





###### HMP & YOI Chelmsford

###### Families and Significant Others Strategy

2018 - 2019

Introduction



Family and significant relationships are considered as a key means by which we can prevent reoffending and reduce the likelihood of intergenerational crime. Supporting a prisoner in a meaningful and constructive relationship with his or her family or significant others, should be a primary focus for anyone caring for those in custody who hope to achieve positive change and transform lives. HMPPS therefore has a moral and ethical responsibility to assist any meaningful and constructive relationship in preparation for their release.”

Maintaining family relationships is paramount in achieving a reduction in re-offending.

HMP/YOI Chelmsford is committed to the fostering of good family relationships and the maintenance of existing relationships, in order to aid the resettlement of prisoners.

The prison aims to provide a framework that enables positive outcomes and interactions for children and families with a close family member in our custody. The impact of any custodial sentence is not only felt on the family member but also on the family and friends of the prisoner.

The primary purpose of a prison sentence is to punish the offender. However, given practical, financial, social and emotional effects of imprisonment, a prison sentence can also have punitive consequences for families outside prison. Prisoners’ families, particularly their children, are often termed the ‘innocent victims’ of crime (and punishment).For a long time, prisoners’ families were also referred to as the ‘hidden’ or ‘invisible’ victims of punishment or crime, since the hardships they experienced were not immediately obvious.

**What is the impact of imprisonment on prisoners’ families?**

Since every family is different (including who is considered to be part of a ‘family’), the impact of imprisonment is different for every family. Yet, research suggests that there are some fairly common experiences.

Over 10 million children in the world have a parent in prison and Action for Prisoners Families estimates that in the United Kingdom approximately 200,000 childrenhave a parent sent to prison each year.

The children of prisoners are 3 times more likely to take part in anti-social and delinquent behaviour. Imprisonment can result in reduced family income, home and school moves, disrupted relationships, stigma and decreased social support. Each year in the United Kingdom more children are affected by parental imprisonment than by divorce. It is estimated that 65% of boys who have a father in prison will go onto offend themselves. This research shows that offending can be catastrophic to families and children; who are also being punished along with their parent (Action for Prisoners Families: 2012).

**Specifically:**

* Families experience emotional distress even with the temporary loss of a loved one from the family home and/or family life: for example, families miss out on sharing family events such as birthdays and Christmas, or even simple family activities such as meals, with the imprisoned family member.
* Prisoners are stigmatised for their offence, and their families often are too. Families are seen as *guilty by association* even though they are legally innocent and generally have had no involvement in the offence. This stigma is sometimes referred to as *stigma by association*. This stigma makes the imprisonment even more difficult for family members, and it can also mean that families are treated negatively by other members of their community, or face negative treatment from colleagues, peers, the media and even friends and family.
* Following the imprisonment of a person, partners of prisoners are often forced to take on multiple roles and responsibilities, particularly where the incarcerated family member has previously had an active role in the household.
* Imprisonment tends to impose financial strain on the families of the prisoners in two ways: by decreasing the family income and by increasing family expenditure, due to costly visits and phone calls, and handing in money for their loved ones in prison. Prison thus can exacerbate existing socio-economic disadvantage
* There are often particular difficulties associated with prison visiting. Visiting often involves great deal of time, effort (both physical and emotional) and expense. Visiting can be quite an emotional experience, with both positive and negative feelings in the mix: for example, families usually enjoy seeing their imprisoned loved one, but due to the brevity of the visit saying ‘goodbye’ comes quickly, which can be distressing.
* Visiting can be particularly difficult for children, with poor facilities that are not ‘child friendly’ and confusing rules restricting how they can interact with their imprisoned family member; families often have to travel long distances to a prison, and are often reliant on public transport; visiting times may not be compatible with tea time and bed time routines, leaving children irritable or tired, which then may impact on school performance the following day.
* Stigma for the children of prisoners can be manifested in being bullied by classmates in school.
* Longer-term, children of prisoners are three times are more likely to engage in anti-social or offending behaviour than their peers who do not have a parent in prison.

