



Your guide to volunteering opportunities in the criminal justice system

Inside *What Can I Do?*
Huge range of volunteering opportunities
Real-life stories from volunteers
Innovative local projects
Key contacts and resources
Find out what volunteering can do for you!



INDEX

Introduction	3
Policing	5
Youth Justice	6
Restorative Justice	8
Victims	9
Magistracy	10
Probation	12
Prison Visiting	13
Prison Visitors' Centres and Visits Play Projects	14
Prison Chaplaincy	16
Independent Monitoring Boards	17
Prisons Week	18
Community Chaplaincy	19
Circles of Support and Accountability	20
Projects	21
What else can I do?	25
Suggested Reading	26
Useful Addresses	27
Feedback	30



INTRODUCTION

What Can I Do? – the sequel

Bigger! Brighter! Better! And of value to anyone interested in volunteering within Criminal Justice. Welcome to the new edition of *What Can I Do?*

The original *What Can I Do?*, produced in 2002, was the idea of the Churches' Criminal Justice Forum and pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust), and was funded by the Rethinking Crime and Punishment project of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Although it was a modest booklet, it proved hugely popular. Fifteen thousand copies were eventually distributed, and Paul Goggins MP described it as one of the most useful publications he had seen after becoming government minister responsible for prisons and probation.

The new edition is again the work of CCJF and pact. This time, the cost of printing has been borne by the Criminal Justice System (Home Office, Crown Prosecution Service and Department for Constitutional Affairs) as a contribution to the Year of the Volunteer 2005, to promote volunteering opportunities in criminal justice. *What Can I Do?* also matches the Together We Can cross-government initiative to encourage more local people to become involved in developing local public services.

The Criminal Justice field changes rapidly. The National Offender Management Service had not been conceived in 2002; Independent Monitoring Boards in prisons were still Boards of Visitors, and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders hadn't yet hit the headlines. The new *What Can I Do?* contains:

- New information on volunteering opportunities
- Feedback from volunteers
- Examples of innovative local projects – particularly where volunteers are drawn from faith communities.
- An updated reference section
- Suggested reading

You, the volunteer

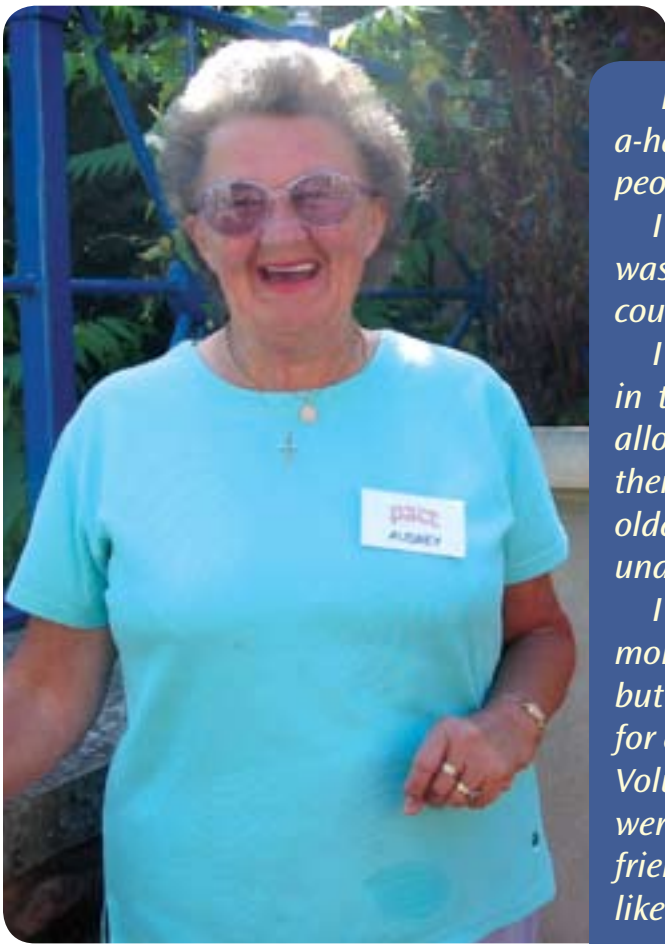
As a potential volunteer, you are a precious resource. You do not need to be a member of a faith group to make use of this booklet. Nor do you need to have any experience of volunteering. There are opportunities to suit those from all backgrounds, of all ages, and with all kinds of different skills.

If you have criminal convictions yourself, that need not rule you out; indeed your experience may be especially useful. Much will depend on the nature of the convictions, how long ago they were, and the nature of the work for which you are volunteering. For many of the opportunities suggested, you will need to obtain a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure.

You will probably find the work demanding. It will almost certainly challenge some of your pre-conceptions about victims of crime, young offenders, prisoners, prisoners' families, prisons, and the people who work within them. It may enable you to see beyond some of the needlessly destructive tabloid headlines, which offer all-too-easy solutions.

The faith and community dimension

Churches' Criminal Justice Forum and pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust) believe that problems associated with crime cannot all be successfully addressed by the Criminal Justice system alone. Both CCJF and pact are rooted within the Christian tradition. We believe criminal behaviour, its underlying causes and its consequences, should be of concern to all faith groups. Where possible we have tried to introduce a multi-faith dimension to the new *What Can I Do?* We want to see people of faith taking a lead in fostering a culture of active engagement and shared community responsibility, and volunteering is the clearest demonstration of a willingness to do so. The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is equally committed to communities playing a part in reducing re-offending and increasing public confidence in Criminal Justice, through its Communities and Civil Renewal Strategy.



I've been volunteering at Exeter prison for four-and-a-half years. I was attracted to it because I love meeting people. I have great empathy with them.

I once knew someone who was in prison. His family was embarrassed and ashamed and I thought that if I could ease that for anyone, I would like to.

I work one day in the pact visitor centre, and one day in the tea bar inside the prison visit hall. We are not allowed to go over and talk to the prisoners, but some of them give me a wave. I love it. I live in a development for older people and it is a welcome change to see anyone under the age of 50!

I get to know the visitors well. Some visit over many months and we build rapport. I never was judgmental, but now I'm even less so. Human contact is important for everyone. It's good for them and it's good for me, too. Volunteering keeps me in touch with life. My neighbours were very surprised when I started, but I did get one friend involved. She enjoys it! She serves tea in the prison like me.

Audrey Varley, volunteer at pact Visitors' Centre at Exeter

"I think more people should volunteer. It takes the selfishness away. When you meet prisoners' families you wonder how they cope. I have so much admiration for them. If I ever feel unhappy, I look at those families and realise my life is good."

Rachel Williams, pact play-worker and former volunteer

"What would I say to other men thinking of volunteering? I'd say the more men the merrier! Most men have a caring side and with a bit of a push, they could do it. Lots of people need help, but without volunteers like myself, they don't get it. As a black man, especially, some people relate to me more. Sometimes women ask for my take on their partner's behaviour; sometimes boys who are shy of the women volunteers ask to talk to me. We need more male role models for those boys."

Stefan Horton, volunteer at pact Visitors Centres at Holloway and Pentonville

Volunteering – It's good for you!

Much research has been done into the general benefits of volunteering – from making new friends and experiencing new opportunities and challenges, to enhancing employability. It can benefit people of all ages and backgrounds – students, young professionals, and those who are unemployed or retired.

A survey among 200 of Britain's top businesses, carried out by TimeBank (See Useful Addresses) a national campaign inspiring and connecting people to give time, found:

- 73% of employers would employ candidates with volunteering experience, more readily than those without.
- 94% of employers believed that volunteering could enhance skills.

The charity CSV (Community Service Volunteers) conducted a survey of people over 65 who volunteered and asked them about the benefits, as they perceived them.

- More than 50% said volunteering improved their health and fitness.
- 62% said volunteering helped reduce stress.

In his book *The Healing Power of Doing Good*, (See Suggested Reading p.26) Allan Luks cites medical evidence to support the belief that volunteering is beneficial to health, for instance in helping with insomnia, strengthening the immune system and enabling a speedier recovery from surgery.

If *What Can I Do?* does lead you into a fulfilling volunteering opportunity, please let us know about your experiences (See Feedback, p.30); in doing so, you may encourage us to produce a third edition!

Stuart Dew, Churches' Criminal Justice Forum

Andy Keen-Downs, pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust)

POLICING

Traditionally, volunteers have assisted the work of the Police through the role of the Special Constable. Other opportunities are available, with an emphasis on the Police working with, and through, local people to provide the kind of policing that communities will value.

What and Who?

Independent Custody Visitors are members of the local community who visit police stations unannounced to check on the welfare of people in custody. They come from all walks of life and from all sections of the community. To become a visitor, you must be over 18. A criminal record is not an automatic barrier to becoming a custody visitor; individual circumstances are assessed. However, magistrates, serving police officers and civilian staff, and others for whom the role might generate a conflict of interest, are excluded (see www.icva.org.uk for more details).

