
QUEER DETENTION MONITORS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

We are a group of queer/LGBTQIA+ people working in detention monitoring. As queer people working in mostly straight institutions, monitoring settings where LGBTQIA+ people are at particular risk of abuse or ill treatment, we have created this dedicated space for us and our peers.

Jean-Sébastien Blanc, Louise Finer and Sam Christensen, October 2025

Group aims

1. To provide a supportive space for queer detention monitors to come together.
2. To facilitate discussion of issues and challenges that may arise within our working environments.
3. To bring our shared experience to finding better ways of addressing the many problems faced by queer people in detention settings, building our confidence to challenge poor practice.
4. To consider broader policy issues relating to queer people deprived of liberty or working in detention settings.

Group principles

- We acknowledge that not everyone can be openly queer in their workplace and that visibility can be dangerous for some. This is a space for queer peers to come together safely, in trust and confidence and in solidarity.
- We acknowledge that trans and non-binary people are underrepresented within detention monitoring bodies, and that they face additional hurdles to gain employment and to come out in this context.
- We are motivated by the need to bring greater understanding and visibility of the situation of queer people in all types of detention settings, who face higher risks of discrimination, harassment and violence. We strive to improve their conditions whilst they are deprived of liberty, but we also firmly believe these intrinsic risks justify greater efforts to seek alternatives to detention.
- We acknowledge the multiple and intersecting identities of all LGBTQIA+ monitors and people in detention, and will consider the additional grounds on which they may be marginalised or discriminated against, including but not exclusive to: race, disability, neurodiversity, class, nationality.
- We will work together in the context of a backlash against LGBTQIA+ rights in many areas of the world, acknowledging the challenges many face in their personal, public and professional lives in this context.
- We note that international standards and recommendations (OPCAT Articles 5,18; UN Special Rapporteur on Torture A/HRC/31/57 paragraph 39) underscore the importance of

LGBTQIA+ people being included and represented in detention monitoring bodies, and we will advocate for these principles to be upheld across National Preventive Mechanisms and international monitoring bodies.

Criteria for joining the community of practice

- To identify as queer (in its broadest definition).
- To be involved in the practical work of detention monitoring. Those with past experience gained in a practical detention monitoring role will also be welcome to join.
- To be interested in contributing to a wider reflection about practices and policies relating to queer people deprived of liberty.
- To be committed to trans-inclusion, and challenging multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

We welcome and will proactively seek detention monitors working in non-Western countries, people from racial and ethnic minority groups, trans, intersex and non-binary people, and people with disabilities to join the group.

For the time being, English is the common language of the group. However, a limited proficiency in English should not be an obstacle. If the need arises, translation options will be sought.

What do we do?

- Online support: whenever we have a question, a doubt, a practical situation to discuss, a problem faced while visiting a place of liberty, issues dealing with colleagues => we can contact the group for support and answers
- Regular thematic discussions: we organise online community of practice meetings a few times every year to discuss collectively topics of common interest.

In the future, we expect to set an agenda for sharing our work. This may include external meetings with detention monitoring bodies, community of practice meetings with experts in the field (LGBTQIA+ people with detention experience, activists, academics), blogs, external publications and engagements.

Rules of engagement

The community of practice operates under principles of confidentiality and privacy. This includes:

- Not sharing the names of any community members outside the group, without explicit permission from the individual.
- What is shared in the group stays in the group.
- Sensitive or confidential information is not shared in the community of practice. All members will be individually responsible for upholding the confidentiality rules of their own monitoring bodies.

We expect all members of the community of practice to be non-judgmental, respect differences, leave space for everyone to participate. We expect all members to participate actively and attend as many meetings as possible given other commitments.

Funding

The community of practice is currently unfunded, and all participants will join in their own time. We hope to explore possibilities for funding the work or activities of the group in the future.

Contact

Please contact us at qdmcop@gmail.com for further information or to express an interest in joining the community of practice. Feel free to write in French, Spanish, German, Russian, Portuguese, Italian or English.