HMP Birmingham 2019

‘Family and Significant Others Strategy’

Governor ……………………………………………………

Controller ……………………………………………………

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| Version | Authors | Date | Updates |
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9. **Introduction and Terms of Reference:**

HMP Birmingham is committed to delivering the best possible family service to those in our custody and their family and significant others in their lives. As a community and a prison, we do not always get this right, however we are honest and strive to learn from the things that do not go to plan or we have overlooked. We welcome regular feedback from all and our partner agency HALOW conduct surveys throughout the year to try and capture the experiences of everyone involved. We are also committed to carrying out our own surveys every three months. We use this to monitor and evaluate to our progress for improving the experiences of all involved. We value all feedback.

The publication of Lord Farmer’s Review (circulated 10 August 2017) is seen an integral part of the government’s reform programme with prisons being urged to make considerations for families as a key component in every process. This ‘golden thread’ as described by Lord Farmer is to be utilised to strengthen residents’ family ties to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime.

HMP Birmingham has over the past five years been involved in working closely with residents, their children, family, and significant others. Our interactions with families and significant others linked to our stakeholder engagement seeks to find solutions to the three key areas raised by the government as being ‘ongoing concerns’.

A. Reducing the likelihood of reoffending

B. Reducing intergenerational offending behaviour

C. Offering support and guidance to families, children, and significant others along with supporting information

As an organisation and a community, it is our legal and moral obligation in conjunction with our professional duty to encourage and foster pro-social interactions between those in our care, their families, children, and significant others. This includes but is not limited to; supporting, guiding, and helping with parenting, family, and relationship situational support, where this is appropriate and safe to do so.

We have coupled this policy document alongside official research findings from academics, charities, the Prison Service, Ministry of Justice, other Governmental bodies in addition to our stakeholders and partners. This is to ensure that we use not only relevant theory, existing policy documents but also empirical research which, supports the Government’s position regarding the ongoing concerns and the key areas raised above which is essential that we as an organisation tackle effectively.

These documents include:

* Lord Farmer Review (2017) – 19 recommendations
* HMIP (Children and Families) – 46 expectations
* Delivering Effective Family Practice (December 2017)
* HMP Birmingham’s Reducing Reoffending Strategy (Annual update – to be re-reviewed)
* Ministry of Justice’s Reducing re-offending: Supporting families, creating better futures (2017)
* Parenting and relationship support programmes for offenders and their families
* HMIP and MQPL feedback
* Internal Audit and Compliance reports
* G4S UK Prisons Family Intervention Team
* Incentivising Prison Visits: New Research Findings on the Needs of Children with Imprisoned Mothers and Fathers (Sharratt and Cheung, 2017)
* The Effects of Prison Visits from Community Volunteers on Offender Recidivism (Duwe and Johnson, 2015)
* Offender treatment and rehabilitation: What works? (Lösel, 2012)
* Risk and protective factors in the resettlement of imprisoned fathers with their families. Final research report*. Norwich: Ormiston Children and Families Trust.* (Lösel, 2012)
* Male prisoners’ family relationships and resilience in resettlement. Criminology and Criminal Justice (Markson et al., 2015)

HMP Birmingham follows guidance from HMPPS regarding the definition of a family and what this represents. This includes; precautions and safeguards that are appropriate and lawful.