Special Constables are volunteers who receive training to work with and support regular police officers. People may join the Specials because of an interest in helping their local community, but also because they are interested in police work, or because they want to find out more about policing. They come from all walks of life and give at least 4 hours of their time a week. To find out more, look up the contact details of your local Police Force in a telephone directory or visit the Crime and Policing section of the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk or the 'Specials' own website at www.specialconstables.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Watch schemes involve volunteers from local communities, with a volunteer co-ordinator, working with the police to improve the quality of life for local communities. More details from www.neighbourhoodwatch.uk.com or www.neighbourhood.net. Lessons learnt from a National Reassurance Policing project together with the Policing Priority Area and Community Cohesion programme will inform the Neighbourhood Policing model and should result in more opportunities in the future for volunteers to work with police.

Local initiatives may involve, for instance, volunteers helping to staff the front counter at a police station that might otherwise be closed to the public. Contact your local Police Force as suggested below.

How?

A telephone call or un-announced visit to a local police station may not be the best way of finding out how you can become involved, as many are open to the public for only limited periods and you are likely to be seen by someone who can only take a message. It may be better to write to the local Police headquarters or explore the website of your local Police Force.

You can link to all of these from www.police.uk/forces/forceslist.asp

QUICK GUIDE

Independent Custody Visitors

- visit police stations to check on the welfare of people in custody
- must be over 18

www.icva.org.uk

Special Constables

- volunteers who receive training to work with and support regular police officers
- at least 4 hours a week

www.specialconstables.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Watch

- volunteers from local communities

www.neighbourhoodwatch.uk.com

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Youth Justice (*page 6*)
- » Restorative Justice (*page 8*)
- » Victims (*page 9*)
- » Magistracy (*page 10*)
- » Probation (*page 12*)

YOUTH JUSTICE

The principal aim of the Youth Justice system is to prevent crime by children and young people under the age of 18. The right intervention may help divert a young offender from a criminal career. Effective youth justice requires the involvement of the local community and there are a number of roles volunteers can play.

What?

An **appropriate adult** attends the police station when the police wish to interview a young person and the young person's parents/carers either will not, or cannot attend. The appropriate adult is there to ensure that the young person's interests are represented and their rights are protected.

Mentoring pairs a volunteer adult with a young person at risk of offending. The adult's role is to motivate and support the young person through a structured relationship over a period of time. The mentor may support the young person going back into education or training, in finding a job, or improving literacy and numeracy skills. Being a mentor requires the volunteer to encourage the young person to keep working at the areas which put them at risk of offending.

Being a member of a **Youth Offender Panel** gives you the opportunity to be involved in creating a programme of activities for young offenders that will ensure they repair the harm resulting from their offending and address aspects of their lives that cause them to offend. You will talk to the young person, together with parents, guardians and victims to agree a tailor-made package aimed at repairing the harm done and preventing further offending.

Who?

Generally, you are likely to need patience, good judgement and objectivity, commitment and reliability, good listening and communication skills, and the ability to relate to young people. Volunteers are of all ages and backgrounds. Previous convictions, especially those that are minor in nature and old, will not automatically exclude you.

QUICK GUIDE

- help young offenders
- need patience, reliability, good listening and communication skills

Appropriate Adult

- attends police interview to ensure young person's rights are protected

Mentor

- motivates and supports young person through a structured relationship over time

Youth Offender Panel

- involved in creating a tailor-made package to repair harm done and prevent further offending

How?

For more details of any of these possibilities visit the website of the Youth Justice Board at www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk or contact your local Youth Offending team (see *Useful Addresses* p.29). There is a YOT in every local authority area in England and Wales. Teams include staff from police, probation, social services, health and education. You can find contact details at the Youth Justice Board website or in local telephone directories.

"Youth Offender Panels give youngsters the ability to verbally own up to what they have done and to apologise. It's very therapeutic, watching that young person slowly understand that everything you do in life has an impact on other people. I find it really heartening to think panels have the ability to prevent further offending ... It is such a positive feeling knowing you have been part of that process"

A Youth Offender Panel member and mother-of-six

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Restorative Justice (*page 8*)
- » Probation (*page 12*)

PROMISE (Promoting Resilience and Opportunities by Mentoring in Somerset) is a mentoring scheme for five to 19-year-olds who have experienced severe problems within their families or communities. Among its objectives are a reduction in school exclusions and offending by young people. There are 120 mentors and the programme is expanding.

Mentors are recruited in a variety of ways, such as adverts in Yeovil Town FC's programmes and on local radio. "We have no problem finding volunteers," says Rod Salter, a social work manager seconded to head a five-strong team at PROMISE. "The programme is now so well-established that every week people approach us to be volunteers."

Each mentor has to complete an intensive seven-day training programme over seven weeks. The training is accredited and can therefore be used as an entry qualification to higher education. Once qualified, mentors get 24-hour support: "We make great efforts to recognise how valuable volunteers are. "During the training we make it clear that even small changes can be very dramatic for the young people involved."

More than a third of the mentors, says Salter, have changed their careers as a result of their mentoring experience: "It has huge benefits for the county of Somerset, because they are channelled into such work as education and youth work."

This case study first appeared in Youth Justice Board News, published by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative Justice is becoming widely used in schools, in youth justice, as part of police cautioning, and in prisons. It works to resolve conflict and repair harm. It encourages those who have caused harm to acknowledge the impact of what they have done and gives them an opportunity to make reparation. It offers those who have suffered the harm, the opportunity to have their harm or loss acknowledged, and amends made.

Interest in Restorative Justice is a recent development in England and Wales, but restorative approaches to offending can be found in many ancient civilisations. In the British adversarial or retributive system, crime is seen as a violation of the state and the focus is on blame. In a restorative approach, the crime is a violation of the victim and the community and the focus is on problem solving and obligation. Instead of inflicting punishment to hurt and deter, the emphasis is on the restoration of all parties. It is an important Restorative Justice principle that all parties enter into the process willingly.

What?

Restorative Justice in action can include a number of different processes, including:

Victim/Offender Mediation/Conferencing: Volunteers are trained to facilitate meetings between victim and offender and their families/supporters, or to pass messages between them, if that's what the victim and offender want. This is used extensively in Youth Justice. Indirect Mediation may take place where the offender and/or the victim do not wish to meet, directly; a mediator or facilitator conveys messages and may help them to try to reach an understanding or agreement. In other circumstances, a representative victim may help offenders understand the impact of their offending.

Family Group Conferences/Meetings: These are meetings where extended family are invited to come together with the aim of resolving conflict or problem behaviour. They are primarily used with young people who are considered at risk, or if an important decision has to be made, such as where the young person might live. Family Group Conferences have been widely used by Social Services, and are used within some youth justice areas for young people who have committed offences.

Reparation: This may be a compensation payment to the victim, or if the victim wishes, to a charitable organisation. It may take the form of work for the victim (especially when the victim is an organisation such as a small business or a school) or community reparation - usually for a charitable organisation. Ideally reparative placements should meet the wishes of the victim and be offence related. They should

also take account of the skills or interests of the offender as this will increase the likelihood of successful completion and help re-integrate the offender. Reparative projects exist in many prisons, arranged by organisations such as the Inside Out Trust (see [Useful Addresses p.28](#)).

QUICK GUIDE

- restorative Justice involves everyone in the community.
- train as a mediator or get involved in a local project
- join a Youth Offending Panel
- lots of ways to get involved

Who?

There are many ways in which you can assist, as Restorative Justice is intended to involve everyone in the community. You can train as a mediator, become involved in a local project (or help set one up), tell your story if you have experience as a victim or an offender, or join a Youth Offending Panel (see [Youth Justice, p.6](#)).

How?

The Restorative Justice Consortium has information and advice for prospective volunteers (see [Useful Addresses p.29](#)).

Mediation UK can direct people to a local mediation service, which provides training and support to volunteer mediators (see [Useful Addresses p.28](#)).

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » [Youth Justice \(page 6\)](#)
- » [Probation \(page 12\)](#)
- » [Community Chaplaincy \(page 19\)](#)
- » [Circles of Support and Accountability \(page 20\)](#)

VICTIMS

There are a number of possible volunteering opportunities for those wanting to work with victims and witnesses of crime. Victim Support is the national charity which helps both victims and witnesses. (It is worth noting that offenders are often also victims!)

What?

The principal use of volunteers is in providing local support services to victims. People react to crime in many ways; although most victims don't suffer long term harm, both adults and children can be seriously affected and often need help in order to recover.

Victim Support are responsible for the development of a network of Witness Support services that has been expanded to cover both Crown and Magistrates courts. Volunteers, based with Crown and Magistrates Courts Witness Services, give information and support to victims and witnesses attending trials. This service often needs to recruit volunteers.

Who?

Volunteers should be understanding and be good listeners, who can get on with people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds. Anyone can apply and no previous experience of this kind of work is necessary.

