HMP Thameside Custodial Service



Families and Significant Other Strategy – 2024/2025



Document Details

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Document approval

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Contract Director	David Bamford	October 2023
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1 Executive Summary

Maintaining family relationships is an important element, working in partnership with other functions and services in achieving a reduction in re-offending. HMP Thameside is committed to the fostering of good family relationships and the maintenance of existing relationships which 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 may have wider impacts on family and friends of the prisoner across any number of social factors.

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 due to the adversities experienced by family networks not being immediately obvious.

This is a public document which aims to inform all stakeholders of the Families and Significant Other Strategy. The Strategy will be distributed in the prison amongst staff, prisoners and internal partners including the IMB (Independent Monitoring Board), Catch 22 and Turning Point. The Strategy will also be on the NICCO website and members of the public will be able to access it from there. Prisoners will be able to access the document in the library, where it will be available for reference only. An easy-to-read flyer that summarises the Strategy's key points will be on the First Night Centre (Induction wing) for new arrivals to receive as part of their induction process.

The Family and Significant Other lead for HMP Thameside is Assistant Director, Emma Neill who is also the Head of Reducing Reoffending.



What is the impact of imprisonment on prisoners' families?

Family networks vary across localities and differ depending to individual cases therefore the impact of imprisonment is different for every family. Yet, research suggests that there are some common experiences. It is reported that 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 children have a parent sent to prison each year.

Adverse childhood experience studies provide that vicarious trauma indicate the children of prisoners are 3 times more likely to take part in anti-social and delinquent behavior. 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).

If the prisoner has a child that is in the Social Care system, the Families First team can refer the prisoner and the child to the social services by completing a **Social Service Referral form** (Annex A). By referring them to Social Services, we can try to arrange supervised visitation in line with the legal requirement.

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 divert 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 to maintain positive behavior whilst in 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).

Maintaining family ties may not be appropriate, in a small number of cases, possibly due to the risk of harm that a prisoner poses to the family network. Safeguarding children and supporting victims should always be a priority in the work at Thameside supported by appropriate service providers and National Probation Service.



FAMILIES AND SIGNIFICANT OTHER OBJECTIVES

The HMP Thameside Children and Families Pathway aims to ensure the interests of prisoners and their families are addressed through:

. Helping to maintain family ties, where appropriate

We will create feedback forms for prisoners and their significant others to complete when they access our Families interventions. The feedback will be reviewed, and the results used to shape and develop our delivery

Improving parenting skills of prisoners

We will ensure some of our interventions are set up to improve parenting skills. Feedback forms for prisoners and their significant others will measure the impact of the intervention on their parenting skills

Provide advice and guidance to families and prisoners

At least one member of the team will attend prisoner inductions on the First Night Centre and notes on PNomis will evidence the advice and guidance taking place. All prisoner drop in sessions will be noted on PNomis and the Families Manager will carry out quality checks

Developing a family friendly focus in prisons and through our Visitor Centre

Enhancing our interventions and getting all relevant staff engaged during interventions

• Involving the family in Resettlement decisions when appropriate

Communicate with Keyworkers and Prison Offender Managers to complete contact forms

• Threading the Children and Families pathway through all the Resettlement pathways

Provide all key stakeholders with a copy of the strategy and review their suggestions and comments



Measuring our success in developing the Children and Families pathway

- Prisoner Family Needs questionnaire
- PIAC (Prisoner Information and Amenities Committee) Meetings
- Reducing Reoffending/Resettlement meetings
- HMIP (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons)
- Prisoner MQPL (Measuring the Quality of Prisoner Life)