1. Family is defined as either a blood relative, legal, or significant person that a resident identifies as their next of kin. For care-leavers this may be someone that provides a statutory service, friend, or associate. Many of those in custody will have experienced a non-traditional upbringing, with a range of adults having cared for them, and similarly those in custody with children may have other arrangements outside of a traditional family arrangement. It is important to accommodate all ‘family’ arrangements where they provide a constructive and supportive relationship for the prisoner and their family.
2. We recognise that not all family relationships are positive. Family members may sometimes be the direct or indirect victims of a prisoner’s offence e.g. domestic abuse. These individuals have the right to protection from their perpetrator and in all cases; permission should be sought from the victim and any relevant partner agencies before making contact. This will enable the victim/family unit to be supported in the community. E.g. Victim Liaison Officer, Probation, Community Rehabilitation Companies, Police, Local Authority Social Services (Children’s Services).
3. Other family or significant others may be enablers, contributing to their offending behaviour. Residents may be subject to harassment or restraining orders and the courts take primacy in how we manage familial and other relationships. We must therefore ensure that we prevent inappropriate contact.
4. We also recognise that some family relationships or significant others may be a protective factor in the prisoners journey, and where this is the case, we will share this knowledge with key partners in order to work with us to enable the prisoner to maintain contact to strengthen these links.
5. **First Impressions – The Visitor Centre**

For most people visiting the prison the first point of contact is at the visitor centre. This is situated 100 metres away from the prison on Winson Green Road. The visitor centre has been operated by HALOW (a local registered charity) who have worked with families and significant others in the West Midlands for over 30 years. HMP Birmingham alongside HALOW are committed to supporting and improving relationships with family and significant others.

The following services are offered in the visitors’ centre

* A welcoming place where families and friends can spend some time before and after visits to the prison
* Welcome packs for new visitors regarding the rules and procedures of visits
* Lockers for personal possessions
* Baby changing facilities
* Range of refreshments / Café facilities / Drop in Community hub
* Facilities to meet the needs of disabled visitors
* Wide range of information, advice, leaflets, and support the relevant needs of prison visitors
* Access to a range of community agencies which provide help with concerns regarding: health, housing, benefits, employment, drug/alcohol misuse etc.
* Someone to talk to in confidence
* Dedicated Family Support Worker
* A play area in the Visitors’ centre and Visits Room (parents/carers are responsible for their children at all times)
* Facilitate family days once a month / weekly Family Interventions
* Operates a Toys4Tots scheme (donation service of unwanted toys)
* A dedicated HALOW Hotline for advice and guidance
* Book reception visits and process applications
* Biometric recognition is used for the identification of visitors both Legal and Domestic

There are parking spaces available either in the Visitor’s car park or alternatively, Franklin Street or Foundry Road.

1. **HMPPS recommendations – minimum “family offer”**

Lord Farmer’s report referred to a ‘local family offer’ recommending that all establishments deliver and develop provision in the following areas and that these are reflected in their local strategies which should be a minimum offer:

1. Visitor Centre/Visitor Reception Services

Service is provided by HALOW

1. Staffing structure to ensure family work represents as an operational priority

The staffing structure includes;

1 x Band 7 : Governor of Operations

2 x Band 4: Visits Supporting Officers and Family Interventions Managers

1 x Band 4: Children & Families Pathway Lead

1. Extended Visits – to enable supportive relationships to flourish

Visits sessions have been amended to allow vulnerable residents an extra visits session, and residents have sessions that range from 1 hour to 2 hours in length.

1. Family Learning – to equip residents to maintain and improve relationships

This is an area that requires development, at present we operate emailaprisoner.com, Listeners’ scheme, Samaritans, secure-payment-services.com, family learning sessions, dining together, family DVD watching. Our aim is to develop this area by introducing interventions such as Storybook Dads, Family Man, Parenting for Dads, Fathers Inside, Baby Bonding/ Dads & Kids groups, Positive Parenting, Strengthening families/communities and other family oriented learning within visits.

1. “Gateway” communications system – to demonstrate how the establishment have responsive communication systems in place for families

HALOW operate a survey system to check positives and negatives. HMP Birmingham is committed to completing a family and significant others survey every 3 months. These results will be discussed at the Reducing Reoffending Pathway Meeting. Individual concerns regarding the visitors’ centre will be dealt with by the HALOW staff and internal prison concerns by HMP Birmingham staff.

