



# **HMP DARTMOOR FAMILIES AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS STRATEGY**

**2024**



**Date of issue: May 2024**

SIGNED: Steve Mead

**Governor**

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2022

## Version History

Publication date	Version Number	Date of Amendment	Summary of Amendments	Name of Editor
04/06/22	V1	N/A	N/A	Michael Walker
04/10/22	V2	04/10/2022	Removal of references to Covid; removal of Choices, new information on Pact; Video visits information updated.	Michael Walker
24/02/2023	V3	24/02/2023	Added reference to HMIP expectations	Michael Walker
05/04/2023	V4	05/04/2023	Updated visits guidance, removal of final references to the pandemic, update on in-cell telephony, update on video visits. Full review of any out of date information.	Michael Walker
10/05/2024	V5	05/05/2024	Review of all information, addition of policy on a page; signed off by Governor Mead.	Michael Walker

# AIMS, PURPOSE & VISION

**HMP Dartmoor** is committed to supporting relationships between prisoners, families and significant others. We are dedicated to helping the prisoners in our care be the best they can and achieve the goals they have. Having the support of their families and significant others is a big factor in them achieving these goals.



Maintaining family relationships is an important factor in helping people desist from crime, with the stability and support and hope that they provide. It has long been known that prisoners who maintain a bond with their families / significant others are at a lower risk of re-offending post release. Research shows that offenders without family support on release are between 2 and 6 times more likely to re-offend in the first year of their release from custody. Additional research (Farrington) shows that male children of offenders are 63% more likely to offend themselves and that rises to 93% when both parents are offenders.

We aim to encourage contact between children and their fathers and support development of these relationships, hopefully leading to a positive impact on reoffending rates, and potentially improving school attendance for children affected by parental imprisonment. To achieve the above we will provide the following:

- Treating families with respect, decency and dignity
- A safe and secure visits centre
- To promote positive family contact e.g. via father-child visits, celebration of success events, family days and other family development opportunities.
- Always look to find further ways of improving family contact to enhance meaningful relationships
- Encourage families to have a voice in certain areas of the prison sentence
- To work with internal and external agencies to create an atmosphere of 'Family Friendly Visits' and therefore reduce any barriers to visiting.
- Work closely with internal and external agencies to provide advice and support to families.
- Ensuring robust child protection policies are in place



The key role of the Families & Significant Others Champion is to support the Head of Reducing Reoffending and the creation and development of a healthy relationship between prisoners and their families. The Head of Reducing Reoffending at HMP Dartmoor is Governor Michael Walker.

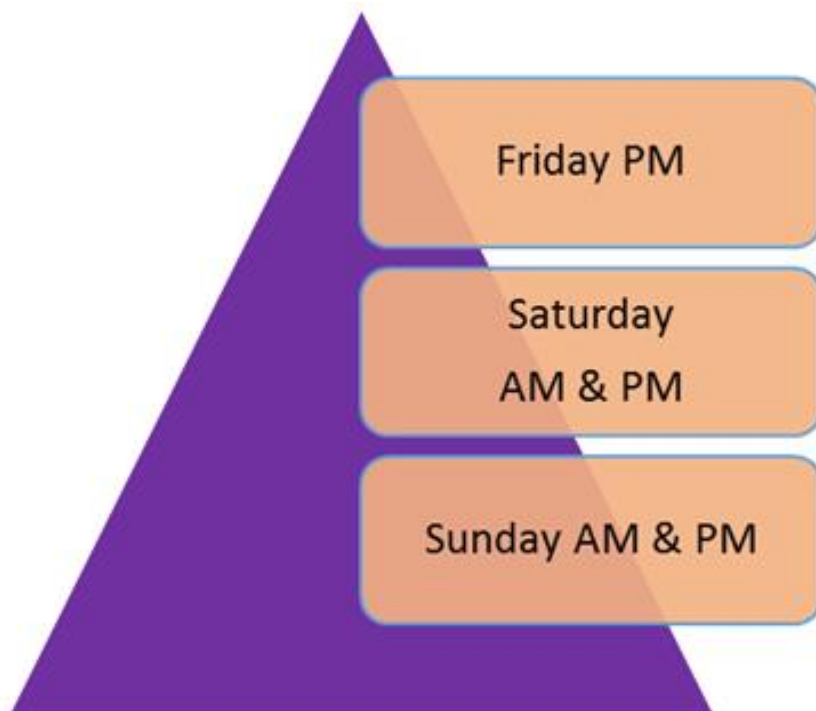
The Families & Significant Others Champion at HMP Dartmoor is Custodial Manager Danny Branley, he is committed to improving family links and ties for

all prisoners and their families or significant others, improving visits experiences, and to listening to the views of those concerned.

