



# Briefing Pack

## “Getting Involved”

**This pack contains details from each of the Lancashire Criminal Justice Board agencies about how people can volunteer or get involved in other ways:**

- 1. Victim Support**
- 2. Lancashire Constabulary**
- 3. HMCS – becoming a Magistrate**
- 4. Probation Service - community payback**
- 5. Lancashire Youth Offending Team –mentoring and Referral Panels**
- 6. Crown Prosecution Service**
- 7. HM Prison Service**

## **1. Victim Support**

Volunteers are crucial to the work of Victim Support. They help over 1 million people affected by crime nationally each year, and, despite the funding received from the Home Office and sponsors, the work in Lancashire could not be done without the 300 locally based volunteers.

### **Volunteers help Victim Support in the following ways:**

**At local Victim Support branches** - branch volunteers are based in the community and provide emotional support, information and practical help for people who have suffered crimes ranging from burglary to murder or manslaughter. Volunteers normally visit people in their homes and help by allowing them to talk through their feelings about the crime. Volunteers also give information about any practical and personal issues, and help victims find their own strategies to overcome the effects of the crime.

**With Witness Services** - going to court can be a stressful and bewildering experience, both for the victims of a crime and their families, and for witnesses called to give evidence. Witness Service volunteers are based in magistrates' and Crown Court buildings and offer emotional support and practical information to people going to court. This can include: offering witnesses a chance to visit the court before giving evidence; explaining court procedures; accompanying a victim or witness into the courtroom, and giving the chance to talk over the case when it has ended.

**As IT Volunteers** - if you have a good level of knowledge of networking, hardware and software, and the communication skills to support and train users, you may be interested in working as an IT volunteer, supporting Victim Support and Witness Service offices around the country. Victim Support is looking for proficient users of Windows and MS Office software with a working knowledge of installing, testing and maintaining networks.

**Other ways of helping** - you can help victims of crime in other ways, such as helping with the running of our offices, or assisting with publicity, developing our web sites, fundraising and interpreting, particularly if you have skills in these areas.

**Anyone aged 18 or over can apply to become a Victim Support volunteer. For more information about volunteering with Victim Support, contact:**

### **Victim Support in Lancashire**

Area Office  
1 Chapel Street  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR1 8BU

Tel: 01772 828 422

Fax: 01772 256 000

Email: [areaoffice.lancashire@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:areaoffice.lancashire@victimsupport.org.uk)

## **2.Lancashire Constabulary**

### **Community Volunteers current recruitment**

Lancashire Constabulary currently has over 600 members of the public from all walks of life who volunteer some of their time to carry out a variety of tasks for the Constabulary. If you would like more information about community volunteers or would like to become one please contact the Volunteer Scheme management office on 01772 413574.

### **What do community volunteers do?**

Being a volunteer means contributing some of your time to help Lancashire Constabulary improve its quality of service to our communities. The amount of time you decide to volunteer will be up to you and will be agreed during the application process.

Volunteers are involved in various aspects of the service from helping Neighbourhood Policing Teams to develop close relationships with their communities, to monitoring media coverage, to contacting the public to update them on the progress of police investigations or gathering further information.

### **What sort of skills and experience do volunteers need?**

We don't ask for any qualifications or specific experience. We are looking for people from all backgrounds with a variety of different skills and experiences to help us in our work.

### **What do volunteers get from the Constabulary?**

Lancashire Constabulary understands that your time is valuable and that there are many and varied reasons for volunteering and we in return, are committed to develop your skills as a volunteer within our organisation.

Support - If you are approved as a volunteer, you will be provided with advice, guidance and support to help you carry out your activities.

Training - You will not be expected to do tasks that you are not qualified to do. Appropriate training will be provided.

Expenses - Volunteers can claim certain travelling and other out of pocket expenses. These will be agreed if you are approved as a volunteer.

And finally, volunteering within Lancashire Constabulary could offer you:

1. Opportunity to develop your interpersonal skills
2. Additional and relevant training
3. The chance to meet and make new friends
4. Opportunity to develop your IT skills
5. Enhancement of your CV

The knowledge that you are helping to improve our quality of service amongst the communities of Lancashire

### **Further information or help**

**Contact the Volunteer Scheme management office on 01772 413574.**

### **3.HMCS - applying to become a magistrate**

Before applying to become a magistrate, there are a number of things you will need to consider, including your personal qualities, job and health. You don't need formal qualifications or legal training to become a magistrate. However, you will need to be able to demonstrate six key personal qualities: good character; understanding and communication; social awareness; maturity and sound temperament; sound judgement and commitment and reliability.