This families and significant others policy links directly into Birmingham’s reducing reoffending pathway, where supporting and providing interventions are a proven way to reduce the tendency for residents upon release and within their time in custody to revert back to criminality and anti-social behaviour. It is our hope that engagement with the families of prisoners housed at HMP Birmingham fosters positive working relationships and encourages protective factors to reduce criminal behaviour.

1. **Supporting Families and Significant Others - “Gateway communication”**

HALOW and HMP Birmingham offer the following services that are considered “gateway communication”.

* Email-a-prisoner.com
* E-payments service
* HALOW website
* HMPPS website www.gov.uk/prison-visits

We aim to improve in this area of delivery in the next 12 months following Government recommendations by considering the use of the following communications tools or services

* Skype service – use with family and probation (NPS and CRC) (used at HMP Parc)
* Prison Voice Mail
* Happy or Not – Satisfaction can be turned into a measurable Key Performance indicator (Smiley TerminalTM)
* Introduction of a Family Interventions Unit

FAMILY SUPPORT

The family support worker at HMP Birmingham based at the visitors centre

Family Support is available for you and your family

We can point you in the right direction and find you the right support you need

We have a wide range of information, advice and can sign post you to a wide

range of agencies which provide help with concerns regarding;

* Alcohol & Drugs
* Education
* Benefits
* Mental Health
* Independent living
* Trauma

If the agencies are not listed, please ask!

The family support worker can provide a listening ear or someone to talk to in confidence either face to face or on the phone

Please do not hesitate to ask to speak to the family support worker with any concerns!

Helpline HALOW - 0121 598 8050/8178

1. **The Visiting Experience / Family Days**

As well as providing a comfortable and inviting atmosphere we also offer many other facilities. These include:

* A fully staffed take-away styled restaurant offering breakfast, lunch and evening meals accompanied by a varied range of hot and cold drinks. The restaurant is operated by Aramark who strive to provide healthy and vegetarian choices at affordable prices.
* Vending machines with a wide range of sweet alternatives
* Play facilities and activities with children’s work offered by HALOW
* Baby change provision
* High-chairs and additional seating
* A gender neutral disabled toilet
* A mother and baby breast feeding suite and chair
* Disabled lift access
* Knowledgeable and approachable staff
* Experienced Children and Families Pathway support officer
* A Family intervention suit offering a more private environment specifically designed for difficult situation family visits.
* Newly refurbished visit hall and visitor waiting area

A monthly Family day is held with the opportunity for families, significant others and residents to spend quality time together. A 5 hour visiting session is provided so that fathers, their children and families can interact in activities provided by HALOW. These family days are themed in accordance to calendar events and are very popular with the children. We also host the same family day event for vulnerable residents and their families. All family days have different activities which may include:

* Face Painting
* Choir
* Games
* A visit from Father Christmas
* Creative Art
* Colouring and painting sessions
* Singing and dancing
* DVD Watching
* Dining together
* Competitions

Family Day policy:

Structure Of The Day

09:30 – Collected from Wing and taken to Visits

10:00 – Family Day starts

10:00 – 12:00 – Family Time; Various activities

12:00 – 13:00 – Buffet Lunch provided by Visits Canteen

13:00 – 14:30 – Choir sing-a-long; Structured Activity; Theme based; Best Dad Award

14:30 – 1500 – Family Time; Get ready to finish off the visit

Family Day is there to help you and your family maintain family ties and give you the opportunity to have a visit in a more relaxed and fun environment. Staff are present to supervise and maintain the security of the room but are also there to get involved and answer any questions you or your family may have. Outside agencies are also available for you to talk to and gain advice. During Family Day if your behaviour is deemed inappropriate your visit will be terminated and you will receive an IEP Warning. Therefore please ensure the following rules are adhered to:-

• Interact with your children and join in with activities that they may be taking part in

• Do not see this visit as an opportunity for you to spend 5 hours with your partner/family whilst your children are off playing

• No inappropriate (sexual/violent) behaviour

• No inappropriate (sexual/violent) language

• No being abusive to Staff/Visitors/Prisoners

• Keep an eye on your children and what they are doing

• No handling money

• No Passing of unauthorised articles

ALL Prisoners that take part in Family Day will be subject to a Full Search at the end of the Visit

By signing this Compact you are agreeing to the Rules outlined and understand the consequences of your actions if you are to break these Rules.

