

Did You Know??



- We have two local prisons: HMP Send for women, and HMP Coldingley for men
- 70% of women in prison have suffered abuse, mental health problems and addiction
- Many women are in prison are isolated miles from home, or have no family to visit
- Friendship and contact with the “outside” world is vital to coping with prison life and returning to society after prison. Could you become an official prison visitor, offering friendship to a prisoner for an hour or two every week or so? Could you make “time to listen, time to share, time to care.”??
- Official Prison Visitors (OPV) are independent volunteers appointed by prison establishments, who visit prisons in order to offer friendship to prisoners. Probably the most important attributes an OPV can have are:-
 - Common sense.
 - Compassion.
 - A Sense of Humour.
 - Patience.
- If you have all of the above and are willing to give of your time, perhaps you could become one of the people to join the privileged group who are OPVs.
- This is what prisoners say:

"It is like having a member of my family come and see me every week. It just, you know, helps me through."

"Thanks for the visit. You have really helped me through a bad time."

"Having a visitor means a lot. It means that someone from the outside is bothered enough about me to come and visit."

"I know what I've done. I'm not happy about it, but I know now that I'm not forgotten or ignored. Your visits prove that."

"Thanks for your visits, they've really helped me get through the sentence. You have made me determined that I'm not coming in here again, NOT EVER. I know that there is a better way to do things. Thanks again."

"It's the interest you show. I don't know if you understand, but I feel now as though somebody cares. Maybe if someone had shown this interest a few years ago I wouldn't be here now; who knows where I might have been? Do you think its too late for me to get a life?"

Find out more: look at the website for prison visitors, www.naopv.com; or to find out about volunteering locally, contact Rev Lesley Mason on 01483 471131 or email lesley.mason@hmps.gsi.gov.uk