Because of the need to maintain public confidence in the impartiality of the judiciary, employees in a small number of occupations (for example, police officers) cannot become magistrates. Magistrates must command the confidence of the public, have personal integrity and have the respect and trust of others. This means that, for example, it is unlikely that you will be appointed if you are an undischarged bankrupt. Serious motoring offences or persistent offending may be a disqualification. The magistracy welcomes applications from people with disability. However, if your health would prevent you from carrying out any of the range of magistrates' duties, you may not be eligible.

#### **There are a few important issues to consider before you apply:**

Firstly, your availability. You must be sure you can meet the required time commitment. You will also need to be available for training; initially equivalent to 18 hours and some meetings. Training and meetings usually take place outside of work hours.

Also, can you get time away from work? If you are employed, your employer is legally obliged to provide reasonable time off for magistrate duties. You will need to agree with your employer how you will manage any additional time away from work that you need.

Finally, which court will you work in? You will need to decide which court to apply to sit at. There are more than 360 magistrates' courts in England and Wales. You can choose a court near to where you live or work. A list of all magistrates' courts can be found at your local court, or you can use the **CourtFinder link on the internet [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)**

Magistrates are recruited by local Advisory Committees. Recruitment takes place at different times from area to area, so it is important to check when it is happening in your area. You can telephone your local Advisory Committee to find out when they will be recruiting and discuss any other queries you may have.

So that you make an informed decision about whether or not to apply you will need to visit a magistrates' court to observe the magistrates sitting. You will need to visit at least once (but preferably two or three times) when it is sitting in general session, in the 12 months before you apply. Your visit should be specifically to observe proceedings with a view to considering whether to apply. If you are invited to an interview, you will be asked to talk about your visits.

Once you have completed these steps you will be ready to apply. The application process is as follows: you complete the application form, then your local Advisory Committee assesses your application, then the Advisory Committee may invite you to attend a first interview, which may be followed by a further interview - if you are successful at the interviews, the Advisory Committee recommends you for appointment by the Lord Chancellor. The selection process can take six to twelve months.

#### **You can apply to become a magistrate in two ways:**

**Online** - using the interactive email attachment application form. Complete the form online, save it to your computer and attach it to an email addressed to your local Advisory Committee application contact.

**By post** - using the printable application form. Complete the form by hand, in black ink, and post it back to your local Advisory Committee. Contact information is given in the 'Advisory Committees and Magistrates' Courts in England and Wales' directory.

Information and an application form can be found at [www.direct.gov.uk/magistrates](http://www.direct.gov.uk/magistrates) or alternatively contact:

Mrs L Edgar  
Lancashire Advisory Committee  
Her Majesty's Courts Service  
Cumbria & Lancashire Area Director's Office  
Sessions House  
Lancaster Road  
Preston PR1 2PD  
Tel 01772 272834

## **4.Probation Service - Community Payback**

**Every year, offenders complete over 200,000 hours of unpaid work that directly benefits community projects across Lancashire.**

Community payback is a scheme that allows local people to have a say over what work the offenders do to pay back to the community for the crimes they have committed.

Offenders can be sentenced by the court to complete a minimum of 40 hours or a maximum of 300 hours of unpaid work. We work in partnership with local communities to find suitable work placements for offenders to carry out these hours.

We select work which:

1. promotes community safety and public protection
2. prevents crime and tackles causes of crime by better neighbourhood security
3. makes good the harm caused by crime, repairing damage and helping victims
4. lessens fear of crime, for example making safer footpaths and environments

Lancashire Probation Service welcomes suggestions for work projects for offenders. We work with many organisations charities and agencies and all projects undertaken are not for profit.

**Anyone can suggest a project online at [www.probation-lancashire.org.uk](http://www.probation-lancashire.org.uk) or contact their local probation office to make a suggestion.**

## **5.Lancashire Youth Offending Team (LYOT)**

**Mentoring** is one of the ways people can volunteer with the Lancashire Youth Offending Team.

**What is Mentoring about?** Mentoring is about being a role model to the young person who may not know any other adults other than those in authority or fulfilling a paid role in their lives. A mentoring relationship is typically developed at a time of transition in the young person's life for a significant and sustained period of time.