HMP THAMESIDE RESETTLEMENT PATHWAYS AND THEIR COMMITMENT TO PRISONER'S CHILDREN & FAMILIES IN 2024/2025

Supporting Contact

- Every prisoner at HMP Thameside will have access to innovative in-cell ICT provision which includes prisoners being able to telephone their families at any time and in the privacy of their cell.
- Every prisoner at HMP Thameside will have access to innovative in-cell ICT provision which will enable prisoners to book visits with their families at convenient dates and times through the Custodial Management System (CMS).
- HMP Thameside has a Families First Team that provides information and support. They will develop and
 deliver constructive activities to families and children in accordance with the regime. The emphasis of the
 activities is to provide quality time between prisoners and their families. There will be themed activities
 taking place which vary throughout the year.
- A renewed focus for the coming year on designing and delivering bespoke interventions to support a diverse
 range of prisoners and their families. These sessions include specialist Neurodiverse visits, chess club, baby
 bonding and toddler time.
- Social visits take place each day in the visit's hall. There is an emphasis on providing a pleasant environment for these visits to take place and a coffee shop providing refreshments is open during social visits.
- A children's reading area is provided in the visit's hall where children and their parent can spend time
 together choosing and reading books with the support of a Family First worker. The focus of this area is to
 provide a friendly safe environment for children to learn and develop during social visits.
- Families will initially encounter the Visits Centre just outside of the prison; this is designed with a similar emphasis on creating a pleasant environment for prison visitors.



Visits and initiatives

We offer the following activities for prisoners to apply for:

- Social Visits Every convicted prisoner will be entitled to at least 2 social visits every 4 weeks.
- **Family days** are held during the year for the prisoners to spend time with their children and families. 40 places are available for this session for children ages 0 17
- **Storybook Dads** is delivered by the children and family's team in conjunction with the library. This allows the prisoners to record a DVD for their children, of a story of their choice. This then is edited, put together with the book, and given by the prisoner to his child.
- Short stories from Dad: The prisoner is provided with in cell workbooks and guides to write a story for their child. The Family First Team will type up the story, add any pictures the prisoner has drawn or chosen and then print and send to the child by post. With the prisoners permission, the story will be added to a collection of stories written by HMP Thameside prisoners.
- **Baby bonding** is offered to prisoners with new babies under 12 months. They are given the opportunity to spend time with their new babies in the family room by the social visit's hall. This gives the prisoners time to bond with their new babies in a more relaxed environment.
- **Toddler time** is for children under school age (0-5). These sessions run each month in the social visit's hall. Prisoners can spend time playing and learning with their kids under 5s. There are 30 places available on each session and it takes place every third Tuesday of the month
- **Dad's discussion group** is an opportunity for prisoners to chat about their children and family. The group will be led by the prisoners dealing with real issues they want to discuss. This session will be practical based and theory.
- Families First Drop In. Prisoners have the opportunity to access a weekly drop in session where they can meet the families' team and access information on what support is available to them and how they can access families' first activities.
- Neurodiversity Visits: Smaller sessions focused on supporting neurodivergent prisoners and families to
 enjoy visits with specialist activities and materials. These sessions have been designed by our Neurodiversity
 Lead, Eve Annor-Cole. Eve has also trained the Family First staff and operational staff to be 'Neurodiversity
 Champions', an initiative aimed at improving the experience of neurodivergent prisoners, families and staff.
- Reading Cave: An area in the visits hall where Dad and Child can spend some time with a Family First
 assistant to select a book and read together. The child can then take the book home with them. Books are
 also offered in the visitor's centre for children to take with them. We are expanding this service to offer
 book fairs throughout the year for Dads to select a book to be sent out to their child from the prison
 (subject to any non-contact restrictions.)



- Creative sessions for Dads: Giving Dads the opportunity to create a gift to send out to their child. Ideas
 include creating their own games, writing stories, making cards or decorating photo frames for a picture
 taken on family day.
- **Positive Parenting Course:** This is a 4-6 week course, facilitated by the families first team. This will be showing the different ways people parent and tips and techniques on improving prisoner relationships and how they communicate with their children.

Child Safeguarding

The following are situations that would require a **Child Welfare Report** (Annex B) being completed and handed to the **Public Protection Clerk** or a member of the **Families First Team**.