All volunteers are given training before they help victims, with further, specialised training available for those who volunteer to work with people who have suffered from serious crime, such as victims of sexual violence and families of murder victims.

Some volunteers work several hours a week, while others offer occasional help. Volunteer visitors can work during the day, or in the evenings or at weekends; Court volunteers need to be free to work during the day.

How?

For further details, activities, and local opportunities for volunteering contact Victim Support (see Useful Addresses p.29).

“When I visit victims I feel a great sense of satisfaction, seeing them regaining control of their lives, helping empower them to move on and gain strength from knowing that someone is interested in their pain, sorrow and anger and above all that someone is listening”

A Victim Support volunteer

QUICK GUIDE

- volunteers provide local support to victims and witnesses of crime
- need to be understanding and a good listener
- no previous experience necessary
- full training given
- flexible timing, but court volunteers need to be free during the day

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Restorative Justice (page 8)
- » Magistracy (page 10)



MAGISTRACY

Magistrates (also called Justices of the Peace) are members of the local community, appointed by the Lord Chancellor to sit in magistrates' courts to hear criminal and some civil cases. Experienced and specially trained magistrates sit in youth courts and family courts.

What?

Magistrates deal with less serious crime such as theft, criminal damage, public disorder and motoring offences as well as more unusual cases such as environmental offences, truancy from school, copyright theft and cruelty to animals. If a defendant is found guilty, or pleads guilty, magistrates will use sentencing guidelines to help decide the appropriate sentence.

Who?

Magistrates come from a wide range of backgrounds and occupations. They are ordinary men and women with common sense and personal integrity. They know their community well, are able to listen to all sides of an argument and can contribute to fair and reasonable decisions. Ideally, the local magistrates' bench reflects the community it serves in terms of age, gender, ethnic origin and occupation. There is a particular need for more young and ethnic minority candidates.

Some people are not eligible. Police officers, traffic wardens (or their close relatives) and people in related occupations where a conflict of interest could arise, will not be appointed. Candidates must be between 18 and 65 years of age; magistrates must retire at 70.

Legal or academic qualifications are not required. Training includes discussions, talks, practical exercises, observation in court and prison visits. This training is compulsory. New magistrates are assigned a mentor to support them in their first two years. Magistrates sit in panels of three, with equal responsibility for decision-making and with a qualified legal adviser to help on aspects of law. Those appointed must be available to sit for a minimum of 26 half days a year and be available for full-day sittings. Arrangements are usually worked out well in advance. Training and meetings are an additional commitment but are often held outside normal working hours.

QUICK GUIDE

- members of the local community
- must be between 18 and 65 years of age
- full training given
- must be available to sit for 26 half-day sittings a year and some full-day sittings

Magistrates are unpaid but may receive allowances for travel expenses and subsistence. Many employers allow paid leave; those who lose pay may be able to claim an allowance.

How?

Further information and application forms are available by telephoning 080 0003 007 or the website of the Department of Constitutional Affairs www.magistrates.gov.uk. Alternatively, contact your local advisory committee. The number of the nearest committee is available from a freephone number 0800 003 007.

More information about magistrates can be obtained from the Magistrates' Association (see [Useful Addresses p.28](#))

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Policing (page 5)
- » Restorative Justice (page 8)
- » Victims (page 9)
- » Independent Monitoring Boards (page 17)
- » Circles of Support and Accountability (page 20)

"I have found the work frustrating and compelling in equal measure. No two days are ever the same ... the foibles of human nature which pass before us are endlessly challenging ... From time to time it is possible to feel that lives have been changed for the better"

A magistrate with twenty years service



After completing an interesting fortnight on jury service, I decided that I would apply to become a magistrate.

My mother was astounded as she thought (like a lot of people) that I had to have loads of fancy-sounding legal qualifications. My husband was quietly confident that I would achieve my aim and encouraged me all through what I found to be quite a tough and challenging selection and interview process.

The instructor at my health club commented that I was probably now 'in the money' and was dumbstruck when I explained that magistrates do not get paid!

Many people are interested in knowing what powers we have, how high the fines and how long the prison sentences can be, and what other types of punishment are available. I often have to decline daytime social invitations, saying 'I'm afraid I can't make it as I shall be in court all day', and the reactions can be very funny. People cannot make out if I am appearing in court as a defendant and until I say 'I'm a magistrate', they do look at me strangely! Then they usually comment 'That must be so interesting - how often do you do it? Have you ever sent anyone to prison?'

My friends now know that I cannot say very much about cases I have sat on, and therefore don't ask too many questions, but they are, nevertheless, interested in the judicial process and the outcomes of any trials.

As for my extremely supportive husband, he calmly makes a note of all my sittings in his diary, offers to cook dinner on the nights when I have been in court all day, sends me off with a cheery 'Have a good day dispensing justice' and has only been into court once to see me 'in action', as it were. I think he probably finds it a little strange to bow to his wife!

Maggie Puttick sits on the East Dorset Bench.

PROBATION

In recent years, probation has undergone many changes – and it’s role and structure is still changing. In 2001, local Probation Services, which had a good deal of autonomy, became Areas within the National Probation Service. Since then, the creation of the National Offender Management Service, NOMS, has seen probation and prison brought under one umbrella with a single chief executive. Probation’s role is evolving from advising, assisting and befriending offenders to protecting the public, reducing re-offending, punishing offenders within the community, ensuring awareness of the effects of crime on victims, and rehabilitating offenders.

What?

Although Probation is now part of a national service, there are differences between the 42 Areas and volunteer opportunities need to be explored locally. These are some possibilities:

Mentoring and support: Offenders may be serving community sentences, or be supervised following their release from custody. For many released from prison there are worries about accommodation, benefits, employment or training, and about coping with life outside. A mentor may help the individual to access services and gain confidence and self esteem - and may make the difference between a fresh start, and a return to offending, arrest and custody. Mentors can also help those on community orders to comply with the requirements, perhaps, assisting with transport, easing anxieties, addressing barriers and providing practical assistance.

Education/Training: Many of those being supervised have educational needs. Improving literacy and numeracy, so that employment opportunities are enhanced, contributes significantly to reducing re-offending. Volunteers with a background in education, or who have the skills to provide support to offenders on courses, are particularly welcomed. Where an individual being supervised has drug or alcohol problems, Probation may work in partnership with specialist voluntary sector agencies. These agencies often have opportunities for volunteers.

QUICK GUIDE

- need to be open-minded and non-judgmental

Mentoring

- help individual to access services, and gain confidence and self-esteem
- provide practical assistance

Education/Training

- background in education or supporting offenders on courses

Probation Boards

- responsible for policies and performance of probation area
- selection by recruitment based on individual skills and experience

Probation Boards: Responsibility for the policies and performance of each of the 42 Probation Areas is vested by Parliament in a Probation Board . The Home Secretary expects Boards to operate in accordance with overall Criminal Justice policy; Boards are accountable to the Home secretary via the Probation Directorate. Membership of a Board should reflect the local community. Selection is by an open process of recruitment; appointment decisions will be based on the individual skills and experience that people bring.

Who?

There are no particular qualifications required to be a probation volunteer. However, you will need to be open-minded and non-judgmental. Probation volunteers will require a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure.

Probation Board members must have a full understanding of local and national issues and political awareness. They need to retain an ambassadorial outlook, supporting the position of the service and their Probation Area and be aware of the views of local people and communities.

How?

The National Probation Directorate ([website www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk)) has contact addresses and links to local probation areas; some of these sites contain details of opportunities for volunteers. Alternatively, look under “Probation” in a local telephone directory. The Probation Boards Association has its own website (www.probationboards.co.uk).

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Policing (page 5)
- » Youth Justice (page 6)
- » Magistracy (page 10)
- » Independent Monitoring Boards (page 17)
- » Circles of Support and Accountability (page 20)

PRISON VISITING

Official Prison Visitors assist the Prison Service to achieve its statement of purpose by providing a humanitarian contact, which helps to keep the prisoner in touch with the outside world.

What?

Officially appointed Prison Visitors are independent volunteers recruited by prison establishments on behalf of the Prison Service, who visit prisons in order to offer friendship to prisoners. They are neither paid civil servants, nor is there a faith dimension to their role.

Any prisoner may apply for an Official Visitor, whether he/she has visits from family members or friends or not. Official Prison Visitors visit all categories of prisoners, whatever their circumstances.

Prison Visitors are encouraged to operate in such a way that they are included in the general life of the prison, meeting needs which are quite distinct from Probation or Chaplaincy.

Who?

Candidates must be of good character. They should not hold any employment or office liable to cause embarrassment or conflict of interest in relations with prisoners or members of staff. Members of Independent Monitoring Boards and Local Review Committees are not eligible. Most Official Prison Visitors are between the ages of 21 and 70 but there is some flexibility. All appointments are at the discretion of the Governor.

How?

Apply directly to your local Prison for an application form (Form 1014). Further information is available from the Prison Service (www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk) or from the National Association of Official Prison Visitors (see *Useful Addresses*, p.28).

