

DYSLEXIA ADULT NETWORK NEWS No 7 – Spring 2018



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THIS 7th EDITION OF NETWORK NEWS COVERS

Message from the Chair

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Greetings to all our readers!

As you will see in this edition, our member organisations are working intensively to raise the issues of dyslexia, and related Neurodiversity, for adults. We share and collaborate on these activities to create a greater impact overall for our agreed messages.

Meanwhile, though it is frustrating that progress is so slow, there are significant signs of achievement this year. Recognition that Neurodiversity is a key issue by the HR profession is something I have been working on for over a decade; this has now begun and the WAC report has done much to raise awareness.

DAN continues to be persistent and determined to achieve positive change. We have come a long way in the five years we have been meeting.



We will continue to try and meet with the new Minister for Disabled People; so far I have been offered the possibility of meeting her civil servants and am following this up.

The DAN steering group meets next on June 5th.

Margaret Malpas, Chair of DAN

1. Report on the Westminster AchieveAbility Commission on ND & Recruitment

Katherine Hewlett

The report has been attached to the email message bringing you this Network News

January 22nd was a big day – the formal launch of **Neurodiverse Voices: Opening Doors to Employment**, the report of the Westminster AchieveAbility Commission (WAC) on Recruitment. Our focus now shifts to promoting the Recommendations . But first, some background.....

Why was the Commission needed?

- To investigate the barriers to employment
- To identify good and bad practice in recruitment
- To help inform the government target of one million disabled people into employment by 2020.

Who contributed to the Report?

The Report was based on evidence gathered from four face-to-face evidence sessions at the House of Commons (40 people in all); these comprised

- The Experts (AGAS- BDA - Microlink)
- The Employers (BBC- TFL-T.Rowe Price- Exceptional individuals- Key4Learning)
- The Neurodiverse Voice
- The DWP (Access to Work)

Two surveys were circulated over three months during the 2016-2017 period

- The ND survey returned over 600 responses
- The employers survey returned 30 responses

In addition, six detailed written submissions were requested and received.

All the material was then analysed in order to identify major issues and formulate recommendations. The Report was written by Katherine Hewlett , Ross Cooper and Melanie Jameson with design work by Kendall Bickford.

The launch

There were two major events during the launch week of 22-27 January, backed up by a media and social media campaign.

Monday 22 January The formal release of the embargoed report took place in the House of Commons, hosted by Barry Sheerman MP. Over 50 people attended this event, drawn from the adult education sector, the workplace, training, political think tanks and those who have expertise in the area of Neurodiversity. Key areas of the WAC report were presented and WAC Adviser, Lord Addington, summed up by stating '*Neurodiversity is part of our society and Neurodivergence is part of the work place*'

Thursday 25 January “A celebration of Neurodiverse Voices: Opening Doors to Employment” was held in the Jubilee Room at Westminster Palace. Over 50 people heard the following programme of speakers:

Advantages of Neurodivergence

Denise MacGuire (President of Prospect Union) on neurodiversity

Matt Boyd (CEO Exceptional Individuals) and Nat Hawley on the advantages of employing a neurodiverse person

Creative Skills in practice

Jon Adams (Democracy Street) shared his disability arts projects

Lennie Varvarides (DYSPLA) profiled an upcoming film festival **SEE page 4**

Active networking and support

Atif Choudhury & Adam Hyland (DnA -Diversity and Ability Ltd) on their inclusive approach to support

Kelly Kinsella (STEM) on dyslexia networking within the Civil Service



Following up the WAC recommendations:

A guide from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) *Neurodiversity at Work*, will enable HR professionals to learn more about Neurodiversity which should relate both to the hiring process and to support of ND staff so that they can achieve their potential.

This goes some way towards fulfilling **Recommendation One** of the WAC Report, on awareness raising / awareness training programmes.

www.cipd.co.uk/Images/neurodiversity-at-work_2018_tcm18-37852.pdf

We are now asking that the CIPD and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) link up to devise training programmes to ensure greater awareness of Neurodiversity to organisations and government offices. These training programmes will inform a DWP good practice guide to recruitment (**Recommendation Two**) by building on the existing DWP toolkit: www.autismandneurodiversitytoolkit.org

Recommendation Seven – Reasonable Adjustments

Two publications feed into this important recommendation:

Firstly, *Making A Shift* (Arts Council England) regarding the representation of disabled and neurodivergent people in the cultural sector workforce.

www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/making-a-shift Thanks to Becki Morris for sharing this.

