

Resolving enquiries about rules in prison: a peer-led information service toolkit

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Introduction

The Prison Reform Trust (PRT) Advice and Information Service receives over 6000 enquiries per year from currently serving prisoners about prison life, prison conditions and their rights in prison. We provide information to help people understand the experiences they are having in prison, who they can go to for support and how to challenge any treatment which they think is not fair or decent. But of course, the better outcome is always that prisoners can get this information without having to ask us. This Toolkit is offered as a way of helping prisons achieve that outcome more often.

Over the last 18 months we have been encouraged to discover a variety of peer led services within some establishments which provide this kind of information to prisoners, and which complement the work that our Advice and Information service delivers. They all consider that peer led services deliver benefits to prisoners and staff alike. We want to make that learning better known.

By visiting and speaking to the staff and prisoners who are running these services we have collated examples of good practice and devised a step by step guide to setting up a peer led service information service in a prison. It is **not** about setting up or running resettlement advice services, but only about dealing with in-prison issues - specifically helping prisoners and staff to get easier access to the information which should govern in-prison decisions, and the means to challenge those decisions appropriately when necessary.

PRT's offer is to provide advice and contacts if you want to start a peer led information and advice service from scratch, or to develop what you already have. In the long term, a strong network of peer led services would mean that more potential conflicts could be resolved at the earliest opportunity, and would allow PRT's advice line to concentrate on the most common or intractable issues that cannot be resolved locally.

What are the benefits of a peer led information service?

Information about prison rules and conditions being provided by currently serving prisoners has wide ranging benefits for both staff and prisoners.

Benefits to management

- Prisoners and staff are better able to recognise and adhere to correct procedures
- Concerns are resolved in good time, and potentially before complaint stage
- Regular problems raised to management level through consultation and monitoring reports
- Helps fulfil duty to ensure access to Prison Rules and Prison Service Instructions
- Effective option for dissemination of general update and other information
- Encourages culture of transparency and active citizenship within prisons
- Good demonstration for inspections- peer led information services have been praised by HMIP in previous inspections and the annual report.

Benefits to prisoners

- Prisoners can gain an understanding of the systems and conditions they are living in through easy access to Prison Rules and Prison Service Instructions
- Prisoners can identify when their treatment is fair or unfair and know when it is appropriate and worthwhile to raise an issue
- Prisoners are better able to navigate the often complex procedures that prisons operate under
- Prisoners delivering the service are empowered through meaningful work experience

Benefits to staff

- Access to information often helps resolve issues when prisoners can see that decisions are supported by Prison Service Instructions. This can help to reduce tension between prisoners and staff.
- When needed, staff can also use the service for reassurance about new instructions and instructions they are less familiar with
- Resolving concerns early can improve relationships between staff and prisoners.
- Early resolution of issues and redirection of enquiries can free up staff time to focus on areas which make better use of their skills and training.

Different Models

There are a variety of ways in which a peer led information service can work, depending upon the type of prison, the population, space and staffing resources. There may also be existing services already in operation that could accommodate the function. The following are examples of possible service models.

Application based service

- Prisoners submit enquiries either using a standard application or a service specific application.
- Enquiries are gathered from wings daily and taken to an assigned office or work space for response by the peer workers.
- Peer workers then check current PSIs, PSOs, and local policies to look for the requested information and respond in writing with extracts from the relevant documents if useful.
- This model can also provide for face to face explanations on at the designated work space or on the wings.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Space	Full or partial access to office space for service and confidential storage of paperwork
ICT	Access to PC for word processor, and locally stored information Printer/scanner/photocopier for producing PSIs
Staff	Member of staff to manage service, including recruitment of peers and day to day oversight Local wing staff for basic monitoring if needed SMT “owner”
PSIs	All publicly available PSIs, PSOs and other useful info – either hard copies or electronically
Movement	Peers need to be able to access working space and wings to pick up and return applications.
Systems /Comms	Effective application process in place / separate application process

‘Your Consultation Group’ in HMP Oakwood

Your Consultation Group (YCG) is a peer led service in HMP Oakwood which aims to provide prisoners with information about prison rules and prison service instructions relevant to difficulties they may be having in prison. It also offers a resource to staff to check details they may be less familiar with.

The YCG operates from an allocated office for which they have been given full use and responsibility of. Within it they have filing cabinets to store a copy of all available PSIs, a PC for letter writing and statistical analysis, a photocopier to make copies of popular instructions and desk space for general work and seeing prisoners.

Prisoners can access the service using YCG application forms which are available on the wings, and by speaking to the reps who regularly tour the wings to promote the service. They may also drop into the office during service hours if they work in the area.

They have used their initiative to produce signs for the wings which both advertise their service and provide information. For example, one board which they have had printed gives a very clear explanation of the complaints process including use of Easy Read illustrations.

The success of the service is in no small way due to the support it has received from wing staff right up to senior management. YCG reps report having been given responsibility and trust right from the beginning and little difficulty in obtaining reasonable resources to run the project.

Telephone advice service

- Where in cell telephony is available, this model could be effective.
- Prisoners with enquiries are able to call through to the peers using the phone in their cell. The call is directed to an allocated phone line in a room or confidential space reserved for the service.
- The peers log the enquiry and aim to answer it during the same call.
- If they are unable to answer the enquiry immediately they record the enquiry for further investigation and gather the information from PSIs, local policies or a member of staff. They can then call or write to the prisoner with the answer.
- An answerphone can also be put in place to take messages from those who call outside operating hours.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Space	Partial access to office space for service and
ICT	Access to PC for word processor, locally stored information Printer/scanner/photocopier for producing PSIs Telephones access with internal permissions set up as agreed
Staff	Member of staff to manage service, including recruitment of peers and day to day oversight Local staff for basic monitoring if needed SMT “owner”
PSIs	All publicly available PSIs, PSOs and other useful info - either hard copies or electronically
Movement	Peers need to be able to access working space and possibly wings to deliver responses
Systems /Comms	In cell telephony OR access to confidential phones on wings for prisoners

Prisoner Advice Line in HMP Lowdham Grange

We were made aware of the work of the Prisoner Advice Line through a specific mention of good practice in the HMIP 2015-2016 Annual Report and also when speaking to people in prison who had found it useful and suggested it should be replicated in public prisons.