This strategy is built on recommendations from the SW Prisons Children and Families Review, Lord Farmer Report titled 'The Importance of strengthening Prisoners' Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime' and Delivering effective Family Practice. To achieve these objectives, we are offering the following services here at HMP Dartmoor.

## VISITS AT DARTMOOR

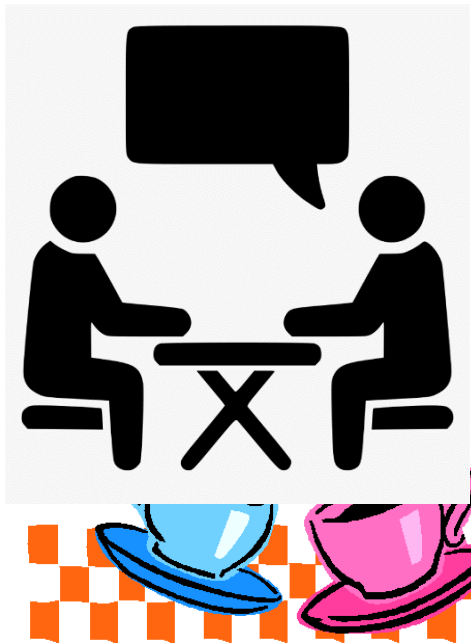
Face to face visits at HMP Dartmoor are available on:



You can book these by ringing the visits booking line on **01822 322022**, the opening times are Monday to Friday 10am-12pm.

Or by using the email address:





There is also an online booking system:

<https://www.gov.uk/prison-visits>

Follow the instructions to book a visit.

Our visits hall at Dartmoor is always clean and bright, offering a pleasant place to sit and be with friends and loved ones, we have recently made a significant investment in new and improved furniture and a new kitchen area. There are refreshments available for purchase, and a crèche area with activities for children.

When you first arrive at the prison you will be asked to sign in at the external visitors centre,



showing your ID. This must either be:

- one form of photographic ID i.e., passport or driving license, foreign identity or residents' card
- or at least 2 of the following:
  - Birth/marriage certificate
  - Cheque book
  - Credit or debit card
  - 'Proof of age card'
  - Foreigner identity card
  - Residence card

You will then be able put your belongings in one of the lockers provided, this area is supervised by staff from the prison and the Pact team.



Please be aware that the only item you can take with you into the visits hall itself is the locker key.