**Why focus on Children and Families?**

Supportive families are a great resource for prisoners and they often play a vital role in helping an individual move away from crime. A supportive family can also provide effective protective factors for prisoners at risk of suicide and self-harm. Having a stable family to return to on release, can also encourage prisoners to engage in sentence planning interventions and maintain positive behaviour whilst in custody, ensuring their earliest release from custody.

Research on desistance from crime, also suggests that positive family ties can have an encouraging effect on the rehabilitation of offenders. Prisoners who had not received visits whilst in prison were 39% more likely to re-offend, compared to those prisoners who had received visits from family members (Action for Prisoners Families: 2012).

It is therefore important at Chelmsford that our staff and our partners/pathways leads encourages positive family relationships and identify ways of supporting families in order to reduce re-offending.



In a small number of cases maintaining family ties may not be appropriate, possibly due to the risk of harm that an offender poses to the family. Safeguarding children and supporting victims should always be a priority in the work the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Companies working with us at Chelmsford

At Chelmsford the Children and Families Pathway, aims to ensure the interests of prisoners and their families are addressed through:

* Helping to maintain family ties, where appropriate.
* Improving parenting skills of prisoners.
* Provide and advice and guidance to families and prisoners.
* Developing a family friendly focus in prisons and through our visitor centre.
* Involving the family in Resettlement decisions when appropriate.
* Threading the Children and Families pathway through all of the Resettlement pathways.

**Performance**

**Governance and Management of the pathway**

In order to ensure that the “family” remains the focus of our work towards the rehabilitation of our prisoners at Chelmsford, the commitments listed below will be monitored through the following processes:

* Reducing Re-offending meetings
* SPDR reviews
* Pathway meetings

**Measuring our success in developing the Children’s and Families pathway**

* Prisoner Annual Needs questionnaire
* Ormiston Families questionnaire
* HMIP
* Prisoner MQPL
* Visitors surveys/forum

**Working in Partnership**

**Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour**

Offenders are more likely to have negative social attitudes and poor self-control. Successfully addressing their attitudes, thinking and behaviour during custody may reduce re-offending by up to 14%. This can be addressed through positive relationships with staff as part of the Keyworke

initiative and through courses aimed at reducing risk. Prisoners that are serving over 12 months will move on to complete their offending behaviour programmes.

**Chaplaincy**

At Chelmsford we have a multi faith chaplaincy team catering for the diverse pastoral and faith needs of the prison population. The chaplaincy team working with the Ormiston staff to assist with family days when necessary.

Following notification of a death of a relative of one of our prisoners, the chaplaincy team will provide bereavement support for the prisoner through this distressing period.

The Chaplaincy team arranges on request, marriages for prisoners serving sentences at Chelmsford.

Following a death in custody, the Chaplaincy team are often called upon to attend and offer support to the decease’s Next of Kin. The Chaplaincy team will often keep in regular contact with the family and offer support.

For prisoners who may not have any family or friends or whose family is unable to visit, it may be possible to arrange for a volunteer prison visitor to attend. This scheme is run through the Chaplaincy and the visitors who come in are all volunteers.

**Accommodation**

NACRO is the CRC (Community Rehabilitation Company) that have responsibility for ensuring our prisoner’s accommodation needs are met

NACRO currently complete a resettlement plan for all prisoners which identifies all resettlement needs including housing issues.

NACRO see all prisoners prior to release (at approx. 12 & 4 weeks prior to discharge) to try and assist with housing needs on release

**Finance, Benefit and Debt**

Resettlement Officers will offer financial resettlement support to all Offenders within HMP & YOI Chelmsford who are 12 weeks from release. These services can include, but not exhausted to; signposting to Citizens Advice Bureau, completions for referral of grants, signing posting for setting up banks accounts, contact with courts regarding fines and arranging for payments, contacting housing providers where there are rental arrears and develop a budget plan for release.

Job Centre Plus is also available for benefit advice and signing on for the work programme.

Maintaining strong relationships with families and children can play a major role in helping the men to make and sustain changes that help them to avoid reoffending. This is difficult because custody places added strains on family relationships.