The service consists of a small team of trusted peer workers who answer calls from prisoners on a 7 day service. They have access to a room assigned for this purpose, with 2 PCs and a scanner. Saved on the PCs are the full Prison Service Instructions so they can access and search them for relevant enquiries.

The service is well used. The team receives approximately 800 calls per month and had taken over 40,000 calls when we visited. The PAL advisers promote their service through a presentation at induction.

As the service has become an accepted part of the culture at HMP Lowdham Grange, staff members have also used it to check less well known instructions. New trainees are introduced to the team as part of their induction which helps embed it into the prison culture.

The key to the service is most certainly the team of prisoners at the centre. This is partly a result of a rigorous application procedure which the prison has put in place and careful monitoring and support from staff to maintain boundaries and working relationships. The advisers reported significant support from senior staff including the assistant director to set up and run the programme.

There are several benefits that the PAL has brought at Lowdham Grange. The statistics generated by the PAL give senior staff a good indication of where common concerns lie in the prison, if problems are occurring in one place or about one department.

The major benefit is undoubtedly the relief of staff time with approximately 97% of enquiries through the advice line being resolved without need for staff intervention.

Prisoner Information Desks

The Prisoner Information Desk model has been widely used throughout the estate in a variety of different ways. This approach is similar to the application based service, with more emphasis on the visible presence of the service on each wing.

- Each wing has an identifiable PID worker. They may be based in a specific place (Prisoner Information Desk) or be identifiable in some other way such as a coloured t-shirt
- Prisoners are made aware of PID workers on induction to the wing. They approach them in person or submit an application to them if they have a query.
- PID workers provide information immediately or signpost to the right member of staff
- PID workers relay general concerns back to staff in regular meetings and help chase delayed responses if necessary. They also receive updates which they can share with general population.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Space	Accessible work space on wing. Partial access to office space for confidential storage of paperwork
ICT	Optional access to PC for word processor, locally stored information. Printer or scanner for forms, local notices, PSIs, etc or staff who can do this for them.
Staff	Member of staff to manage service, including recruitment of peers and day to day oversight Local wing staff for basic monitoring if needed SMT “owner”
PSIs	Local notices and publicly available PSIs, PSOs and other useful info
Movement	Primarily on wing. Some peer workers may need access to other wings to coordinate the service.
Systems /Comms	Effective application process in place. Regular PID meetings to share information.

Prisoner Information Desks in HMP Hewell

HMP Hewell have an effective Prisoner Information Desk (PID) scheme that disseminates key information to prisoners including local notices and Prison Service Instructions, and signposts them to important services.

There is a PID worker on each wing of the prison, as well as a ‘red band’ worker who coordinates workers between wings. They act as a point of contact for common enquiries and for general issues to be raised. They provide forms such as general applications and phone forms and explain how to use them for those who are not familiar.

The PID scheme is facilitated by weekly meetings. This is an opportunity for them to raise issues that have been coming up regularly - for example, if there have been unusually long waiting times for responses from a certain department, or if people are experiencing problems with things such as kit change. This feedback gives staff a chance to identify problems early so that they might be resolved as soon as possible.

The meeting also acts as useful information dissemination point. PID workers are provided with updates on ongoing problems and upcoming changes and can then share this information with other prisoners on their wings. This keeps people better informed, effectively dealing with enquiries and potentially complaints that would have otherwise required staff attention.

An additional fortnightly meeting of all prisoners in peer-supporting roles – including Insiders, Listeners, Resettlement Key Workers, Reception Orderlies, Restorative Peer Mediators, Foreign National Reps, Education Mentors, Shannon Trust peers – reinforces this and maintains the flow of information to and from prisoners. A functional head will often attend these meetings to listen to issues concerning their function and provide clear information which can then be shared with the rest of the population.

The PID worker’s role has developed to include further responsibilities that benefit the running of the prison. They help collate maintenance issues on the wing – these are passed on in weekly meetings. They also function as Health Champions – liaising with Healthcare on behalf of prisoners re complaints and appointments.

Library advice service

Prison libraries are already required to make available extant Prison Service Instructions and Prison Service Orders, excluding those that are restricted. However, prisoners are not always aware of this information and in most cases would need guidance to find and understand the information they are looking for in the limited time they have access to the library. This is an ideal space to add the following support;

- A prisoner in need of information likely to be found in PSIs/PSOs visits the library and requests help.
- In the library they are directed to a peer worker with a good knowledge of the PSIs who supports them to find the relevant information to answer their enquiry.
- At busy periods, and depending upon the regime, this could be run as a first come first serve drop-in or an appointment format.

This model has the benefit of combining with a pre-existing and relevant service, and the role of peer worker could be combined with current library rep roles.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Space	Some working space needed within current library
ICT	Printer for producing PSIs. PC useful but not necessary
Staff	Member of staff to manage service, including recruitment of peers and day to day oversight Library staff for basic monitoring if needed SMT “owner”
PSIs	All publicly available PSIs, PSOs and other useful info
Movement	Peers and prisoners able to access library when needed.
Systems	Effective application process for library access

Integrate with other services

A final possibility is to link the service with existing provision or a regular service delivered by an external organisation.