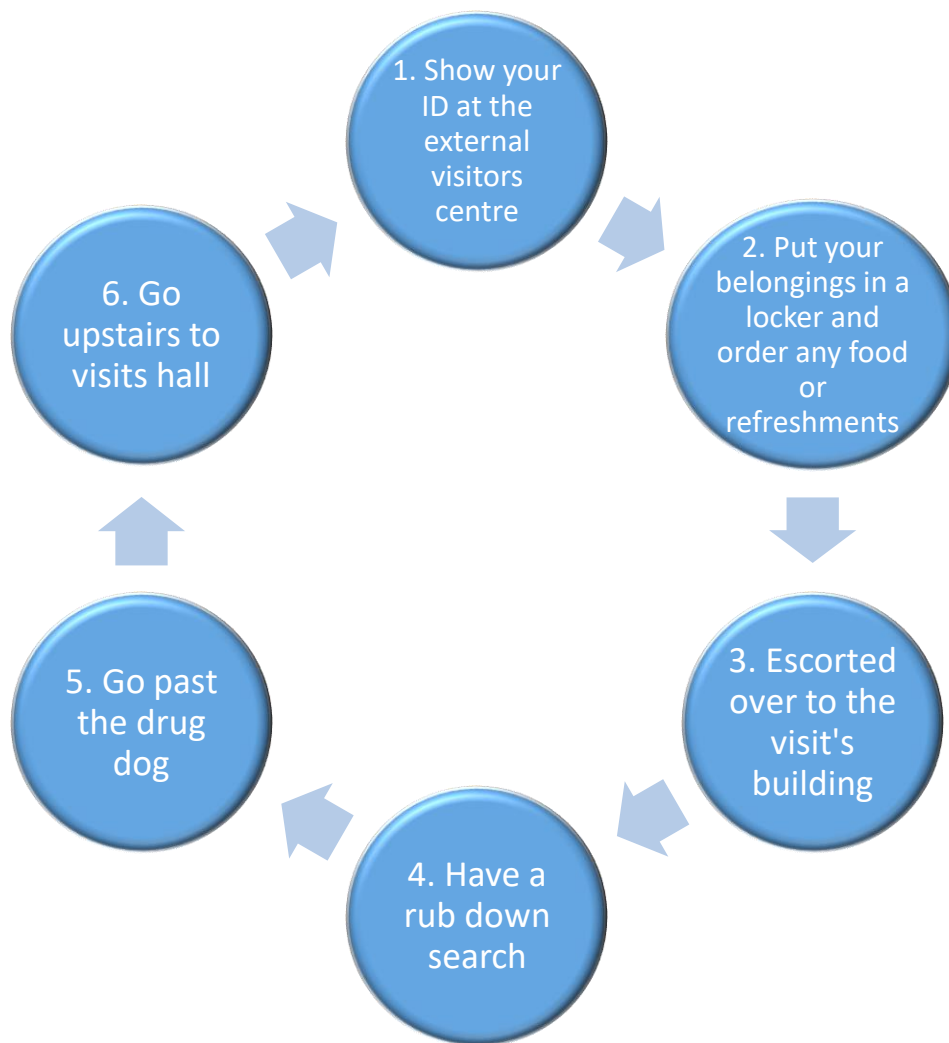
You order your food and drink, and pay for it, whilst in the external visitor's centre prior to your visit.



If a baby comes to visit, the parents will have to bring in an empty bottle and a sealed packet of formula. Nappies and changing equipment/materials are provided.



Be aware you cannot wear smart watches on a visit; normal watches are allowed though. If you have any unauthorised items, you will have to return to the external visitors centre to put them in your locker, so to ensure you have the longest possible time with your loved one please double check your pockets before you are brought across.

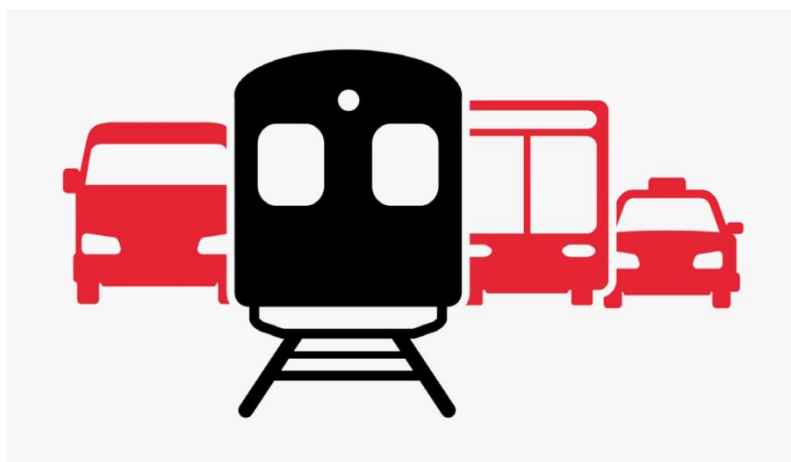


## ASSISTED PRISON VISITS

The Assisted Prison Visits Unit (APVU) provides financial support with the cost of travel to visit a relative, partner or escort a child to visit a loved one in prison. Some costs can also be claimed if overnight

accommodation is required to attend a visit. Claimants must be over the age of 18 years, and receiving benefits such as Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance. Claims are now made quickly and easily online although it is possible to ask for telephone assistance or a paper application. See Assisted Prison Visits for more information or to apply.

