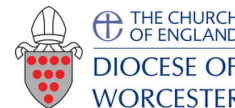


Worcester Diocesan Criminal Justice Affairs Group

Prayer Guide - July 2026



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.

Offenders with mental health problems

People in prison are generally in poorer health than the wider population and are more likely to have experienced childhood adversity, family breakdown, educational failure, poverty, substance misuse and trauma. Many enter custody with existing mental health problems, which imprisonment can worsen through loss of liberty, separation from family, overcrowding, violence, limited activity and uncertainty about the future.

Around 1 in 7 prisoners are identified as having a treatable mental disorder, and prison then adds its own stresses to those that already exist. Overcrowding and stretched staffing further reduce access to therapy, education and meaningful contact. Data shows that 56% of male prisoners and 74% of female prisoners report mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, personality disorders, psychosis and complex trauma.

Continuity of care across prison, probation and release remains weak, and the significant treatment gap in the general population impacts on offenders needing support. Rates of self-harm in prison are at the highest level since records began in 2012, especially among women (almost 9 times higher than males) and people on remand compared to those sentenced.

Merciful and Loving God, We bring before you all offenders whose mental health is a constant battle whether visibly troubled or struggling in the dark. In moments of grief, may they know your compassion; in times of depression, may they know your nearness; and when faced with addiction, surround them with your grace. Heal the wounds that cannot be seen and mend the brokenness that lies deep within. Bless their families, who often carry silent pain, and give strength to prison staff who work tirelessly to support them. Grant them the courage to face the truth of their past without being crushed by it, and the wisdom to see that change is possible, even in the most difficult places. Renew their strength, restore their dignity, and remind them they are never beyond Your love. Amen

Especially we pray for:

- All prisoners facing mental health challenges, experiencing difficulty in finding a way forward and lacking hope for the future
- Those new to prison life suffering despair and fear in an unfamiliar environment
- Those in need of diagnosis and treatment which is not available in prison or the community
- Those resorting to illegal substances in the absence of prescribed medication / treatment
- Those so desperate that they self-harm or attempt/commit suicide
- Families and friends with concerns about the mental health of loved ones
- Mental health workers trying their best with limited resources
- The impact on prison and probation staff as they manage difficult behaviour and mentally ill offenders without available specialised resources
- Greater understanding of mental ill health; the development of a compassionate society & a criminal justice system that offer timely and appropriate interventions & support