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**HMP LEYHILL**

**FAMILY & SIGNIFICANT OTHERS STRATEGY**

**2023-2024**



***Supporting & promoting positive contact with Family & Significant Others***

**Family and Significant Others Pathway Lead**

Laura Dornan Date: 22nd December 2023

**Governing Governor of HMP Leyhill**

Steve Cross Date: 22nd December 2023

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**A little about HMP Leyhill….**

Originally a war-time hospital, Leyhill opened as a low-security prison in 1946, the only one of its’ kind in the south-west. Over the years there have been various changes to living accommodation and the current programme of upgrades & expansion should take our prisoner role from approximately 450 presently to around 700 in a couple of years’ time.

Although located in the south-west, HMP Leyhill serves as a resettlement prison for prisoners from across the country, many of whom are serving long sentences for serious crimes, including sex offences. Because of the high-level of risk managed here prisoners must normally be at least 25yrs old. The average age is around 50yrs old, but many are somewhat older and have the mobility and health needs that advancing years can present.

**Why have a Family & Significant Others Strategy?**

Research conducted by various bodies over a number of years notes the value to both self and others of positive contact between prisoners and those in the community with whom they have a meaningful relationship: their families or significant others.

* The Ministry of Justice Resettlement Survey 2008 found that prisoners who have meaningful family visits are 38% less likely to reoffend than those who do not.
* The Social Exclusion Report 2002 notes that prisoners who are able to maintain healthy family ties whilst in prison are up to six times less likely to re-offend than those who have not.
* Over half of those serving sentences lose contact with their families whilst in prison.
* HMIP Expectations document published in 2017, updated in 2019 and 2021, made 46 specific measurable expectations with regards to supporting family contact demonstrating how highly this area is valued.
* The Lord Farmer Review, commissioned by the Justice Secretary to look at the importance of family contact, was published in 2017, it’s 19 recommendations having been endorsed by the Prisons’ Minister.

**What else did Lord Farmers’ Review say?**

Lord Farmer’s Review was entitled ‘The Importance of Strengthening Residents’ Family Ties to Prevent Re-offending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime’. Whilst it doesn’t exactly slip off the tongue its’ intent and focus are quite clear.

Lord Farmer recommended the development of performance measures that would hold Governors to account for positive family work outcomes. These measures will be used to demonstrate how the prison and family services support the enhancement of relationships in preparation for prisoners release and positive reintegration into society.

According to the Lord Farmer report family should be the ‘golden thread’ running through the processes of all prisons and Lord Farmer refers to a ‘local family offer’ recommending that as a minimum offer all establishments deliver and develop provision in the following five areas:

1. Visitor Centre / Visitor Reception Services
2. Staffing structure to ensure family work is an operational priority
3. Extended Visits - to enable supportive relationships to flourish
4. Family Learning - to equip prisoners to maintain and improve relationships
5. “Gateway” communications system - to demonstrate how the establishment have responsive communication systems in place for families

**What do we mean by ‘family’?**

For the purpose of this document, ‘family’is defined as either a blood relative, legal or significant person/s that a prisoner identifies as their next of kin. Many of those in custody with children of their own may have other arrangements outside of those that would be considered a ‘traditional family arrangement’ and these may or may not be reflective of their own upbringing. We will accommodate all ‘family’ arrangements where they provide a constructive and supportive relationship for the prisoner and their family.

**How will we ensure family are kept safe?**

We recognise that not all family relationships are positive. Family members may sometimes be the direct or indirect victims of a prisoners’ offence. These individuals have the right to protection from their perpetrator and in all cases permission should be sought from the victim, where the victim is an adult, and any relevant partner agencies before making contact. This will enable the victim/family unit to be supported in the community. Where the victim or at-risk person is a child, or where any other risk/potential risk is identified in relation to a child, the establishment’s [Safeguarding Children Policy, October'22](https://justiceuk-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sarah_memery_justice_gov_uk/Documents/Safeguarding%20%282018%29/Safeguarding%20Children%20Policy%2C%20October%2722.doc?web=1) will be followed. Where the victim or at-risk person is an adult the establishment’s [Safeguarding Adults Policy, March'23](https://justiceuk-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sarah_memery_justice_gov_uk/Documents/Safeguarding%20%282018%29/Safeguarding%20Adults%20Policy%2C%20March%2723.doc?web=1) will be followed.