<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-prison-visits>





# Pact

Pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust) assists prisoners and their families through difficulties that may be faced during their time in prison.

Pact is a pioneering national charity that supports prisoners, people with convictions, and their children and families. They 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. They work for the common good of Society, taking a public health-based approach. They work at the intersection of criminal justice, child and family welfare, mental health, wellbeing provision and health & social care.

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

Pact's Visitors' Centre Service provides specialist trained staff, voluntary workers and resources to ensure that the visitors' centre offers families, friends and official visitors a warm welcome, and the support needed to ensure that their visit is as positive an experience as it can possibly be. As in all their services, Pact offers an inclusive service, with staff who are culturally sensitive and responsive to the diverse needs of prisoners and visitors.

Their staff are on hand to offer emotional support to all visitors, as well as practical information about issues including travel and transport, explaining prison procedures in advance of entering the prison to go through to the visits hall. They provide additional support and reassurance to First Time Visitors, who are likely to be very anxious, including an especially warm welcome, information packs, and personalised support. They may also be able to accompany particularly nervous visitors through the security checks on their first visit.

They provide a welcoming environment for prisoners' families and friends and ensure that visitors feel they can ask for any advice and information they need before and after their visit. As well as providing a friendly visiting space, a key outcome of this service is to link families with support in the community so that they can address issues outside of the prison including finance, debt, housing, mental health, domestic violence, childcare, parenting and more.





Their staff team also act as a vital support point for visitors post- visit where the visit has not gone well or they have concerns about the prisoner. Their staff can then liaise with Safer Custody and other teams within the prison where concerns over prisoner safety are shared.

Pact works closely alongside the prison to provide staff and resources to ensure that visitors have access to all the information they need in accessible formats. They also provide toys and activities for children to make the visiting process less distressing for them and they can also organise family days and child-centred extended visits.

They can be contacted at:

[dartmoor@prisonadvice.org.uk](mailto:dartmoor@prisonadvice.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0808 808 2003 (Prisoners' Families Helpline)

**Address:** Prison Advice and Care Trust, 29 Peckham Road, London, SE5 8UA

**Website:** <https://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/>

## FAMILY VISITS



We hold regular family visits days:

**Family Visits with Children:** These are held over the whole day and include eating lunch together, games, and quizzes and provide themed sessions.

**Adult only days:** We also recognise the importance of allowing families the opportunity to have time to bond as adults in a child free environment, therefore we have also introduced adult only days.

These days are open to those who have been cleared through our Public Protection and Security panel; we offer other events, such as the Celebration of Success where those who are nominated are encouraged to invite family members to attend. These visits are additional to the standard visiting orders. All prisoners in attendance must pass security checks before they are allowed to attend a Children's Event. Anyone who is a risk to children may not attend and neither can those who are on closed visits. When it is a family event, we are happy to consider applications from Basic, Standard and Enhanced prisoners and each will be risk assessed robustly. However, we do believe that anyone who is a 'family man' should be aiming to get enhanced status and set a good example for his children.

Pact oversee these events, and they have worked with us to produce a calendar of these events up to a year ahead to better allow families to organise their visits.

# VIDEO VISITS

HMP Dartmoor offers video calls in the afternoon on Monday to Thursday, with later slots available on Tuesdays (until 18:15hrs).

Calls are free, last 30 minutes, and you can have up to 4 people on the call. They can be used anywhere in the world.