QUICK GUIDE

- independent volunteers who visit prisons to befriend prisoners
- visit all categories of prison
- generally between ages of 21 and 70
- appointed at discretion of Prison Governor

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » *Victims (page 9)*
- » *Prison Visitor Centres and Visits Play Projects (page 14)*
- » *Prison Chaplaincy (page 16)*
- » *Independent Monitoring Boards (page 17)*

PRISON VISITORS' CENTRES

Many prisons now have a Visitors' Centre just outside the prison. Some are run by the Prison Service, others by independent charities. At some, the Centre may be little more than a room with a drink and snack vending machine and lockers for leaving items during the visit. Others are staffed by volunteers and/or paid workers, and offer families a range of services. Visitors' Centres aim to provide a welcoming environment where visitors are treated with dignity and respect, and can obtain information, support and advice.

QUICK GUIDE

- give advice and information to visitors
- practical help with running the centre, e.g. making sandwiches and drinks
- regular, committed involvement
- times vary, but mostly daytime and may include weekends

What?

It may be that, after training, you could give advice and information to visitors regarding their entitlement to financial help for visiting, or on what they can or cannot take into a visit. You might help run the coffee bar, make sandwiches, and drinks. You might feel able to help with some of the clerical and administrative work and answer telephone queries. Alternatively you might do the most important job of all: simply be available as a friendly welcoming presence, and a reassuring smile to people feeling nervous and unsure on a first visit to a prison.

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Prison Visiting (page 13)
- » Prison Chaplaincy (page 16)
- » Prisons Week (page 18)

Who?

You will need to commit to regular involvement, as it is important that centres are adequately staffed at all times when visiting is taking place. Most prisons have social visits on weekday afternoons and all day at weekends.

How?

See below

VISITS PLAY PROJECTS

Many children visit a parent in prison. It is important to provide supervision and entertainment for them to allow their parents time to talk and to make the experience as positive as possible. Play workers need to be available for visits sessions.

QUICK GUIDE

- provide supervision and entertainment for visiting children of prisoners
- experience of working with children helpful
- regular time commitment

What?

Play projects provide a variety of opportunities for children to have fun and be creative. These include face painting and craft activities, slides and climbing frames, puzzles, books and games. Many children who make use of the play areas will have experienced a great deal of emotional upset and instability in their lives and may exhibit challenging behaviour.

Who?

Anyone with experience of working with children either in an educational setting or in clubs or societies and able to give time on a regular basis.

How?

Contact your nearest prison (details from www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk) and ask to speak to the Manager of the Visitors' Centre or the Voluntary Sector Co-ordinator. pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust) runs Visitors' Centres and other services at most of the prisons in London, and at several in Devon and Cornwall (see Useful Addresses p.28)

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Prison Visiting (page 13)
- » Prison Chaplaincy (page 16)
- » Prisons Week (page 18)



“I think I’ve got a lot to offer because I am on the same level as the visitors. Because I’ve been in the same position, I empathise with them. As a prison visitor, I’ve been there, done it and worn the t-shirt. I know the frustration of a visitor. It’s wonderful to be in a position to help – pact staff can often negotiate with the prison and help to clear up misunderstandings.

Lots of people in prison are very damaged. Many have mental health problems. They shouldn’t be in prison, they should be in hospital. Sometimes the visitors are damaged people, too. But we are nice to them even if they are stroppy. The atmosphere here is brilliant. We work as a team and we all help each other out.

Most of the time, the visitors are lovely. Recently, someone brought in some Indian cakes for us, and an American guy brought us a huge bunch of flowers. I get huge satisfaction from volunteering. I help people every day and I feel good every day because of it. I’d encourage everyone to try it, just because you get so much out of it yourself!”

Wyn, volunteer at pact Visitors’ Centre at Pentonville

PRISON CHAPLAINCY

Each prison has a Chaplaincy team composed of Chaplains from the main World Faiths. They are often complemented by volunteers who make a valuable contribution to the work of Prison Chaplaincy.

What?

Volunteers bring with them a variety of specific skills and gifts. They may:

- Assist with services of worship
- Help to lead religious instruction classes
- Participate in human relationship and parenting classes
- Counsel the bereaved
- Befriend selected prisoners
- Undertake administrative duties and prepare prayer letters
- Arrange visits by external groups
- Help prisoners' families and friends in the Visitors' Centre (see Visitors' Centres p.14)

One of the most distinctive contributions a volunteer can make is by providing a link with the local community (see Community Chaplaincy p.19).

The work is both challenging and rewarding. Most volunteers find that it provides an opportunity to make a positive difference to the lives of some of the most vulnerable and marginalised members of the community.

Who?

Volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and religious traditions. All volunteers should have the endorsement of their own faith community or sponsoring organisation and should be prepared to undertake training. Clinks (info@clinks.org) has produced a training pack 'Volunteering in Prison' which contains useful information.

How?

Contact the Chaplains' office at your local prison. You can find contact details at the Prison Service web site (www.hmprisonerservice.gov.uk). If necessary, you can obtain contact details from Chaplaincy Headquarters (see Useful Addresses p.27).

QUICK GUIDE

- assist with services of worship
- counselling and befriending
- volunteers should have backing of their own faith community
- training given

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Prison Visiting (page 13)
- » Prison Visitor Centres (page 14)
- » Prisons Week (page 18)
- » Community Chaplaincy (page 19)

"I became involved through attending the Carol Service ... There was an urgent need for people to whom prisoners could talk fairly freely ... It has made a big difference to my perception of prisoners ... So many have begun life with everything against them ... Our job is not to moralise, only to listen ... We can only be there; this may be enough".

A Chaplaincy volunteer at a prison in Yorkshire

INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARDS

Each Prison and Young Offender Institution (YOI) in England and Wales must have an Independent Monitoring Board (IMB). Board members are appointed by the Home Secretary and are charged with monitoring the rights and well-being of all prisoners within the prison or YOI to which they are appointed.

What?

Board members must satisfy themselves as to the humane and just treatment of prisoners and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release. To do so, they will require a good first hand knowledge of their prison or YOI and have frequent contact with the prisoners. They will need to know the standards which the establishment is expected to meet and the impact its performance has on the prisoners.

Board members visit frequently, and often without notice. They have access to all prisoners and must be willing to engage with any who want to see them.

Board members' concerns are taken up with local management; if not satisfactorily resolved, they may be taken to a higher level including, if necessary, to the Home Secretary.

Members are required to attend monthly Board meetings, and take their turn in making monitoring visits and dealing with prisoners' complaints. They must also be prepared to visit the prison or YOI at any time if a serious incident occurs.

The role of a Board member is both demanding and challenging. Prisons are complex. Board members need to relate the situation before them to a mass of regulations. The role requires commitment, but for those with the time and the desire it can be a most rewarding way of getting involved. The opportunity to engage with people from diverse backgrounds during a difficult time in their lives can help to broaden the Board member's horizons and develop a deeper understanding of a section of the community that is marginalised and often misunderstood.

Who?

There are no specific qualifications required to become a member of an IMB. However applicants need to have energy, commitment, a fair amount of free time and the ability to challenge thoughtfully, decisions made elsewhere. Sensitivity and open-mindedness are also required in dealing with prisoners. Board members are given central and local training to equip them for the role.

Board members are drawn from the ranks of those who work, those who do not, those with previous voluntary sector experience and those with none. There is a particular need for members of ethnic minority communities, as currently they are under represented on many boards.

How?

Send your name and address to the Independent Monitoring Board Secretariat. They will send an application pack. (see [Useful Addresses p.27](#))

QUICK GUIDE

- monitor the rights and well-being of prisoners within the Prison or YOI
- monthly board meetings
- attend the Prison or YOI at any time if a serious incident occurs
- demanding, challenging role
- needs energy, commitment and fair amount of time

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Policing (page 5)
- » Youth Justice (page 6)
- » Magistracy (page 10)
- » Probation (page 12)

PRISONS WEEK AND PRISONERS' SUNDAY

Prisons Week is a Christian initiative to pray for, and raise awareness of, the needs of prisoners and their families, victims of crime, prison staff and all those who care. The week can also be used by other faith communities and secular groups as a time to highlight criminal justice concerns.

What?

Prisons Week is usually the third week of November. Some use the title 'Prisoners' Sunday' which is the Sunday at the beginning of the week. A theme is chosen each year for Prisons Week; in 2004 it was 'Justice that Restores' and in 2005 it is 'The least of these'. Church congregations and other faith groups are encouraged to focus upon criminal justice issues, either within a service of worship, at a weekday meeting with an invited speaker, in discussion groups, or by making literature available.

Who?

Volunteers in local faith communities who have a concern for criminal justice can get Prisons Week on the local agenda, by bringing it to the attention of the priest or minister, or the leadership of the particular group. Volunteers may offer to speak, to arrange a forum for discussion, to write an article for a local magazine, or simply to obtain resources for others to use.

