

**Updates on the implementation of recommendations resulting from the Farmer Review ‘Improving Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce**

**Intergenerational Crime’ published August 2017**

On 5 September 2017 at the launch of the Farmer report, the Government welcomed the 19 recommendations that resulted from the review. Progress has been made on most of the recommendations but there are still a handful that will require longer-term structural reform to be delivered. This is the *second* formal update demonstrating progress that has been made against each recommendation to date.

**Farmer recommendation updates April 2019**

**1. There should be a clear and simple structure for accountability with regards to prisoners' contact and relationships with their family**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

* Since April 2018 all prison Governors have been required to produce local Strategies, setting out how they will support prisoners to improve the level of engagement with their friends and families. These local strategies are available through the [National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO)](https://www.nicco.org.uk/) website. HMPPS are working with Governors to ensure that local strategies for all prisons are published on the NICCO website by Summer 2019.
* A new [Family Policy Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strengthening-prisoners-family-ties-policy-framework) was developed and published in January 2019, setting out the expectations of provision of family or significant other support to all prisoners.

* 1. **The importance of 'Maintaining and developing family relationships' must be explicitly stated as part of the purpose of prison, to protect the agenda from being de-prioritised or dropped under future governments.**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

* The new [Family Policy Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strengthening-prisoners-family-ties-policy-framework), Strengthening Prisoners’ Family Ties is the Secretary of State’s commitment to maintaining and developing prisoners’ family relationships.  The Secretary of States expectations of those operating within prisons is enshrined through this policy framework.
  1. **The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice to be made responsible for ensuring prisoners’ family ties are consistently treated as important across the estate by including them in his accountabilities.**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

* As #1.1 above

**1.3 It should also be explicitly specified that the Performance Agreements the Secretary of State enters into with governors and executive governors of prison clusters must include a ‘local family offer’ to ensure that effective family work is delivered inside prisons. There should be a clear and simple structure for accountability with regards to prisoners' contact and relationships with their family**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

* From April 2018 all prison Governors are required to produce local Strategies, which set out how they will support prisoners to improve the level of engagement with their friends and families; and describe the local family offer. See following link. <https://www.nicco.org.uk/search?q=FAMILY+STRATEGY>

**1.4 The Performance Agreement with each prison should specify the following local family offer elements (with guidance from the Ministry of Justice) but  
detailed design and delivery to be at the broad discretion of Governors in each establishment:**

**(a) Visitor base/centre and visiting services;**

**(b) Staffing structure to ensure family work is an operational priority;**

**(c) Extended visits;**

**(d) Family learning; and**

**(e) ‘Gateway’**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

* From April 2018 all prison Governors and Directors are required to produce local Strategies, which set out how they will support prisoners to improve the level of engagement with their friends and families. *and describe the local family offer.*
* A new [Family Policy Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strengthening-prisoners-family-ties-policy-framework) has been developed and was published in January 2019, setting out the expectations of provision of family or significant other support to all prisoners.

**1.5 The Ministry of Justice should ensure that the importance of family ties is a golden thread running through the new policy frameworks based on the revised and pruned body of Prison Service Orders and Prison Service Instructions and also Probation Instructions.**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

* All policies are subject to the Department for Work and Pensions Family Test[[1]](#footnote-2). The Deregulation Operational Policy Team ensure that this test is applied to all policies.
* From March 2019, all draft Family impact tests completed in support of policy frameworks, will be shared with the Family Services Working group for consideration, as part of the clearance process.
* We are currently piloting changes to ACCT documentation and guidance, including greater emphasis on the importance of family involvement in the ACCT process. This will be reflected in the relevant policy framework when the revised ACCT is rolled out across the estate.

**1.6 The Ministry of Justice to develop an action plan out of the Farmer Review recommendations, including details on how the proposals will be taken forward and report progress to the Review twice a year.**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

* An action plan was developed and is monitored monthly via a Family Strategy Working Group chaired by the HMPPS Families lead in partnership with the MOJ Family policy lead and attended by a Clinks representative.
* Regular meetings are held with Lord Farmer, and Clinks to provide updates.
* Quarterly updates are published via the NICCO website.