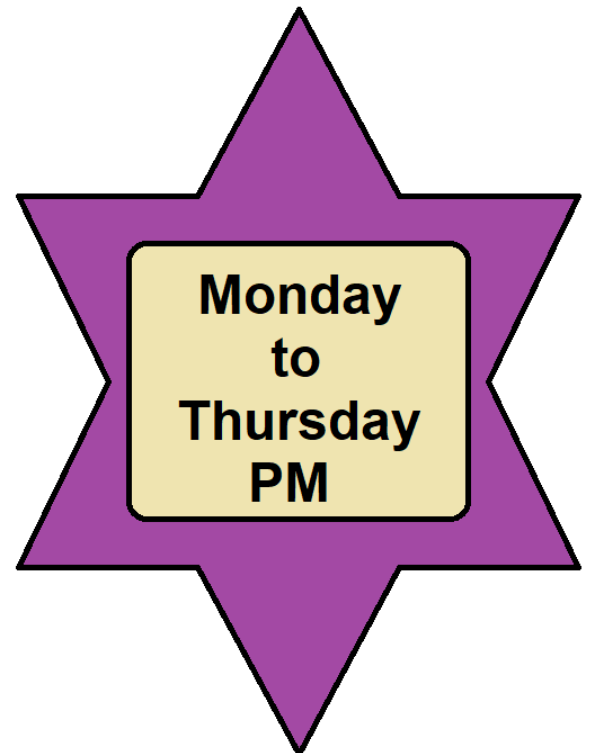
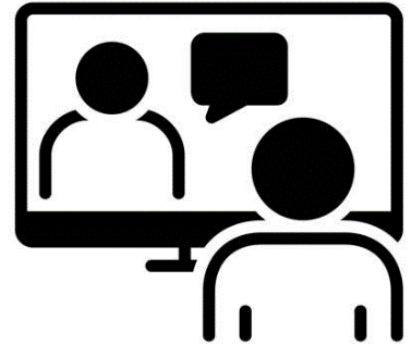
Visit the website for information on how to use this facility:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visit-a-prisoner-using-a-video-call>

This app uses the latest facial recognition technology, which has been a work in progress to find a correct balance between security, safeguarding, and the user's experience, as, if the software sees someone unexpected, or identifies anything that is inappropriate, it will automatically pause the video call.

As this is a relatively new service the prison is offering, the software is constantly being updated and upgraded to decrease its sensitivity and improve your experience, by the company that produced it, and so, as time goes on, the quality of the calls should keep improving.

Usual prison rules for visits apply about appropriate dress and behaviour. Remember that all calls are recorded, and staff are also able to monitor the calls as they are happening and can terminate a call for inappropriate behaviour.



# CARE LEAVERS

WHO ARE CARE LEAVERS?

- A care leaver is someone who has spent time in the care of the local authority.
- If they no longer qualify for the services from their local authority, we consider them as 'care experienced' as we need to continue to recognise that this period of their lives could still impact on them both in a positive or negative way.
- Over 25% of the adult prison population has previously been in care.



## PERSONAL ADVISORS

- Eligible care leavers up to their 21st Birthday will have a personal advisor from the local authority who were responsible for them when they were in care. This was extended from April 2018. The support of a personal advisor is now available for those who want it until their 25th birthday on request.



- Personal advisors take on the role of ‘corporate parents’. This means, in simple terms, that they should carry out as many of the roles that they can that a parent would.

- There is a requirement for them to visit their care leaver every 8 weeks.

- Both personal advisors and care leavers tell us that their preference would be to meet on a social or domestic visit – it may be the only visit the young person has and as such the only chance of a ‘normal’ visit where they can be in a more relaxed setting and have a drink and a kit kat perhaps! We are happy to facilitate this at HMP Dartmoor.

## FAMILY

- Care Leavers may not have a traditional family as we know it and there may be some important, supportive relationships with people who are not immediate family or indeed related to them at all.
- We will consider each person’s individual circumstances when making decisions for example ROTL, visits to dying relatives, funeral applications. An aunt or grandparents for example, may have been the only stable relationship for someone in care even if they were not ‘loco parentis’.

## OTHER THINGS WE CONSIDER.....

- Care leavers are a vulnerable group.
- Care can also be a positive experience as can some qualities within our care leavers. For example, they are likely to be resilient, caring and tolerant of others. They may have also learned valuable life skills.
- There may be trust issues so we will work harder to ensure we facilitate opportunities to develop or strengthen relationships.



# SAFEGUARDING

## WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?



HMP Dartmoor believes that the welfare of a child or a young person is paramount regardless of their age, culture, ability, gender, language, ethnicity, religious belief and/or sexual identity.

