

HMP Ashfield Family and Significant Other Strategy



2022-2023

Introduction

The purpose of the family and significant other strategy is to support prisoners to build and maintain strong family ties in order to reduce reoffending and reduce intergenerational offending. This strategy has been developed specifically for our prisoners, their families and significant others to inform them of what we have in place and what our plans are moving forward at HMP Ashfield.

Covid 19

Unfortunately, Covid 19 has meant restrictions in the community and likewise restrictions within the prison. Our regime is continuously under review in line with Government regulations to ensure the safety of all that live, work and visit HMP Ashfield. We understand the importance of maintaining family and significant other ties during these hard times and, despite the restrictions that are in place, we will do our best to continue to support these relationships in a way that ensures everyone's safety.

Social Visits

Throughout 2020 and 2021 social visits were affected by restrictions imposed by the government; this has meant that they have been under constant review. Some of these restrictions include: providing lateral flow tests upon entry, no contact, wearing of face coverings, Social distancing, a reduction in visiting numbers and closure of the Café. Social visits are continuously reviewed, so please check our website for the latest visiting hours- www.serco.com/uk/sector-expertise/justice/hmp-ashfield . All prisoners are updated on any changes through the ATM machines on the wings and the wing PIAC reps are informed. The mothers' union volunteers have been suspended, but we hope that when visits can eventually return to normal, they will be back on hand to make teas and coffees in our visitors' centre. We have a well-equipped visits hall with comfy sofas and chairs for families and friends to enjoy their visit.

Family Children Visits

Any family visits with children are held in the family room. We have a selection of toys, games, and books available to use during the visit and any child leaving the establishment can take a book home with them from our "Children's book project" shed. During 2022, we would like to make improvements to this room and we are hoping to start a homework club where kids can bring in some of their schoolwork to show loved ones.

Extended visits

Unfortunately, family days and other types of extended visits have been suspended because of Covid 19 but we aim to start again as soon as it is safe to do so. We aim to run family days in line with half term dates so there isn't a need to take children out of school. During special holiday periods such as Christmas, we run a special family day relating to the holiday, for example; the Quaker chaplain dressed up as Santa and enough money was raised to buy all the children presents. Throughout 2022 we are hoping to resume this and we will update the prisoners with all event information via the PIAC reps and the wing ATM machines.

HWPV (Help With Prison Visits)

We promote the HWPV scheme run by the government as we understand everyone has different financial circumstances. If you are claiming certain benefits or have a health certificate you may be able to get help with travel to the prison, overnight accommodation, and meals. Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-prison-visits> for more information on how to claim and to see if you are eligible.

Video Calling - Purple Visits

With the advancement of modern technology, it is now possible to have a face-to-face meeting with the convenience of not leaving your home. "Purple Visits" video calling allows us to offer an interpersonal experience that is safe and convenient for prisoners, visitors, and staff. Our aim is to continue to offer this throughout 2022 to aid those that can't visit in person regularly. The app is now available to download from the app store; just search for "Purple Visits". You will be able to see all available booking slots and there is in-app support where required.

Visitors Surveys

Throughout 2022 we aim to publish at least 2 visitors surveys to help us make improvements to our visiting service. During Covid restrictions we have been limited on what we can offer, our priority was creating a safe, decent environment for our prisoners and visitors. Hopefully throughout 2022 we can safely reduce some of these restrictions and return to normal service. We aim to provide face-to-face feedback sessions with our Family Lead in the visitors' centre, who will be able to answer questions, get feedback and provide the latest information on family services. There is also a short survey for video callers to complete after a Purple visit to help us make improvements to this service.

CAPO- Children Affected by Parental Offending

In 2021, we started working with the CAPO initiative (originally commissioned by Bristol city council). CAPO is about providing support to families who have been affected by the criminal justice system and those in particular with children that have parents in prison. We now have 5 CAPO champions based at the prison who can provide support by offering; a listening ear, advice and guidance, tools to help support children with parents in prison and they can signpost to other services should they be required. Our champions will provide support to a whole network of champions based in the community that may work with families that have been affected by the criminal justice system in settings such as schools, children's centres, and hospitals. Families can ask for a champion to call them by filling in a quick, easy form in the visits centre or ask a member of staff if any champions are on shift, or by contacting the switchboard to arrange a call back. Throughout 2022 we hope to raise further awareness of CAPO and hope to help support families in the community.

Family through Keywork

Each prisoner has a designated keyworker that can provide consistent, continuous support throughout their sentence. Part of this involves ensuring prisoners have external support from either family or a significant other. They check to make sure contact is being maintained and can offer support and advice where needed.

FACT (Family At the Centre of Throughcare)

Prisoners at Ashfield can sign up to FACT. Regular updates will be sent to their families or significant other on how the prisoner is doing. During 2022 we hope to resume holding FACT days where the family or significant other can attend a visit with the prisoner, they get to sample some of the prison food (the same meal that will be served on the wings) and they can have a chat to various departments from around the prison. The prisoners Keyworker will also be asked to attend if on shift. To sign up to FACT prisoners can speak to their keyworker or send them an APP on the wing ATM system. It is widely advertised throughout the establishment and keyworkers encourage signup during the initial keywork session.

Phones

All prisoners have a phone in their cell which allows for convenient phone contact with family and friends. During periods where visits have been suspended due to Covid, HMP Ashfield have given 10 minutes of free phone credit per day (increased to 15 minutes on bank holidays) to encourage prisoners to keep in touch with their loved ones.

