

Quakers in Criminal Justice Member Activities

The range of involvement of members of QICJ is impressive. We are working with people in prison, in courts and in communities to bring about safer places for personal growth. Here are some examples:

Quaker Prison Chaplains now work in over 80 prisons in England and Wales. Many are supported by Friends who attend the Meetings for Worship they have established in their prison.

Alison is Quaker Chaplain to the Courts and Tribunal Service in her area – concerned for staff, security, defendants and their families and supporters. This is a new service recently established.

Mark works as an Appropriate Adult in police custody settings, upholding the rights of the vulnerable accused. Minimal wage.

Marian and Nick have presented on restorative approaches at the UN. In criminal justice settings, restorative conferences and processes record high satisfaction levels for both victims and offenders. Marian is involved in Resolve West (formerly Bristol Mediation) delivering restorative approaches in Avon and Somerset. Nick works with courts in North Carolina.

Alan is an Independent Monitoring Board Member and, in addition to monitoring fairness and decency in the prison, has been surveying the IPP population as to how they are treated within the establishments in his area.

Ruth has developed DWRM www.dworm.org.uk – university courses for learners in prison – a social enterprise that provides access to higher learning for those in custody. Supported in prisons by education departments, this service has helped many achieve their ambition to study further and share the university experience from their prison cell. It fills a big gap that the Open University left.

William has helped a project in Coventry working with unsupported refugees, developing housing and community to enable a transition into a more settled life.

Joolz is in an Amnesty Group that held a bike collection in Refugee Week with remarkable success. She reminds us of the work of the Koestler Foundation and recommends a visit to the Royal Festival Hall to see the remarkable artistic and creative work being done by prisoners.

Bill is currently on licence after being sentenced for 31 months. He has never been in trouble before and was shocked by the conditions for prisoners, especially during COVID. Bill has become a council member of UserVoice, an organisation run by ex-offenders to help people passing through the justice system.

Mike is an academic with a special interest in the growing use of technology and AI across the CJS.

Melanie has worked over many decades to promote the needs of neurodiverse people throughout the justice/criminal justice system. She has engaged with the Ministry of Justice, who are finally producing a Neurodiverse Action Plan.

Kate clerks the working group of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network, which organises seminars and liaises with the Scottish government.

Jo is a member of a Circle of Support and Accountability. The Circle meets every week with their Core Member, encouraging him to care for his health and follow his (safe) interests.

Tim, working with criminal justice practitioners, has helped develop Escaping Victimhood www.escapingvictimhood.com, a Quaker Recognised Body, which provides experiential residential workshops for families bereaved by homicide and for victims of other serious crimes, including abuse in childhood.

More information about these projects is available from Tim Newell, newell.tc@gmail.com