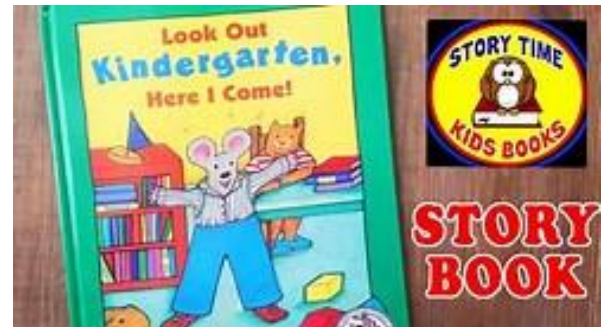
We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

The prison has a local policy that sets out guidelines for the safeguarding of children who may be attending social / family visits, or who may have other forms of contact with HMP Dartmoor.

The purpose of this policy is to act as guidance for operational and partnership staff to identify potential signs of child abuse / neglect and give clear instruction as to the course of action that these staff should follow.

## STORYBOOK DADS

Storybook Dads works in over 100 UK prisons. As well as enabling imprisoned parents to maintain family contact, they also provide training and employment for hundreds of prisoners, improving their skills and chances of rehabilitation.



Storybook Dads helps to maintain the vital emotional bond between parent and child by enabling parents to make bedtime story CDs, DVDs and other educational gifts for their children. The process is fairly simple.

The prisoner chooses a book and is recorded reading the story. The recording is downloaded onto a computer where music and sound effects are added (much of this work is undertaken by trained prisoners who benefit from being able to develop new skills and experience). The finished story is put onto a CD and then sent to the child. Most prisons can only record audio, but a DVD option is available in a few prisons so the child can see as well as hear the story. Storybook Dads believes that the gift of a story CD from an imprisoned parent, can help to overcome the children's sense of loss and confusion and help to maintain the bond between parent and child, bringing great comfort to both.

As long as a prisoner is allowed access to their children, they can apply.

Visit Storybook Dads for further details about the service.

**Email:** <https://www.storybookdads.org.uk/forms/get-in-touch>

**Telephone:** 07597 838432

**Address:** Storybook Dads, HMP Dartmoor, Princetown, Yelverton, Devon, PL20 6RR


**Website:** <https://www.storybookdads.org.uk/>



## DIRECTIONS

**Address:** HMP Dartmoor, Princetown, Devon, PL20 6RR

### How to get here:

- **Bus:** At Plymouth bus station take a bus to Tavistock for the connecting bus service to Princetown. There is no Tavistock to Princetown services at weekends.
  - **Train:** The nearest mainline railway station to HMP Dartmoor is at Plymouth.
  - **Taxi:** Different companies appear to charge anything from £20-£40 fares to HMP Dartmoor from Plymouth. The average rate should be £20-£25. If possible, it is advisable to agree a fixed fare with your driver before setting out.
  - **Car:** From Bristol, follow signs to the Southwest e.g., Exeter, Okehampton (A30). Bypass Okehampton following signs to Launceston, taking the next turning on the left, signposted Tavistock (A386). As you approach Tavistock, after passing Kelly College on the right, take the 2nd turning on the left-hand side signposted Princetown. Proceed for approximately 7 miles over the
- 



moors turning right into Princetown. Once in Princetown you will see the prison on the left-hand side. (If you would like a more scenic route over Dartmoor, after Exeter then follow the signs for Plymouth). After about 28-29 miles you will see signs for Ashburton, don't take the first turning off to Ashburton (on the left), and take the next one signposted Ashburton, Two Bridges, and Princetown. Princetown is approx. 12 miles from the turning (down very winding roads). Once in the village of Princetown take the first right turn, the prison is approximately half a mile up this road on the right-hand side.

- From Plymouth, follow the signs to Yelverton, Princetown. Once in Princetown turn left. The prison is approx. half a mile up this road on the right-hand side.
- From Cornwall, follow the signs to Tavistock. On arriving in Tavistock follow the signs to Princetown which is approx. 8 miles away.
- The visitors' car park is situated approx. 150 yards before the prison on the right-hand side.

# EMAIL A PRISONER

Email a prisoner is a service which allows families to send an email to someone inside the majority of UK prisons. The emails are printed out and delivered along with other post on a daily basis. The cost of this is just 40p. The website below gives more information about the service, how to sign up and other details.

