



Kilmarnock prison - Chaplaincy

As I have mentioned before Kilmarnock is a community in its own right. One of the key aspects is the right to worship and I am grateful for the lead that the Chaplaincy team makes in also providing pastoral support.

In my time, a number of changes of personnel and ethos have occurred in Kilmarnock marking new developments in the life of the prison. This is equally true with the Chaplaincy where a significant shift in the understanding of the role of the Chaplain in prison life has taken place. Prison Chaplaincy has always been hard to define. In essence it involved spending time with men who are 'doing time'. The new approach acknowledges the ongoing need for a holistic approach to the care of the prisoner and their spiritual well being. Leading the way in managing a large department (Community Integration) the Chaplaincy team is now at the service of the whole prison community, staff and prisoners alike.

I cannot stress enough how important they are or how many times they have been the life changing contact for staff as well as prisoners.

At its narrowest, the Chaplaincy Team in HMP Kilmarnock has the responsibility of providing services and faith support for prisoners of various denominations and faiths. These are provided on a weekly basis and all prisoners are free to attend. All of the mainstream denominations are represented on the team but the team sees itself as having much broader remit.

The Chaplaincy team recognizes that they have a responsibility for all prisoners, staff and visitors regardless of denomination or faith. Prisoners of all or no stated faith are welcome at any time to access chaplaincy provision but the significant part of chaplaincy work takes place away from the Multi-Faith Centre.

In the residential areas of the prison, in the workshops, in the Visits Hall, and in Healthcare, much of the Chaplaincy Team's interaction with prisoners takes place at a very informal level; meeting prisoners and simply spending time with them. For vulnerable and distressed prisoners trying to come to terms with being inside, this lifeline often proves invaluable but it is also true that many prisoners see the team and the multi faith center as a haven of peace and quiet – a place to reflect and someone to talk to who will always be discreet.

The Chaplaincy Team does not stand on the fringes of prison life but sees itself at the heart of all that is happening in the prison. What will happen to a prisoner after release is as important to the Chaplaincy Team as what happened to prisoners while they are inside. Chaplaincy is a valued and valuable part of a multi-disciplinary approach to caring for offenders. Currently in HMP Kilmarnock one of the great strengths of the Chaplaincy team is its diversity. Each of the part time chaplains brings a different background and a different experience. All bring care and compassion rooted in their own personal faith and they support and encourage prisoners to discover and to develop theirs.

In the future the team hopes to develop Community Chaplaincy, asking faith centers in the surrounding community to provide support in prison and when prisoners are released. I believe the Chaplaincy team is part of helping Kilmarnock to make a difference, helping Kilmarnock to go from Good to Great.

Wendy Sinclair

DIRECTOR

HM PRISON KILMARNOCK