For example, it may be possible to give additional training and responsibilities to existing peer workers such as those supporting employment or housing advice.

It may also be possible to attach this to regular advice clinics run by external agencies – for example the clinic run by Prisoner’s Advice Service, described below.

PAS clinic and training at HMP Send and HMP Wandsworth

The Prisoner’s Advice Service (PAS) run regular clinics in prisons for to advise about rights and conditions under prison law and also deliver prison law training to peer workers and staff.

In HMP Send, they have allocated peer workers who coordinate appointments for their clinic, help complete referral and monitoring forms and act as a point of contact for PAS. The peer workers are able to give basic advice about prison service instructions and prison law in between clinics, such as whether it is appropriate to make a complaint and if an issue is sufficiently urgent to be escalated. This acts as an extension to the service PAS offers and ensures continuous access to information for women in HMP Send. PAS peer workers at HMP Send also have the opportunity to complete a Level 3 certificate in Advice, Information and Guidance, provided by St Giles Trust.

PAS also work with St Giles Trust in HMP Wandsworth, where as well as providing a regular clinic through the prison library, they provide training sessions for St Giles Trust peer workers and equality reps. These peer workers can then share this knowledge with the general population in delivery of their main role.

Setting up the service

1 Determine model

Using the suggestions above as a guideline, decide which model would work best in your establishment based on regime restrictions, available staffing, existing peer services, availability of space, etc. Consider whether existing services could be adapted or added to.

2 Consult staff and prisoners

For a service to be well used and have support from staff it is good practice to consult with prisoners and staff from an early stage to gain positive input and iron out potential barriers. This consultation may influence the nature of the service you decide to implement.

3 Locate space according to model

Depending upon the model you are aiming for, allocate space within the prison for that service to run. You will need to consider the following;

- Is there space for an adequate number of peers to work?
- Can peer advisers easily access this space?
- Can prisoners wishing to use the service access this space (if required by the model being implemented)?
- Who else has access to this space? Will information from prisoners be confidential?
- How confidential is the space for telephone or one to ones (if relevant)?
- Is the space large enough to contain necessary ICT tools and filing space for PSIs/PSOs/local policies?
- Is it a safe working space? Can peers get staff attention easily if needed?

4 Decide and arrange ICT access

For a service to be most effective some ICT access is necessary. This might include:

- Secure PC access –for writing responses, record keeping and report making. Also access to information to run the service (as below)
- Printer – for printing responses and information from PSIs
- Scanner/Photocopier if making copies of PSIs for prisoners
- Telephone – could be configured to allow incoming calls from prison departments only, or to allow calls to be made by peers to other departments to check for info. Can be monitored regularly to address security concerns.

5 Ensure access to PSIs, PSOs and local policies

The service requires access to existing PSIs and PSOs, a copy of the Prison Rules and local policies such as IEP schemes.

These could be made available in hard copy form. This requires the space to file them and photocopier access to share copies with prisoners.

Alternatively they could be made available electronically on an accessible PC. This would require printer access, but would mean less filing space needed.

See *Annex A For Recommended List Of Resources*

6 Allocate staff support

Whichever model is used, a peer led information service requires some level of oversight to support and manage the peers involved.

It benefits from the ownership of an appropriately senior member of staff to make decisions and help break down initial barriers and building working relationships between the service and other staff.

Oversight is also needed to maintain security concerns and ensure roles are not being abused. General support might be made available from allocated wing staff, or a specific person.

7 Is there training available?

An effective service and meaningful role for the peers benefits from relevant training. This supports the prisoners in developing the skills appropriate to their role and adds an incentive to which will encourage application from motivated candidates.

For example, in HMP Oakwood they offer peer training in prison law as part of the scheme. Prisoners' Advice Service also run regular prison law training sessions for peer advisers and other reps.

St Giles Trust have been pioneering the use of peer advisors for over 15 years alongside delivery of resettlement and other services, and currently deliver in over 25 prisons including HMP Oakwood and HMP Hewell mentioned above. As part of this they offer peer advisers the opportunity to gain a Level 3 City and Guilds qualification in Advice and Guidance. This supports the service by making sure the peer advisers are equipped with real skills and adds incentive and worth to the programme by ensuring they leave with a valuable qualification. In 2016 St Giles Trust Peer advice service at HMP Huntercombe won second prize in the Prison Reform Trust's 2016 Robin Corbett Award

8 Outline purpose and procedures of service (with staff and prisoner input)

The service should have a clear and defined purpose and the systems and roles should be outlined.

For example –

- Who is the service for?
- What will the service offer? Be clear whether it will offer information only or if peers can provide advice and/or advocacy
- How will prisoners be able to access the service?
- How will the service respond? Will there be targets for response?
- What communication methods will peers be able to use to contact other staff?
- How will confidentiality be maintained?

9 Define the role, create job description and decide eligibility

Decide on the role title, create a job description and decide what criteria you are looking for in the role.

See *Annex B* for Example Role Description and Personal Specification provided by St Giles

10 Uniform or identification?

Consider whether it would be beneficial for peer workers to be identifiable for example by lanyard or a coloured t-shirt or top – this can help staff identify them for movement purposes and encourage prisoners to approach them for advice.

11 Screening and Recruitment of peer advisers

Recruiting the peers appropriately is the most important aspect of the process. Clear processes need to be in place for screening and recruiting people that have the appropriate skills and motivations.

When determining criteria, you may want to consider the following:

- Experience and skills
- Motivation and aspirations
- IT and writing skills
- IEP level/ red band
- Staff recommendations/reference
- Security clearance
- Length of sentence

It is beneficial to applicants and the service if the recruitment process is as close to the experience you might have of applying for a role in the community. For example, a written application followed by a formal interview. This adds to the sense of responsibility the job entails and increases the likelihood of selecting appropriately motivated and responsible prisoners.