Secondly, an article within Vol 30 of the journal of the British Psychological Society: *Re-enabling the Neurodiverse*, within the context of The Changing Workplace;

<https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-30/november-2017/changing-workplace>

In addition, we note that this is the focus of the APPG on Dyslexia and Other Specific Learning Difficulties, to be held on 13 June, 2-4pm.

As a priority, WAC is urgently calling for action to stop the spiral of poverty; this is encapsulated within Recommendation Three – JobCentre Plus

There must be an end to sanctioning of neurodivergent customers for failure to submit paperwork/on-line documentation within a short time-frame and without appropriate support.

We also recommend staff awareness training in neurodivergence, better assessment processes and support for those choosing self-employment.

NEXT MOVES: WAC Lobbying work:

1) Dissemination to MPs, mid-May

A copy of *Neurodiverse Voices: Opening Doors to Employment* will be dispatched to MPs, accompanied by an official letter from the WAC Chair, Barry Sheerman MP.

In it, Barry highlights key issues identified by the evidence-gathering process:

'The Commission found that:

- *The experience is even worse than we thought*

- *We are wasting talent*
- *We need better measurement of job skills and abilities*
- *Selection processes evaluate how neurotypical the candidate is, rather than how suitable they are for the job*
- *We need more proactive change supported by implementation of legislation'*

The letter concludes

'Since dyslexic people and those who are neurodivergent represent the highest percentage of adults who are disabled, this Commission report is vital in order to represent the issues for this community, as well as revealing their value and strengths within the workplace.'

2) A call to contact your MP

We are urging colleagues and supporters to lobby on one of the recommendations by contacting their local MP and asking him/her to ask a Parliamentary question in the House. Guidance on composing a letter is given on the Quaker website: <https://quaker-prod.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/store/e44ba8aa6b9238ec8ef738ddf70d010e0a5b7b3172e3daca92ef21144aa>

3) Engage with the All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs)

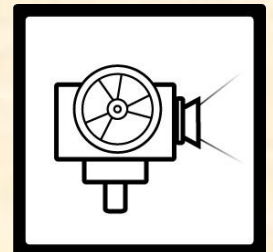
Find out about and engage with the Disability APPG or the Dyslexia APPG by lobbying on the WAC Report recommendations. The best way to do this is via the Secretariat, held respectively by Disability Rights UK (appgsecretariat@disabilityrightsuk.org) and British Dyslexia Association (contact suef@bdadyslexia.org.uk).

2. DYSPLA Film Festival showcases ND talent

Becki Morris

I recently attended an International Film Festival by DYSPLA. The Festival is the first of its kind to celebrate dyslexic and other neurodivergent filmmakers and a great opportunity to see their work.

DYSPLA describes its focus as *"the innovative moving image to define dyslexic and neurodiverse aesthetic. We aim to explore ideas of how dyslexic and neurodiverse individuals experience and exhibit the world, and also address ideas of societal reform. Tackling the conventions surrounding neurodiversity and magnifying the benefits within the creative sector."*



The event was held at the Crypt near Euston Station in London. Attendees entered the installations to the sound of 'Cadillac of the Skies' by John Williams from Steven Spielberg's film 'Empire of the Sun'. The music was then accompanied by a caption 'Steven Spielberg, Dyslexic Filmmaker'. This was a great choice to evoke a sense of positive recognition of dyslexia before entering to see the selection of work. There was a warm welcome to the event with plenty of opportunity to celebrate what it is to be dyslexic and neurodivergent. An important message was how many films were about social impact in relation to events such as Hillsborough and Immigration; these productions were very different in approach but clear and evocative as regarded their message.