On occasion family or significant others may be enablers contributing to, or allowing the facilitation of, a prisoners’ offending behaviour. Prisoners may be subject to harassment or restraining orders which we must ensure they comply with. We will therefore ensure that we prevent inappropriate contact. Additionally, the Unwanted Prisoner Contact Service, launched in November 2022, is available to any member of the public, including all victims of crime and survivors of domestic abuse, who want to stop contact from a prisoner. They can be contacted at [www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact](http://www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact).

**Our Offer:**

**Visitor Centre and Visitor Reception Services**

The visitor center at HMP Leyhill is supported by PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust) & community volunteers. The reception area is comfortable with toilet provision and activities for families upon arrival. As an open prison searching is not routinely conducted however will be on occasions and in these instances staff will guide visitors through the process. They may be supported by a drugs dog. Inside the visits hall there is a café which provides hot and cold beverages and snack food at competitive prices.

The Family Centre offers the following services:

* An information, guidance and sign-posting service for issues such as housing, finance, alcohol and substance misuse and domestic violence.
* Advice and support about prison procedures.
* Someone to talk to in confidence if needed.
* Access to all areas to assist visitors, for example baby changing facilities, full disabled access & toilets.
* We encourage all visitors and prisoners to give feedback to help improve the visiting experience.
* PACT Family Support Workers are available for prisoners, families, friends and significant others and provide confidential one-to-one support. PACT can be contacted at [www.prisonadvice.org.uk](http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk/) or via the Prisoners’ Families Helpline: 0808 808 2003. Prisoners’ self-referrals should be passed to the PACT Family Engagement Manager.

The visits hall is large, comfortable, bright and airy and has a children’s play area equipped with a range of toys, books and games enabling parents and children of all ages to engage in an appealing and diverse range of activities. An outdoor play area allows for activities to be enjoyed in the fresh air, weather permitting.

The whole visits facility, visitor centre, visits hall and external play areas, is non-smoking and non-vaping.

**Visits and Extended Visits**

In-person visits are offered on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 1.30pm to 3.30pm.

Extended visits for children are held at least four times a year and for adults only at least three times a year. These take place in the visit’s hall from 10:30 – 15:30. A range of activities enhance the experience of the days and a free buffet lunch is provided. Every effort is made to co-ordinate dates of children’s extended visits with school holidays, although this can be a challenge across the country, and the visits are often themed. Several weeks before each extended visit prisoners will be invited to apply and their incentive level is not a barrier to taking part.

**2024 family day dates:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Children’s family day dates** | **Adults only family day dates** |
| 2nd April | 16th April |
| 13th August | 18th June |
| 29th October | 20th August |
| 23rd December | 17th December |

**Getting here**

Unfortunately for those not having access to a car HMP Leyhill can be a costly and time-consuming place to get to, especially for those living further away. Bristol Parkway and Bristol Temple Meads are the nearest mainline train stations. Taxis to the prison from the stations are expensive, upwards of £30, and relating bus services are very restricted at weekends. The HMP Leyhill pages on the Gov.uk website give more detailed travel information, including links to relevant transport services. The Assisted Prisons Visits Unit, telephone [0300 063 2100](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=672573c815e355d9JmltdHM9MTY3ODQwNjQwMCZpZ3VpZD0zMmI2ZGExMS01NzQ5LTY3ZTEtMWJiMi1jYmVjNTZmMjY2NTImaW5zaWQ9NTU5Nw&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=32b6da11-5749-67e1-1bb2-cbec56f26652&psq=assisted+prison+visits+scheme&u=a1dGVsOjAzMDAwNjMyMTAw&ntb=1), may be able to assist with the cost of visiting and help can also be sought from <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-prison-visits>.

**How else to keep in touch**

Video-visits are available twice a week and offer an alternative for those who cannot attend the prison. There is also the e-mail a prisoner service, Emailaprisoner.com, and prisoners have unlimited access to prison telephones on their residential units. Some still choose to send and receive written correspondence, which is unlimited although may be monitored under some circumstances. For those able to access ROTL (Release On Temporary Licence), and subject to prior approval by staff, contact with family in the community can be a really valuable experience. Foreign national residents can convert their standard visiting orders to phone credit to make calls abroad or for airmail letters.

**What about those who have no family or significant other contact?**

During 2022 more than 240 prisoners at HMP Leyhill had no visits at all. Whilst this may have been of choice for some, and a number may still have had telephone or letter contact or spent time with family during ROTL, it is however likely that a significant number of prisoners, for whatever reason, just had nobody outside of custody with whom to communicate. A national Official Prison Visits (OPV) scheme operates at HMP Leyhill to support such prisoners whereby an approved volunteer will visit the person they have been paired with to offer non-judgemental friendship and support. Additionally, an Every Contact Matters peer-led support scheme is being introduced to help identify and sign-post those who are isolated in custody. Similar schemes have worked well elsewhere and should also have a positive impact here, especially when so many of our prisoners have been in custody for such a long time.