See Annexes C and D for Example Application form and Example Interview Questions

12 Induction

A suitable induction process should be in place to introduce selected peers to their role, the processes and expectations. This should include a contract/compact which includes confidentiality.

See Annex E For Example Induction Checklist and Annex F for an example of a Peer Adviser contract used by St Giles Trust.

13 Promoting the service

For the service to be well used and ingrain itself in local culture, it needs to be well promoted amongst prisoners and staff. Peers could be invited to participate in induction of new prisoners as well as presenting to new staff during training. Leaflets and notices on wings will also help promote the service. With ICT access peers could produce these themselves.

14 Support and review

Regular meeting with peers, prisoners and staff will be needed to review the service and troubleshoot problems. This may be required more regularly in the early stages to address challenges as they arise.

Challenges

Safeguarding and risk management

- As with many worthwhile projects in prison there is an element of risk. In particular, safeguarding issues could arise as follows;
- Peer worker takes advantage of responsibility to abuse other prisoners or to engage in unlawful activity
- Other prisoners pressurising peer workers to misuse their responsibility
- Peer worker becomes the victim of bullying or other abuse as a result of their position
- Loss of professional boundaries between staff and peer workers

However, these risks can be carefully reduced by the following steps and should not be a barrier to running a successful and valuable service:

- Rigorous and meaningful recruitment process which;
 - assesses the genuine motivation of applicants
 - can include getting recommendations or references from wing staff who have experience of their risks and behaviours
 - includes scenario questions to test safeguarding risks
- Security screen each applicant to check there is no intelligence to suggest an unmanageable risk to others or good order in the role.
- Clearly defined role– staff and peer workers should know what the limits to the role, including times of work and what areas they need access to.

- Peer workers made aware of safeguarding policies and sign agreement to report any concerns to staff.
- Staff monitoring of services including;
 - Local staff briefed to monitor and report concerns relating to peer workers
 - Random checks undertaken, with peer workers' awareness - for example, a telephone advice service can be randomly monitored and feedback provided.
 - Staff reminded to submit SIR if they have any general security concerns
- Staff reminded of safeguarding policies in line with PSI 16/2015 *Adult Safeguarding in Prison*.
- Quick and measured response to safeguarding concerns raised

A thorough risk assessment of the service should be undertaken which includes any perceived risks and ways these are mitigated.

Confidentiality

The following measures should be undertaken to maintain confidentiality and data protection:

- Peer workers have confidentiality requirements explained at induction and sign a contract which includes a confidentiality statement

See *Annex F* for an example of a Peer Adviser contract used by St Giles Trust.

- Ensuring that prisoners using the service are aware the information they share will be accessible to peer workers as well as prison staff. This could be included in service posters, on specific apps or explained in person when accessing the service. For example, a service specific app might include the following:

The information you share with this service will be accessible to peer workers, who are other serving prisoners, as well as prison staff.

Please tick this box to show you understand this

- Information shared by service users is recorded and stored securely away from other prisoners. This may require space in a lockable filing cabinet or office space. Information recorded on local PCs should be password protected.
- If peer workers are collecting, delivering or otherwise carrying information of a sensitive nature they should ensure that this is not stored in their cell at any time or left anywhere where it could be accessed by others.
- Peer workers at no time have access to personal information on other systems such as NOMIS or OASys

Prisoner churn

In some types of prison, particularly those with a local function and a high turnover of short term sentences, prisoner churn can be problematic in sustaining a reliable and effective service. The following approaches go some way to counter this challenge:

- Aim to recruit those with longer sentences. If possible, and where it does not interfere with their own sentences plan goals, have these individuals put on hold to avoid transfer.
- Where possible, recruit so that peers overlap and are able to learn from each other before experienced peers move on. This will prevent having to start completely again with a fresh team.
- Where transfers are inevitable, consider setting up an arrangement with other prisons within the same cluster, so that peers transferred between two prisons can take up a role within the next prison.

Culture change

In prisons where prisoner led roles are less developed, staff may have understandable concerns about the level of responsibility being given to prisoners, blurring of boundaries and provision of a service which might encourage complaint and criticism against them.

It is important that any service has strong backing from senior management and that someone is responsible to resolve any initial relationship difficulties between the service and other departments.

In many cases, these initial concerns can be overcome as the benefits to staff become apparent and through some positive interactions with well selected and trained peers.

How can we help?

To support the development of peer led information services, Prison Reform Trust are offering a brief consultation with interested prisons to discuss how a prisoner-led information service could be effectively implemented within the establishment.

This may include:

- Meeting with senior management to discuss the benefits and challenges of peer led information service
- Share good practice
- Contributing to consultation with prisoners and staff
- Troubleshooting practical solutions to delivery
- Discussing recruitment techniques with staff
- How to embed peer led culture

We then offer to follow up this initial consultation with a return visit between 3 and 6 months later.

We are working with the **Prisoners' Advice Service** (PAS). PAS are Prison Law experts, consisting of 6 prison law caseworkers who have a wealth of experience in training on this subject. They run clinics in a number of prisons and provide one off training sessions to peer supporters in prisons such as HMP Wandsworth. If you are interested in setting up a peer led information service at your prison, PAS may be able to provide this training for peer workers and staff.

We have close links with **St Giles Trust** who have been developing effective peer advice services in prison for many years, and deliver Level 3 NVQ in Advice Information and Guidance in more than 25 prisons. If you are interested they can provide taster sessions for your staff to demonstrate the benefits of this approach to support peer led services in your prison.

