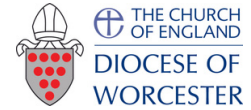


Worcester Diocesan Criminal Justice Affairs Group

Prayer Guide - July 2025



The Diocese of Worcester hosts a group whose focus is criminal justice and offers a faith perspective on criminal justice matters & raises awareness of the issues.

CJAG offers this bi-monthly prayer guide which we hope will be useful for personal & intercessory prayer in local parishes. Do pass it on to those who would be interested and encourage its usage. Welcome to the CJAG Prayer Guide for July.

Substance abuse

The link between substance misuse and crime is complex, but there is evidence to suggest that a significant number of those committing offences have problematic alcohol or drug use. Up to half of all acquisitive crime is estimated to be drug-related, with both chronic and binge drinking strongly associated with violent reoffending. Around 306,000 are judged to be heroin and/or crack users nationally, with 200,000 in treatment in any one year. The cost is enormous, both financially and in human terms, with families devastated across the UK. The Crime Survey estimates that 8.8% of all people aged 16-59 (approximately 2.9m) and 16.5% aged 16-24 (around 971,000) used "any drug" in the past 12 months with 1.8% frequent drug users.

There is increasing concern about the levels of illicit drugs in prisons (random tests recently identified more than half the prisoners at a Cat C prison tested positive for illicit drug use). The drugs market on prison wings is described as currently being "as bad as it's ever been", and there are real fears about an escalation in drug-related gang wars; an increase in the use of drones which can carry up to 7kg of illicit goods (experienced pilots are being hired by organised drug gangs to fly drugs into prisons); and the spread of new super-strength synthetic opioids 250 times stronger than heroin have already claimed lives in prisons.

Disrupting drugs supply will never work without sustained work to reduce the demand, fuelled by boredom - tens of thousands of prisoners continue to spend less than 2 hours out of their cells daily instead of being in full-time education or employment that prepares them to return to the community. On the positive side, there is evidence that robust drug and alcohol treatment programs contribute significantly to crime reduction and enhance public safety.

Heavenly Father, look with compassion upon all who through addiction have lost their health and freedom. Restore to them the assurance of Your unfailing mercy; remove from them the fears that beset them; strengthen them in the work of their recovery; and to those who care for them, give patient understanding and persevering love. Amen.

Especially we pray for:

- Those trying to free themselves from addiction
- Substance misuse treatment services
- Inexperienced prison officers and health staff that can be at risk of being tempted by large sums of money to smuggle drugs into prisons
- An improvement in continuity of care from custody into the community for those requiring substance misuse treatment
- All who work within the Criminal Justice System with substance misuse offenders, for their compassion and wisdom