We host monthly social events for those residents who are not fortunate enough to have visitors. We have quiz evenings which are both fun and educational and we also play bingo.

In an effort to maintain family ties a resident may request that multiple visits are booked on their behalf should their visitors be travelling substantial distances to see them.

Residents are able to request the help of Family Support through the kiosk system within the establishment. Family support workers can message them to discuss their needs and book appointments to meet with them if necessary.

All visitors will be required to wear an identifiable wrist band whilst inside the establishment. Children will be hand UVA hand stamped as part of the safeguarding measure already in place.

1. Partnership working and stakeholder engagement

* Monthly visitor forums
* Quarterly open days with multi agency attendance
* Quarterly community fun days
* Newbigin Community Trust are present at the visitors centre 5 days a week to offer advice to visitors and the community regarding advocacy
* Newbigin also offer respite by way of holiday homes throughout the country that we can refer to should visitors need it
* Soho 1st involved visitors and the community in the recent development of the Peace garden
* Visits centre operate a community hub with facilities such as a pay as you feel café with cooking demonstrations and a local sewing/knitting club.

1. **HALOW Leaflets**

  
The Help & Advice Line for Offenders Wives, Partners and Families (known as HALOW (Birmingham) for short), is a registered charity (No: 1150445)

* The charity was set up by residents’ families and friends in 1985 to provide information, counselling and support to residents’ families and friends.
* HALOW (Birmingham) works in partnership with HM Prison Service & G4S to manage Visitors’ Centres at: HMP Birmingham & HMP Oakwood

**At HMP Birmingham Visitors’ Centre, we offer the following services:**

* A welcoming place where families and friends can spend some time before and after visits to the prison
* Welcome packs to new visitors to ensure that they are aware of rules and regulations concerning domestic visits
* Lockers for personal possessions of visitors
* Baby changing facilities
* A suitable range of refreshments
* Facilities to meet the needs of visitors with disabilities
* A wide range of information, advice, leaflets and support relevant to the needs of prison visitors
* Access to a range of community agencies which provide help with concerns regarding: health, housing, benefits, employment, drug/alcohol misuse etc.
* Someone to talk to in confidence if you are needing help
* A dedicated Family Support Worker
* A play area in the Visitors’ Centre and Visits Room (parents/carers are responsible for their children at all times)
* Facilitate family days once a month (please see notice board for details)
* Operates a Toys4Tots scheme (You may donate any unwanted toys to the Visitors’ Centre for children to use)
* Newly opened Peace Garden in front of the centre which opened June 2019

**DO YOU NEED SOME HELP?...**

Our staff are experienced and willing to provide a listening ear when you need someone to talk to.

**HALOW (BIRMINGHAM)**Registered Address: St.Martin’s Youth Centre, Gooch Street, Highgate, Birmingham, B5 6DR

Website: [www.halowbirmingham.org.uk](http://www.halowbirmingham.org.uk)

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| **HOW TO GET TO HMP BIRMINGHAM** |

**BY BUS**

Proceed to the bus stop in Colmore Row and take the ‘101’ to Lodge Road.

To get to the main prison gate, follow the prison wall, which will be on your left hand side.

**PLEASE NOTE: Visitors should go to the Visitors’ Centre first which is visible, diagonally, from the end of Lodge Road.**

**BY TRAIN**

Take a train to New Street Station NOT Birmingham International.

The prison is approximately five miles from New Street Station.

From there, the journey can be completed either by taxi or bus.

**FROM NORTH AND NORTH WEST**

M6 to junction eight. Leave and join the M5 southbound.