QUICK GUIDE

- raise awareness of the needs of prisoners, their families, victims of crime, prison staff and all who care
- highlight criminal justice concerns
- volunteers in local faith communities

How?

The Prisons Week committee produces leaflets, cards or posters each year. There is no fixed charge but a donation of £1 for ten cards or leaflets is suggested. (see [Useful Addresses p.29](#)).

Prison Advice and Care Trust produces a Parish Pack for Prisoners' Sunday (see [Useful Addresses p.29](#)).

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Prison Chaplaincy ([page 16](#))
- » Community Chaplaincy ([page 19](#))
- » What Else Can I Do? ([page 25](#))

COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY

Community Chaplaincy has worked successfully in Canada for more than a quarter of a Century, and is now being developed in Britain, with support from Churches' Criminal Justice Forum, Prison Chaplaincy, and the Salvation Army.

Local Community Chaplaincy projects are essentially partnerships between local communities, prisons and faith groups. Volunteers are mainly people of faith, recruited to work under the direction of a professional co-ordinator, or Community Chaplain, supporting prisoners in re-settling upon release. Already, it is being demonstrated that this can reduce re-offending and the fear of crime.

What?

The commitment of the volunteer begins, ideally, before the prisoner is released. The two meet to begin to establish a working relationship, and identify issues of importance. A care plan can then be produced, with other relevant agencies, identifying how best the prisoner's needs can be met. With the guidance of the Community Chaplain the volunteer will, if necessary, link the prisoner with specialist local agencies dealing with issues such as accommodation, employment and training, and substance misuse. After release, the volunteer will strive to be both mentor and friend, helping the prisoner to put down roots and establish a climate in which the risk of re-offending is reduced.

Community Chaplaincy is not an evangelistic outreach. Projects will try to support those who are on a faith journey, and link the person with a supportive church or faith community if requested, but volunteers must not actively seek to convert people to their faith.

Who?

Volunteers will not need to have relevant experience; training is provided. They will need to be people of good standing, who are willing to accept direction from the local co-ordinator and observe agreed boundaries. They must be prepared to respond in a caring and positive way to people, who because of their life experiences, may be both difficult and demanding. The volunteer must be able to accept being let down, without feeling a personal sense of failure or rejection.

How?

Eventually it is hoped that there will be a national network of Community Chaplaincy projects, which, together, will be able to offer support to a released prisoner going to any part of the country. At the time of writing there are twelve local projects which are operational, or in the final stages of development. Others are planned. It is hoped that each will work to an agreed set of core values, but each will also have its own characteristics and identity. Some will also develop responses to local situations like drop-in centres or accommodation.

Plans are being made for a national "umbrella" association which would help create a national identity, be a forum for sharing good practice, and support the development of new projects. Until that is operational it would be advisable to contact your local prison chaplain who will be able to provide details of any local community chaplaincy project operating in the area. Contact the Chaplain's Office at your local prison.

Details of local prisons can be found via the Prison Service website: www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk

QUICK GUIDE

- partnerships between local communities, prisons and faith groups
- mentoring and befriending
- helping ex-prisoner to put down roots and reduce risk of re-offending
- training provided
- under direction of local co-ordinator

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Youth Justice (page 6)
- » Restorative Justice (page 8)
- » Probation (page 12)
- » Circles of Support and Accountability (page 20)

CIRCLES OF SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Circles of Support and Accountability work with sex offenders in an attempt to help them avoid further offending. The idea originated in Canada and was run by the Mennonite Community. In Britain, it has been championed by the Quaker Crime and Community Justice Group and is now being taken up by others, including local Community Chaplaincy projects.

What?

Whilst in custody, offenders who are identified as at high risk of re-offending, with low levels of support and high levels of need, are matched with a Circle. This individual then becomes the Circle's 'core member'. The initial meeting of the Circle draws up a contract of commitment to openness within the Circle and confidentiality beyond. All decision making is by consensus. The core member promises that there will be 'no more victims' by his (or her) hand, and that he or she will follow the laid down release plan.

Circles retain close and supportive contact with both probation and police and have to be aware of their responsibility to inform the appropriate authority, if the need arises. Full Circles meet weekly with the core member. Most days however, the core member will have contact with individual members of the Circle. These contacts can range from a brief phone call through to a shopping trip or lunch. Levels of contact decrease over time; however, should a core member's behaviour cause concern, there may be a period of intensified support and challenge.

Who?

Circles usually consist of four to six volunteers; these are frequently drawn from a range of faith communities – but this is not a requirement. The Circle members agree to befriend a released sex offender and offer support and advice, and to challenge signs of inappropriate behaviour. Whilst no specialist or expert knowledge is required, volunteers do need to be both responsible and practical people. Following a screening process, suitable volunteers are trained and given support in their new role.

QUICK GUIDE

- working with sex offenders to reduce risk of reoffending
- circles of four to six volunteers
- befriending, supporting, advising and challenging signs of inappropriate behaviour
- volunteers will be screened and given full training
- commitment and confidentiality required

How?

If you live in Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire or Buckinghamshire, or in the Manchester area, you may be able to be involved now. The Circles approach is spreading, and there may soon be opportunities in other areas. If you feel you might like to get involved, contact Quaker Peace and Social Witness (see Useful Addresses p.27).

NOT FOR YOU?

Try looking at:

- » Youth Justice (page 6)
- » Restorative Justice (page 8)
- » Probation (page 12)
- » Prison Chaplaincy (page 16)
- » Community Chaplaincy (page 19)

“My gut feeling is that working in this circle has substantially reduced the likelihood of our core member re-offending. I may be wrong, but I just can't see him doing it again. To me, as a survivor, that is the greatest reward I can imagine — that other little girls are spared.”

A volunteer member of a Circle

PROJECTS

In addition to the volunteering opportunities described in the preceding pages, there are many innovative projects up and down the country which make a real difference – helping offenders find fulfilment away from crime, supporting victims and families – making the criminal justice system more constructive, more rehabilitative and more humane.

Some are larger organisations with funds to pay staff; others exist in just one town or city, carried forward by the vision and energy of a small group of volunteers.

Some, but not all, are faith-based, with people working out their faith not through evangelisation but through a desire to contribute something to their community – recognising, as we said in the introduction to this booklet, that all the problems of criminal behaviour cannot be solved by the criminal justice system alone. As a potential volunteer you are likely to be welcome, whether or not faith plays a part in your life.

It is possible here to offer only a few examples of a selection of the projects known to the authors. Some are quite unusual! New and innovative ideas are coming to notice all the time.

The **Amelia Methodist Trust** farm near Cardiff works with disaffected young people. Many come from dysfunctional families, have been excluded from mainstream schooling, and get caught up in the criminal justice system. Outdoor, environmental and workshop activities, operate alongside basic literacy and numeracy teaching. Some young people obtain qualifications, others simply leave with increased confidence and self-esteem and are better able to cope. Volunteers are an essential part of the workforce; many of the young people who have left come back to help. Underpinning everything is a strong belief that a sense of God is frequently found in creation, beauty, the countryside and relationships. For many young people, the farm is a special place and a sanctuary. **01446 781427** andrewc@ameliastrust.org.uk www.ameliatrust.org.uk

The **Army Cadet Force Association Outreach Project** helps socially disadvantaged young people who are vulnerable to crime to become better citizens. Young people, usually aged between 12 and 14, are referred by Youth Offending Teams, Referral Panels, police and schools. Typically they have been subject to a police reprimand, or warning, excluded from school, or are showing behavioural problems. Statistics indicate that the behaviour or attitude of 60% of the young people referred shows a significant improvement after nine months. The Army Cadet Force uses 8,000 volunteer instructors. Details of local Outreach contacts from Ian Murray, development officer **0191 264 5300** ianmurray@acfaoutreach.org www.armycadets.com

Bringing Hope seeks to address the issues of drugs, gangs and gun crime in Birmingham, and identify a meaningful response for the churches across the city. It is a joint initiative of the Council of Black Led Churches in Birmingham, Birmingham Churches Together, Birmingham City Council, the Drug Action team and the Diocese of Birmingham. Volunteers are essential to the developing work of Bringing Hope. **0121 772 3444** info@bringinghope.co.uk www.birminghamchurches.org.uk

Depaul Trust was founded in 1989 as a Catholic response to the growing number of young homeless people arriving in London. It has developed a range of services including nightshelters, hostels, employment training and family mediation. In 1998, Depaul Trust began working with young offenders through two projects, Outside Link and One-to-One. Outside Link helps young prison leavers



Photo: Amelia Methodist Trust



Photo: Depaul Trust



secure accommodation before release, in order to prevent them from being homeless, and vulnerable to re-offending. The One-to-One project matches young offenders about to be released with volunteer mentors who provide support and advice, to help them live independently and be integrated into the community. Both projects have demonstrated a reduced rate of re-offending. **020 7935 0111** www.depaultrust.org

GymNation in Gloucester provides a gym and community centre which welcomes people coming out of prison, or referred by probation. Men who have developed an interest in using the gym while in prison, are able to use GymNation at a cost much less than normal gym fees. There is also an advice service, and visits are made to Muslim prisoners in Gloucester Prison. GymNation describes itself as a service “which targets minorities but welcomes anyone from any background”. Volunteers help the project, by providing assistance with cleaning, tidying and moving equipment. **01452 308127** gymnation@btclick.com .