PRT's own **advice and information service** is able to provide an ongoing contact for peer advisers to check information and to signpost more complex cases to. We hope to build a network of peer led information services which share good practice and information and which have a positive impact on prisoners and prison staff.



List of recommended resources for Peer-led information service

The following resources should be available either in hard copy, or electronically for an effective service:

Prison Rules

The Prison Rules 1999 is an important piece of legislation which governs how prisons are run.

This includes regulations on areas such as physical welfare, communications and offences against discipline.

You can find a link to Prison rules here:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/728/made>

Prison Service Orders (PSOs) and Prison Service Instructions (PSIs)

Prison Service Orders (PSOs) are long term mandatory instructions which were issued until 31 July 2009. They have no expiry date, and remain in force until cancelled or replaced. You can find a link to PSOs still in force here: <https://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos>

Prison Service Instructions (PSIs) contain a number of rules, regulations and guidelines by which prisons are run. PSIs have a definite expiry date. They also introduce amendments to PSOs. You can find a link to PSIs here: <https://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis>

It can sometimes be difficult to know which PSIs or PSOs you need. The following subject index from the government website can help you work this out.

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/offenders/psipso/subject-index.pdf>

Prison Reform Trust Information sheets and booklets

The following are currently available PRT resources available through our service and on our website:

[Information booklet for people on licence for a sex offence](#) (Oct 2015)

This booklet contains information for people convicted of a sex offence on release from prison. It may also be helpful to families, employers and people working with those convicted of a sex offence.

[Human Rights booklet for prisoners](#) (July 2014)

A human rights booklet for prisoners which explains your rights as a prisoner under the Human Rights Act. The booklet also provides information about cases which are important in a prison context, information about prison rules and guidance and information about where to go for help.

[Information Sheet for Immigration Detainees in Prison](#) (May 2013)

This information sheet was produced in 2013 in collaboration with the Detention Advice Service (DAS). It has information about your rights if you are being kept in prison by the immigration authorities. DAS have sadly closed since the production of this information sheet but the information is still relevant.

[Sentence Planning](#) (December 2012)

This is an information sheet produced in 2012 following guidance introduced about sentence planning. It includes some information regarding offender behaviour programmes.

[IPP Information Booklet](#) (December 2008)

This booklet for IPP prisoners provides information on what the sentence is and how the sentence works. It was produced in December 2008 before changes were made by the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 but much of it is still relevant and useful to those who received the IPP sentence before this. There is also an update produced in December 2012 to cover the changes introduced by the LASPO Act 2012.

[The Prisoners' Information Book for Male Prisoners and Young Offenders](#) - translated into 27 languages.

[Information Book for Prisoners with a Disability](#) (full version)

This information book explains where to go for assistance if you are in prison and have disabilities. It also gives information on your rights whilst inside. Also in easy read and 27 languages.

Prisoner's Advice Service Information Sheets

PAS have information sheets on the following which we often use and send to prisoners:

- **[Adjudications](#)**
- **[Categorisation \(Female\)](#)**
- **[Categorisation \(Male\)](#)**
- **[Complaints](#)**
- **[Confiscation Orders](#)**
- **[Data Protection Act](#)**
- **[Disability Discrimination](#)**
- **[Foreign Nationals](#)**
- **[Healthcare](#)**
- **[Home Detention Curfew](#)**
- **[Incentives and Earned Privilege Scheme](#)**
- **[Judicial Review](#)**
- **[Lifers and IPPs](#)**
- **[Mandatory Drug Testing](#)**
- **[Parole](#)**
- **[PAS Info sheet](#)**
- **[Probation Complaints](#)**
- **[Property Claims](#)**
- **[Racism Complaints](#)**
- **[Recall to Prison](#)**
- **[Release, License and Conditioning](#)**
- **[Release on Temporary License](#)**
- **[Resettlement & Community Care](#)**
- **[Segregation](#)**
- **[Sex Offences](#)**
- **[Transfers](#)**
- **[Transgender Prisoners](#)**
- **[Visits](#)**
- **[Work, Pay and Education](#)**

Useful Information sheets from other organisations

Parole Board

Easy read 'guide to help with your Parole Review'

www.gov.uk/government/publications/easy-read-guides-for-prisoners

RECOOP

Information sheets about the Care Act

www.recoop.org.uk

PPO

Learning lessons bulletins on Use of Force, Property

www.ppo.gov.uk/document/learning-lessons-reports/

Unlock

Information about being on licence

hub.unlock.org.uk/knowledgebase/

CAB

Information about benefits when in prison

Example Role Description and Personal Specification provided by St Giles Trust

St Giles Trust

ST GILES TRUST PEER ADVISOR *(Add specific job title e.g. Equalities Rep)***JOB DESCRIPTION:** Peer Advisor *(Add specific job title e.g. Equalities Rep)***RESPONSIBLE TO:** *(Add name and job title here)***RATE OF PAY:** *(See individual Prison guidelines)***LOCATION:** *(Add specific locations e.g. Wing based, Healthcare, Education)***HOURS OF WORK:** Weekdays: 9am – 11.45am & 2pm – 4.30pm
Weekends and Evenings when needed**JOB PURPOSE**

To contribute to effective rehabilitation services and the reduction of reoffending by providing peer support, information, advice and guidance specifically:

1. Ensuring that high quality information, advice and guidance to meet people's needs are provided in the following areas: *(Add areas of information provisions e.g. Rules in prison and Prison Service Instructions)*
2. Supporting teams and other agencies across the prison to provide support to people in prison.
3. Making referrals and signposting to teams/services/agencies as appropriate
4. Running PIDs (Prisoner Information Desks) on the wings.

GENERIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Work with integrity and in line with the relevant legislation, policies and procedures including those that relate to safeguarding, security, confidentiality, equality, data protection and health and safety
2. Ensure that consent forms are completed before every client interaction and that clients understand the relevant confidentiality and information sharing/storage processes
3. Introduce and explain services to prison staff, external agencies and other prisoners.
4. Work under the direction of the supervising staff to contribute to the wellbeing of prisoners.
5. Provide high quality, basic information, advice and guidance to individuals about a range of issues.
6. Identify the need for referral to services/agencies and make referrals as appropriate
7. Collate any monitoring or evaluation reports to demonstrate the impact of the service
8. Wear specified uniform for identification and carry photo ID at all times when working.

- **You must be full vetted and security cleared to take up this position.**
- **You will sign a Peer Advisor Contract (attached). Any breach of this contract will result in dismissal from the position and programme.**

SPECIFIC DUTIES *(Individual Agencies and Departments to complete this section)*

- *Include specific duties relating to the role of the Peer Advisor e.g. Resettlement Peer Advisors, Induction Orderly, Diversity Rep*
- *All Peer Supporters are to attend the Learning to Advise Course one afternoon per week (or other specified training).*

PERSON SPECIFICATION

QUALIFICATIONS			
ESSENTIAL		DESIRABLE	
Level 3 Advice and Guidance or equivalent or willingness to work towards	C/A	Level 2 qualifications English and Maths	C
EXPERIENCE			
ESSENTIAL		DESIRABLE	
		Relevant previous experience in custody or the community through employment or volunteering	A
		Experience of working in a team	A
SKILLS			
ESSENTIAL		DESIRABLE	
Basic knowledge of the needs and the issues facing individuals in prison and on release	I	Effective communication skills	I
The ability to work in line with relevant legislation, policies and procedures including those that relate to safeguarding, security, confidentiality, equality, data protection and health and safety	I		
PERSONAL QUALITIES			
ESSENTIAL			
A desire to support others to rehabilitate, resettle and desist from reoffending	A/I	Awareness of own strengths, weaknesses and limitations in relation to supporting others	A/I
Friendly and approachable	I		
Strength of character and the ability to withstand pressure to do 'favours' for other inmates (e.g. trafficking)	I		
Patience and willingness to work with sometimes vulnerable, talkative and demanding clients	A/I		
Commitment to promoting equality and celebrating diversity	A/I		
Commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	A/I		

C = certificates; A = application form; I = interview

Example Application Form - Peer Information Worker -

Name:

Prison number:

Location/cell:

Job applied for:

Why are you interested in the role of peer information worker?

What skills do you have which will be useful in this role?

What paid or unpaid experience do you have which would be useful in this role?

How will this opportunity benefit your future goals?

What is your release date?

Are you expecting a transfer in the next 6 months?

Name and signature of staff member recommending you

Example Interview questions

Candidate name _____ Interviewer _____ Date _____

#	Question	Notes	Score
1	Why are you interested in this role?		
2	Can you tell us any experience or skills you have which would be useful for providing advice and customer service?		
3	What skills or personal qualities do you think you need when working in a team?		
4	What is your understanding of confidentiality?		

5	Can you tell me about experience you have using computer programmes such as Word and Excel?		
6	How would you deal with someone who was rude or aggressive towards you during your role?		
7	<p>Whilst providing information to a prisoner, they inform you that they intend to harm themselves.</p> <p>What do you do?</p>		
8	<p>In role as a peer adviser another prisoner asks you to take an item of property to his friend on another wing.</p> <p>What do you do?</p>		

0 – No evidence

1 – Limited

2 – Good

3 – Excellent

Example Induction Checklist

Meeting with supervising member of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explained purpose and procedures of the information service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explanation of the role including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main responsibilities• Working hours• Location(s) of work• Uniform (if relevant)• Use of any ICT• Permitted movement around the prison• Boundaries	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provided list of key resources for information provision	<input type="checkbox"/>
What to do if unable to attend due to illness/visit/appointment clash	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explained and signed compact including confidentiality agreement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safeguarding discussed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equality and Diversity discussed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant health and safety issues discussed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explained training arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meet with other peers and agree shadowing arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>

Example Contract provided by St Giles Trust**St Giles Trust Peer Advisor Contract**

As a St Giles Peer Advisor you are in a position of trust and responsibility and it is important that your behaviour reflects this at all times. In return St Giles Trust will offer you the training, support and supervision that you will need to carry out your job effectively and the opportunity to complete a Level 3 qualification in Advice & Guidance.

DUTIES

- You will be expected to work - *add project specific times and days*
- You will be expected to attend regular training, performance reviews, and team meetings as required
- If you want to do any other activity during work time this must be agreed by your supervisor.
- Demonstrate a consistent level of engagement with the project
- You will inform your supervisor of any social/ legal visits and other valid reasons for non-attendance
- Please let your supervisor know if you will be absent due to sickness.
- A verbal warning will be given for any unauthorised absence

RESPECT

You have a right to be treated with respect and you have a responsibility to treat others with respect regardless of race, gender, crime etc in accordance with the prison's Equal Opportunities policy and in line with the 2010 Equalities Act.

HONESTY

It is important that you are transparent in your dealings with clients and staff alike and that you maintain professional boundaries.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

You must tell your supervisor of any potential conflict of interest when supporting an individual client so that they can allocate that client to another Peer Advisor.

CONFIDENTIALITY

You are expected to treat any information given by clients as confidential unless someone discloses a risk to prison security or a risk of harm to themselves or others in which case your supervisor must be informed immediately in accordance with the St Giles Confidentiality Policy. This policy must be made clear to clients and you must ensure that they agree to and sign a consent form before any information is shared with a third party.

MOVEMENT

Your work pass has been issued to give you access to clients in agreed areas of the prison at set times. You must abide by the conditions stated on your pass and carry it with you at all work times.