Visit the Email a prisoner site:

<https://www.emailaprisoner.com/>

# PRISON VOICEMAIL SERVICE

Prison Voicemail is a service enabling families to exchange voicemail messages with their loved ones in prison.

**How it works:** the family member dials a unique landline number from their mobile phone and leaves a message, which the prisoner can receive and reply to from any phone in the prison. The cost of the service is borne by the family member, who pays to leave messages. The prisoner pays the normal price of a landline call to receive or reply to messages. A recent customer survey found that 83% of prisoners and 92% of families say the service makes the sentence easier on them.



'Think this is a fantastic idea. The prison is on 'bang up' a lot of the time which makes it hard for my husband to call me as I work full time and he is locked up early. He can then leave a message so I hear his voice. Plus our little girl gets to leave her daddy a goodnight message every night. Thank you!'

"I had a job where I couldn't answer the phone when he called. Your service made such a difference to our ability to communicate."

"Brilliant service I've recommend to some of the ladies at the prison. My children loved that they could listen to their daddy read them a bedtime story, and he could listen to them open their Christmas presents". Thank you.

"I just want to thank you. I was in hospital for major surgery and it was really helpful to be able to leave him messages."

To read more testimonials, please visit:

**Website:** <https://prisonvoicemail.com/testimonials>

For more information and pricing details, please visit:

**Website:** <http://prisonvoicemail.com>

Or

**Telephone:** 01603 340588

## ITEMS THAT CAN BE POSTED IN BY FAMILIES

Here at HMP Dartmoor, there are a few items that you are able to send in to your loved one.

Alongside letters and cards, you can also send:



If someone has transferred to HMP Dartmoor within the first 28 days of sentencing they can apply to the Governor to have a clothes parcel sent in from family (although, with HMP Dartmoor being a Cat C Trainer, it is not commonplace that we receive individuals that early in their sentence).

Please do not send anything in that is not allowed, always check first, or it is likely to be returned to you and you will have wasted money on postage.

You can also use the free and fast online service to send up to £50 to someone in prison.

<https://send-money-to-prisoner.service.gov.uk/en-gb/>

You can no longer send money by bank transfer, cheque, postal order or send cash by post.

If you cannot use the online service, you may be able to [apply for an exemption](#) - for example if you:

- are unable to use a computer, a smart phone or the internet.
- do not have a debit card.

You can apply for this by writing to the Governor, who may then give you permission to send money by post.



# DISCHARGE PROCESS

On their day of release, we will escort your family member to the main gate usually between 08:00 and 08:30, where you can either meet them and take them home, or we will arrange and pay for a taxi to take them to Plymouth train station and a train ticket to their required destination if you are not able to do this.



## CONCERNS

Occasionally you may have concerns about your loved one's state of mind or safety and may be worried that they are going to do harm to themselves.



**For urgent concerns:** If you have a concern about the well-being of a prisoner that is urgent, you should ring the Safer Custody team on **01822 322111**. This is an answer machine service, however it is checked regularly; you will need to leave a message explaining your concern, along with your name and if you would like a member of the team to return your call, please leave your contact details.

**For emergencies:** If you think someone is at risk of immediate serious harm, or their life is in danger:

You should ring **01822 322000** and ask to be put through to the Orderly Officer or Duty Governor at the prison.

You will need to explain that your call is an emergency, and you are worried that a prisoner is at risk of immediate serious harm.

Please be advised these numbers are for concerns about suicide or self-harm only, they should not be used to make contact with a prisoner who you have not heard from recently.

All other prisoner related enquiries please contact Pact (details on page 9).

## HMIP EXPECTATIONS

HM Inspectorate of Prisons uses a criteria to conduct their inspections of prisons, they are responsible for delivering independent and objective assessments of outcomes for prisoners.

There is a specific section for 'Children and families and contact with the outside world'.

At HMP Dartmoor we use these criteria as a guide and we work hard to meet the expectations.

For more information, please visit the HMIP website:



<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/our-expectations/prison-expectations/>

# PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We know how important maintaining contact is to you and your loved one.

We will be continuing to offer video visits and are currently reviewing the days and times that this facility is available, to provide the best service possible.

Work has now completed on the installation of in-cell telephones, this new technology will make a huge difference to the amount of contact you can have with your loved one.