DYSPLA offer workshops, information and meet-up opportunities for neurodivergent people working in film, for further information follow their twitter account @Dyspla_Festival and join their Facebook group (Dyspla Festival).

https://dyspla.com/DYSPLA-INTERNATIONAL-MOVING-IMAGE-FESTIVAL_event

3. WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT

Melanie Jameson

DAN training for Access to Work (AtW) www.gov.uk/access-to-work

After many email exchanges and organisation, two free face-to-face training sessions (March 15 & 16) were provided for the AtW Hidden Impairments Team in Halifax. I undertook to deliver these.

I was surprised to discover that these Advisers, despite being part of a dedicated team, appeared to receive little or no formal training on 'Hidden Impairments' (I cannot comment on their other remit: mental health needs). Basic questions arose such as what Dyspraxia was and the characteristics of ADHD. Furthermore, despite assurances that the Hidden Impairment Toolkit had been produced primarily for this team, it turned out that they were not regularly consulting it and some of them did not know of its availability.

So, a session that was carefully planned as higher level CPD for a team already trained and working in our area and using a dedicated Toolkit became a basic session on the impact of neurodivergence in the workplace and an introduction to the Toolkit. Advisers would not share their procedures and were very reluctant to engage with case studies.

On my return I edited my handouts as stand-alone resources which were supplied, along with powerpoint slides and a resource which DAN drafted several years ago: a guided telephone interview to take Advisers through a conversation with ND clients.

DAN is still campaigning on two unresolved matters:

- the issue of (sometimes) being asked to produce 'medical evidence' of dyslexia - or to go to HR to organise a diagnostic assessment (!)
- the anonymity of workplace-needs reports; this appears to be led neither by the contractors (RBLI) nor by AtW as new official policy.

We are also trying to ascertain whether there is a consistent approach to AtW renewal.

Finally, the British Dyslexia Association has made an e-learning course available which we are offering to the AtW Centres in Harrow and Basildon and also to Jobcentre Plus.

Update on Disability Confident www.disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk

DAN maintains good contact with the senior civil servant now directing much of the Disability Confident agenda. However we differ with her concerning the monitoring of organisations which opt for one of the three levels of 1. Disability Confident committed employer, 2. Disability Confident employer, and 3. Disability Confident leader.

Funding is available to augment Disability Confident over the next 5 years.

We can report that the Post Office has signed up at the highest level and will therefore need external accreditation from a disability support organisation.

Please contact me (mj@dyslexia-malvern.co.uk) if you have any information on, or experience of, this monitoring process.

Remploy was one of the companies engaging in a two week programme of events, webinars and dial-in's, sharing best practice on managing disabled people, with a particular focus on Reasonable Adjustments. Their website includes information on Adjustments, Access to Work and engaging with Disability Confident.

See www.remploy.co.uk/disability-confident

**DAN seeks current information on the Work & Health Innovation Fund
Is this being drawn down to forward the 'Improving Lives' agenda?**

4. NEWS FROM OUR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

DYSLEXIA SCOTLAND

Cathy Magee



Dyslexia Scotland has been very busy on a number of initiatives:

Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice training modules

3 free online Open University training modules were developed in 2017/18 for teachers on Dyslexia and inclusive practice.

Dyslexia Scotland, Education Scotland and the CLD Standards Council tailored the **first module for Community Learning and Development practitioners**. This module was launched at the CLD Standards Council conference in Dundee on 29 March 2018.

Fair Start Scotland

Dyslexia Scotland has been approved as a specialist provider for Forth Valley area in the delivery of Fair Start Scotland.

Fair Start Scotland is the new employment support service for Scotland. There are lots of people who want to work but find it hard to find the right job that meets their needs and is flexible enough for their circumstances. The programme is voluntary, and is based on key values of fairness, equality, dignity and respect.

Creative Dyslexic Network

Over the last year, around one third of referrals to our Employment Service were arts graduates and aspiring working creatives, all experiencing the same difficulties: struggling to access paid work in their preferred field; struggling to access general paid work, difficulty accessing funding and feeling isolated.

We held a free event in March 2018 for dyslexic adults developing their career in the creative sector to meet others, learn useful strategies and tap in to supports and resources to help their career. 15 individuals attended from visual arts, writing, arts education, media and environmental arts fields. 90% said the event was overall useful for them and 91% of participants said they would attend another Creative Dyslexic Network event in future.