**1.7 Governors to be held to account for positive family work outcomes.**

**ONGOING**

* In April 2019/20 a ‘shadow’ family self-assessment performance measure was introduced. The ‘shadow’ element of the measure means that final performance for the business year 2019/20 will not form part of each establishment’s overall performance score. This will allow each Governor/Director and all concerned, to develop confidence in the self-assessment process and the robustness of the measure itself. The self-assessment supports and provides crucial guidance for the delivery of more consistent services that help to improve relationships between prisoners, their families and significant others. Such services include, extended visitations and family days across the prisons estate. The measure encourages and recognises positive and proactive work by prisons.
* Once learning from the 2019/20 ‘shadow’ measure has been considered a formal measure will be applied for the business year 2020/21.

**2. Her Majesty’s Inspector of Prisons must ensure the importance of family ties features prominently throughout the new Expectations currently being refined, so empowered governors know this has to be a cross-cutting priority in the running of their prison.**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

* Her Majesty’s Inspector of Prisons (HMIP) appointed a lead inspector to Children and Families giving greater prominence to this area. Its website publishes good practice from recent inspections on families and significant relationships. <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/our-expectations/prison-expectations/rehabilitation-and-release-planning/children-and-families-and-contact-with-the-outside-world/>

**3. To improve the use of evidence and data, the body that considers ‘what-works’ to rehabilitate offenders should also act as a repository of information about effective family work.**

**ONGOING**

* An evidence hub function is being established as an online repository of evidence that enhances access to information currently held within MoJ and its agencies.
* The A-Z ‘What Works’ is being quality assured for publication on the Gov.uk website.  This is expected to be launched this year – 2019.
* Data from Family Services providers can be accessed on the NICCO website, <https://www.nicco.org.uk/>. **(Recommendation 3 & 12)**

**4.** **Family work should be included in all four standards in the White Paper (1. Public Protection; 2. Safety and Order; 3. Reform; 4. Preparing for life after prison)**

**ONGOING**

**Business plan:**

* HM Prison and Probation Service Business Plan 2018-2019, published July 2018, commits Governors to implement the Farmer Review recommendations and improve positive family ties through the improvement of digital services.

**Other activities that support this recommendation include:**

**Ten Prisons Project**

* The 10 Prisons Project is focused on reducing violence by improving security to tackle the supply of drugs into prisons, raising standards of decency, and increasing consistency through enhancing staff capability. However, given the importance that family ties can play in reducing violence, there are several activities that seek to improve family engagement.
* The Family Engagement Project is a six-month project working with four of the ten prisons - HMP Leeds, HMP Hull, HMP Nottingham, and HMP/YOI Moorland – which will generate learning that will be shared with the other six establishments involved in the project. The project seeks to embed a family-focused approach that demonstrates what can be achieved by implementing Lord Farmer’s recommendations.
* Family Engagement Workers from Pact, Lincolnshire Action Trust and Jigsaw have commenced delivery. The first phase of the project is to understand current family practice across the four sites. The second phase will develop the tools and resources needed to embed family practice, including delivery of ‘Think Family’ training for key workers. The final phase will ensure the tools are fit for purpose and replicable, and will involve feedback and discussion with families and prison staff.
* As part of the work to raise standards of decency, funded has been provided to address areas where the 10 prisons want to make improvements to the environment. This has included work to improve visits facilities to support positive family engagement. Improvements are shown in the pictures below at HMP Nottingham’s visits hall.