Leave the M5 at junction 1.

Turn left onto A41 towards Birmingham.

At the 5th set of road traffic lights turn right onto A4040 (Boulton Road).

Prison is approximately one mile away on left hand side of road.

**FROM NORTH EAST**

To the A38, continue down the ‘Aston Expressway’ – A38 (M).

Turn off second left, up the slip road to Dartmouth Circus (a large roundabout).

Turn right taking the third exit (signposted A41 West Bromwich).

Continue through two sets of road traffic lights along New John Street West.

At the roundabout, take the third exit down to Hockley Circus.

At the flyover, turn right onto A41 towards West Bromwich.

Continue through several sets of road traffic lights and turn left onto A4040 (Boulton Road).

Prison is approximately one mile away on left hand side of the road.

**FROM SOUTH EAST**

M6 to junction 8

Onto M6 southbound to junction 1

Turn left onto A41 towards Birmingham

At 5th set of road traffic lights onto A4040 (Boulton Road)

Prison is approximately one mile away on the left hand side of the road

**FROM SOUTH WEST**

M5 to junction 1

Turn right onto A41 towards Birmingham

At 5th set of road traffic lights onto A4040 (Bolton Road)

Prison is approximately one mile away on the left hand side of the road

**FREE CAR PARKING FACILITY IS AVAILABLE ON A FIRST COME FIRST SERVED BASIS!**

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| **REQUIRED IDENTIFICATION FOR ADULT VISITORS (OVER 18)** |

**HMP BIRMINGHAM NOW OPERATES A BIOMETRIC SYSTEM**

**(Photographs and Finger Prints)**

# ONE of the following forms of identity is acceptable along with TWO official letters (dated with-in the last 3-6 months) (e.g. gas bill, electric bill, phone bill or visa statement, loans statement, bank statement).

* Passport – including foreign and time expired passports where the photograph is still recognisable.
* C Identity Card
* Photo bearing driving license
* Senior citizen Public Transport Photo Pass issued by local authority
* Annual Public Transport Season ticket with photo card
* Employers ID or Student ID card with photograph only if it clearly shows the name of the visitor and the employer or educational establishment, and has a photograph or signature which can be compared with the visitors appearance or signature, and if Foreign Nationals identity card
* Benefits book
* Prison pass

# Or TWO of the following forms of id along with TWO official letters (dated with-in the last 3-6 months) (e.g. gas bill, electric bill, phone bill or visa statement, loans statement, bank statement).

* Birth/Marriage Certificate
* Medical Card
* Cheque book and debit/credit card – (counts as one, do not accept as two forms of ID)
* Employers card or ID without photograph
* Young persons ‘Proof of Age’ card
* Trade Union or National Student Union Membership card
* Rent book or rent card showing name and address.

**Identification for all visitors is required. All visitors must show identification from the above list.**

**Once registered, visitors are advised to always bring ONE form of identification with them to produce in the event of a technical failure.**

Please note that anyone found attempting to enter this establishment with false identification will be reported to the police.

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| **INFORMATION AND I.D REQUIRED FOR MINORS (UNDER 18)** |

All under 18 years of age must have **full original birth certificate** (not short one) with parents names on it, and the child must be either visiting dad or coming with mom or dad on the visit. This must be produced on **EVERY** visit for **EVERY** child!

All under 18 years of age visiting with legal guardian must have **Legal Documents** to prove the guardianship (e.g. sworn affidavit or court papers)

* Minors under 18 years of age are not allowed to visit unless one of the following applies:

1. *The minor is a child of the prisoner*
2. *The minor is a brother or sister of the prisoner and is accompanied by their parent or legal guardian*
3. *The minor is a child of one of the visitors (accompanying visitor must be over 18 years of age)*

* Details of visitors suspecting of using children for trafficking contraband into the prison will be passed to the Social Services department*.* **Please be aware, this may result in your child/children being taken into care!**

No under 18 years of age allowed to visit with-in the first seven days of the prisoner entering the establishment

**It is up to the visitors to prove the child relationship to them or the prisoner before the child is let in.**

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| **EMAILAPRISONER.COM** |

**Welcome to Email a Prisoner.Com**

**Family / Friends / Probation / Legal & Agency Professionals**

**Do you correspond with prisoners?**

* At HMP Birmingham, you have the option to email prisoners using the **emailaprisoner.com** service
* Depending on the time of day you send your email, prison staff will print it and pass your message to the prisoner, hopefully the same or the following day.