**What is the role of the Mentor?** The role of the Mentor includes supporting the young person while he/she develops new life skills and sets their own goals for the future as well as to help the young person to take the first step in pursuing those goals. The Mentor must understand that the young person is about emotions, feelings, values and things that have happened to them before you got there and the experiences they've had. Assumptions should not be made that a Mentor's experience would be a positive choice for a young person. The Mentor must be comfortable with themselves and with who they are. They must be able to step away from themselves and their own concerns when supporting the young person. Mentors should be honest, committed and respectful of their mentees. The mentoring relationship should be built upon trust, respect, support, encouragement, commitment to and belief in the young person.

**Summary** - Mentoring is about suitably trained and experienced adults providing support and a listening ear to young people and facilitating the young people in making positive changes in their world.

**Criteria** - Mentors must be aged over 18 and they must have CRB Disclosure

**What is the time commitment?** Mentoring relationships can normally be arranged around the work/time commitments of Mentors. Mentors can do as little or as much as they like.

**Are Mentors paid?** Mentors are volunteers, so they are not paid but they should not be out of pocket - travel expenses will be paid by the Youth Offending Team.

**How will Mentors benefit?** Mentors benefit from both training and experience. All Mentors will be given full training, which will develop communication skills and equip them to assess people and situations and make important decisions. These and other skills should be easily transferable into most work situations.

**Training** – all volunteers go through the LYOT Induction Programme and Mentor Training Programme. There is individual support and supervision from a dedicated Case Worker available, other support is available 24 hours per day. Mentors are supervised on a monthly basis. Where required specialised training is provided and free training on a variety of issues is available to all volunteers

## **5b.Lancashire Youth Offending Team (LYOT)**

### **Referral Panel Member**

**What is a Referral Panel?** Around 30 per cent of young people who appear at court charged with an offence receive a Referral Order of between three and 12 months. On receiving an Order the young person is passed on to the Referral Order Panel at the Youth Offending Team who then organise a Panel Meeting attended by: the young person; the young person's carer (unless the young person is aged 16 and left school); two or three trained members of the community; a YOT representative; the victim and their supporter(s) or representative and any other relevant professionals/adults who can contribute to the meeting. These meetings serve both the offender and the victim by encouraging young people to take responsibility and speak up for themselves, whilst allowing the young person to acquire a direct insight into the consequences of his/her offending. For the victim they get to be involved in the process of Restorative Justice. During the initial meeting the panel and the young person agree to a contract of behaviour always involving some reparation either to the victim or to the community. This contract is then supervised by the YOT and further Panel Meetings.

**Do you want to be a Panel Member?** As a member of the community, you can become a Panel Member. Being a Panel member is a challenging a rewarding role. Together with your Panel colleagues, you will direct the way forward for the young person who has admitted the offence.

**What is the time commitment?** Panel Meetings can normally be arranged around the work/time commitments of Panel Members. Most Panel members will give up about three hours a month.

**How will it benefit you?** You will benefit from both training and experience of Panel Members. All Panel members will be given full training, which will develop communication skills and equip them to assess people and situations and make important decisions. These and other skills should be easily transferable into most work situations.

**Are Panel members paid?** Panel members are volunteers, so they are not paid but they should not be out of pocket - travel expenses will be paid by the YOTs.

**Finally** - If you want to see less crime in your community, this is the perfect opportunity to get involved. You could be included in tackling youth crime and its consequences. We need people like you, people who will make a difference. It makes no difference where you come from or what you do as long as you are over 18 years old and are willing to make a difference in your community.

**To get involved as a mentor or panel member call the volunteer contact on 01772 532075.**

## **6.Crown Prosecution Service**

The Crown Prosecution Service in Lancashire is happy to provide opportunities for students wishing to spend time with the organisation on work placements.

To apply students must send a covering letter explaining why they wish to work with the CPS and why a placement would benefit them with their studies, along with a copy of their current CV.

Placements are for one or two weeks (two weeks is the maximum) unfortunately longer placements cannot be accommodated. The placement co-ordinator tries to ensure that students are placed in the CPS office nearest to them.

The placement scheme with the CPS is extremely popular and as such places for 2009 are already taken. However, students wishing to be considered for 2010 should be applying now to ensure they are placed on the waiting list.