***Before After***

 

**5. Prison performance measures, which would enable comparisons to be made with similar prisons for the purposes of learning from practice, should include a family related measure such as rate of prisoners who receive visits on entry and exit and rate of prisoners engaged with their family, or other supportive relationships, on entry and exit.**

**ONGOING**

* The new performance measure process will be piloted through a shadow target measure was designed in collaboration with Governors, family services providers, data specialists, Wales and women’s estate colleagues.
* A shadow family performance target will commence in April 2019 and the lessons learnt from the self-assessment process, will contribute to the full measure that will be set and implemented in 2020.
* Part of the measure will allow establishments to demonstrate their use of management information for example, to identify which prisoners do/do not receive visits and actions taken to support those individuals. This information should reflect in prison’s local family strategies and development plans.

**6. Contact details of family and significant others should be mandatorily requested by prisoner escort services before a prisoner leaves court and immediately added to his prison file, with this and other information on key relationships updated on an ongoing basis and sent with him when he moves establishments.**

**ONGOING**

* A new version of the PER which reflects the recommendations made in the Farmer report has been developed. Next of kin details for prisoners and significant others are requested on page 3. The PER is expected to be signed off and implemented during 2019.

**7. If a prisoner cannot name anyone he will want to contact on the first night this should be flagged and active steps taken to try to reconnect him with family or others with whom he might be able to develop a supportive relationship.**

**ONGOING**

* HMPPS recognise that initial days in custody can be distressing and isolating for prisoners, particularly those who have lost contact with their families. Reception and First Night procedures will identify a next of kin for prisoners and a phone call to a friend or loved one is always offered. The OMiC model ensures that prisoners are allocated a key worker as soon as practical and this prison officer will work with the prisoner throughout their sentence to support them to maintain contact.
* The purpose of the Offender Management in Custody model (OMiC) changes is to ensure that:
  + every prisoner should have the opportunity to transform their lives by using their time in custody constructively to reduce their risk of harm and reoffending;
  + to plan their resettlement;
  + and to improve their prospects of becoming a safe, law-abiding and valuable member of society. OMiC recognises the value and importance of the role of families.
* Key workers may also seek to engage the family in specific circumstances, depending on the situation and where consent has been provided, such as:
  + Stages of crisis – attendance/ informed about self -harm reviews or to be proactive at the point of visible triggers
  + Where there is a need for separation and segregation
  + Concerns regarding mental and physical health that may need to be shared
  + Celebrating achievements/ milestones whilst in custody
  + Supporting those preparing for release into the community either through temporary licence or released on licence
* The other aspect of the OMIC changes will be the introduction of a different approach to case or offender management for some long-term offenders. For them the offender manager will be located inside the prison rather than, as now, in the community. We would expect that this change will lead to opportunities around better embedding families in the management of offenders whilst in custody such as prison offender managers:
  + developing a greater knowledge and understanding of a prisoners’ family situation;
  + engaging families and key workers to develop trust and confidence; and to
  + create opportunities for prisoners to engage positively with family services and activities offered.
* In Wales, Families and Significant Other Standards are being developed to set out expectations of good practice for our staff. This includes expectations on how people in custody without significant other ties can be identified and supported in building or rebuilding safe, appropriate and rehabilitative family and significant other relationships.

**8. Empowered governors’ tenures should be of sufficient duration to demonstrate that they have added value to the prison, as Performance Agreements last for three years this should be the minimum length (apart from in exceptional circumstances)**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

* To ensure that there is more stability in prison leadership, the aspiration of HMPPS is that governors will remain in post at prisons for a sustained period and that turnover will reduce. The aim of HMPPS is to maintain Governors in place for three years subject to performance or any other exceptional operational circumstances or personal factors.
* Ongoing scrutiny provided through the FSWG requesting bi-annual reports from HMPPS Human Resources on compliance and average duration of tenure.

