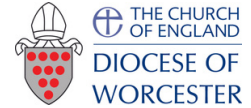

Worcester Diocesan Criminal Justice Affairs Group
Prayer Guide - October 2024



The Diocese of Worcester hosts a group whose focus is criminal justice. The diocesan Criminal Justice Affairs Group (CJAG) offers a faith perspective on criminal justice matters and raises awareness of the issues.

CJAG offers this monthly prayer guide which we hope will be useful for personal & intercessory prayer in local parishes. Do pass it on others in your church and encourage its usage. Welcome to the CJAG Prayer Guide for October.

Prison numbers reached their highest ever (88,350 at 30 August) at a time when speedy justice was being sought for those involved in the riots. Scotland, England & Wales have the highest imprisonment rates in Western Europe. The prison population has almost doubled in the last 30 years - despite recorded crime having fallen - due to changes in sentencing policy and an increasingly punitive approach towards those committing offences.

Community sentences are more effective than short prison sentences at reducing crime but resources are continually channelled towards prisons. The early release of prisoners to ease the pressure has caused negative media attention with little recognition that prisons overwhelmed by overcrowding are not preparing people for life outside, and there is insufficient support for people when they are released.

Join us this month in praying for those directly affected by the overcrowding.

Heavenly Father, we come before you with heavy hearts, aware of the overcrowding in our prisons. We pray for those who are incarcerated, that they may find hope and strength in your presence. Grant them peace and the opportunity for rehabilitation and growth. We also lift up the prison staff who work tirelessly under challenging conditions. Give them patience, wisdom, and compassion as they carry out their duties. Lord, we ask for your guidance for policymakers and leaders, that they may find effective solutions to reduce overcrowding and improve the conditions within prisons. Help us all to remember the humanity of those behind bars and to work towards a more just and compassionate system. Amen

Especially we pray for:

- The pressures on prison staff to meet the needs of current prisoners and the ever-increasing numbers
 - All those released early that they may have the support they need not to fail in the community
 - The families of prisoners particularly the estimated 192,912 children with a parent in prison
 - A more compassionate society that supports changes in the CJS which decreases re-offending
 - All victims of crime, especially those alarmed by the early release of offenders.
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