Investors in Volunteers Award

We are very pleased to announce that we have achieved the Investing in Volunteers Award. Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for all organisations involving volunteers. It aims to improve the quality of the volunteering experience for all volunteers and for organisations to acknowledge the enormous contribution made by volunteers.

Investing in Volunteers Award demonstrates best practice in volunteer management.

Full information on www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

British Dyslexia Association (BDA)

Margaret Malpas

Toolkit for Dyslexia Networks

In conjunction with a group of adults with dyslexia, BDA has launched a free Toolkit for Dyslexia Networking Groups.

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexic/additional-resources

Neuro-Diversity in the Workplace

The BDA is running a one day conference on this topic on **Thursday, 28 June** (09:30 to 16:00). Speakers include Margaret Malpas of the BDA, and Katherine Hewlett from Achievability, presenting on the WAC Report on ND and Recruitment.

Venue: the Building Research Establishment Watford **Cost** £35

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/events/view/name/promoting-neurodiversity-in-the-workplace-networking-for-success>

Guys and St Thomas' Hospital Trust sign up to Quality Mark

This Trust employs over 13,000 staff and also deals with many patients who may be Neurodiverse. BDA has been working with them since 2014, to promote awareness; This included providing training for dyslexic staff who started an internal network and ran (voluntarily) an information desk in the main foyer for staff and patients during Dyslexia Awareness Week.

We are delighted that the Trust has now joined our Dyslexia Quality Mark Scheme. Under this scheme, organisations work through a process of identification, implementation and verification for policy, communications, and management practices to ensure that they are truly dyslexia-friendly. When these elements are all established and verified, the BDA can award the coveted Quality Mark.

BDA International Conference

The 11th BDA International Conference was held in April at the Telford Conference Centre. There was a specific focus given to issues for adults on the final day. The keynote session was given by Prof Amanda Kirby who provided an overview to key issues, covering both academic studies and practical matters. Further presentations included Katherine Hewlett on the findings of the WAC Report, Prof D McLoughlin and Carol Leather. Blace Nalavany and Julie Logan shared their research on links between non-disclosure of dyslexia, self-esteem, stress and lower levels of happiness at work.

Margaret Malpas presented on success factors and how creativity is a strength for many dyslexic adults, Margaret Rooke spoke about her two books with witness accounts from dyslexic adults and children, and Janette Beetham presented on how Dyslexia Champions had a positive effect on self-esteem in dyslexic adults.

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE DYSPRAXIA FOUNDATION

Richard Todd and Eleanor Howes

This is a special year for the Dyspraxia Foundation (DF). We have just launched our new **Guidelines for Employees** as part of our 30th Anniversary events to secure corporate supporters and launch a 30 year appeal. A digital copy will shortly be added to the DF website.

Our **30th Anniversary Conference**, London, 23rd June, will include sessions on dyspraxia in adulthood, namely the lived experience of our newly appointed Adult Representative and further dissemination of *Opening doors to Employment*.

For more information and to book online go to: <https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/30th-anniversary-conference-london-june-2018/>

We intend to follow this up with a dedicated full day for dyspraxia in adults at a later date, and shall also update our **Guidelines for Employers**.

For details of all events and initiatives, see www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

AchieveAbility

Katherine Hewlett

In addition to promoting the recommendations of the WAC Report, AchieveAbility is busy with two projects

1) The REFUND project

AchieveAbility is starting to work with St Mungos, to provide digital opportunities for staff and their clients, (who are in recovery). Research has shown that there is a high incidence of self-medication and homelessness for people who are Neurodivergent (Disability Today 2014). AchieveAbility proposes to run a series of Digital skill development workshops for St Mungo's clients who are neurodivergent at their Recovery College.

These workshops will be centred around developing skills in the following areas: Digital Communication, Social Media, Visuals, Written Word on IT, How to search for work, Using assistive Technology and Personal Development Skills. These programmes will be embedded in St Mungo's Digital Plan to create pathways into employment through three Tiers of Digital Programmes.