Highfields Happy Hens in Derbyshire provides troubled young people with love, stability and the opportunity to learn life skills. Young offenders and those excluded from school, are taken on as volunteer egg collectors, helping to collect 16,000 eggs a day from 20,000 free range hens. The Christian-backed project takes referrals from the local Youth Offender Team and has achieved remarkable success in reducing re-offending. Often, the animals have a therapeutic effect on the behaviour of the young people. **01283 732083** www.highfieldshappyhens.co.uk

“Over time we have seen angry hands become gentle hands”
Highfields Happy Hens

The **Howard League Citizenship and Crime Programme** helps to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour by young people through school conferences, which discuss crime and citizenship in a way that is meaningful to those aged between nine and fifteen. The conferences also stimulate young people to take positive action within their own communities. Volunteer advisors help deliver the programme see www.howardleague.org ‘Citizenship and Crime’

“My favourite workshop was Peer Pressure because I learnt a lot about facing up to yourself, and not going by what others say or want”.
A pupil who took part in the programme

Students at Goldsmiths University, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, University of Central England, or University College of St. Martin’s are able to join a prison visiting scheme called **Inmates**. This has been developed at Goldsmiths and is designed to recruit, train and deliver volunteer prison visitors from the student bodies. Goldsmiths University **0208 692 1406**. Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College **01494 605100**, University of Central England **0121 331 6842**, University College of St. Martin’s l.stone@ucsm.ac.uk

The **Inside Out Trust** is active in more than 70 prisons. Restorative projects involve prisoners in work which helps them to develop new skills and – most importantly – to improve the lives of other people. These include large scale park regeneration schemes, Braille transcription for blind children and adults, art for hospices, and wheelchairs for disabled people in Africa. Prisoners volunteer for this work, and it is important that they do so. Helping other people must be a deliberate act! Volunteers from outside support the prisoner project teams in a variety of ways: encouraging, training, praising and awarding certificates. The Trust believes strongly that each individual needs self-respect and a positive sense of having a place in the world to thrive, and that this must include the most vulnerable people in our society, particularly those in prison. info@iotrust.plus.com www.inside-out.org.uk

“Knowing that those bikes I’ve made are going to people in Africa makes me very happy to know I’ve done something good “.
A prisoner working on an Inside Out project

“Recently a young person who I work with lost her mother ... Before her mother passed away there were times when she did not cope very well with the situation, so getting into trouble was a regular thing. It was often difficult to know how to support her; just being there, meant that you also became involved in this family’s struggles ... Her positive attitude and maturity is a credit to her character, and she is doing well in her new environment.”
Youth worker with Oxford Youth Works

While many resources are channelled into responding to offending, **Oxford Youth Works** tries to prevent it. The project builds relationships with young people as an expression of Christian care. It tends to be the more needy and ‘at-risk’ young people who respond. The security that can be provided by this relationship means that young people are more open to challenge and change. Oxford Youth Works focuses on relationships with and between young people and their communities and encourages restorative approaches to all levels of conflict. Volunteers have the opportunity to work alongside young people, with other volunteers and youth workers, in communities in Oxford.
01865 204747 www.oxfordyouthworks.co.uk

pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust) works with prisoners’ families, and with prisoners, both men and women. It helps families maintain contact during imprisonment, supports vulnerable prisoners entering prison, supports families at court, and works inside and outside prison for the successful resettlement of ex-offenders. **pact** volunteers currently work across Greater London, in Milton Keynes, and in the Devon and Cornwall area. The charity has developed an accredited volunteer training programme and offers a range of volunteer opportunities, including working in **pact** family centres which are attached to prisons (See **Prison Visitors’ Centres** p.14) working with prisoners at Holloway and Exeter Prisons, and providing supervised play for children visiting prison. **Pact** is also seeking volunteers who are interested in fundraising, public speaking, or administrative work at its offices in London and Plymouth. **020 7490 3139** (London) or **01752 671555** (Plymouth)
www.prisonadvice.org.uk

“You’ve got to remember that when you’re in prison ... It’s all about ‘you’ve been a bad boy’, ‘you’ve done wrong’ ... And then you get the opportunity to do something like this, and then within yourself you’re saying: ‘I’m actually helping people now. I’m a good boy now because I’m helping people and it’s my choice to be of help’ ”.
A prisoner Citizens’ Advisor

Since the summer of 2002 a team of six serving prisoners from Springhill Prison has been built up and trained by the **Oxford Citizens Advice Bureau**, where they have made a major contribution to meeting client needs, helping around 15,000 people. Following detailed evaluation by a team from Oxford and Cambridge Universities which showed that the full CAB standards were maintained and there were no breaches of prison licence conditions, the scheme has now been extended to a further five Prison/CAB partnerships. For further information on the evaluation see the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation website www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk. For further information on the prison/CAB partnership, contact the coordinator Stephen Pryor on pryor@brackengarth.freeserve.co.uk

The **Prisoners’ Families and Friends Service** has supported 10,000 families at court during the past ten years, through its Presence in Court project. In doing so, it has trained 500 volunteers. The project now operates in eight London Crown Courts. Volunteers offer first instance

information, guidance and support to families of men and women sentenced to imprisonment or remanded in custody.
020 7403 409 info@prisonersfamiliesandfriends.org.uk
www.prisonersfamiliesandfriends.org.uk

Prison Fellowship mobilises and assists volunteers from the Christian community, through prayer, practical action and values-based programmes, to restore those affected by crime - offenders, ex-offenders, families, victims and communities. Specific initiatives include Sycamore Tree, a victim awareness



“There isn’t a word that can describe the joy I heard in my boy’s voice”.

A prisoner whose son had received a Christmas present through Angel Tree

programme for prisoners based on restorative principles; Angel Tree, helping to strengthen family ties by providing Christmas presents for prisoners’ children; and Compass, a Christian values-based programme covering life skills, lifestyle and the arts. Volunteers are based in more than 150 local groups. **01621 843232** www.prisonfellowship.org.uk

While working in the chaplaincy at Low Newton women’s prison at Durham, Elizabeth McGurk became aware that many women had no one to meet them on discharge, and were apprehensive about getting themselves to the railway or bus station. Some fell prey to drug dealers. With the approval of the prison governor, Elizabeth formed

‘Prison Outreach’, recruiting a team of volunteer car drivers from local churches to offer transport to any woman who wanted it. In two years, 500 released prisoners were assisted. ‘Open Gate’ has now been formed, offering a mentoring service and eventually, it is hoped, supported housing. This has become a partnership between the prison, Community Chaplaincy, and a local agency St. Cuthbert’s Care. **0191 386 1311** or **0191 384 1734**

Restore (formerly Pacer 50plus) is a faith-based national peer-led support service for older serving and former prisoners. As a former prisoner, founder Stuart Ware identified that the pains of imprisonment continue long after release. Restore believes that the negative experiences of imprisonment are a major contributor to recidivism and a hindrance to successful rehabilitation in local communities. Many former prisoners feel lonely and isolated. Healing and reconciliation lies at the heart of the work of Restore. It needs volunteers, whether or not they are ex-offenders, who have a faith, and a commitment to work with those who are excluded from society. **01300 342062** stuartware@btinternet.com

The **Shannon Trust** recruits prisoners as volunteer mentors to help other prisoners improve their literacy skills using the Shannon Reading Plan. The volunteers give up half an hour each day to help other prisoners on a one-to-one basis using a Toe by Toe manual. Self-esteem improves as well as literacy. Volunteers outside prison are also used to fulfil liaison roles. cheryl@shannontrust.com www.shannontrust.com

The **South Asian Offenders** project in Manchester works with Manchester Probation area to ensure that cultural issues are taken into consideration in the writing of pre-sentence and parole reports, the supervision of offenders and liaison with victims. The project operates within the Pakistani Resource Centre, which seeks to empower members of South Asian communities to confront some of the problems they face. Volunteers are used to help mentor offenders. **0161 237 9556** offenders@pakistani.resource.org.uk

Stepping Stones is a Christian Trust that has worked with ex-prisoners for more than twenty years, seeking to reduce the likelihood of re-offending by helping people move into their own home and get a decent job. Stepping stones encourages its residents to join a local church which will provide support and opportunities to build new relationships. The Trust has three houses in London - one specifically for sex offenders. Two local churches provide support and frequently voluntary work as well. There is also a role for volunteers in offering friendship. Many people feel nervous of ex-prisoners but most ex-prisoners need friends who can demonstrate that a crime-free lifestyle is a reality. info@steppingstonetrust.org.uk www.steppingstonetrust.org.uk



Photo: Stepping Stones

WHAT ELSE I CAN DO?