**Surveys, statistics and monitoring**

Twice-yearly visitor and prisoner surveys, a resident’s needs analysis, and at least six-monthly meetings between prison family leads, family service providers and prisoner representatives ensures that we have open lines of communication to review services, address needs and develop future plans. Additionally, feedback and recommendations from MQPL (Measuring the Quality of Prison Life) visits and HMIPP (His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons and Probation) inspections will also be shared, discussed and used to inform future planning as they become available (at the time of this strategy update the last HMIP inspection was in 2016 and MQPL in 2019, so further visits, with up-to-date recommendations, are awaited). A new (April 2023) national Family & Significant Other Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is being introduced this year to ensure policy compliance and the maintenance of standards.

PACT produce monthly performance reports, which they share with the establishment. The reports include details on issues raised with them, information requests and actions taken. They also record the number of residents engaging with one-to-one case work and any group work undertaken. A quarterly contract management meeting, for which PACT complete a detailed monitoring report and which both PACT and prison management attend, is chaired by the regional F&SO lead.

**Family & Significant Other Staffing Structure (to ensure family work is an operational priority)**

Having dedicated leads and champions from across the staffing structure, including SMT, partner agencies and prisoner representation, ensures appropriate priority is given to this key area. The structure is as below:

The **Head of Reducing Reoffending** is the Children & Families Pathway Lead. They are a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) and lead on the development of the F&SO strategy and the meeting of the KPI. Their job description details their full responsibilities and is available on request.

A **Custodial Manager F&SO Champion** supports the pathway lead and acts as their deputy. As above, their job description details their full responsibilities and is available on request.

The **Chaplaincy Family Lead** manages the OPV scheme and is also the link to Salvation Army track-and-trace scheme.

The **PACT Family Engagement Manager** supports the promotion of family well-being and offers tailored support to both prisoners and families.

A **PACT Family Support Worker** supports the above and will be present during visits sessions. Both actively support the extended visits sessions with activities and information.

Prisoner **Peer F&SO Strand Leads** contribute to the development of future strategy and are a vital ‘feet on the ground’ line of communication. They attend F&SO pathway meetings and act as a point of contact for prisoners from across the establishment.

Prisoner **Peer Support Workers** will be integral to the successful development of the Every Contact Matters scheme.

**Family Learning**

To best support prisoners and their families there can be a need to support relationships by providing life skills and relationship skills training. PACT offer one-to-one support to both prisoners and their families and may seek additional support from other agencies, including children’s services. A number of bespoke and ad-hoc learning opportunities that contribute to better family relationships occur throughout the year. These include cookery courses and drama workshops such as teambuilding to promote interpersonal skills and substance misuse abstinence. External providers and community partners support us in this delivery. The multi-faith Chaplaincy team, and related faith organisations, can also be important in providing support and learning both inside and outside of the establishment. Additional family learning opportunities will be offered throughout the year as they become available.

We also recognise the role and responsibility we have in addressing the needs of care leavers as a distinct group with distinct needs. We recognise that a trauma informed approach and co-ordination of local authority resource and pathway planning can add significant value to reducing re-offending, the reduction in risk of serious harm posed to others and appropriate sentence and release planning. We identify care leavers and there are staff specifically trained in supporting any them as needed.

**“Gateway” Communications System**

Telephone numbers and e-mail and web-site addresses have been included throughout this document in relevant areas. Their inclusion is to ensure families can seek further information, raise concerns or pass on important information.

A confidential Safer Custody Hotline, **01454 264 039**, is checked daily and can be used by families to report issues or concerns. If you leave your name and contact number your call will be returned and an update given. If the matter is urgent however and requires immediate attention please speak to our communications staff on **01454 264230** so they can ensure appropriate action is taken and support given. You can also contact the Safer Custody team using a web form which will be picked up within 72 hours: [www.prisonersfamilies.org/hmp-leyhill](http://www.prisonersfamilies.org/hmp-leyhill)

**Aims for this year**

* To develop and introduce the Every Contact Matters peer support scheme for those who have no family or significant other contact.
* To offer a full schedule of children and adult extended visits.
* To maximise opportunities for family learning.
* To promote establishment awareness of the F&SO strand.