Covering letters and CVs should be sent to:

Melissa King  
Lancashire Crown Prosecution Service  
Group Operations Centre  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Podium  
Unicentre  
Lordswalk  
Preston  
PR1 1DH

Contact tel no: 01772 208279

## **7. Prison Service**

### **Independent Monitoring Board (IMB)**

Few people realise that inside every prison and immigration removal centre there is an Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) – a group of ordinary members of the public doing an extraordinary job. IMB members are independent and unpaid. They monitor the day-to-day life in their local prison or removal centre and ensure that proper standards of care and decency are maintained.

#### **An important role**

Being an IMB member is a very special and privileged role that takes up an average of 2-3 days per month. Members have unrestricted access to their local prison or immigration removal centre at any time and can talk to any prisoner or detainee they wish to, out of sight and hearing of a members of staff if necessary. A typical monitoring visit, for example, might include time spent in the kitchens, workshops, accommodation blocks, recreation areas, healthcare centre and chaplaincy.

#### **Confidential access**

Board members also play an important role in dealing with problems inside the establishment. If a prisoner or detainee has an issue that he or she has been unable to resolve through the usual internal channels, he or she can put in a confidential request to see a member of the IMB. Problems might include concerns over lost property, visits from family or friends, special religious or cultural requirements, or even serious allegations such as bullying.

In addition, if something serious happens at the establishment, for example a riot or a death in custody, representatives of the board may be called in to attend and observe the way in which the situation is handled.

#### **Working as a team**

Every Board meets regularly, usually once per month, and has an elected Chair and Vice Chair. Board members work together as a team to raise any matters of concern and to keep an independent eye on the establishment they monitor. Every year they produce an annual report, which is published to the local community.

#### **To get involved please contact the Independent monitoring board secretariat:**

2nd floor, Ashley House, 2 Monck Street, London SW1P 2BQ

Email: [imb@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:imb@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Official Prison Visitors**

An Official Prison Visitor is someone who visits prisoners regardless of whether they have visits from family and friends. Someone who has time to listen in confidence and show respect to a prisoner.

They will commit themselves to visit a prisoner on a regular basis, normally this will usually be around two hours a month.

The National Association of Official Prison Visitors (NAOPV) co-ordinates the activities of Official Prison Visitors and provides training and support for volunteers. Contact NAOPV if you are interested in volunteering to be a Prison Visitor via [www.naopv.com](http://www.naopv.com)

## **Peer Support**

The Prison Service recognises that being sent to prison can be a traumatic and often distressing experience for many prisoners, particularly those new to the prison system. For this reason there are a number of peer support schemes run specifically by prisoners for prisoners.

Effective peer support can contribute to safer prison strategies by helping to create a safe, decent and healthy environment with positive prisoner-prisoner and staff-prisoner relationships, where problems can be voiced and addressed and anxiety alleviated.

## **Samaritans**

Samaritans are available 24 hours a day to offer emotional support and they now have strong links with most prisons in England and Wales. If a prisoner wants to see a Samaritan, they can ask a member of staff to arrange a visit or use one of the dedicated phones which provides access to Samaritans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Alternatively, prisoners may call their local Samaritan branch at any time of the day through their pinphone. Any conversation the prisoner has with a Samaritan is completely confidential and will not be discussed with prison staff.

Samaritans main activity with most prisons apart from units holding young people under 18 is to select, train and support volunteer prisoners called Listeners.

## **Listener Schemes**

The majority of prisons in England and Wales now have a Samaritan supported 'Listener' scheme. Listeners, who work as unpaid volunteers, provide confidential emotional support to other prisoners. The support offered by Listeners is confidential, so that details of a prisoner's conversation with a Listener will not be passed on to prison staff unless the person they are supporting gives their permission.

## **Other peer support schemes**

A few prisons do not have a Listener scheme, although most of them run alternative peer support schemes known sometimes as a 'Buddy' or 'Carers' scheme. These schemes are not confidential and are not supported by Samaritans.

## **Insiders**

The Insiders scheme involves the training of selected prisoner/trainee volunteers to provide basic information and reassurance to prisoners new to prison shortly after their arrival in prison. The first 24 hours in custody are particularly distressing for many prisoners, particularly those new to the prison system, and the aim of the Insiders scheme is to help reduce the anxiety experienced by them.