**Prison Debt**

HMP & YOI Chelmsford is committed to tackling and trying to prevent the growing issue of debt amongst prisoners. The Prison Service has a duty of care to all offenders and as such, through the debt committee we are developing an understanding regarding the factors that can contribute to debt that is has clear organisational significance and to provide information, support and interventions to those prisoner who find themselves in debt and those identified as vulnerable to getting into debt.

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**Drugs and Alcohol**

HMP & YOI Chelmsford’s substance misuse service is provided by Full Circle who deliver a substance misuse provision (psychosocial) in house. In order to manage the contract between Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT) and Full Circle a number of quality indicators are reported to EPUT/ NHS England. To measure performance and review that the client’s needs are being met EPUT/NHS England and Full Circle meet quarterly.

The service assesses every individual’s substance use when they first come into the prison at induction. If the service user wishes to engage with the service they are then allocated a case Manager who then works with the client throughout their stay in Chelmsford, focussing on their recovery, as well as any other important issues (e.g. accommodation, family, childcare, health and wellbeing, work or benefits). Service users are signposted to services within the prison offering specialised support where necessary and appropriate

**Mental and physical health**

Chelmsford’s mental health provision is provided by Essex Partnership University Trust. The team consist of a psychiatrists and Registered Mental Health nurses, they offer a range of interventions.

Any member of staff can refer to the Mental Health team via application process.

Chelmsford also offers a Listeners Scheme in partnership with Samaritans this offers those with self-harm or suicidal intentions an offender based support network.

Prisoners can expect to receive comparable levels of primary and secondary support and treatment as they would receive in the community.

Registered Mental Health Nurses work with prisoners with mental health problems, supporting them towards improved mental health where possible. In-reach also work with, and support prisoners who are at risk of suicide and self-harm attending ACCT reviews and helping to develop support plans for those prisoners at risk.

**Education, Training and Employment**

This pathway is managed by a number of different agencies and partners working together to offer opportunities for offenders to achieve qualifications and gain real

Employment skills.

People Plus provide prisoners at Chelmsfordwith the opportunity to obtain qualifications in a variety of academic and Vocational subjects. Employment support is primarily provided by supported by a number of other partners such as NACRO, and Job Centre Plus.

Prisoners have access to the Virtual Campuswhich provides them with resources to enhance their understanding of family and relationship issues and child development information. Prisoners can also upload their prison work, which they can access after their release and share with their family.

The Library services are provided by the Essex County Council and provide books on parenting and other family related subjects, and also provide prisoners with the ability to record stories for their children through the provision of the Story Book Dad scheme. The library staff also provide Family/Toddler library time visits.

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**National Probation Service/Offender Management Unit/CRC’s**

OMU plays an important role within the wider objectives to reduce reoffending, promoting the rehabilitation agenda. These objectives are:

1. Provide effective interventions targeted on the basis of an assessment of risk needs and directed towards reducing the risk of re offending and protecting the public from harm.

2. Deliver rehabilitation services from the point of reception that inform effective sequencing of appropriate interventions continuing throughout the custodial period, through the gate and in the community.

3. Effective offender management and collaborative partnership working, ensure specialist provision is available to address identified needs encompassing the core 7 pathways.

HMP Chelmsford recognises that Public Protection is one of the core functions of the prison service, NOMS and the MOJ. Public Protection is at the forefront of all that we do and is the responsibility of all staff regardless of grade or position.

The OMU/NPS cultivate a collaborative, prison-wide approach to public protection. This approach is built on clear communication between all departments of the establishment as well as partner agencies.

This approach enables prisoners risk to be identified. Often this risk will be to children or named adults (who may be from the prisoner’s family).

Safeguarding of children is a priority and depending on the level of risk level a prisoner poses to children, will determine the level of contact they can have with children whilst at Chelmsford. The management of these restrictions can involve mail and telephone PIN monitoring and monitoring of contact with children during visits.

