



NEWSLETTER TO SUPPORTERS: JANUARY 2014

Successful pilots

This time last year, Prisoners' Penfriends was conducting pilot schemes, corresponding with sex offenders at HMP Whatton and HMP Usk. Up until then, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) had prevented us from writing to prisoners convicted of sex offences.

Following successful pilots and consideration of all our security procedures, safeguards and training, NOMS has now decided to lift the ban. To quote its own email, going out to the prison estate, "Following the success of the pilots, Ministers have agreed sex offenders in other establishments can now be included in the Penfriends Scheme, although the final decision remains with the Prison Governor for each establishment."

We are now being invited to visit a number of prisons to agree how we are going to work together. In this way, we hope to reach those prisoners who are the most isolated and in need of what we have to offer. This is what some of the prisoners on the pilot said:

- *"I'm happy to know there is someone out there to take an interest in me and my life for once as I'm a bit of a loner."*
- *"Having someone write to a person like myself gives me hope that I can make things work on the outside."*
- *"Letters always bring a smile back to my face which is so easy lost in here."*

Funds

Conducting the pilots has been extremely time-consuming. We are worse off than we were this time last year. Getting the scheme off the ground in new prisons will involve travel, time etc. All donations will be gratefully received.

Patrons: Sir Nicholas Hytner, Sir Peter Lloyd, Fay Weldon, Lord Ramsbotham.

Trustees: Jennifer Gadsby-Peet, Malcolm Duxbury, Stephen Pollard (chair).

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