

**Family and Significant Others Newsletter- January 2021**

Firstly HMP Guys Marsh would like to wish a Happy New Year to all Families, Friends and loved ones of those at Guys Marsh! For this month’s newsletter we wanted to give an update surrounding our current regime restrictions in light of the new lockdown measures that were implemented on Monday 4th January 2021. This lockdown has meant that the Prison has had to go back into Phase 4 restrictions.

We understand that this will be a difficult time for both the men in our custody but also you as their loved ones and being able to maintain communication, family ties etc. within these restrictions. Please see below updates on how we can try and ensure that ties with Families & Significant others are maintained and supported by staff throughout this lockdown.

**WHAT ARE THE RESTRICTIONS LIKE THIS TIME ROUND?**

* All staff are still required to wear a face mask in all areas of the Prison. This guidance has now been extended to Prisoners and they have been issued their own face coverings.
* Social Visits will remain suspended until further notice in line with the National Lockdown.
* Education will remain in-cell until classroom delivery can recommence. However, we are still authorised to conduct a class for Cleaning due it being relevant to keeping our establishment clean and decent.
* Gym will include an outdoor regime only.
* Only Essential Services such as the Kitchens, Laundry etc. will be open for employment purposes.
* Offender Behaviour Programmes are still allowed to run to support men in their progression.
* We will be running a restricted regime, which will mean that apart from those who are due out for employment or relevant appointments, they will not be unlocked unless for their daily exercise.

**VISITS**

Whilst Face to Face visits are unable to take place, we would like to make you of ‘Purple Visits’ which allows you to have a video call with family and friends whilst normal visits are restricted. Whilst we understand that this type of visit is not the same as having physical face to face contact with your loved one, it is still important to be able to keep in contact through some form of means to continue to strengthen and maintain your family ties. If this is something that you would be interested in, you can download the **‘Purple Visits App’** on your Smartphone or you can search **‘Prison Video Calls’ on GOV.UK** for more information.

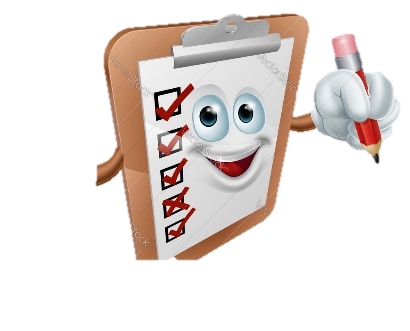
If you have any queries about the suspension of visits or any questions about the Purple Visits, then please contact our Family Champions or Banardos worker (contact details below.)

**PURPLE VISITS FEEDBACK**

We recently conducted a survey with men that have used Purple Visits and thought we would share some of the positive feedback of why these visits have been useful to maintain family ties!

* **41%** said they use Purple Visits due to Family and Friends not being able to travel long distances for visits.
* **82%** said they use Purple Visits due to the new restrictions in visits or visits being suspended.
* **64%** of men said that Purple Visits had **‘Greatly Improved’** the communication between them and their families whilst visits had been suspended.
* **100%** of men said they would like to see Purple Visits even after COVID.
* **‘My children love Purple Visits especially as there is no contact on regular visits as it would be hard to keep a 1 year old sat down.’**
* **‘I don't think you could improve the service, as it’s been a brilliant way of communicating.’**

We are also interested to hear your feedback if you have also taken part in Purple Visits since they went live. Please find attached a quick survey you can complete and return to [FamilySupport.GuysMarsh@justice.gov.uk](mailto:FamilySupport.GuysMarsh@justice.gov.uk)





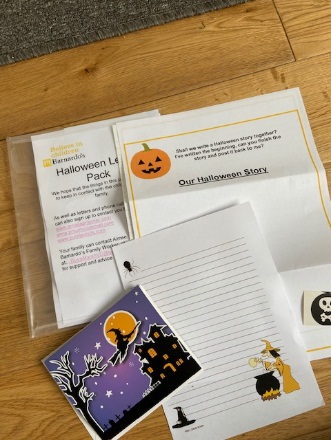
**WHAT ELSE IS ON OFFER TO HELP SUPPORT FAMILY TIES?**

1. **Using Prison Voice Mail to keep in touch**

Read this uplifting article on the BBC about how one family used Prison Voicemail to rebuild their relationship - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-54194831>