CRC will work with prisoners of low and medium risk and have links with Full Circle and currently developing a non-accredited course for perpetrators and victims of domestic violence.

**Equality and Diversity**

Chelmsford recognises it has a duty of care under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that all our service users and visitors with or without protected characteristics are treated with dignity and respect. In the context of the family equality is about recognising that families are all different – various make-up, faith and culture and this must be reflected in the services we provide.

**Safer Custody**

For a variety of reasons, there are periods in a prisoner’s sentence when they can become a heightened risk of suicide and self-harm. Chelmsford believes that maintaining and encouraging positive family relationships can be a positive protective factor in helping prisoners break the cycle of self-harm and can be useful in helping to support the prisoner through their crisis period

At Chelmsford the Safer Custody team will, with the prisoners consent, invite contribution/attendance from families at ACCT reviews

The Safer Custody team also manage and monitor the Safer Custody hotline for Chelmsford. This provides families/friends with the ability to speak to a member of the Safer Custody team or leave a message, about any prisoner they have safeguarding concerns about. Following receipt of this phone call, the safer custody team will provide all necessary support to the prisoner.

**Care Leavers**

Under the new Housing Act there is a responsibility to house Care Leavers aged 18 -24 immediately upon release. There is also a need to engage with all men in custody both 56 days prior to release and 56 post release in order to house them. Our care leavers are identified on induction through the BCST process.

**Security and Operations**

The security and Operations group manage the visits function, including the visits hall and the processes for both prisoners and families using the visits hall.

The team manage the security of the area with a view to ensuring the safety and security of all those using the visits hall, including families, children, prisoners and staff.

The team also liaise with the Ormiston staff to ensure the visitors centre process runs smoothly and families have a welcoming environment to relax in prior to the commencement of the visits.

The Security department also manage the pin phone monitoring system ensuring public protection monitoring takes place in line with the guidelines, protecting the public from unwanted contact from prisoners.

**Reducing Re-offending**

It is the role of the Reducing Re-offending team to co-ordinate and link with all the pathways and those partners involved in Resettlement.

Moving forward, the Children and Families pathway needs to be developed significantly. Partners and pathway leads should consider the impact on families and children of any changes/developments they plan to implement.

The Reducing Re-offending team will endeavour to raise the profile of the Children and Family pathway, co-ordinating the development and improvement of this pathway through the Reducing Re-Offending and Pathways meetings and its related action plan.

Maintaining and encouraging positive family relationships is a protective factor in helping prisoners to break the cycle of crime and desist from future offending and may impact on the prevention of intergenerational crime.

**Contract Management**

**Ormiston**

Ormiston provide information and support for prisoners families from the point of arrest through to release and beyond. At Chelmsford, Ormiston provides family support for one to one and family support where required. The Visits Centre at HMP Chelmsford is open between the hours of

Mon-Thurs 12.00- 16.15.

Sat 8.00am-11.15 & 12-16.15.

Sun 12pm – 4.15

The centre provides information and support services and information on Assisted Prison Visits.

The visits hall has a supervised play area for children under the age of 12 years old and is open during the visits periods

The visits refreshment area will provide a variety of drinks and snacks during the visit period.

Ormiston will advocate on behalf of families where the need exists, signpost or refer the family to the relevant service that best suits their needs in local community.

Ormiston will also help families navigate their way around HMP Chelmsford visit processes and procedures.

Links with the chaplaincy and safer custody team ensure that any concerns about an offender’s wellbeing are communicated to the prison so that relevant action/support can be put into place for the offender and families mind can be put at ease.

Two family days per year are planned and delivered along with two specific population targeted events. There are ten children’s visits per year and four parenting courses.. There are also 10 enrichment visits per year. These are delivered in line with contract expectations. These are supported by the Ormiston case manager and play coordinator, education department, the library and the gym.



**Visits**

All staff must treat all children and young people with respect and dignity at all times, taking all reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being.

Visiting a family member in prison could be a very emotional time for a child. It could be a new experience for them entirely, or it could be that they were somehow involved in the persons offending – for example in cases of domestic abuse. Therefore staff should be aware of this and speak and act with empathy.

