a fantastic event in a superb surrounding, I look forward in some kind of feedback from NOMS in near future. Thank you again

6. Back on duty now, surrounded by the hubbub and usual chicanery of the shift, and thought that I must send ye a quick note to express my thanks for a lovely couple of days. The whole experience was holistic and generated a fine field of force that was palpable. Wonderful to see prison officers actually enjoying themselves in such surroundings and with interested and interesting people.

7. Hiya Alison, just wanted to personally say thank you to you for last week at Cambridge, i can honestly say it was the most inspirational 2 days of my career if not my life!! Academics meets the shop floor!! Truly inspiring 😊 if ever you and your team fancy a visit to Hindley give us a shout 😊

8. Hi Simon, many thanks for being instrumental in arranging the Prison Officer Summer School. I found the experience inspirational and will be taking back to HMP Dartmoor some key ideas. A great deal of hard work went into all the arranging I have no doubt – please extend my thanks to your staff at The Butler Trust. I found this event to be a total inspiration - well done and thank you.

9. I would just like to send my regards and let you know what a fabulous time I had at the 'Summer School'. It was an honour to attend and meet some amazing people, I hope at some point in my career I get opportunity to see you all again.

10. I just wanted to say thank you so much for the summer school that was put on at the University of Cambridge. I had a lovely time and met some great people and found the whole experience to be really enjoyable. I would also like to say how I thought that Simon Shepherd was a great host, very funny and engaging, he is clearly passionate about what he does which is great to see. Thank you for letting me go, I will not forget those two days. I hope that further events take place in the future.

11. I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you for a very beneficial and well organised two-day event I thoroughly enjoyed it, please pass on my thanks to all concerned.

12. I would like to thank you for last week's summer school. I took a lot away from the experience and learnt a great deal. Everyone I spoke to said how well it was run and how much they enjoyed it. I would certainly be interested if anything similar arises.

13. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this inspirational event. More officers would definitely benefit from attending the Summer School or similar Regional Seminars.

14. The event was absolutely outstanding, it was a privilege and an honour to be at Cambridge, the occasion was extremely well organised. From Simon Shepherd and Alison Liebling and all speakers and facilitators, to the amazing meal and setting in Kings College hall, after 20 years of service thus far, I can say categorically, that it was the pinnacle of my career and I was very proud to have been given the opportunity to represent HMP Durham. My one regret is that there was not a group photograph opportunity but this aside, it does nothing to detract from what was a most fantastic event and it was a great pleasure to be in the company of such highly accomplished academics, speakers and facilitators as well as meeting new colleagues. The hugest thank you to everyone. A frame in time I will never forget.

15. I enjoyed the course Very much, it was good to hear that other Establishments were finding themselves with similar difficulties to the ones faced at my own establishments. The speakers were very knowledgeable and showed a great understanding of the work and challenges that staff face. Thank you

16. Inspirational team and a real honour to be invited I hope this quote will mean a lot to those who were there and understand the rapid changes and the effects that our modern times have had on the prison service. Gaius Petronius once said:- We trained hard, but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams, we would be reorganised. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganising; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralisation. I hope that in the future stability comes which in turn will increase the profession for the future.

17. An amazing event, well run and managed. The timing was a little tight for the end of the first day and attending Kings College for Dinner, but a fantastic evening. It would be useful to hold the event every so often, I don't think yearly would be necessary but maybe every 5 years as the service has changed drastically in the last 5 years and I feel it will continue to shift. It was unusual to feel that you were an expert and others wanted to learn and understand the role we perform. Thank you for the opportunity.

18. I thoroughly enjoyed the 2-day summer school last week and feel honoured my prison picked myself to attend. It was a great experience from start to finish, I mostly enjoyed meeting other colleagues from different prisons and picking up tips that I hope to bring to my jail to make a difference and to help and develop the prisoner staff relationship. I look forward to seeing the event materials online.

19. The event was brilliant and it is a real shame that the experience and the learning cannot be presented to every officer in the same fashion.

20. I really enjoyed this event, the programme was very interesting and informative and I thought Simon Shepherd was a great chair. The dinner in King's College was absolutely amazing and in a great venue. If a similar event was to be held I would be interested in returning.

21. Outstanding.

22. Great event well organised. I am a bit unsure of its purpose though. What is the information gathered going to be used for? Would enjoy being involved again if required. Thank you.

23. Thank you for a wonderful 2 x days, the facilities were excellent, as were the refreshments. Simon and his team should be very proud.