The team internal mailbox is Familiesfirst@serco.com

Once the Families First team received a Child Welfare Report, a member of the team will review the information and if appropriate, will interview the prisoner and complete a **Social Service Referral Form** (Annex A). Alternatively, they will refer to the POM for risk assessment and further intervention:

Example situations that would give cause for concern and require completion of a CWR:

- A prisoner discloses information about current risk to a child in terms of neglect, sexual, emotional or physical abuse. It is important to remember this may also include information about another prisoner's child a family member or a friend.
- A prisoner discloses information about historical incidents of physical or sexual abuse.
- A prisoner discloses information about safeguarding risks in relation to an unborn child. This may include
 neglect, substance abuse and mental ill health. This could be in respect of the pregnant female or people in
 contact with her.
- An incident during visits or family day which may raise safeguarding concerns.
- Information contained in letters or telephone calls which indicates a child is at risk.
- Information from outside agencies which indicates a child may be at risk.

How to make a referral for a prisoner at Thameside

All prison staff in all departments and prison partners: PPG, Turning point and Catch 22 may automatically during their daily work make referrals as and when they feel it is needed.

The Resettlement & Families manager will be the link between each department. Alternatively, the Head of Reducing Reoffending can be contacted on extension 392.

Serco Business

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Out of hours referrals

The out of hour's number can be called after 5pm Monday to Friday and during the weekend.

It is as follows: Social Care 020 8854 8888

The number has a mailbox that is checked Daily (Monday – Friday)

What should be considered in the event of a Child being at Risk?

When making a referral it is important to find as much information as possible about the safeguarding issues:

- Name / Address / Date of birth of person you are making the referral about
- Prisoners Names and relationship to the above
- Other important people involved (Parent / Carer)
- Reason for referral in detail with all facts.

Education, Training and Employment

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

NOVUS provide offenders at HMP Thameside with the opportunity to obtain qualifications in a variety of academic and Vocational subjects.

HMP Thameside's Employment Hub works in partnership with DWP and New Futures Network to provide courses and events aimed at increasing training opportunities for prisoner approaching release. This area also provides workshops on CV, disclosure and interview skills to give prisoners the skills they need to obtain employment and successfully resettle back into their communities. Prisoners at HMP Thameside will have access to photo ID and bank accounts ready for their release.

The Library service provides books on parenting and other family related subjects, and also provides prisoners with the ability to record stories for their children through the provision of the Story Book Dad scheme.



Commitments

- To develop the Resettlement Drop in Centre in partnership with the Family's First Team, Catch22 and the Employment Hub.
- To increase our offering of family events and activities, creating more diverse programs to boost inclusivity and engage some of our most challenging groups.
- To improve the experience of Family's and Significant Others attending the prison, involving them in the prisoners journey through custody and upon release.

Public Protection

HMP Thameside 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.

Our Public Protection clerks work with Catch22 and the National Probation Service, to identify those who pose a risk of serious harm to children and other victims, including partners and other family members.

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

The levels of contact a prisoner at risk to children can have are detailed below:

Levels of Restrictions for Child Contact		
Level One	Full restrictions apply. No contact with any child permitted All correspondence and telephone calls may be monitored subject to a risk assessment being carried out and regularly reviewed.	
Level Two	Contact permitted with named child only via written correspondence. All correspondence and telephone calls may be monitored subject to a risk assessment being carried out and regularly reviewed.	
Level Three	Contact permitted with named child only via written correspondence and telephone calls. Correspondence and telephone calls may be monitored subject to a risk assessment being carried out and regularly reviewed.	



Level Four

No restrictions necessary, contact permitted with named child only via correspondence, telephone calls and visits. The prisoner may be allowed access to family visits with the permission of the Governing Governor following a further, individual risk assessment. Routine monitoring of correspondence, telephone calls, general observations in the visits area. This level of contact applies only to those children that the prisoner has permission to have contact with. All other children will be subject to Level One restrictions.

Catch 22

Every prisoner received into custody will have a Basic Custody Screening interview wiha Prison Offender Manager within 72 hours of their arrival. The Catch 22 Prison Offender Manager can refer prisoners to the Families First team or signpost them to send an application on CMS, for family support and activities.

Commitments

- To carry out risk assessments on OASys (Offender Assessment System)
- To complete Basic Custody Screening interview with prisoners on arrival and within the last 12 weeks of their sentence
- Ensure all warnings are on the prisoners file and communicated to security and the public protection clerks

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. Involvement and engagement with the prisoner's family can be useful in helping to support the prisoner through their crisis period. At HMP Thameside the Safer Custody team will, with the prisoner's consent, invite the contribution and or attendance from their families at ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) reviews.