This is particularly pertinent when staff need to search a child and guidelines and rules should be adhered to:

Staffing present:

• Male staff can only search male visitors of age 11 and over. Female staff can search both male and female visitors, however they must be the only gender that search children who are 10 years and younger. There will always be 2 members of staff present during the searching process.

• If the visitor is a child aged 16 years or under or appears to have learning difficulties, staff must ensure that the parent or responsible adult companion fully understands the purpose of, andthe procedure for the search and is allowed to attend the search. If staff at the search is unsure whether the visitor is 16 years or under they should check.

• Staff should not spend any time alone with a child or young person away from others.

• It is the responsibility of the carer / responsible adult to take the child to the toilet should it be requested – no member of staff should every take a child to the toilet.

• Staff are advised not to make unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact with children and young people. Any contact should only be made to the child’s extremities i.e. head or hands and onlywith their consent, although physical contact may be unavoidable, without consent, when it is necessary to prevent injury or immediate danger from harm etc.

• First aid should only be administered by a trained member of staff, in full view of the adult.

The following procedures should normally be applied to children aged 3 years or under. However it is recognised that children mature at different rates and so there can be no hard and fast cut off point, staff must use their discretion on a case-by-case basis.

• A baby will normally be searched only when the carer is searched and only with the carers consent. It is not normal practise to search babies unless there is specific intelligence that contraband is concealed on the baby.

• Babies must only be searched in a room, which has a reasonable temperature, and in the presence of the carer.

Waiting for the visit to start, and even during the visit can be ‘boring’ for a child. Therefore the Visitor’s Centre will be a pleasant waiting area, with toys and books for children to play with and information available to carers about the support that is available to them. Also, the Visits Hall has a good range of toys and activities in a sectioned off section of the hall. This is staffed by volunteers who get everything ready for the children to arrive and who supervise and encourage appropriateplay during the visit. The visits hall has a refreshment bar which sells a variety of food and drink, including many varieties which are suitable for children.

The visits hall has range of furniture that is conducive to an environment that creates positive communication between families.

Ormiston ensure all staff are working in the prison are familiar with and adhere to the relevant policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection



**Digital Technology**

The digitisation of prisons affords positive opportunities to facilitate better and easier family contact. Examples of these developments include in cell telephony and on-line visits booking system. Otherinitiatives include email a prisoner whereby a family member or friend can email in to the prison with communication for the prisoner and prison voicemail. For those prisoners that may need extra support with technology we use peer supporters in the residential areas who can assist where a prisoner may not be familiar or comfortable with the technology. Turning pages mentors are available for prisoners that may have literacy needs and need some extra assistance.



**Annex A**

**Available support/information for Children and families and professionals working with them**

* **Action for Prisoners’ Families** www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk – Action for Prisoners’ Families, works for the benefit of prisoners' and offenders' families by representing the views of families and those who work with them.
* **AFFECT** – AFFECT provides services for the families of serious offenders and offers support groups to families in the south of England. [www.affect.org.uk](http://www.affect.org.uk)
* **First time in Prison –** www.firsttimeinprison.co.uk this website was written by lawyers for individuals (and families) who are facing a first prison sentence.
* **Inside Time –** www.insidetime.org.uk – this website gives visiting and other advice
* **Pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust) –** www.prisonadvice.org.uk provides

Useful information on visiting and how visitors’ centres can help families.

* **Prisoners’ Family Voices** is a web-based community which gives family members the opportunity to talk to each other.

http://prisonersfamiliesvoices.blogspot.com

* **Offenders’ Families Helpline 0808 808 2003** info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk

www.prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk

* **Prisoners’ Families and Friends Service 0808 808 3444** info@pffs.org.uk

[www.pffs.org.uk](http://www.pffs.org.uk)

* **SHARP (Support Help and Advice for Relatives of Prisoners**) **01743 245365** for free
* **Ormiston Families –** Head Office 01473 724 517 www.ormiston.org At HMP Chelmsford 01245 552 452