NEWSLETTER TO SUPPORTERS: JULY 2012

SEX OFFENDERS

Although Prisoners' Penfriends has been making it possible to correspond with prisoners since 2005, to date, the Prison Service has not allowed us to write to those who have been convicted of a sex offence.

This may be about to change. We have been invited to conduct two pilot programmes, writing to prisoners in HMP Whatton and HMP Usk. All prisoners in both these prisons have been convicted of sex offences.

These prisoners are often particularly isolated, having been abandoned by friends and family during what can be very long sentences. Those running sex offender treament programmes say that, if these offenders are going to change their lives, they will be assisted in doing so by taking part in "normal social interaction".

Penfriends specialise in being normal and chatty. And, as one of our prisoner-penfriends told us, his penfriend saw him "through a lot of tough times, knowing that she has not judged me and will not judge me for what I'm in here for."

We are now running special training sessions for those volunteers who will take part in these pilots, to make sure that everyone involved stays safe and feels secure and happy about this important and challenging task.

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