You must not use your work pass for movement that is not work related and at any time if staff ask what you are doing you must have the relevant ID and be able to explain your reason for being unlocked and in that particular area of the prison.

WORK WEAR

St Giles Trust will provide you with purple Peer Advisor polo and/or sweat shirts for your use only. You must wear your Peer Advisor shirt at all times when working.

When your employment in the prison ends you must return all Peer Advisor shirts to St Giles Trust.

DISCIPLINE

Breaching this agreement would lead to removal from your employment and the Peer Advisor training course.

In cases of misconduct involving violence, abusive behaviour, bullying or sexually inappropriate behaviour you will be withdrawn from the Peer Advice programme with immediate effect.

St Giles Trust adheres to security policies and will report any concerns to the security department. Incidents in these circumstances can lead to immediate termination of employment.

If you understand the above and agree to the following then please sign below:

- I agree to be put on hold for 6 months
- I agree to adhere to the terms in this contract at all times

Signed:

Print Name:

Prison Number:

Date:

Witnessed by

Signed:

Print name:

Example monitoring report provided by HMP Oakwood

The following report was provided by HMP Oakwood's 'Your Consultation Group'. The reports are produced by peer workers running the service using the statistics they gather. These reports are made available to senior staff to keep them informed of concerns as they arise.

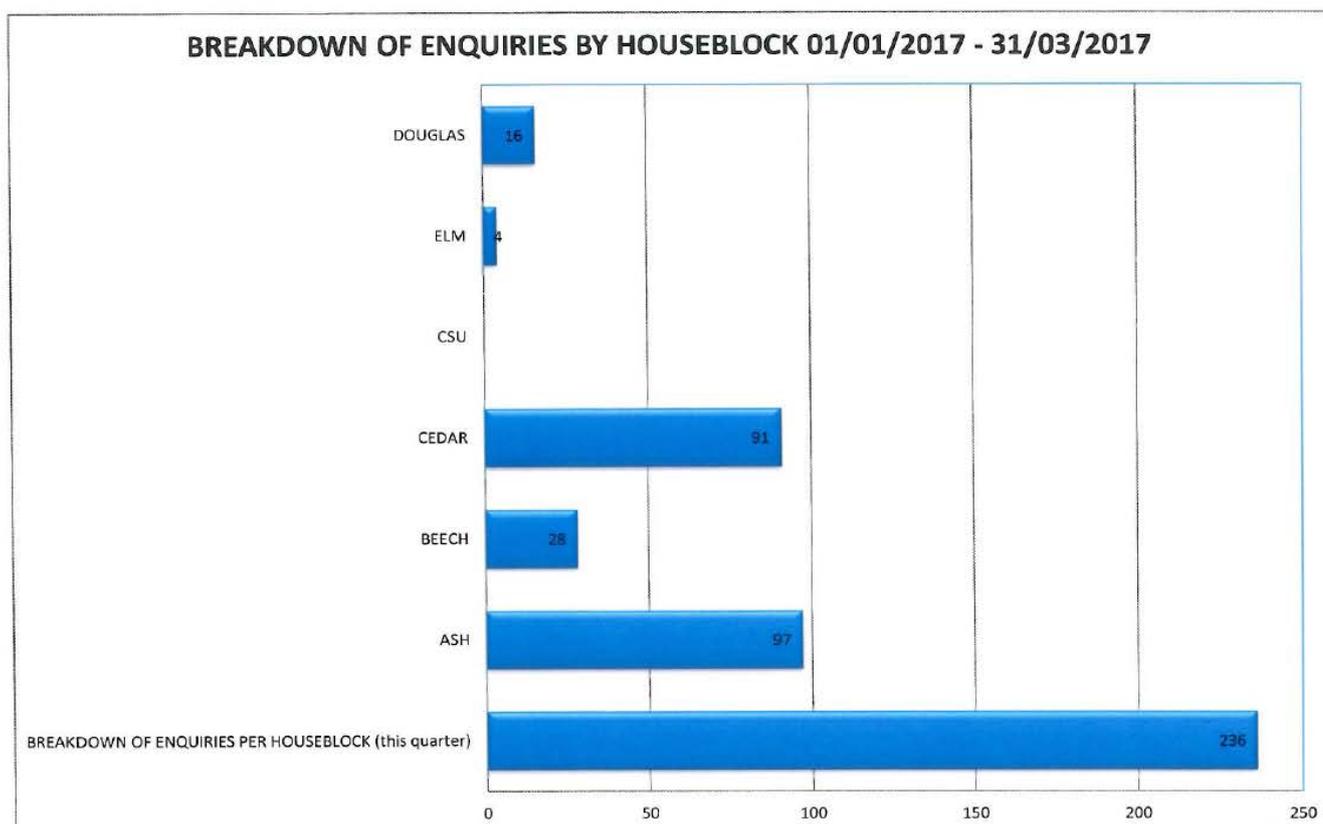
YCG STATS 1ST QUARTER OF 2017
01/01/2017 - 31/03/2017