***"When people are in prison, they are still someone's mother, father, sister brother… And although they should have some description of punishment, having a lack of family ties shouldn't be one of them."***

If you want to find out more about using Prison Voicemail to keep in contact with your loved one at Guys Marsh visit - <https://prisonvoicemail.com/>

1. **Barnardo’s Letter Packs**

Residents with children can request letter writing packs so they can access materials to send to their children to mark those occasions. Children love receiving things in the post and a letter or a card is a simple way to show a child their loved one is thinking of them always, even if they can’t see each other. Residents can request these packs from the in-cell activity list or you can contact the family worker on [guysmarshvc@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:guysmarshvc@barnardos.org.uk) if you would like a pack sent to your loved one.

1. **Story Book Dads**

This initiative allows residents to record a lovely story CD for their loved ones such as their Kids, Grandchildren, younger siblings etc. and get it sent off for them to listen to whilst at home. This is a free and easy service that is run by both the Activities Hub and Education Staff at Guys Marsh to ensure the recording is done to a high standard!

If you would like your loved one in Prison to take part in this, get them to apply via application on the wing or you can email our Family Mailbox to get us to and speak to them to see if they are interested!



1. **Families on Film Project**

The Families on Film project is a new initiative being implemented at HMP Guys Marsh. It is basically a reversal of our usual Story Book Dads procedure: instead of residents sending stories and messages to their children, the families send a film of the children to the resident. We allow all eligible prisoners’ families to participate regardless of their loved one’s IEP status.

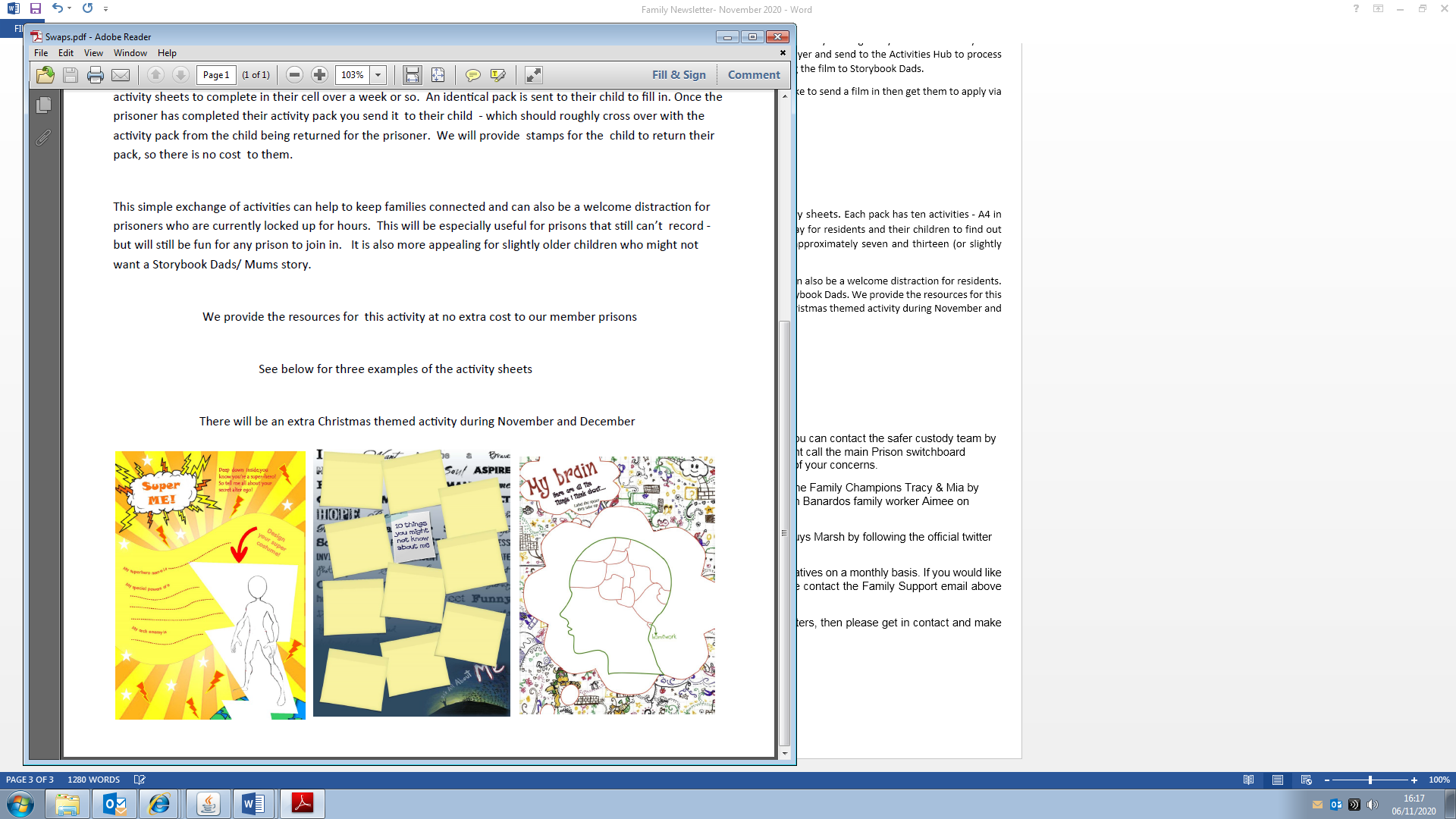
As with our regular service, there is currently no charge to the prisoner or his family although they can donate if they wish. The resident applies to us via a regular wing app or a tear-off slip from the flyer and send to the Activities Hub to process where there are clear instructions and guidelines about applying and sending the film to Storybook Dads.