**9. When governors are in the process of making a decision about granting ROTL, family ties and supportive relationships should be one of the considerations.**

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* Whilst the new Release on Temporary Licence Policy Framework (ROTL) will make access to ROTL easier, we expect most to take place in open and women’s prisons where the resourcing and infrastructure best enable ROTL to be undertaken. Currently, closed prisons release eligible prisoners on ROTL, however, Governors ensure that they have the necessary security arrangements in place to prevent contraband being brought in by returning prisoners, staff in place to carry out the required assessments and Boards, and operational enablers, prior to considering a wider expansion of ROTL.
* Eligible prisoners may apply for release on temporary licence (ROTL) specifically to maintain family ties, as well as for other activities that can help resettlement, such as work, education and training.

**10. Men who are eligible for ROTL should be able to attend visits outside the prison gate, whether on approved premises or in the wider community.**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

* HMIP have reported that the use of ROTL for family engagement has increased.
* We have to make sure prisoners are rehabilitated properly, using tools like release on temporary licence (ROTL).  We know that ROTL can help to reduce re-offending by providing opportunities to work, learn,  build family ties and assist with meeting housing needs.
* Governors need to be able tailor their ROTL regime to the circumstances of each offender and the opportunities available. We have consulted those involved in taking ROTL decisions (prisons, probation and police) and those who provide opportunities for prisoners to work on ROTL and are currently considering the responses.

**11. Governors should be intentional about ensuring all prisoners who do not have family or other support – for example if they have been in the care system – are helped to form relationships with people outside or peers inside.**

**ONGOING**

***Care leavers***

* The Model for Operational Delivery for Young Adults (18–25) considers men with adverse childhood experiences, which includes care leavers. As well as providing data and evidence, there is also guidance specifically for helping care leavers. In particular, there are recommendations to encourage prisons to consider ‘family’ in its broadest sense – for care leavers, this might include foster carers, close friends, family friends, local authority carers or personal advisors and these links should be encouraged in the same way as ‘traditional’ family. This might include, for example, permitting personal advisors to attend social visits, rather than legal visits.
* The HMPPS in Wales Family and Significant Other Strategy (currently in draft) includes a section on Care Leavers which emphasises the importance of recognising the individual needs of care leavers and outlines some of the joint work being taken forward between HMPPS in Wales and the Welsh Government to improve outcomes for care leavers in the Criminal Justice System.
* Under the new offender management in custody (OMiC) model, which will be introduced from 16 September 2019, every identified care leaver under the age of 25 will be allocated a prison offender manager (POM) for the duration of the custodial part of their sentence. The POM will fully assess the needs of the individual in consultation with the personal advisor, and create a sentence plan which aligns any planned provision with the care leaver’s pathway plan. They will oversee the delivery of the sentence plan, offering supervision depending on the risks and needs of the case. At the end of sentence, in the pre-release phase, the POM and community offender manager (COM) will ensure there is a smooth handover of responsibility and that any resettlement plan is aligned to the pathway plan.

**Older Prisoners**

* The Ministry of Justice is aware that the number and proportion of the prison population who are older prisoners (defined as aged 50 and over) has increased.
* The Ministry of Justice has undertaken scoping work to identify the current position regarding the older prisoner population, looking at current provision to identify any gaps and identifying existing best practice. We are also looking to identify gaps in evidence and data, with a view to developing options for future work.
* We have presented our findings to date to a steering group of external experts to test our work and identify new ideas for consideration.
* With an ageing population, we need to be prepared for how we can provide safe, decent and suitable services, accommodation and support for men of all ages. The Model for Operational Delivery (MOD) for older prisoners gathers together key evidence, relevant literature and good practice examples from across the estate to aid Governors in their planning, so that they can cater for the needs of older prisoners.
* The MODs recognise the need to consider the varying requirements of prisoners according to prison function and/or cohort. Accordingly, governors may put appropriate adjustments in place, for example for elderly prisoners, close family or friends may also be older and may find it challenging to travel for visits. Therefore, governors may allow accumulative or extended visits, as a reasonable adjustment, on request.