Contributing to the debate

If you have read this far, it is likely that you will already be better informed, and have a clearer grasp of the issues, than many other people, whose views on how to deal with crime are based upon sensationalised headlines and black-and-white tabloid analyses. If you have become involved as a volunteer, as we predicted in the Introduction, some of your pre-conceptions will almost certainly have been challenged. You can obtain further information from the books and organisations listed on the following pages.

You can help raise awareness by:

- Writing to your Member of Parliament, supporting her or him in taking a balanced view of how best to tackle offending, particularly at a time when legislation is being debated. Most MPs welcome letters that are presented reasonably and well-argued.
- Telling your friends of your experiences, and contributing to discussions which seem to lack balance.
- Writing to newspapers which appear to be whipping up a fear of crime without good cause - distorting crime statistics, misrepresenting young people, undermining confidence in Judges and Magistrates and using un-necessarily derogatory language to describe offenders. Be concise and get your letter in as quickly as possible after the offending article appears; most publications have an e-mail address for letters.
- Telephoning phone-in programmes on local radio stations.

Fundraising

Organisations which help victims, offenders and their families require funds. Many do not receive core funding from government and rely on the goodwill and generosity of charitable trusts, and foundations, and members of the public. If you don't feel able to be involved in any of the direct forms of volunteering, and fundraising is your "thing", you are likely to be welcomed warmly, especially if you have innovative ideas for persuading people to part with their money, as well as the traditional sponsored activities, raffles, bring-and-buy and car boot sales.

However, you should not undertake to raise funds on behalf of a particular group without the express permission and authorisation of the group. Criminal Justice is an area of work which does provoke some strong reactions; eliciting donations to help fund a nightshelter for homeless ex-offenders is unlikely to be as easy as getting people to give a contribution for a home for stray cats!

Prayer

The followers of most World faiths believe in the importance and the power of prayer. If you are a person of faith, please support this work in prayer. We suggest you pray particularly for:

- Volunteers: That they may be sustained in what can be difficult and demanding work
- Young people on the fringes of crime - that they will find good role models, who will help them find a sense of fulfilment, away from offending
- Victims of crime and offenders — that contact with volunteers will provide help and encouragement.
- Families suffering as a result of the imprisonment of a family member - that they will be helped in coping without their loved one - and in re-adjusting when she or he returns home
- Judges and magistrates - who have to make difficult decisions, balancing the need for justice with mercy
- Prison, Probation and Police staff - that they will be given the patience to treat people who can be difficult and demanding, with respect
- Prison Chaplains - that they too will be sustained, especially at times of tension within the prison; that they will be able to minister both to staff and inmates, helping prisoners to find a resource greater than they have known before, which will enable them to lead changed lives.

SUGGESTED READING

A lot is written about criminal justice, and you should not feel that you have to read all – or even, any – of the titles listed, in order to be a volunteer. Some people read about things, while others get on and do them! Where a website address is given, it is often possible to download, or request, the title concerned via the Internet.

Community Safety

Nacro. 1999. *Community Safety Community Solutions: tackling crime in inner city neighbourhoods*. www.nacro.org.uk

Nacro. 2000. *Putting the community into Community safety: a practitioner's guide* www.nacro.org.uk

Criminal Justice Reform

Jones C. and Sedgwick P. (eds.). 2002. *The Future of Criminal Justice: Resettlement, Chaplaincy and Community*. SPCK

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. 2004. *I would Rethink Crime and Punishment by ...* www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. 2004. *Rethinking Crime and Punishment: The Report* www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

Church of England Mission and Public Affairs Council. Sedgwick P. (ed.). 2004. *Re-thinking Sentencing: A contribution to the debate*. Church House Publishing

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. 2004. *Crime, Courts and Confidence: Report of an Independent Inquiry into Alternatives to Prison*. www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

Families

Action for Prisoners' Families. 2004. *The Outsiders: Information booklets for the partners and families of prisoners*. www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk

Prison Reform Trust. 2002. *A Review of the Role of Prison Visitors' Centres*. www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk

Inmates and families at HMP Wolds with Watson S. and Rice S. 2003. *Daddy's Working Away: A Guide to Being a Dad in Prison*. Care for the Family

Mental Health

Nacro. 1998. *Risks and Rights: Mentally disturbed offenders and public protection*. www.nacro.org.uk

National Offender Management Service

Clinks. 2005. *Prisons Probation and NOMS: A fact sheet for the Voluntary Sector*. www.clinks.org

Finola Farrant for Prison Reform Trust. 2002. *Troubled Inside: Responding to the Mental Health needs of Children and Young People in Prison* www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk

Dora Rickford for Prison Reform Trust. 2003. *Troubled Inside: Responding to the Mental Health Needs of Women in Prison*. www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk

Prison and Prisoners

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USEFUL ADDRESSES

Addresses, phone numbers and email addresses tend to change! For the latest version of these contacts visit the What Can I Do website — www.whatcanido.org.uk — where you can find a regularly updated list.

Action for Prisoners' Families

Unit 21 Carlson Court, 116 Putney Bridge Road, London SW15 2NQ
020 8812 3600
info@actionpf.org.uk www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk

National federation of services supporting prisoners' families. Provides opportunity for member groups to participate in a national network that encourages exchange of knowledge, skills and ideas

Alpha for Prisons

Holy Trinity Brompton, Brompton Road, London SW7 1JA
020 7052 0336
prisons@alpha.org www.alphacourse.org/prisons

Helps chaplains run the Alpha Course (which introduces people to Christianity) in prison

Buddhist Prison Chaplaincy -Angulimala

The Forest Hermitage, Lower Fulbrook, Warwickshire CV35 8AS
01926 624385 prakhem@foresthermitage.org.uk
www.angulimala.org.uk

Role includes recruiting and supporting Buddhist Prison Chaplains

Caring for Ex-Offenders

Holy Trinity Brompton, Brompton Road, London SW7 1JA
020 7052 0334
info@caringforexoffenders.org www.caringforexoffenders.org

Developed following the growth of Alpha for Prisons. This charity works to support and help resettle released prisoners within the community

Caritas – social action

39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX
020 7901 4875
caritas@cbcew.org.uk www.caritas-socialaction.org.uk

The Catholic church's voice on social justice and care within England and Wales. Encourages practical action

Centre for Crime and Justice Studies

Law School, King's College, 26-29 Drury Lane, London WC2B 5RL
020 7848 1688
ccjs.enq@kcl.ac.uk www.crimeinfo.org.uk www.kcl.ac.uk/ccjs

Informs and educates about all aspects of crime and criminal justice; encourages and facilitates healthy debate

Chaplaincy headquarters at NOMS

Prison Chaplaincy headquarters, Sixth Floor, Horseferry House, Dean Ryle Street, London SW1P 2AW
0207 217 8960
chaplaincy@prisons-chap-hq.demon.co.uk

Serves the needs of prisoners staff and faith communities. (See 'Chaplaincy' p.16)

Churches' Commission for Racial Justice

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Bastille Court, 2 Paris Garden, London SE1 8ND
020 7654 7254
ccrj@ctbi.org.uk www.ctbi.org.uk

Monitors trends and developments in racial justice and, where appropriate, co-ordinates a Church response. Areas of interest include Race and Crime.

Churches' Criminal Justice Forum

39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX
020 7901 4878
info@ccjf.org.uk www.ccjf.org.uk

Upholds Christian values in criminal justice, and raises awareness of criminal justice concerns among churches. Encourages volunteer involvement.