YCG STATISTICS 2017

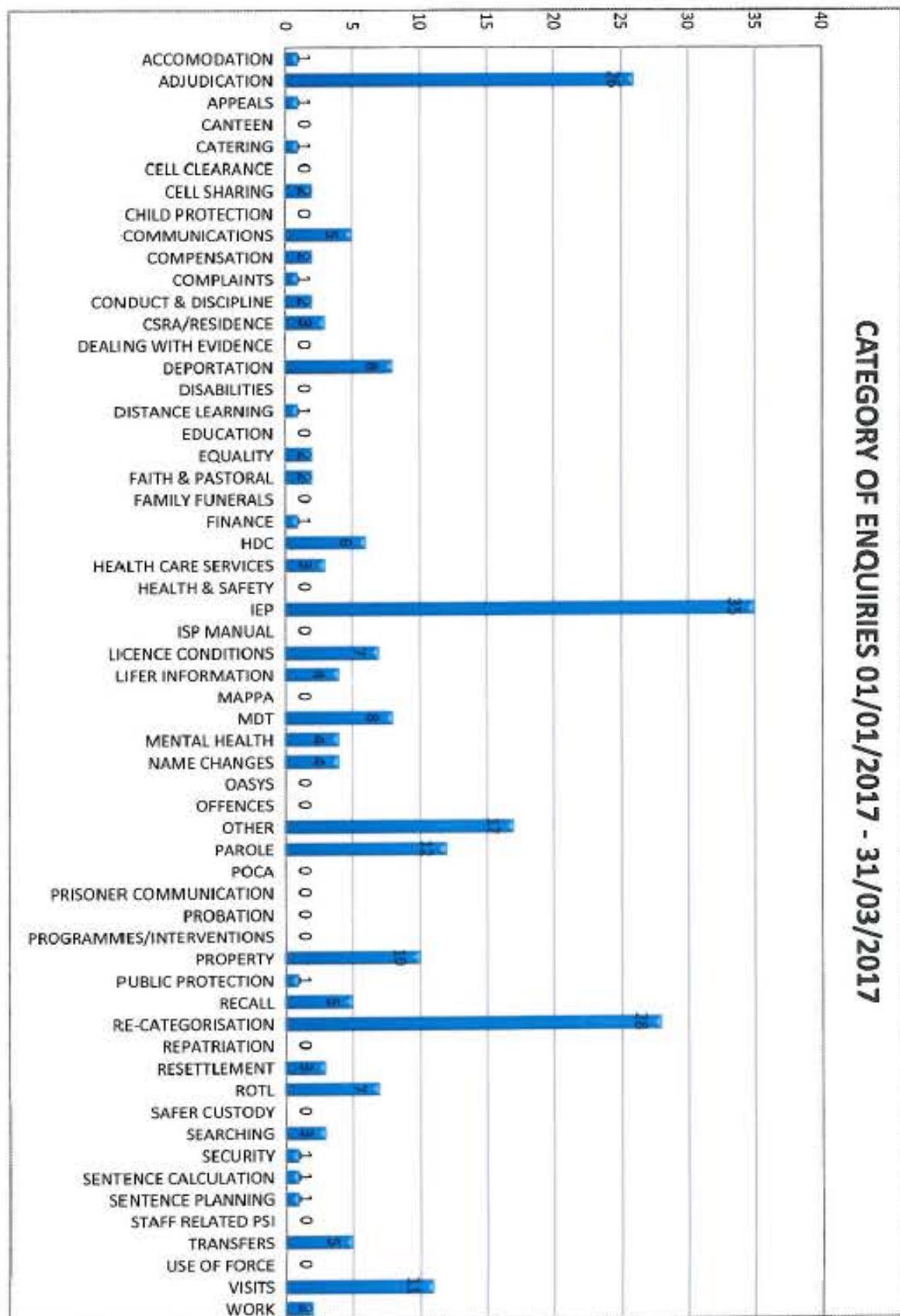
TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS TO DATE	513
TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS THIS QUARTER	139

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENQUIRIES TO DATE	902
TOTAL NUMBER OF QUERIES THIS QUARTER	236

NUMBER OF QUERIES ASH HOUSEBLOCK	97
NUMBER OF QUERIES BEECH HOUSEBLOCK	28
NUMBER OF QUERIES CEDAR HOUSEBLOCK	91
NUMBER OF QUERIES CSU HOUSEBLOCK	0
NUMBER OF QUERIES DOUGLAS HOUSEBLOCK	16
NUMBER OF QUERIES ELM HOUSEBLOCK	4



CATEGORY OF ENQUIRIES 01/01/2017 - 31/03/2017



YCG EQUALITY STATS (PROVIDED BY CLIENTS)
2017 QUARTER 1 - 01/01/2017 - 31/03/2017

TOTAL NUMBER OF NEW CLIENTS SEEN THIS QUARTER	139
TOTAL NUMBER THAT PROVIDED EQUALITY DATA	124

AGE	TOTAL
21/25	20
26/30	22
31/35	24
36/40	21
41/45	13
46/50	4
51+	16

RELIGION	TOTAL
ATHEIST	0
BUDDHIST	0
CHRISTIAN	11
C OF E	7
HINDUISM	0
JUDAISM	0
MORMON	1
ISLAM	37
NOT STATED	6
PAGANISM	2
RASTAFARIANISM	1
ROMAN CATHOLIC	5
CATHOLIC	0
SCIENTOLOGY	0
SIKH	5
SPIRITUALIST	1
NONE	47
QUAKER	0

ETHNIC ORIGIN	TOTAL
WHITE-BRITISH	66
ASIAN-BANGLADESHI	2
ASIAN-INDIAN	6
ASIAN-PAKISTANI	19
ASIAN-OTHER	3
BLACK-AFRICAN	6
BLACK-CARIBBEAN	6
BLACK-OTHER	2
CHINESE	0
MIXED-OTHER MIXED	0
MIXED-WHITE & ASIAN	1
MIXED-WHITE & BLACK AFRICAN	0
MIXED-WHITE & BLACK CARIBBEAN	8
NOT STATED	2
WHITE-IRISH	0
WHITE-OTHER	3
WHITE-BRITISH TRAVELLER/GYPSY/SHOW PEOPLE	0
WHITE-IRISH TRAVELLER/GYPSY/SHOW PEOPLE	0
WHITE-OTHER TRAVELLER/GYPSY/SHOW PEOPLE	0