24. I thoroughly enjoyed the event, the talks on the first day were enjoyable and relevant although I particularly enjoyed Helen Arnold's talk, I feel that she immediately gained the respect of officers due to undertaking the course of a PCO herself. The second day was not particularly relevant, I along with a few others did not really understand the relevance of the 'teachers' talk and felt although staff do see themselves as 'teachers' it's not in such a formal capacity as suggested in the talks. The dinner on the Thursday evening was beautiful and was a relaxed environment as to let everyone interact and get to know each other. The accommodation was suitable for a few nights stay. My only comment is that as a member of the Scottish Prison Service it felt like I was not very well represented and the conflicting regimes of the English and Scottish services was evident throughout. I thoroughly enjoyed the event and can't wait to get my hands on the materials that will be provided from the event.

25. Many thanks. It was certainly an enjoyable and worthwhile event, thank you so much for organising it.

26. [From a governor] Dear Simon, I am writing with regard to the Cambridge event. [name] was very impressed by the whole organisation (and the hopeful outcomes) of the event and she said that you were absolutely brimming with your usual humour and enthusiasm. Apparently you spent some time with her which she really appreciated and she had a good time. She is confident that the event will lead to improvements and she sees a good future 'for the service' and also 'in the service'. Alison Liebling was mentioned as being an excellent speaker and keen to progress and support the work of the public sector prison service as was Andy Rogers. It sounds like it was a tremendous few days.

27. Before coming to the event I was a little sceptical. I thought that it might be a load of academics preaching to us about how to do our job better. The reality couldn't have been further from the truth. I was humbled to learn that so many people in various walks of life and professions have a deep feeling that prison officer do a difficult and valued job. I felt overwhelmed by the feeling of support and genuine interest that was shown by everyone involved in running the event. Thank you so much.

28. I absolutely loved the event and feel privileged to be involved in the first Summer School. If Simon wasn't involved in the Butler Trust, he should have been on TV, what an entertainer and his relaxed approach was so refreshing, it put everyone at ease and to be that passionate and involved as well. It is rarely mentioned how and why we do our job, or the conflict we defuse or the situations we face and deal with. Often when prison officers get together, we try and outdo each other with horror stories and incidents we've been involved in. This give us the opportunity to talk about our role, how we see ourselves and how others see us, and it reminded us that we are not the "baddies" and we do an excellent job. I thought the Institute & The Butler Trust did an excellent job in organising this event. Loved talking to Helen and Bethany about issues surrounding prison and life inside prison, yes suicide in prison was included in those talks. My only regret is, now I've attended once, I probably won't get the opportunity to return and do it all again. I will be telling my Governor

about the topics we discussed and what I can bring to my establishment in addition to thanking him for the opportunity to attend this prestigious venue. A very well organised event and extremely proud to say I was there. Thank you Butler Trust and Institute of Criminology.

29. Hope this would be a yearly event to discuss what changes have been made from previous year and what current situations that prisons are dealing with

30. A thoroughly enjoyable experience. One that has restored my faith somewhat in what we do. Thank you very much.

31. It was the best thing that i have been involved in, in my 25 years' service. It was very well organised, professional but down to earth at Prison Officer level. There was formality but not too formal and the Evening meal at King's college was the icing on the cake. Thank you to all who took part and helped to organise the event.

32. This was one of the most enjoyable events I have ever been to. It was nice to be taken seriously and nice to hear the positives from prison instead of the constant moaning that sometimes accompanies prison service events. Alison and Natasha were particularly impressive. The whole event was like a breath of fresh air. As for dinner at Kings, it was a very special time for us all. Thank you so much for the invite.

33. I would just like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to you and your team for making my visit to Cambridge such a wonderful experience. I thoroughly enjoyed the two days and feel that my views were taken seriously and listened to. It was fantastic being able to network with so many of my colleges from other establishments and hearing their thoughts about their own working practices. I learned so much over that period about the support that the butler trust has for prison staff and the work that you carry out on our behalf. The whole experience ticked every box for me, it was informative, supportive, enjoyable, well organised and above all fun!!!

34. I feel very honoured to have been a part of this event. By far one of the main highlights of my ten-year career with the service. It is comforting to know that the outside world has an understanding of our role and how skilled we actually are. Simon was a fantastic host very charming! And Alison's words were inspiring. My favourite talk was from Helen Arnold. I think she should give more of these talks to a wider prison audience as her words made me feel very emotional (and a little bit special if I am honest).

