



**FAMILY AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS**

**STRATEGY**

December 2023

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**Introduction**

At HMP The Mount we all have a responsibility to help maintain positive relationships.

Supporting people in our custody to develop meaningful and constructive relationships with their families or significant others is vitally important, especially considering the distance some families may have to travel to visit their loved ones.

At HMP The Mount, we want to make visits less daunting, more child friendly and stimulating for all that attend, whilst adhering to all security procedures.

HMP The Mount is willing to support those who do not have visits to help build or repair relationships, and to gain support during and after release.

**Message from The Governor**

HMP The Mount is committed to actively seeking the involvement of families in our work to support individual prisoners and believe we have a responsibility in helping to maintain all positive relationships. It is my vision that we do whatever we can to develop and strengthen the bonds between the men in our care and their families. I give my personal support to this strategy.

Supporting prisoners to develop meaningful and positive relationships with their 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. For the men in our custody supportive families are a great resource that 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.

This strategy sets out a pathway to achieving the required outcomes of the recently published Farmer Report and captures the necessary steps the establishment is taking.

John Gormley

Governor.

**History**

HMP The Mount Prison was designed as a Category C Training prison built on the site of the former [Bovingdon RAF station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Bovingdon). However, when the establishment opened in 1987, it was used as a [Young Offenders Institution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_Offenders_Institution) for males aged 18 to 21. Today the prison is used to hold a maximum of 1048 Category C adult male prisoners.

For the purpose of this document, ‘family’ is defined as either a relative or other significant person that a prisoner in our care identifies as providing a constructive and supportive relationship.

**Getting to The Mount**

**By Car**

If you are driving to The Mount and are using a SatNav the postcode to enter is **HP3 0RU**. This is the postcode of a nearby street but following this will direct you right into the prison driveway. Visitors should be aware that there have been reports that entering the prison’s own postcode into SatNav devices has led people to a different site in the area. There is free car parking and some spaces for Blue Badge holders.

**By Public Transport**

To plan your entire journey by public transport, use [National Rail Enquiries](https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/).

The closest mainline railway station is Hemel Hempstead which is only a 5-10 minute taxi ride from the prison. There are also bus stops outside the station where you can catch a bus to the prison itself (use [Traveline for local bus times](https://www.traveline.info/)).

**Accessibility**

Wheelchairs, their users and adults accompanying them may need to be searched. Staff who carry out the searches will do so with sensitivity. Visitors who need physical assistance during their visit must be accompanied by another adult. The establishment’s staff cannot offer personal assistance.

There is disabled parking at the gate and no steps from the allocated parking up to the main gate. The Visits Hall is on the first floor but a lift available. Disabled toilets available for visitors to use.

If you have difficulty visiting the establishment because of a disability you can discuss this in

confidence with the Visitors Centre staff on 01442 836517.



EMERGENCY CONTACT

**Contact Us**

**Address:**

If you have a concern that there is **an imminent risk of danger to a person in our care** and you wish to speak to a member of staff to raise this concern, then you can call the switchboard: **01442 836300**

The member of staff answering the phone will not be able to discuss the person in our care with you, but they will immediately pass your concern onto a senior member of staff to action. We aim to address any issues raised on the call immediately and will let you know what the outcome is.

If you are concerned about the safety or wellbeing of any person in our care at HMP The Mount but there is no immediate threat or danger, then you can leave an answerphone message for the Safer Custody Team on:

**01442 836351**

This voicemail service is checked numerous times a day.

HMP The Mount   
Bovingdon   
Hemel Hempstead  
Hertfordshire  
HP3 0NZ

General Phone Number:

01442 836300

Safer Custody Hotline:

01442 866351

**Sending Money to Prisoners**

**Credit/Debit card**

The best and easiest way to send money to a friend or loved one in prison is by credit/debit card. You can do this by going to [Send money to someone in prison - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/send-prisoner-money)

**Postal Order**

If you do not have a credit/debit card or access to the internet, money can be sent in by postal order, made payable to ‘HM Prison Service’. On the back of the postal order write the sender’s name and address and the prisoner’s name and prison number. Post to:

HMP The Mount, Molyneaux Avenue. HP3 0NZ

You can also send money using your debit card or by bank transfer:

1. Make sure you have their prisoner number and date of birth

2. Go to this web page: www.gov.uk/send-prisoner-money and complete the online form.

3. Money should reach the prisoner in 1-3 working days.

**Clothing Parcels**

Prisoners are authorised to receive a clothing parcel which must be sent in within the first 28 days of their sentence. Enhanced prisoners can subsequently have a parcel sent in yearly on the anniversary of the day they gained their enhanced status. They can also purchase items from approved prison catalogues.