Storybook Dads have relocated their headquarters to HMP Dartmoor, allowing your children to receive stories from their dads.

We have made a significant investment in our visits centre, and it has had extensive renovations to the kitchen area and a full redecoration; we will continue to add to this area to improve your experience.

We have introduced family forums into some of our family visits days.

We are investing in our visitor's centre to make the area more comfortable and welcoming.

We have started to work with external partners, such as Dartmoor Zoo, to bring new enrichment activities to our family visits days.

We always working to improve our communication, and regularly add updates and information to both our HMPPS page and Twitter account.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dartmoor-prison>

[https://twitter.com/HMP\\_Dartmoor](https://twitter.com/HMP_Dartmoor)

We also welcome ideas from you. If you have any ideas on something that Dartmoor could realistically look at bringing into the prison to support you, the families and children of our prisoners, or ideas to improve your visit experience, please write to:

Families & Significant Others Champion  
c/o Activities Hub  
HMP Dartmoor  
Princetown  
PL20 6RR



# Frequently asked Questions!!

When can I visit?

**Friday PM, Sat AM & PM, and Sun  
AM & PM - see page 4.**

What are video visits?

**Video calls, see page 9.**

Can I get financial help  
to visit?

**Yes, in certain  
circumstances, see  
page 6.**

Where is Dartmoor Prison?

**It is in Princetown, Devon,  
directions are on page 12.**

What is the prison voicemail  
service?

**You and your loved one can  
leave voice messages for each  
other, see page 13.**

What do I do if I have serious concerns about my  
loved one?

**Contact the prison or Pact, see contact info on page  
8 & 15.**

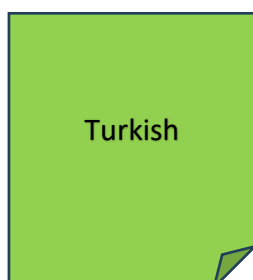
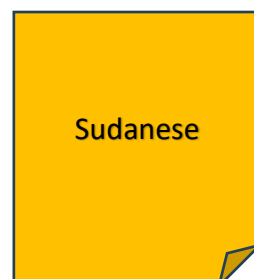
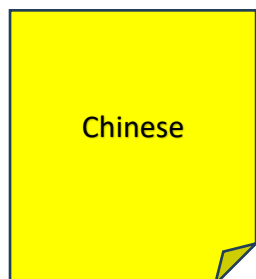
What can I post in?

**This is restricted, see page 14.**

# POLICY ON A PAGE

We have produced a policy on a page, providing information on the main points of our Families & Significant Others Strategy.

It is also available in the following languages:



# HMP Dartmoor Families & Significant Others Strategy

## WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

*Family Champion & Family Provider to build relationships with Families & Significant Others.*



*Training to be provided to Keyworkers & other staff to allow us to respond to both prisoners and family's needs.*



*Communication to Families & Significant Others being a priority.*



*To provide extended Family Day Visits and other family projects such as Celebration of Success events, with a fair opportunity for all to apply and enjoy.*

*To allow Families & Significant Others to have a voice and provide feedback for improvement.*



*Being able to provide a clean, decent and welcoming visitors centre and visits hall.*



*To invite Families & Significant Others to engage with the 'Prisoners Journey' to support in their progression in all areas.*

*To include Families & Significant Others in resettlement plans for their loved ones.*



*To make those in our care who are Care Experienced, aware of their entitlements.*



**For further information, or for a copy of the full strategy, please contact the Families & Significant Others Champion or Pact via [dartmoor@prisonadvice.org.uk](mailto:dartmoor@prisonadvice.org.uk).**

# CONCLUSION

Here at HMP Dartmoor we are committed to maintaining and improving our family ties for prisoners. It is important to us that families play a role in changing the lives of prisoners in our care. We want to learn from families, so we are better placed to care for our prisoners and more able to adapt to their varying needs.

You, as families need to be acknowledged as an important part of change and support to those in our care and must be recognised and made use of.

We must always strive to improve these ties as, in most cases, it can only produce positive results for all persons involved, as well as HMP Dartmoor as a whole.

We aim to improve the services we offer and look forward to hearing your ideas!

