

## Making a Patchwork for National Prisons Week

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National Prisons Week ran from 9 – 15 October, 2022.

To mark this annual event, Quakers in Criminal Justice were asked to share reflections, experiences, impressions and key facts about prisons, enabling me to assemble a '**Prison Patchwork**'. Quaker Prison Chaplains invited more serving prisoners to contribute.

The top line consists of insights relating to Meetings for Worship 'inside'.

Gathered worship Deep silences Supportive group.	'Thank you for a lovely afternoon' <i>Prisoner to Chaplain after worship</i>	'I am just so grateful to be here' <i>Chaplain at the Meeting for Worship</i>	This is where God is, in these prison corridors (whatever God means to us).
Just because we have done something bad, doesn't mean we are bad people. We want people to see we can change.	The lowest point for me in prison was receiving my COVID booster jab through the bars. I hung my arm out & was injected like an animal.	The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons. - <i>Dostoevsky</i>	Door unlocked CLANG. Door unlocked CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. Then, finally, the Peace of our Quaker Meeting.
I had a very kind-hearted teacher (ie Chaplain) who was patient enough to help me understand how to live a Quaker way.	I got an alright cellmate but he speaks no English. Then we got a pack of cards. We can't exactly talk, but we do have a laugh!	I never could draw anything till I got here. I started just colouring in, but now my stuff is all over the walls.	I've been making a treasure box with the matchsticks and glue. My mum died when I was here, I want to keep her letters safe and special.
The nights are the worst here, people cry, I go over the past, I panic. The radio is a diamond. I wind it up, put it by my pillow, escape into music.	In prison I was recognised as an interfaith theologian, became a Chaplain's Assistant three times. Thank you, Officers & Governors concerned.	Many prisoners who'd like to take a course & show they wish to make amends, have few opportunities to do so - or receive any help to start to feel positive.	When visiting prison, I became aware of how few 'ordinary people' like me I met i.e. married, with children, house, employment, education. Most of them never had a chance.
The prison population doubled after the closure of secure hospitals. Care in the Community?	Black young adults are 8.4 times more likely to receive a conviction & 1.5 times more likely to be sent to prison.	25% of male prisoners and 50% of female prisoners have been in care. 65% of boys with a convicted parent will offend.	60% of female prisoners are mothers, of whom 45% had children living with them at time imprisonment.
Imprisonment has become the response of first resort to far too many of our social problems.	You don't make people behave well by treating them badly.	There is a probation shortfall of 1,692 (full-time equivalent) staff.	1 in 7 prison officers left last year and many new recruits are teenagers who are unlikely to stay for long.