**Your Visit**

A group of people standing together

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All prisoners are entitled to visits. Prisoners need to add visitors to their ‘approved’ list through the kiosk/in-cell laptop or through an application. They will require the full name, address and date of birth of each visitor. Once this has been done, visitors can ring up or book online. When you book your visit, you’ll be given a booking reference number which you should make a note of. You need to book your visit with the establishment at least 24 hours before the desired visit date. If you turn up without having booked a visit you will be turned away.

**To visit someone in HMP The Mount:**

You will need to bring one of the following forms of identification with you:

-Passport

-Driving Licence

-EC Identity Card

-Employers/Student ID Card

-Bus Pass with photograph

-Red Maternity Book (ID option for children who

Do not yet have a photographic

ID or birth certificate).

If you are unable to produce one of the above,

staff may accept combinations of

three or more of the following:

-Birth/Marriage Certificate

-Bus/Rail Pass with Photograph

-Bank Credit/Debit Card

-Young Persons proof of age card

-NUS Card

-Rent book/utility bill

-Library Card.

**Help with the cost of your visit**

Financial Assistance with Visiting: If you qualify to receive help with your finances such as benefits, you may be able to recoup all or part of the cost of your travel expenses through the ‘Assisted Prison Visits Scheme’. As part of your application, you will need to get a secondary form stamped by prison staff in order to prove your visit took place. You can request a copy of this form at the Visitors Centre.

**Visiting Hours**

HMP The Mount provides visits at the following times:

Monday to Thursday 14:00 to 15:45

Monday, Wednesday, Saturday 09:00 to 10:45 (January 2024)

Saturday and Sunday 13.45 to 15.30

The Visitor’s Centre is open each afternoon when visits are on. This is where family and friends check in for pre-booked visits.

**How to book a visit**

A family can book a visit by visiting the following website:

[www.gov.uk/prison-visits](file:///C:\Users\jqf13z\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\SNHM3GBZ\www.gov.uk\prison-visits)

When booking a visit, you will be asked for the following:

-Name and prison number of the prisoner you wish to visit.

-Your own name, address and date of birth.

-The date you wish to visit.

-The number of people visiting – their names, addresses and dates of birth.

-The relation to the prisoner of anyone under the age of 18 years.

The prisoner is allowed a maximum of three adults on a visit.

Please be aware that if a child under the age of 18 is visiting, then they need to be accompanied by an adult.

If you have booked a visit and would like to amend it or have a specific enquiry regarding it, you can email [socialvisits.themount@justice.gov.uk](mailto:socialvisits.themount@justice.gov.uk) and your request will be considered and you will receive a reply ASAP.

We ask that all visitors attend their visit clothed modestly i.e., not too revealing/no offensive or inappropriate slogans or logos, no ripped jeans. A full dress code is available on request and is displayed in the visitors’ centre.

**Entering the Prison**

All visitors are required to prove their identity before entering the prison. [Read the list of acceptable forms of ID when visiting a prison](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/management-of-security-at-visits-policy-framework-open-estate/acceptable-forms-of-identification-id-when-visiting-a-prison-in-england-and-wales-annex-a).

All visitors will need to be given a rub-down search, including children. Adults will also be loaded onto our biometric system using a fingerprint scanner. You may also be sniffed by security dogs.

The Mount has a dress code policy which is displayed in the visitors’ centre. Visitors should wear family friendly clothes (no vests, no low-cut tops, no short dresses and no headwear, other than that worn for religious reasons).

Following easing of COVID restrictions, visitors can buy snack ‘grab-bags’ containing various snacks and soft drinks from the visitors’ centre. However, we are currently working with PACT to re-open the snack kiosk in the visits hall so that hot snacks and drinks can be sold.

There are strict controls on what you can take into The Mount. You will have to leave most of the things you have with you in a locker. You can leave pushchairs in the visitors’ centre if you’ve come by public transport.

If you leave the visits hall for any reason, you will need to be re-searched before you are allowed back in.

You will be told the rules by an officer at the start of your visit. If you break the rules, your visit may be cancelled, and you could be banned from visiting again.