**No writing, No envelopes, No running for the post, No hassles!**

*What does this service cost?*

**Messages only cost 35p**. Cheaper then a second class stamp but quicker than royal mail plus. Our messages don’t get lost in the post and postal strikes do not affect us. Emails you send are delivered directly to the prison’s post room – within minutes.

*How it works?*

Once logged in to our secure website your emailed message will be encrypted and reformatted by our secure sophisticated software and then redirected to the prison of choice. Officers then seal the message (for privacy on the wings) and deliver to the prisoners ASAP.

Please be advised – our system does not provide a direct email service to prisoners. Our service is simply a different way of delivering your mail to prisoner(s)

Visit [**www.emailaprisoner.com**](http://www.emailaprisoner.com) today and send a prisoner a message.

Also – keep checking our website for:

Special offers further discounts, new features & services coming soon.

Email a prisoner.com

PO Box 4335 – Somerset – BA11 9AF

Tel: 0844 873 3111

Fax: 0844 873 3114

(In association with Prison Technology Services Ltd No.6406028 Reg. in Eng & Wales)

Proud Sponsors of Prison Chat UK (PCUK) & The New Bridge Foundation

Please note legal messages sent via our service are not subject to the usual privileged arrangements afforded to posted mail

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| **SECURE PAYMENT SERVICES** |

You can also send money to prisoners by using:

[**www.secure-payment-services.com**](http://www.secure-payment-services.com)

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| **PICS2PRISONS** |

Keeping in touch with loved ones in prison can be hard. Send a PICS2PRISONS postcard to stay connected in just 3 easy steps.

1. Upload a photo from your phone/computer
2. Write a personlised message
3. Pay just 99p and we will print and post your photo as a postcard to any prison in the UK.

*Send your loved one a smile*

Visit: **www.Pics2Prisons.com** and send a postcard today ☺

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| **RESIDENTS PERSONAL PROPERTY** |

Residents can have **7 pairs of** underwear and 7 pairs of socks on a visit without an application being required.

Remand residents are only allowed **ONE** hand in of clothing every **SIX** months.

Convicted residents are only allowed a **ONE OFF** hand in within 10 days of conviction.

Any resident who wishes clothing must put in the application at least 4 days in advance of their visit to the reception department informing them of when the visit is (date and time) and who is bringing the items, along with a list of what items are being brought. The domestic visit must be booked first before the residents can put in his application for property.

Visitors can ring the Visitors’ Centre the day before their visit to check if the application has been approved and the resident is on the property list.

**Property requests are an internal matter done by the resident, visitors cannot do the request themselves.**

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| **RESIDENTS IN POSSESSION LIST** |

Clothing allowed:

Guidance for visitors

* 5 T-shirts in total
* 3 pairs of jeans / trousers / tracksuits bottoms   
  (if jeans: **only blue** / if tracksuit bottoms: **not black**) in total
* 2 shirts (not white)
* 2 jumpers/sweatshirts **(not black)** in total
* 2 pairs of trainers
* 1 pair of flip flops
* 7 pairs of socks
* 7 pairs of underwear

Clothing **NOT** allowed:

* Hoodies
* Suits
* Boots
* Hats/Gloves/Scarves
* White Shirts
* Any clothing deemed to be similar to staff uniform
* Any clothing that has logos for football teams or sports or national flags

1. List of Farmer’s Report Recommendations

1. There should be a clear and simple structure for accountability about residents’ contact and relationships with their family.