**Social visits**

* Social visits are one of the main protective factors forpeople held in custody. Evidence suggests that a lack of familial contact can lead to violent or self-harming behaviours, which will have a detrimental impact on prisons and prisoners. The statutory entitlement to social visits for convicted prisoners is two visits in every four-week period.  In addition, policy allows for a visit on reception.  Empowered Governors can add to this time with additional family visits or longer sessions to encourage family relationships.
* Providing visits in a relaxed environment is important. This may have a positive impact on the welfare of the prisoner as well as their motivation to engage in resettlement activities.
* Family learning or homework clubs can also provide an opportunity for family members to undertake educational activities and homework together in a fun and dynamic way, retaining family ties and involving prisoners in their children’s education while encouraging their own relationship with education. Such events work most effectively when the focus of the session is about the interaction between the prisoner and their children.
* Prisoners families should be made aware of existing schemes that are available which can facilitate and enhance family visits, including the Assisted Prison Visits scheme ([Strengthening Family Ties Policy Framework](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/775554/strengthening-prisoners-family-ties-policy-framework.pdf)).
* Organisations that provide prisoner email services operate in some prisons, in in others, the introduction of in-cell telephones can act as additional methods of maintaining family ties.

**12. To support them in this, the body that considers ‘what-works’ to rehabilitate offenders should examine the effectiveness of models that help prisoners without supportive relationships to develop these, or to reconnect safely with family and others from their past.**

**ONGOING**

**(See recommendation 3)**

**13**. **The Ministry of Justice should make a fund available that governors can bid for to trial innovations that engage with families specifically in order to prevent suicide.**

**ONGOING**

* Bids were invited to consider innovations that engage with families that focused on prevention of self-harm and suicide in May 2018. However, the two-year grant was awarded to two organisation that are working in partnership to deliver services to prisoners that are care experienced.
* The projects, run by family organisation Barnardos and NEPACs, are being overseen by the Operational Families Lead are making positive progress; with the expectation that both projects will lead to sharing best practice across all prisons.
* If such grant opportunities become available in the future, the specifications and evaluation process will be more specific to this recommendation.
* In the meantime, Safer Custody colleagues are focused on suicide prevention and work closely with the family team to ensure that we identify opportunities to promote the benefits of engaging family and significant others in the care of prisoners with identified needs.

**14. As part of their Performance Agreement, each prison should establish a clear, auditable and responsive ‘gateway’ communication system for families and significant others – a dedicated phone line that is listened to and acted upon.**

**14.1 Families’ concerns about mental and physical health should be properly recorded and action taken.**

**14.2 Families (and significant others) should be properly informed about the opening of an ACCT document and able to request the opening of an ACCT document.**

**14.3  If after completion of a risk-based assessment an ACCT document is opened they should be kept appropriately updated of any intervention/action arising from this.**

**14.4 If, after the completion of a risk-based assessment, it is decided not to open an ACCT document, then the family member or other person who raised the matter should be written to detailing the reason for the decision.**

**ONGOING**

* Governors are required to put in place a process that enables family members and/or other people with concerns about a prisoner’s safety to contact an identified member of staff without delay. On receipt of such information a member of staff will physically check to make sure that the prisoner is safe.
* The process should include prompt feedback to the person who raised the concerns, to confirm that the individual is safe and (with due consideration to the appropriateness of the level of information sharing) to describe what action is being taken.
* Guidance on this was re-issued during Summer 2018 through a learning bulletin.
* A separate learning bulletin on engaging families in the ACCT case management process for prisoners at risk of self-harm and suicide has also been issued.
* If an ACCT is opened, consideration must be given to inviting the prisoner’s family/next of kin to case review meetings where this is thought to be beneficial, and where the prisoner has given consent.
* In February 2019 we began a pilot of a revised version of the ACCT process in ten establishments. The new form and guidance place increased emphasis on engaging with the families of individuals at risk. Pilot establishments have been provided with leaflets that explain the ACCT process, which can also be given to family and significant others. The pilot will run for four months and be evaluated, and it is expected that the new system will be rolled out nationally in early 2020.
* In March 2019 we issued additional learning bulletins on the importance of obtaining and recording consent to share information with families, and on how to respond to a family member who has contacted the prison to express concerns about a prisoner’s wellbeing and/or to share information about risk.
* A survey has been devised which will be conducted in all establishments from Summer 2019, to collect information about the processes that are in place to enable family members and/or other people with concerns about a prisoner’s safety to make contact and the systems that are in place to provide assurance that they are functioning effectively. As well as providing central management information that will allow us to assess the need for further action, this will act as a prompt to Governors to take stock of their local arrangements.