**Drugs**

The smuggling of drugs is a serious offence and therefore will be treated as such. This includes illegal and prescription drugs. If anyone is suspected of smuggling drugs, they could be:

-Placed on a closed visit.

-Subject to a full search (formerly – strip search) if agreed to.

-Detained and arrested by the police.

If you are worried about drugs or are being placed under pressure to smuggle drugs, please speak to an appropriate member of staff or contact the establishment by telephone.

Before entering the establishment, you may encounter a dog which is trained to pick up the scent of drugs. If a person is identified as being in possession of drugs or any other prohibited item, the police will be called, and they may be subject to visiting ban.

**In the Visits Hall**

The prisoner will be waiting in the visits hall when you arrive. Normally the prisoner and his visitor(s) sit at a table in an open room, with the other prisoners and their visitors.

Physical contact between the prisoner and visitors is allowed at the beginning and end of the visit. The person you are visiting will need to remain seated throughout the visit.

There are a number of sofa visits available to book for enhanced prisoners. To request these, please email [socialvisits.themount@justice.gov.uk](mailto:socialvisits.themount@justice.gov.uk) once you have booked your visit. Prisoners are permitted a maximum of one sofa visit per month and they must be requested at least 7 working days in advance.

A visit may be held under ‘closed’ conditions if there are concerns that the visit may be a risk to establishment security, or if there is a risk of unacceptable or illegal activity taking place during the visit. During a closed visit, the prisoner and visitors will talk to each other whilst seated either side of a glass panel.

You will be allowed to bring £25 to spend at the visits tea bar.

**Children**

All visitors under the age of 18 years are regarded as children and must be accompanied on a visit by an adult. This is a requirement of the establishment’s child protection policy. Children must not be left alone anywhere, at any time on the establishment’s premises, including in the Visitor Centre or in the car park. In addition, children are not to be left in the visits hall alone with prisoners if the adult visitors leave the hall to use the toilet. A feeding bottle, spare nappies and wipes can be taken into the prison but no changing bag. Access to baby change is available.

There are baby changing facilities and a play area (children must be supervised by a parent or guardian). A disabled toilet is also available. Lockers are also available in the visitors’ centre for personal belongings, but it is advised that any valuables which are not permitted to be taken into the prison are left at home. You will be informed by visitors’ centre staff when it is time to go the main establishment for your visit. If you are going to be late for a visit, please contact the Visitors’ Centre on 01442 836517. The last entry into the establishment is 30 minutes after the visit start time.

**Pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust)**

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**Who are we?**

Pact is a pioneering national charity that supports prisoners, people with convictions, and their children and families. We provide caring and life changing services at every stage of the criminal justice process: in court, in prison, on release, and in the community.

Pact’s vision is of a society in which justice is understood as a process of restoration and healing, in which prisons are used sparingly and as places of learning and rehabilitation, and in which the innate dignity and worth of every human being is valued.  We work for the common good of Society, taking a public health-based approach. We work at the intersection of criminal justice, child and family welfare, mental health, wellbeing provision and health & social care.

Our volunteers and staff can be found in courts, prisons, probation services, and in communities across England & Wales.  We are a diverse, inclusive, modern, and collaborative charity.  We build effective partnerships and sustainable solutions based on our well-established understanding of the systems in which we work, and on our historic values and ethos developed through our 120+ years of service delivery.

**Staying In Touch**

A picture containing text, clipart

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[](http://emailaprisoner.com/)

**Email a prisoner**

If you have access to email, it is possible to keep in contact using www.emailaprisoner.com. HMP The Mount operates the ‘email a prisoner’ scheme. Prisoners are only able to receive in-coming e-mails from family and friends which are printed out and delivered to the prisoner. Email a prisoner enables a family member or friend, anywhere in the world, to send a message to prisoners in the UK from any computer for 40 pence per message. The message is delivered to the prison within seconds so that it can be delivered to the prisoner by prison staff the next mail delivery. This service allows families to maintain contact via email and provide a faster and alternative method to letters.

[logo small](http://www.prisonvoicemail.com/)**Prison Voicemail**

Prison Voicemail allows friends and family to contact the prison and leave a voicemail message for a prisoner who can then pick the message up using an individual voicemail pin number, this allows families to leave messages at a convenient time for them without worrying about missing a call. For more information check out www.prisonvoicemail.com.

**By Letter**

To send a prisoner a letter, please write his name and number on the front of the envelope and a return name and address on the back in case there are any issues and/or it needs to be returned.