Church of England Community and Public Affairs Unit

Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ
020 7898 1531
christopher.jones@c-of-e.org.uk

Advisory role to the Church of England on criminal justice issues

Circles of Support and Accountability

Helen Drewery, Assistant General Secretary, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ
020 7663 1022
helend@quaker.org.uk

Volunteers work with sex offenders to help prevent further offending. (See 'Circles of Support' p.20)

Clinks

25 Micklegate, York YO1 6JH. 01904 673970
info@clinks.org www.clinks.org

Supports voluntary organisations working with offenders and families

Cohesion and Faiths Unit within the Home Office

First Floor, Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF
020 7035 0399

Building community cohesion; engaging with, and building capacity in faith communities

CSV (Community Service Volunteers)

237 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NJ
020 7278 6601
information@csv.org.uk www.csv.org.uk

Works to re-connect people to their community through volunteering and training, so enriching people's lives

Faithworks

115 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 0AX
0207 450 9031
info@faithworks.info www.faithworks.info

Empowers and inspires churches to develop their role at the hub of the community; encourages practical initiatives

Hindu Prison Chaplaincy

The Bhavan Centre, 4a Castletown Road, London W14 9HE
0207 381 3086
shastry@bhavan.net

Role includes helping to recruit and support Hindu prison chaplains and volunteers

Howard League

1 Ardleigh Road, London N1 4HS
020 7249 7373
info@howardleague.org www.howardleague.org

Penal reform. Works for safer society, offenders making amends, and promotion of community sentences

Independent Monitoring Board Secretariat

2nd floor, Ashley House, 2 Monck Street, London SW1P 2BQ
imb@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Information and advice about Independent Monitoring Boards. (See 'Independent Monitoring Boards' p.17)

Inside Out Trust

Hilton House, 55-57a High Street, Hurstpierpoint, Sussex BN6 9TT
01273 833050
info@iotrust.plus.com www.inside-out.org.uk

Develops prison projects based on restorative justice principles. Prisoners learn new skills to help disadvantaged people all over the world - and improve their own employment prospects. Inside Out works with other voluntary and community groups to set up projects

Jewish Prison Chaplaincy

United Synagogue, 8-10 Forty Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 8JW
0208 457 9703
michael@aje.org.uk

Supports and advises Jewish prison chaplains

Magistrates' Association

28 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 6DD
020 7387 2353 or 0800 003 007 for recruitment
communications@magistrates-association.org.uk
www.magistrates-association.org.uk

Represents lay (volunteer) magistrates who deal with over 96% of all criminal cases in England and Wales. The Association also promotes good practice, supports training and provides information and advice to members and to the general public. (See 'Magistracy' p.10)

Mediation UK

Mediation UK, Alexander House, Telephone Avenue, Bristol BS1 4BS
0117 904 6661
enquiry@mediationuk.org.uk www.mediationuk.org.uk

Dedicated to developing constructive means of resolving conflicts in communities. Information about local mediation services

Mothers' Union

Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3RB
020 7222 5533
mu@themothersunion.org www.themothersunion.org

A Christian organisation which promotes the well-being of families. It has one thousand members active as volunteers in more than 80 prisons throughout the UK and Ireland

Muslim Advisor to Chaplaincy

Prison Chaplaincy headquarters, Sixth Floor, Horseferry House, Dean Ryle Street, London SW1P 2AW
020 7217 8832
Ahtsham.ali@hmpr.gsi.gov.uk

Role includes supporting Muslim Prison Chaplains

Nacro

169 Clapham Road, London SW9 0PU
020 7582 6500
volunteering@nacro.org.uk www.nacro.org.uk

Works to reduce crime through practical solutions. More than 200 projects across England and Wales which help ex-offenders, disadvantaged people and deprived communities to build a better future. Practical opportunities for volunteers include coaching young people in football projects, providing one to one support to learners in education and employment centres, mentoring young and adult prisoners, and using theatre and drama to educate and engage young people

National Association of Official Prison Visitors

info@naopv.com www.naopv.com

Co-ordinates the work of official Prison Visitors. (See 'Prison Visiting' p.13)

National Offender Management Service Community Integration Unit

Third Floor, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF
020 7035 0214
philip.rees@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Contributes to NOMS aim of reducing re-offending through the successful integration of offenders into the community.

National Offender Management Service Voluntary Sector Unit

Third Floor, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF
020 7035 0209
elaine.castle3@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Co-ordination of voluntary sector within NOMS

Police

Contact local police headquarters or visit website of local police force (See 'Policing' p.5)

pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust)

Suite C5, City Cloisters, 196 Old Street, London EC1V 9FR
020 7490 3139
info@pact.uk.net www.prisonadvice.org.uk

Works with prisoners' families and prisoners. Pact Visitors' Centres provide information, advice and refreshment for adults, visiting relatives or friends in prison. Runs supervised play for visiting children in prison Visits Halls. 'First Night in Custody' schemes at HMP Holloway (women) and HMP Exeter (men) support vulnerable new prisoners. Projects welcome volunteers, students and those seeking work placements. OCN Accredited training offered

Prison Fellowship England and Wales

PO Box 945, Maldon, Essex CM9 4EW
01621 843232
enquiries@prisonfellowship.org.uk www.prisonfellowship.org.uk

Mobilises and assists volunteers from the Christian community, through prayer, practical action and prison programmes, to restore those affected by crime - offenders, ex-offenders, families, victims and communities. Programmes include Sycamore Tree, victim awareness based on restorative justice principles; Angel Tree, providing Christmas presents for prisoners' children; and Compass, a Christian values-based programme

Prison Reform Trust

15 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0JR
020 7251 5070
prt@prisonreformtrust.org.uk www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk

Creating a just, humane and effective penal system by inquiring into its workings; informing prisoners, staff, and the public; and by influencing Parliament, government and officials towards reform

Prisons Week

PO Box 2733, Lichfield WS13 6GZ
www.prisonweek.org

Formed to pray for and raise awareness of the needs of prisoners and their families, victims of offenders, prison staff and all those who care. (See 'Prisons Week' p.18)

Restorative Justice Consortium

Merchant House, 89 Southwark Street, London SE1 0HX
020 7960 4633
info@restorativejustice.org.uk www.restorativejustice.org.uk

Promotes the use of restorative justice in schools, the community, prisons, the criminal justice system, the workplace and any other situation where conflict arises; disseminates information about restorative justice; develops and promotes agreed standards and principles for evaluating and guiding restorative practice; encourages and undertakes research. (See 'Restorative Justice' p.8)

Revolving Doors Agency

Unit 29, The Turnmill, 63 Clerkenwell Road, London EC1M 5NP
020 7253 4038
admin@revolving-doors.co.uk www.revolving-doors.co.uk

Improving the lives of people who are caught up in a damaging cycle of crisis, crime and mental illness

Sikh Prison Chaplaincy Service

Suite 405, Highland House, 165 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1NE.
0208 544 8037
sikhmessenger@aol.com

Role includes recruiting and supporting Sikh prison chaplains

Smart Justice

15 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0JR
020 7689 7734
info@smartjustice.org www.smartjustice.org

Campaigns for alternatives to custody and promotes initiatives that are effective in changing offenders' behaviour, stopping crime before it starts and tackling the causes of crime

SOVA

1st Floor Chichester House, 37 Brixton Road, London SW9 6DZ
020 7793 0404
mail@sova.org.uk www.sova.org.uk

Works to strengthen communities by involving local volunteers in promoting social inclusion and reducing crime, especially by mentoring

TimeBank

2nd Floor Downstream Building, 1 London Bridge, London SE1 9BG
0845 456 1668
www.timebank.org.uk

National volunteering charity set up to make it easier for people to give time to their community

Victim Support

For details of local schemes contact the national office
020 7735 9166
info@victimsupport.org.uk www.victimsupport.org.uk

Local schemes use volunteers to support victims of crime and witnesses. (See 'Victim Support' section p.9)

Volunteering England

Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL
0845 305 6979
information@volunteeringengland.org
www.volunteering.org.uk

Works to promote volunteering as a powerful force for change – both for the volunteer and for the wider community

YMCA

To find out about projects and volunteer opportunities, visit www.ymca.org.uk to locate your local YMCA

As part of their work with young people, YMCAs run crime diversion programmes. The YMCA also works in 14 Young Offender Institutions helping young people to develop skills, make responsible and informed decisions and think and process ideas so that the consequences are clear

Youth Justice Board

11 Carteret Street, London SW1H 9DL
020 7271 3033
enquiries@yjb.gsi.gov.uk www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk

A public body which can advise on volunteering opportunities in the field of youth justice. (See 'Youth Justice' p.6)

FEEDBACK

We would love to hear from you, particularly in answer to the questions below:

- Was this booklet helpful to you?
- Did you follow up any of the opportunities it contains?
- Are you now involved in some criminal justice project or activity, as a result of reading it? And if so, What?
- What do you believe the benefits to be, for those you are seeking to help?
- What are the benefits for you?
- Did the booklet disappoint you in any way?
- Were there things you wanted to know that it didn't contain? And if so, What?
- Did you find any errors?

Please send your comments to:

What Can I Do
c/o pact
Suite C5
City Cloisters
196 Old Street
London EC1V 9FR

Or visit the website:

www.whatcanido.org.uk



This booklet was produced by pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust) and the Churches' Criminal Justice Forum.

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POLICING
YOUTH JUSTICE
WHAT
RESTORATIVE
JUSTICE
VICTIMS
MAGISTRACY
PROBATION
MENTORING
PRISON VISITING
PRISON VISITORS'
CENTRES
CAN
VISITS PLAY
PROJECTS
PRISON
CHAPLAINCY
INDEPENDENT
MONITORING
BOARDS
I DO?
PRISONS WEEK
COMMUNITY
CHAPLAINCY
CIRCLES OF
SUPPORT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY
CAMPAIGNING
FUNDRAISING

What Can I Do? is a guide to volunteering opportunities in the criminal justice system.

From police to probation, from mentoring to magistracy, it contains details of volunteering opportunities to suit all levels of ability, interest and commitment.

So if you're concerned about our criminal justice system and want to be actively involved, all you need to do is ask **What Can I Do?**

www.whatcanido.org.uk