The Safer Custody team also manages and monitors the Safeguard hotline for HMP Thameside. This enables families and friends 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 and the relevant stakeholders will be updated.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich Council identifies six key principles of Safeguarding Adults as; empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability.



The team hold weekly Safeguarding meetings, where attendees are updated on vulnerable prisoners who may be on an ACCT and what support they are receiving as a result. Minutes are recorded for the meetings and send to the relevant stakeholders by the Safer Custody Administrator.

The Safeguarding Panel will form part of the Complex Case weekly team meeting, to discuss prisoners on an ACCT, prisoners of behavioural or health concern and prisoners residing in the Healthcare unit or the Care and Separation Unit. When a member of staff has concerns regarding the vulnerability of a prisoner, they must make a referral to the Complex Case team by completing an Adults Safeguarding referral form (Annex B). The form should be send to the Safer Custody email group where it will be examined and a decision made regarding further action.

Commitments

- To continue to involve prisoners families in the ACCT process, when necessary and with the prisoner's permission.
- To attend the Resettlement/Reducing reoffending meeting, to discuss the Safer Custody role and the support they provide to the prisoners.
- To manage the communication channels Safer Custody Hotline: 02083175593 Safer Custody mailbox: Safercustody. Thameside@serco.com

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 manages the Visitors Centre process ensuring it runs smoothly and families have a welcoming environment to relax in prior to the commencement of the visits. The Security department also manages the pin phone monitoring system, ensuring public protection monitoring takes place in line with the guidelines, protecting the public from unwanted contact from prisoners.

Commitments

- To continue to provide advice and assistance to families regarding Assisted Prison Visits.
- To ensure the Visits PCO's are aware of how to report any concerns in regards to the welfare of a visiting child.



- Information is displayed in the visitors centre and in the gate area advising families of the
 consequences of trafficking. Crime stoppers posters are also displayed with contact details, for any
 family member who is being pressured into bringing drugs or other illegal items into the prison.
 Operational Support Officers (OSOs) are available in the visitors centre for family members to talk to
 if they are under such pressure.
- To provide operational support during social visits and Families interventions

Reducing Re-offending and Offender Management

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. 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 endeavor to raise the profile of the Children and Family pathway, coordinating the development and improvement of this pathway through the Reducing Re-Offending meetings and its related action plan.

Commitments

- To ensure each pathway lead, in the Reducing Re-Offending meetings discuss their progress against the agreed development objectives in this document.
- To complete a Prisoner Needs Analysis questionnaire with a section included on Children and Family's needs.
- To continue to develop family days.
- To offer family photographs according to the NOMS criteria on family days.
- Catch 22 Case Managers to assess relationships with children and families upon reception which are included in the assessment / Sentence Plan.



Care Leavers

Non-contact with family can be attributed to various reasons. Prisoners may not have contact with family members because of they have been beneficiaries of the social care system as care leavers. The Families First team will support the Safer Custody team to carry out Welfare checks on prisoners that are highlighted as self-isolating. The team will try to develop and enhance prisoners' relationships with at least one external significant person.

The Family First team act as a point of contact for local authorities. Personal Advisors can arrange visits in the family room via the Faily First team. The local offering for each borough is available in printed format in the library to enable care experienced prisoners to understand their entitlements upon release.

Commitments

- Identify whether the prisoner is socially isolated not engaging in the regime.
- Support Care Experienced prisoners to maintain contact with the Personal Advisors and understand their entitlements upon release.