35. Excellent event overall, I consider myself very lucky to be invited. Dinner on Thursday evening was amazing. I hope this kind of event happens again, Thanking you

36. I just want to say thanks for a great 2 days I found it so interested and feel really quite honoured that I got to be a part of it. Definitely the best event I have ever been on in my ten years in the service!

37. Had a very good and informative two days after I was quite apprehensive about the event and not knowing many. I spent the two days with some very experienced officers who reminded me how proud I was to do my job! Would definitely recommend the event to others!! A very useful and informative couple of days, which hopefully will be available to a number of other officers on a regular basis.

38. Found this to be really informative and I really enjoyed myself, perhaps mix the group chats up each time so that you meet new people in each discussion group, furthers our outreach to new staff and establishments. Food was amazing!!!!

39. The day was really special. I was made to feel very appreciated. The work undertaken by Alison and Simon into prisons is very inspirational. It's refreshing to hear that they are so supportive of prison staff who under take their duties in professional and caring way and the difference this can make. I really understand this and have experienced many years of frustration with officers/Suo/Cm's and SMT "who don't get it". I have so many examples of how "good prisoner and staff interactions/working styles" can change prisoners lives for the better. The break out groups were a challenge it was hard to balance some of the strong opinions. It was difficult to feedback these discussions when some of the points were a little controversial. I have had a year of trying to create positive change within our prison on the back of Alison's MQPL and I am fully supportive. I respect Alison's determination of fourteen years in trying to do this. I guess this shows how change is slow. Being resilient is tiring and this day really ignited energy. Thankyou.

40. I sometimes felt that the information that was being given to me was going over my head and that I didn't fully understand it, I wanted to understand what was being explained, however I didn't always understand the terminology that was being used. I like so many prison officers are not very academic, however I am a "people" person which is one of the most important traits we have to have.

41. Thank you so much for the wonderful experience. I cannot praise everything from beginning to end, enough. All staff were so kind, polite and caring. The facilities were wonderful. It was a privilege to have been selected and asked to attend. KCC meal was a treat to remember. if i may, can i please be put on the list for next year. thank you so much

42. Just wanted to say a big thank you for recognising the job we do in sometimes difficult circumstances. It was very much appreciated. Also if Alison wanted to visit HMP Send and see the work that is being done - especially on the Therapeutic Community then i am sure they would be delighted to see her.

43. I found this to be the best course I have been on since joining the service in 2007. I will be able to use what I have learnt in the course within my establishment. It was also good to meet other officers from other establishments.

44. I must thank you for organising such a fantastic event for prison officers. It was so pleasing to understand that academia is actively involved with happens with penal establishments throughout the country. I also was very impressed with the knowledge and understanding of how difficult the role of a prison officer is. I was extremely impressed with Natasha Porter and her insight into the teachers versus prison officers and the similarity of both roles and how best practises could be learnt from each profession. I do however think some of the views are for HMP Utopia which the current prison service is a long way off. Thank you again for a wonderful event

45. This was great, really enjoyed it, met some new mates and very interesting people, I hope that this carries on each year and I would defo come back. Excellent 10 out of 10 well done!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

46. Enjoyed the two days, it made me feel that the other prisons around country are in the same boat not enough staff and staff are trying to make it work as best as they can.

47. Brilliantly organised, informative and rewarding event. My thanks goes to those involved.

48. I have to say i thoroughly enjoyed the whole 2 days and found it very informative particularly from the very knowledgeable speakers. Also positively enforcing the great work that prison officers do every day without much recognition. It is more than just a job and i will be recommending to Governor that in the future; he continues to send staff to fantastic events such as this. Thank you for putting on such a well-structured event.

49. I really enjoyed the whole experience and would highly recommend it to my colleagues. I enjoyed the speakers and thought Simon was a wonderful host, very funny and engaging, a man truly passionate about his job and what he does.

50. With the speakers I particularly liked when they gave specific examples of working with offenders. This kept me engaged and focussed. I found the transformative learning a bit dry with the analogy to plant cells and osmosis - this may have been because it was first thing in the morning! I was disappointed with the overnight accommodation. I found it very basic and outdated. Other than that thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The evening dinner and location was spectacular.

51. This was a wonderful opportunity and experience, and one which provided insightful feedback whilst provoking constructive discussion. Officers were made to feel "special" and as though they and their opinions truly mattered. It was also refreshing to meet so many positive and enthusiastic likeminded people, who all genuinely care about prison staff and prisoners and in getting the best out of their unique relationship.

52. An excellent two day event, enlightening to be a part of the research that is clearly both evident and inspirational in the assisting of an understanding of Prisons, Prisoners and the Prison Officer. Well done and thank you.