

Red Radios for HMP Wandsworth

The Multifaith Chaplaincy team in Wandsworth Prison started a Radio Loan scheme in August 2018 for those prisoners who would find company and cheer by listening to a radio but for various reasons could not afford to buy a DAB radio themselves. A good number are also distributed to the prisoners in the Segregation Unit and Healthcare Units (mental & physical health) where men are kept in solitary confinement.



The team found a wind-up radio – so no batteries to buy and no lead to hang yourself with! It had good reception AM and FM and was red so hoped it was visible enough to track. The fundamental aim was to allow a lonely person to listen quietly to music of their choosing or the sensible spoken word.

The radios continue to bring pleasure and reduce distress in anxiety-inducing situations, where without this small comfort the men may otherwise revert to difficult behaviour. During Lockdown they have been an invaluable means by which the men can keep in touch with the outside world. The TV in the prison plays the prison radio channel and radio Wanno –HMP Wandsworth 's own information broadcasting service, but neither are varied, and both play 'on a loop' so you hear the same programmes repeatedly; and because the noise comes from the telly, both men in a cell must listen to the same channel. A personal radio is treasure to those who like to listen...

Any money donated is used to buy 40 radios, the monthly ration. 40 radios cost just short of £470 – each radio costs £11.70. There are no other costs whatsoever. No overheads, no salaries. It is sad but the prison service budget will not run to radios, and procurement issues mean that wind up radios are not the cheapest option even if the prison could buy any radios.

The chaplains are all approved by the Ministry of Justice as prison chaplains and hold a joint double signature bank account in the name of 'Wandsworth Prison Chaplaincy'. Any gifts would go into this account and would be used for radios. We are not a registered charity so gift aid cannot be claimed on donations.

To donate for radios please make a cheque out to Prison Chaplaincy Wandsworth and send it to Liz Bridge, 13 Fawe Park Road, London SW15 2EB – or transfer money by BACS to Nat West sort 60-22-28 account 40971767 account name Prison Chaplaincy Wandsworth.