**15. Development of leaders and staff must support governors in fulfilling their Performance Agreement requirement to provide a staffing structure that makes family work an operational priority:**

**15.1 Given that family work has been characterised by unacceptable levels of inconsistency across the estate, the leadership capability strategy referred to in the white paper should make this area of responsibility a priority.**

**15.2 The new leadership programme should give governors a solid grasp of the impressive evidence base that shows good relationships with families are key to rehabilitation and reducing intergenerational reoffending.**

**ONGOING**

* Over the past two years HMPPS has developed a national offer of key leadership development programmes, and anticipates marked improvements in leadership capability and talent pipeline as programmes embed. New programmes include: two fast-track promotion schemes, external recruitment for senior managers, graduate recruitment of high potential prison officers, a core leadership programme for Governors and core management programmes for new and experienced managers.
* Families Guidance, HMIP and Audit measures, the new Family Ties Policy, provide information for all staff to deliver effective family services.
* As family services continue to be imbedded within the day-to-day business of all prisons, the Families Team will utilise feedback and learning from the developing families’ performance measure and engage with prison family Single Points of Contact (SPOCS) to identify specific learning needs.
* Working closely with the HMPPS Leadership Development, Talent and Succession Planning Team, we will deliver a series of Action Learning Sets that will support Families Leads and their teams to present issues and develop solutions and good practice. This approach will help to continue and improve positive family services performance.

**16. All new-build prisons should be subject to the Government’s Family Test and required to produce a family impact assessment which should be published.**

**ONGOING**

* We recognise that visits from family and friends can have an extremely positive effect on the rehabilitation of prisoners.
* Therefore, enabling family contact has been an important consideration of the design of the new prisons, particularly as they will hold resettlement prisoners. The new prisons are being built to include high-quality visitor facilities that will give families and friends a good experience in a safe and secure environment so that they come more often.
* As well as improving visitor facilities, the digital infrastructure in the prison will enable prisoners to more readily keep in touch with their families’ in-between visits or where visits are not possible.
* There will also be dedicated space for families to meet prisoners at the point of release, providing a safe environment for both prisoner’s and their families to come together in a supported way to start their resettlement experience immediately on release.
* As part of the design process, we have engaged with stakeholders, including operational experts and the third sector. This has also involved working with health and social care partners to ensure the needs of those with disabilities are met, including visitors to the prison.
* It will be for the operator of the new prisons to undertake the appropriate consideration of the impact on families in the development of their own operating model in line with the relevant operational policy.

**17. Consideration should be given to the closeness of family or other supportive relationships as part of any proposed movements of prisoners out of their home region.**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

**Future vision for the adult male estate**

* The vision for the adult male estate in 2021 shows a reconfigured estate with clearer functions for establishments – reception, training and resettlement, and men held in the right conditions to access the necessary services and support at the right time in their sentence to support their rehabilitation.
* There are complex and wide-ranging issues involved in transferring prisoners, and allocation decisions must reflect both the specific needs and circumstances of the prisoner, as well as the operating environment and range of services at the receiving prison.
* Allocation decisions include consideration of closeness to home and family, alongside other factors such as time left to serve, categorisation, and the identified offending behaviour requirements set out in the prisoner’s sentence plan.
* We recognise that closeness to home is important for maintaining family ties. Given restraints in existing geography and infrastructure, we are not always able to hold prisoners close to home while having access to the right services.
* As in the current estate, those in Training Prisons may be further from home in order to access the right interventions. However, we have prioritised closeness to court for men on remand and closeness to home for men serving short sentences, and during their resettlement period preparing for release into the community for longer sentences.
* As part of the reconfiguration of the estate, men will spend longer in resettlement establishments, where they will be better able to prepare for their release, closer to home. This will be supported by the Offender Management in Custody model.

