



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL PRISON VISITORS

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Dear Members and Friends,

Christmas Appeal

Christmas is a joyful time for many however, this can be one of the most challenging and lonely times for prisoners.

England and Wales have the highest imprisonment rate in Western Europe, in June there were 85,851 people serving sentences and this figure is projected to grow¹. Reports from HM Inspectorate of Prisons have repeatedly found living conditions in prisons to be poor, describing them in recent years as squalid, overcrowded, insanitary, and unacceptable².

NAOPV aims to relieve the need, hardship, or distress of prisoners in penal establishments in England and Wales. Currently, we have around 600 OPV members and as we approach our centenary anniversary in 2025, the need for prison visiting is greater than ever.

"I am serving a long sentence, no family or friends visit me. Before, I was isolated and depressed, my mental health was deteriorating. Then an OPV, Mary, started visiting me. No judging just listening and supporting me, here every week just like she said she would. Mary has been a lifeline. I feel different now, more hopeful."

In 2003 we were awarded an annual grant of £11,000 from the Ministry of Justice, the administration was transferred to HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) in 2018. The grant contributed to the cost of our annual conference, bringing OPV members and stakeholders together to share their knowledge, skills, and experiences. With significant cuts to the HMPPS budget,³ our funding ceased in March this year. To continue our activities, we have had to withdraw funds from our healthy financial reserve, now we are taking remedial steps to address the shortfall in our income.

Can you help?

We are seeking your help to continue our important work in 2024. Please consider a £20 donation this Christmas to aid our ongoing work and expand our network of OPVs. Your contribution will make a significant impact, allowing us to visit more prisoners as part of a coordinated prison visiting programme. Join us in our effort by donating via our website and being part of our mission to promote, implement, and support prison visiting. <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/14376#!/DonationDetails>

¹ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn04334/#:~:text=In%20addition%20to%20snapshots%20on,Northern%20Ireland%20in%202021%2F22>.

² <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05646/>

³ [Prison: the facts](#)