

GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA QUAKER MEETING JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: AM Quaker Prison Minister for Gloucester Prison

NB: While the basic roles for Quaker Prison Ministers at both “our” local prisons, Gloucester and Leyhill, have many similarities, the contexts in which they’re applied differ considerably. The two prisons have different populations. Gloucester is, *inter alia*, a holding and remand centre. Leyhill is, *inter alia*, an open prison.

General Context of the Role:

In the Quaker context the aim is to offer ministry to those imprisoned, especially those who are Quakers or who ask for a Quaker to see them. It is outreach.

The context of the Prison Service varies between prisons. In Gloucester Prison at present access to the work is managed by the Prison Chaplain. Once a member of the team, you may have some freedom to use your own skills. Much will depend on how you’re perceived and what you have to offer and on how ecumenically minded other members of the religious staff at the prison are. The job is in part what you make it.

A copy of the annually prepared Quaker Prison Minister Directory is available from Friends House. In most years a conference is organised for support and information about the work.

Experience and qualifications sought:

There are no formal qualifications. Being a fairly experienced Member of the Society is important. Personal qualities, such as being a good listener, non-judgemental and showing a willingness to explore issues of belief, are valued. Experience of e.g. adult education or counselling work may be particularly useful in the current regime there. Being able to persist calmly against indifference or puzzlement will be valuable.

Main Responsibilities:

Can be locally summed up as:

- Entering the staff group (currently led by the Chaplain), exploring the range of roles open to you. As staff change you may find you are often “breaking new ground”.
- Developing roles as you propose or as you are asked. Offering to run (or continue running) Quaker Meetings in the prison is one possibility.
- Being alert to new possibilities of service; the situation is not static. A possible role could be introducing new work to the Prison, as the present incumbent did for an Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP).
- Organise your own support system, within the AM or privately: don’t expect it to be provided within the prison.
- Expect to serve for up to 6 years (though MM reviews every 3) as this period makes more sense in terms of becoming familiar with roles and colleagues.
- Help keep AM and your own LM aware of issues and/or developments

In practice, depending on the kind of involvement you find best, this can mean...

- Attending monthly meeting of the Chaplaincy team (c. 2 hours one morning)
- Attend ecumenical services in the prison; join in occasional events (e.g. Carol services, Prison Week)
- Attend some Sunday services, some of which may clash with your own Meeting.
- Depending on your own interests and skills, initiate or run projects. These could be in art or drama or, like one postholder, in organising an Alternatives to Violence Project or engaging in a "Preparation for Release" programme.
- Becoming in addition a Prison Visitor with its secular role might extend access and contacts in the prison.
- Within each MM triennium period, report to MM on your work on its behalf.

Rewards and satisfactions of the job:

These are not predictable. However, they may be great. You may be involved in lifechanging events in someone's life, and in spiritual growth, yours and that of others with whom you work. The "fruits of your labours" may not always be visible to you but this will not need to distress you if you have the right attitude.

Approved by MM Nominations Committee 2 9 2002

Updated 'monthly' to 'area' 02.11.2010 EMW