**Models for Operational Delivery**

* To support the transformation of the adult male estate, we have developed Models for Operational Delivery (MODs) for each prison type and for specialist cohorts.
* There is a MOD for each prison function: Reception, Training and Resettlement, and there are three separate MODs for specialist cohorts: People Convicted of Sexual Offences, Older Prisoners and Foreign Nationals.
* MODs are based on data and evidence to support governors in delivering effective and efficient services according to the function and cohorts the prison will hold.
* Each MOD emphasises the importance of visits and maintaining family ties. This includes taking into consideration the needs and sentence length of different cohorts and the type of prison they are held in.
* The MODs advise that families should be made aware of existing schemes to facilitate and supplement family visits, including Prison Voicemail and the Assisted Prison Visits scheme.
* The MODs recognise the need to consider the varying requirements of prisoners according to prison function and/or cohort. Accordingly, governors may put appropriate adjustments in place, for example:
  + For elderly prisoners, close family or friends may also be older and may find it challenging to travel for visits. Therefore, governors may allow accumulated visits, as a reasonable adjustment, on request.
  + Where prisoners are further away from home (for instance, in a Training Prison), empowered governors’ have discretion to allow additional time with family members who travel long distances. Enabling longer sessions can have a positive effect on these relationships, even if the visits are less frequent.
  + The statutory entitlement to social visits for convicted prisoners is two visits in every four-week period, however, empowered governors’ can add to this time with additional family visits or longer sessions to encourage family relationships, especially in a Resettlement Prison when preparing for release and community integration.
  + There is provision for Foreign Nationals to have a free five-minute telephone call once a month where there has been no social visit within the preceding month. Governors can also consider providing international calling credit to those with limited access to funds.

**Existing Visiting Schemes**

* Prisons should ensure that prisoners and their families are aware of existing schemes that can facilitate and supplement family visits, including Prison Voicemail and the Assisted Prison Visits scheme (PSI 16/2011).
* The Assisted Prison Visits Scheme provides help with travel expenses for prisoners’ close relatives, partners or sole visitors who meet the qualifying rules on income. This contributes to resettlement by helping to ensure family ties are maintained.
* The Official Prison Visitors (OPV) scheme is available to all prisoners regardless of whether they have visits from family or friends. However, it is particularly important for those who do not receive visits, and offers friendship and support both in prison and on release.

**The Digital Change Programme**

* The Digital Change Programme has been created to improve the use and capability of digital networks and tools within public sector prisons.
* This programme aims to deliver digital capability that will underpin and support the rehabilitation of prisoners. The digital network will support the maintenance of family ties.
* Based on the current scope of work, the following digital services may form a wider service offer by 2019, which will include prisoner-visits booking and accessible and affordable in-cell telephony.
* The In-cell Telephony Project has equipped 20 Public Sector prisons with the technology needed to allow prisoners to make telephone calls from their cells via the PIN phone system (all contracted prisons already offer this facility). There are clear advantages of this technology in assisting to support the maintenance of family and community links. Additionally, by removing the need to be unlocked to access a phone reduces the potential for conflict when demand is great, which contributes to keeping prisons safe. Staff working in these sites have also noted benefits to their working environment as a result. For these reasons a further 31 Public Sector prisons are in the process of being fitted with in-cell telephony and expected to go live by March 2020.