**Official Prison Visitors (OPV)**

People in our care who do not have anyone who is able to visit can request to have a volunteer prison visitor called an ‘Official Prison Visitor (OPV) who will visit and provide support. This service is offered through the Chaplaincy department.



**Family learning and development**

**Storybook Dads**

Offering opportunities for prisoners to record audio stories for their children. There are also opportunities for prisoners to exchange activity sheets with their children so they can be involved on creating things together.

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**Family Links course**

HMP The Mount’s education department runs regular Family Links courses. This is a 12 week programme which is currently delivered three times a year.

It leads to Gateway Progression Certificate Qualification which prisoners receive when their portfolios have been completed.

The course is designed to meet the needs of those in custody to continue their links with partners, children and families and to learn and practise the appropriate skills to help maintain and develop their relationships whilst away from home.  Most importantly they will increase their communication skills and contact with their family. At the end of the course a family day is put on and prisoners perform a play for their families before having the opportunity to spend quality time with them.

**Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means:

* protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
* preventing harm to children’s health or development
* ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
* taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child

**HMP The Mount has a safeguarding strategy in place and all staff have access to safeguarding training.**

**Care Leavers**

Following the Children & Social Work Act 2017 (C&SWA 2017), all young adults defined as Care Leavers can be offered support until the age of 25. Support can consist of:

Relationships & Keeping Safe

Accommodation

Leisure and Participation

Money, Health and wellbeing

Education, Employment and Training

**All staff at HMP The Mount have access to training regarding** [**supporting care experienced people in custody**](https://sscl-idp.kineodns.com/module.php/core/loginuserpass.php?AuthState=_68b13e2139a5aee41bc051cd981de9fc49786267d6:https://sscl-idp.kineodns.com/saml2/idp/SSOService.php?spentityid%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fmydevelopment.org.uk%252Fauth%252Fsaml2%252Fsp%252Fmetadata.php%26cookieTime%3D1665576762%26RelayState%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fmydevelopment.org.uk%252Fcourse%252Fview.php%253Fid%253D10127).

All new prisoners to HMP The Mount are asked whether they are, or ever have been care leavers and advice can then be offered to those that are.

HMP The Mount has a Care Leavers strategy in place.

**Future Planning**



**Our commitment to visitors and people in our care in 2023 and beyond**

-In 2023, In-Cell telephones will be installed, which will transform family/significant others ties with the people in our care.

-We plan to increase our visits provision by increasing the number of tables available in the visit’s hall.

-We plan to establish a functional email account where families/significant others can email with any ideas/suggestions to improve the experience of visiting HMP The Mount.

-We have recently appointed a Family Strategy Manager whose sole purpose is to improve the link between families/significant others and the people in our care.

-We plan to re-open our snack kiosk in the visits hall so that we can sell hot snacks and drinks.

-We will look to increase sofa visits provision in the visits hall to allow enhanced prisoners and their families to enjoy their visit in a more comfortable way.

-We are looking at ways to continue to improve our facilities for children, subject to funding and security clearance. Any ideas would be welcome.

-We are looking at holding days where we celebrate the success of the people in our care. We will invite their families/significant others to the ceremonies after significant course/qualifications have been achieved to be able to celebrate success together.

**How will we measure success?**

-By the number of spaces/attendees available for each visit.

-By the statistics collated regarding ethnicity, race and cultural attendance on family events.

-By listening to prisoners and families through regular surveys, recording and sharing comments and feedback.

-By reviewing the feedback in the family comment book and functional mailbox.

-By the variety of family, friends and significant others visits offered.

-By collating important data from the people in our care and acting on the information gained.

**Staffing Structure**

**Our staffing structure ensures families and significant others work represents an operational priority**

**Governor**

**John Gormley**

**Deputy**

**Governor**

**Anthony Meechan**

**Head of FaSO**

**Jim Bridger**

**Head Of Reducing Reoffending**

**Jim Bridger**

**Head of Offender Management Unit**

**David Reeder**

**Sharon Edmond**

**Head Of Operations**

**Leanne Smith**

**PACT**

**Chrissie Stocking**

**Erin Moran**

**Operations Custodial Manager**

**Jennifer Winning**

**Campions**

**John Gough**

**Pam Sandiford**

**Morgan Bedell**

**Danyal Ali**

**Head Of Public Protection**

**Sam Hayfield**