ANNEX A

Families First Social Services Referral Form

Prisoner Name:		Other Par	ent Name:	
Prison Number:		DOB:		
Prisoner DOB:		Address a	nd Borough:	
Name of child being referr	ed:			
Child's DOB:				
Address and Borough:				
Details:	a (e.g. scrioois):	TES	NO	
Please add details (name and r	elationship to child) of any other sig	nificant adults in the children's	
Do your children know that yo If NO, would you like help or in			NO	
Description of situation relatin	g to children			
ACTION for FAMILIES FIRST:				
Refer to internal agencies:	Turning Point Families First	Chaplaincy Catch 22	Custody Safer Custody	



Should a follow up appointment be needed, evidence below:
Families First Signature:
Prisoner Signature:
Date:



ANNEX B

Name of Prisoner being visited:

CHILD WELFARE REPORT HMP THAMESIDE

This form should be used where anyone working within the establishment becomes concerned about the welfare of a child.

Prison Number:		
Location:		
Date / Time of visit:		
	,	
Childs Name:	Visitors Name:	
Gender:	Relationship to Child:	
Date of Birth:	Date of Birth:	
Relationship to Prisoner:	Relationship to Prisoner:	
Home Address:	Home Address:	
between what is fact, opinion or hearsay. If it is about an apparent inj	the dates; times; special factors; relevant information. Make clear distinction jury, include a description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Detail if the representation of the second of t	



Name of person completing form:
Date:
Action taken :
(eg. Social Services referral or passed on to Families First)
Action:
Print Signed
(Families First Use Only) Action: Print Signed

Completed forms should be emailed to the Families internal mailbox <u>Familiesfirst@serco.com</u>



ANNEX C

Referral to the Safeguarding Panel

The Safeguarding Panel forms part of the weekly Complex Case meetings and is used to identify and support prisoners who may have difficulty adjusting to a prison regime or environment. Staff should be aware that it could be a normal reaction for a prisoner to experience fear, anxiety, loss or depression when sent to prison. However, it is our aim to identify those prisoners who require additional support or interventions whilst residing at HMP Thameside.

Some key indicators of a vulnerable person may be one or more of the following. This list is not exhaustive but is designed to assist you in identifying a potential safeguarding issue;

Physical:

- Physical disability that restricts taking part in the prison regime;
- Physical appearance could make the person vulnerable or cause concerns that he/she is not able to take care of themselves.

Emotional:

- Inability to engage with other people;
- Appearing distressed and anxious.

Functioning and Capabilities:

- Unable to communicate effectively;
- Unable to understand what is happening to them;
- Low care skills;
- Appears to have mental health issues that impairs engagement.

General;

- Has the potential to become a victim of bullying from other prisoners;
- Is a parent or prospective parent and has raised issues or concerns regarding this;
- Has concerns regarding housing issues whilst in prison which cannot be resolved by wing staff;
- Loss of family member of close friend;
- Other.

Please describe your concern in full:	

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36		

	•••••
Please be aware that it still remains your responsibility to complete any necessary referral the mental health in-reach team, Families First and/or social care. Please confirm within to document, if you have completed either of these referrals.	
Name:	
Grade:	
Date:	
Time:	

Once this referral form has been completed, please send to the Safer Custody internal email address at Safercustody.Thameside@serco.com



ANNEX D

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
- Inside Time www.insidetime.org.uk this website gives visiting and other advice
- **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

- SHARP (Support Help and Advice for Relatives of Prisoners) 01743 245365 for free
- Prison voicemail prisonvoicemail.com
- NICCO (Barnado's) https://www.nicco.org.uk/ NICCO is a one-stop information and advice service to support all professionals (working with children and families of prisoners) and all families of prisoners



ANNEX E

Categories of Abuse

Physical - Assault, rough handling – the list is not exhaustive but will include unreasonable physical restraint

Sexual and sexual exploitation - Any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour

Psychological/emotional - Bullying, intimidation, verbal attacks or other behaviour that affects the wellbeing of an individual.

Neglect - A persons wellbeing is impaired and care needs not met

Discrimination - Psychological abuse that is linked to any protected characteristic

Financial - Theft or using a person's money or belongings for self-gain or gratification

Institutional - Observed lack of dignity and respect, rigid routine, processes or tasks organised to meet staff needs rather than taking into account vulnerability and making reasonable adjustments.

Disrespectful language and attitudes

SIGNIFICANT HARM - This should be taken to include not only ill treatment but also the impairment of, or avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, social or behavioural development