**17.1 Governors should arrange, in collaboration with HMPPS Population Management Unit, to ensure prisoners moved out of area are repatriated at the earliest opportunity to the prison region of their family and wider community (if beneficial to the successful completion of their individual sentence plan).**

**ONGOING**

* Resettlement Prisons prepare an individual for release and resettlement into the community through (re)building, maintaining or improving family and community ties and providing access to local community services. Resettlement Prisons are changing both in relation to the cohort they hold and the nature of service that could be provided to meet their needs.
* In future, Resettlement Prisons will hold two broad groups of prisoner preparing for release: those serving shorter sentences who arrive directly from a Reception Prison, and those serving longer sentences who have spent time in a Training Prison. Every person transferring in to a Resettlement Prison will serve a minimum of 28 days there prior to their release.
* Resettlement Prisons play a fundamental part in our prison system, preparing an individual for release and resettlement into the community through (re)building, maintaining or improving family and community ties and providing access to local community services.

**17.2 As part of any decision concerning prison re-rolling, governors in collaboration with HMPPS, should be required to produce a family impact assessment that considers the proximity of prisoners to their families or other supportive relationships. This should also be published**

**COMPLETED – Continuous review through Family Strategy Working Group**

* Closeness to home is one of a number of factors considered when choosing where to place prisoners. We also consider other factors such as length of sentence, security category and offending behaviour requirements including the employment, education and interventions needed to support an individual’s rehabilitation. While geography has formed part of the modelling we have undertaken to plan for future prison functions, there may be a need for an individual to be placed further away from home during the training portion of their sentence to enable them to access a specialist intervention.
* Closeness to home is particularly important for men in their resettlement period, nearing release, where they need to (re)build family ties, secure housing and health services and look for work.
* To support this, HMPPS will ensure that most offenders are returned to their home probation area for release, where they will be managed by either a community rehabilitation company or the National Probation Service (depending on the level of risk they pose). This will provide continuity of service for offenders in custody and the community.
* Progress is being made to improve continuity of support as Family Relationships work will be made an explicit specification within the next iteration of CRC competition.
* As we reconfigure the prison estate, we will see men spending longer in resettlement prisons prior to release, to ensure they have sufficient time to access the relevant services and spend a larger part of their sentence closer to their families.
* It is for each prison to carry out their own Family Impact Assessment. To this end, family services budgets are devolved, giving governors’ flexibility and discretion to put in place the services that best meet the needs of their prisoners.
* Reconfiguration Delivery leads will support governors as they undertake their Family Impact Assessments as part of the mobilisation and transition to their new operating model.

**18. The MoJ should require prisons to demonstrate mutually beneficial links with local businesses, schools and other bodies in the wider community.**

**ONGOING**

* An example of mutually beneficial links is the new National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) (<https://www.nicco.org.uk/>) provided by Barnardo’s and HMPPS in partnership, provides an online resource to support professionals working with the children and families of offenders such as teachers, social workers, family support workers, community health practitioners, prison officers, police and probation officers.
* NICCO includes a new map function where users can either click on a prison to find out what support is available there, or search via geographical region to find out what community based support is available for families.
* The site which replaces i-HOP will continue to contain hundreds of resources, be updated with services, policy developments, events, training opportunities and practice models.

**19. Virtual visits using video calling technology should be available for the small percentage of families or individual family members who cannot visit frequently or at all due to infirmity, distance or other factors.**

**ONGOING**

* We are continuing to explore the options for the use of Internet Based Video Solutions in establishments to facilitate family visits.
* As part of this, we are proposing to pilot the use of video visits in selected establishments including women and foreign national prisons.
* Piloting this technology in these locations will ensure that we have a cross section of offenders and we can be sure that we are including those groups who are more likely to be placed far away from their families.

**Richard Booty –** HMPPS Family Operational lead

**Angela Christopher –** National Families Advisor

**Graham Mackenzie / Rosie Smith –** Families Policy

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-test-assessing-the-impact-of-policies-on-families> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)