If you would like your loved one in Prison to take part in this, or you would like to send a film in then get them to apply via application on the wing or you can email our Family Mailbox!

1. **SWAPS**

Swaps is a new project for prisoners and their children to swap activity sheets. Each pack has ten activities - A4 in size and designed to be fun to fill in whilst also providing an entertaining way for residents and their children to find out more about each other! The pack is designed for children aged between approximately seven and thirteen (or slightly younger with an adult’s help.)

This simple exchange of activities can help to keep families connected and can also be a welcome distraction for residents. It is also more appealing for slightly older children who might not want a Storybook Dads. We provide the resources for this activity at no extra cost to our member prisons and there will be an extra Christmas themed activity during November and December.



**OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION**

* Please see link below about information in regards to mobile phone data increases that can be requested on behalf of families by schools, trusts and local authorities. Government link for data increase for some disadvantaged families - <https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/about-increasing-mobile-data>
* You can also make contact with the Banardos Family Worker Aimee on [Aimee.Derrick@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:Aimee.Derrick@barnardos.org.uk) / [GuysMarshVC@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:GuysMarshVC@barnardos.org.uk) if you need support to access devices to support your children’s remote schooling. Barnardo’s have linked with vodaphone so that tables can be sourced to support families.

**QUESTION & ANSWER TIME!!!!!!!!**

**If you have any questions that you would like HMP Guys Marsh to answer about anything you would like to know, then please submit your questions through the Family email, the Banardos email or our Twitter page as documented below.**

**We will then include these questions and answers in the next Family Newsletter!**



**Please also let us know what you would like to see on any future monthly newsletters- to help us in keeping you up to date with any information you would like to know!**

**Contact Us**

Should you have any concerns about one of the men in Guys Marsh you can contact the safer custody team by email [SaferCustodyGuysMarsh@justice.gov.uk](mailto:SaferCustodyGuysMarsh@justice.gov.uk) or if the matter is urgent call the main Prison switchboard (01747 856400) and the local safer custody team will be made aware of your concerns.

If you have any general queries or questions then feel free to contact the Family Champions Tracy & Mia by email on [FamilySupport.GuysMarsh@justice.gov.uk](mailto:FamilySupport.GuysMarsh@justice.gov.uk) or the Guys Marsh Banardos family worker Aimee on [Aimee.Derrick@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:Aimee.Derrick@barnardos.org.uk) / [GuysMarshVC@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:GuysMarshVC@barnardos.org.uk)

You can also receive regular updates on what is happening at HMP Guys Marsh by following the official twitter account [@HMPGuysMarsh](mailto:account.@HMPGuysmarsh)

We are aiming to provide you with updates on any changes or new initiatives on a monthly basis. If you would like to sign up to receive the newsletter each month via email, then please contact the Family Support email above and we can add you to a mailing list!

Also, if there is anything you would like to see on the monthly newsletters, then please get in contact and make us aware!

Stay safe and keep well☺

HMP Guys Marsh