Tier system Source James Carroll (Digital Recovery Coordinator, St Mungos)

Tier 1 will focus on developing fundamental IT and Digital skills

Tier 2 will focus on developing skills in key digital areas

Tier 3 will focus on developing employability skills in Digital Technology

AchieveAbility will integrate their workshops in all Tiers.

2) Next Step Programme (up-skilling into work)

AchieveAbility obtained £9,000 from the Big Lottery Fund for Waltham Forest Dyslexia Association to provide the Next Step Programme in three stages: Stage 1, Adult meet ups; Stage 2, basic literacy and numeracy and Stage 3, the now established Next Step course for dyslexic adults who wish to up-skill or return to the workplace.

Stage 2 is now being delivered in partnership with the Peabody Trust as from May 2018.

www.achieveability.org.uk

DAN Communications Officer / the Disability Co-operative Network

Becki Morris

New virtual online network for Neurodivergent Museum Professionals

The Disability Co-Operative Network (DCN) has recently launched a brand new virtual online network for advocates, researchers and people with neurodivergent profiles within the Heritage Sector. The aim of the Network is to connect people and organisations across disciplines with channels of communication to raise the profile of Access to Work within the sector, and to encourage feedback via the Dyslexic Adult Network to DWP. The Network champions neurodivergent profiles in the workplace and in the wider society.

The research element of this initiative will enable the sharing and development of good practice within the sector, also influencing other sectors in the process. The Network has links with a sister network group in the United States which is useful for a comparison and advocacy in the U.S.

If you are interested in joining the group or further information do email Becki Morris via info@musedcn.org.uk
<https://www.musedcn.org.uk/> includes several items relating to dyslexia/neurodiversity.

5. WORKING WITH ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

A number of All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs), with relevance to DAN's areas of work have met, since the last Network News edition.

APPG on Apprenticeships (young people up to age 25).

It was established that young people with an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) are exempt from requiring GCSEs in English and Maths to progress to an Apprenticeship. BUT this support is rare for those with dyslexia/ND, so more campaigning is necessary to secure this accommodation.

APPG on Health & Well-being in the Workplace

Nancy Doyle launched her Report *Psychology at Work: Improving Well-being and Productivity in the Workplace*. This guide for policy makers can be found from the link <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/psychology-work-improving-wellbeing-and-productivity-workplace>

APPG on Disabilities (next meeting May 23rd 3 - 4.30)

Participants were given an overview of the *Improving Lives* agenda on work, health and disability, www.gov.uk/government/consultations/work-health-and-disability-improving-lives/work-health-and-disability-green-paper-improving-lives#executive-summary with its ten year aim of 1million people with disabilities/health conditions getting into work. Transport to work for this population had to be tackled.

The Accessibility Bill going through the House of Lords was questioned.

While 'ethnicity' and 'gender' are high on the agenda, 'disability' should be included as the third vital factor. Local champions are sought, alongside employers who are asked to pledge jobs on-line – the latter initiative was to be launched on March 20.

This APPG hosted by Disability Rights UK: appgsecretariat@disabilityrightsuk.org

APPG on Assistive Technology (APPGAT)

The focus of the January session was an Inclusive learning environment in HE, referred to as 'The Sticky Campus'. One of the presenters, Alistair McNaught, commented: "Inaccessible is inexcusable". A video message from the Minister for Disabled People, Sarah Newton called for leaders in the sector to drive improvements and calling for Disability Business Champions.

www.policyconnect.org.uk/appgat/news/sticky-campus-inclusive-high-tech-learning-environment

Robert McLaren, the convenor, encourages us to sign up for the APPGAT newsletter <http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/appgat/newsletter-signup>

Forthcoming APPG on Dyslexia and Other Specific Learning Difficulties

The next APPG will be held on the **13 June 2018, 2-4pm** with an adult focus.

Sharon Hodgson MP, APPG Chair, has already circulated an email to prospective attendees stating that the meeting will focus on exploring how reasonable adjustments can level the playing field for adults with specific learning difficulties in the workplace. The Secretariat for this APPG is now provided by the BDA. Presenters will include a senior manager from DWP to answer concerns about schemes such as PIP and Access to Work. Please contact suef@bdadyslexia.org.uk to request an invitation, if you wish to attend this APPG.

6. LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO ON AUTISM / NEURODIVERSITY

John Timms, Prospect Union

Having taken part in discussions within the Prospect Neurodiversity Working Group, I conclude that this initiative is worthy of support.

The first two key principles (there are five in all) are as follows:

- **The social model of disability:** Disability is caused by society creating barriers to the equal participation of impaired (or neurologically different) people.
- **The neurodiversity approach:** Humanity is neurologically diverse; people have different brain wiring. ADHD, dyslexia, autism and others are neurological differences. We want human neurodiversity to be accepted, not suppressed or cured.

The Manifesto title reveals that activists for autism have been a major driving-force to get this on the Labour Party agenda; this is reflected in the title and content. Once the 'Neurodiverse profile prevalence figures' are added to the website, it will be more obvious that there are a lot more people in total who are dyslexic, dyspraxic, ADHD etc.

The recent Westminster AchieveAbility report *Opening Doors to Employment* highlighted the overlap between dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism etc. and made it clear that many of the barriers were the same, irrespective of which label(s) an individual had. This implies that it is in the interest of neurodivergent people, regardless of label, to cooperate with each other to challenge the barriers they face in common. The report clearly identifies some of the significant barriers, and makes recommendations for overcoming them. There is scope for lobbying here.

I encourage readers of Network News to read, comment and show support where they agree, but also perhaps suggest that the title of the manifesto should be amended to include dyslexia and other differences.

The manifesto can be found here <https://neurodiversitymanifesto.com/> with links to related information <https://www.facebook.com/pg/LPANDmanifesto/posts/> and <https://theclarionmag.org/2018/03/07/motion-for-march-april-2018-labour-autism-neurodiversity-manifesto/>

7. JUSTICE MATTERS



1) Employment Tribunals

Numbers of claims to Employment Tribunals are on the rise again now that charges can no longer be made, following last year's challenge by Unison. There had been a 70% drop in cases but these are now on the rise again.

DAN is still waiting to hear of anyone who has had their fees returned.

Current levels are more or less at the pre-fee rate. 43 disability cases have proceeded to decisions over the last year including 33 cases where dyslexia is mentioned. In general, dyslexia is being accepted as a disability for legal purposes, though not many of the cases rely on dyslexia as the primary disability. The failure of many claims is put down, in part, to technical failures such as being out of time.

An Employment Tribunal judgment, given on 3 Nov 2017, found for the claimant Ms Rooney against her employer, Captivate Presentations Ltd. The judgement stated:

1. *The claimant is disabled within the meaning of section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 and was dismissed and was therefore treated unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of her disability, which relates to her arthritis and dyslexia.*
2. *The respondent company did not put in place reasonable adjustments.*

The claimant was awarded £11k in damages and lost earnings.

2) 'Learning Difficulties' in the prison population

A vast tendering exercise is now underway to commission all aspects of prison education, laid out in the numerous Schedules of the Prison Education Framework (PEF). One of these, C16, is of particular interest since it concerns *Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities*. Neisha Betts (my Learning Disabilities counterpart) and I have worked hard to get the work 'Specific' included in the initial definitions since the term '*Learning Difficulties*' is open to confusion.

We made the following point in our submission: *The term **Learning Difficulties** is used differently by health, social care and education services as well as by the individuals affected. It is important to ascertain whether someone claiming to have a learning difficulty actually has a learning disability, shows signs of an Autistic Spectrum Condition or has a specific learning difficulty. Challenging behaviour may initially mask a person's learning disability or (specific) learning difficulty.*

So, a small success, but one followed by another setback: funding will not be ring-fenced for the support of 'LDD' prisoners; it will be up to the discretion of the governor or, more likely, the Group Director of the re-organised prison clusters.

Prisons continue to deteriorate on measures of violence, self-harm, drug availability and lack of purposeful activity. From April 1st the prisons careers service was closed down when their contracts were not renewed, thus depriving prisoners of the wide range of services they offer.

With implementation of the new arrangements a full year away, continued over-crowding and Prison Officer numbers still down, the situation in many prisons remains volatile.

Network News was edited by Melanie Jameson