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

e) ‘Gateway’ communication system

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

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.

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.

4. Family work should be included in all four standards in the white paper. Standard 1: Public protection Policy frameworks should require evidence of the involvement of families or other supportive relationships in sentence planning, resettlement planning and decisions regarding the use of ROTL. Standard 2: Safety and order Prisons should be able to show evidence that family or other supportive relationships play a role in intelligence gathering regarding a prisoner’s mental health, drug use (prescription and illicit), propensity to violence and risk to self. Standard 3: Reform Given their role in prisoner rehabilitation, a standardised visitors’ survey should be developed to capture the experiences of families as they seek to maintain contact and to enable comparison between different establishments. Standard 4: Preparing for life after prison Prisons should be able to show how many prisoners do not receive visits.

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.

6. Contact details of family and significant others should be mandatorily requested by prisoner escort services before a resident 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.

7. If a resident 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.

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).

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.

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.

11. Governors should be intentional about ensuring all residents 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.

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

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

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. As part of this:

* Families’ concerns about mental and physical health should be properly recorded and action taken
* Families (and significant others) should be properly informed about the opening of an Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) document and able to request the opening of an ACCT document
* If, after the completion of a risk-based assessment an ACCT document is opened, they should be kept appropriately updated of any intervention/action arising from this
* 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.

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:

• 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.

• 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.

• Key worker job descriptions must include developing personal relationships with their prisoners and their training must reverse the de-skilling that has prevented many from undertaking informal support for prisoners’ family ties.

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.

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.

• 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).

• 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.

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

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.

Response to Lord Farmer’s Report

* HALOW family support worker: a vacancy for this position is currently being advertised, we have offered this service for a number of years and book visits in legal visits to see prisoners on a 1 to 1 basis to see how we can help them, we **book the visits ourselves, we also send and receive messages on case notes on the CMS system to see if we can answer their query straight away. All prisoners we see or have contact with regarding family support we** have records off, and can confer with a family support worker at another prisoner if the prisoner has moved on and requested additional support.
* Liaise with social workers etc., booking last contact visits, booking social workers on visits to adhere to court orders for child contact
* Family days- we already have monthly family days appropriately themed to calendar events. A family day is not just for enhanced residents. We are able to refer family’s for it who maybe struggling to come to terms with the situation
* School letters- we have devised a fact sheet to inform head teachers about the benefits of family days and an attendance letter which we stamp and sign to confirm if a child has attended, so hopefully they will mark it as an authorised absence
* HALOW- we have annual surveys for visitors
* We provide in depth funding reports for the posts that rely on funding etc. ; A full time Children’s worker and we are currently advertising for a part time children’s worker, family support worker
* We have contact with the local school and local organisations that have assisted in family days in the past( we will expand on this once the family support worker starts)
* Governors/FLM’s- meetings with visitors monthly has just started, we used to do this years ago and it proved very popular as most things could be answered on the spot it also gave a less institutional  look to the prison as it’s in the visit centre which is more informal and relaxed
* We have devised guardian permission slips- in the cases of harassment orders where there are no restrictions on dad seeing the children and mum cannot or does not want to visit, they can come into the visit centre with ID and sign to say they are given permission for a named visitor to bring their children on a visit. This is then marked up on the CMS system; this is to help maintain family ties.
* We promote APVU to claim expenses, email a prisoner, secure payments
* We provide visitor information packs, to explain about visits, etc.
* We advertise and promote the safer custody phone number and email address for visitors who are worried about a prisoners well-being, we also contact Oscar 1 if we are told a prisoner is in immediate danger, we get a huge amount of phone calls from visitors who cannot get through on the switch board number, both domestic and professional
* We are in the process of updating HALOW info sheets for distribution to courts , solicitors etc., and HALOW have a website which is updated regularly
* Award evenings are already held at HMP Birmingham

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