Early Days in Custody (EDC)

When prisoners arrive at HMP Ashfield they are offered a phone call and are shown how to put their phone numbers onto the pin-phone system via the ATM, which they can then self-manage. We aim to approve at least 1 number before their first night in custody so they can phone home from their in-cell phone. A member of the EDC staff will also complete an initial key work session with them the following day to see how they're settling in. FACT is offered and prisoners are encouraged to sign up. During the EDC process, next of kin details are updated, it is established whether the prisoner has family or significant other support and whether the prisoner is a care leaver. We aim to use this information to share with relevant departments to assist with their transition into HMP Ashfield. If we identify that a prisoner doesn't have family or significant other support, then we will sign post them to the Newbridge Foundation and other relevant services to help with this.

Care Leavers

Care leavers are identified upon arrival to HMP Ashfield and it is flagged to Keyworkers and offender managers. This is so they are aware and can be sensitive to their needs as unresolved

issues from time spent in care can resurface when in custody. Offender Managers will also use this information to pass onto community offender managers so the prisoner's needs can be taken into consideration upon release.

Safeguarding and Case Management

Where appropriate, (with the consent of the prisoner and family member or significant other), we will involve them in the case management process. This can be helpful to provide further input into reviews and put in place further support. We will implement this into our safeguarding policies to ensure it is an operational priority.

Family Learning

The Interventions Team at HMP Ashfield deliver Horizon and Kaizen which are both accredited interventions. Both these programmes teach individuals a range of different skills which are important in terms of improving interpersonal relationships with significant others. This includes family members. Skills taught in these programmes include problem solving, emotional management and resolving conflict. Both Horizon and Kaizen are strength-based programmes which support motivation to resist from offending and to assist individuals in building constructive and protective relationships with family and friends.

Families are invited in person to take part in post programme reviews to give their input and to be involved with any feedback. We are also hoping to establish a virtual way for families to attend these reviews as we understand it isn't always convenient to attend in person.

During 2022 we aim to complete another needs analysis to ensure we are meeting the learning needs of our prisoners with a view to offer them courses that are both suitable and beneficial outside of the offending behaviour courses.

In 2022 we are also planning to create "Think Family" awareness training for staff. This will be a dedicated training package for HMP Ashfield to help staff understand the needs of a prisoner's family. We hope to provide this training across the prison to all staff members.

The Children's Book Project

Serco have established a link with the Children's Book Project charity. HMP Ashfield was the Pilot site for the project where we held a book gifting day; Dads, Grandads and Big Brothers could come and choose books at our pop-up bookshop and send them home to their Children, Grandchildren, younger brothers, or sisters for free. They wrote nice letters to go inside the book and we provided bookmarks and stickers to go with them. This was well received by the prisoners as it was nice to be able to send a gift to their children. This is something that we aim to do again during 2022.

We also have a green Children's Book Project hut in our family visits room, stocked with books so when children come to visit, they can sit and read with Dad and they can take a book home with them for free.

NAOPV (National Association of Prison Visitors)

Unfortunately, not all prisoners are lucky enough to have family and friends that can visit. If this is the case, they can apply for a prison visitor. Prisoners are matched to a suitable visitor and their visitor will come and visit them and help provide an avenue of support. More information can be found at www.naopv.com.

Newbridge Foundation

Prisoners can apply to the Newbridge Foundation through our chaplaincy department whereby they can receive a quarterly prison visit. Newbridge also offer a pen pal service. For more information check out <https://www.newbridgefoundation.org.uk>.

Prison Fellowship

Our chaplaincy department work with the prison fellowship to offer a pen pal service. The prison fellowship also operates a service called Angel Tree. Angel Tree helps prisoners give Christmas gifts to their children. Should prisoners wish to apply for either of these services then they can speak to a member of our chaplaincy department.

Story Book Dads

Eligible prisoners can record a story to send home to their children. They can apply for this service through chaplaincy who try and accommodate this multiple times a year depending on the number of requests.

Locating of Family

We aim to re-initiate contact when it has been lost. We work with the 'find a prisoner' service to reinstate wanted contact, members of public can apply to www.gov.uk/find-prisoner to locate a prisoner. The Salvation Army can also provide assistance if a prisoner wants to track down a family member, they can apply for this through chaplaincy.

Bereavement

Our chaplaincy department offer a course called Living with Loss. This is a course aimed to help those that have suffered a bereavement, or any other form of loss that has happened in their lives.

Continual improvement plan

To make families and significant others an operational priority, we have implemented a family and significant other (FASO) meeting; which is a multi-disciplinary meeting within Ashfield to discuss and review the development of the FASO service.

We have published an end of year report that is available to all prisoners and members of the public explaining what we achieved during 2021, this is available here:

<https://www.nicco.org.uk/directory-of-services/hmp-ashfield-family-and-significant-other-strategy-2021-2022>

Throughout 2022, we hope to continually improve our services and with the introduction of CAPO family support and initiatives like the Children's Book project, we hope HMP Ashfield can support its prisoners and their families to maintain their relationships.

Concerned about a prisoner?



Are you concerned about the welfare of a prisoner at HMP Ashfield?

Call this 24 hour dedicated number:

0117 303 8000

Your concern will be reported to a duty manager who will aim to provide you with an update around your concern.