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| **HMP Huntercombe**  **Families & Significant Others**  **Strategy**  **A person and a child kissing  Description automatically generated***“Working in partnership”* |
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**Next Review Oct 2025**

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**WELCOME TO HMP HUNTERCOMBE’S COMMUNITY**

**Staff and Prisoners Joint Statement of intent**

**We** all recognise the vital importance of our family relationships for our futures to be successful. So, we are committed to involving families and significant others whenever possible in our work at Huntercombe.

Head Of Reducing Reoffending, Jag Bhatti, is our Families lead and the Operations Manager is our Families Champion.

In order to achieve this, we will listen to each other, to our families and our significant others so we can work well together and build a better service for all. We will not always be able to do everything we would wish for, but we will be dedicated to regularly reviewing services for prisoners and their families in order to achieve continuous improvement in this area. So, we welcome each and every one of you and we invite you to join us on this journey.

**Introduction**

Supporting a prisoner to develop meaningful and constructive relationship with his or her 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. Family and significant relationships are considered as a key means by which we can prevent reoffending and reduce the likelihood of intergenerational crime. HMPPS therefore has a moral and ethical responsibility to assist any meaningful and constructive relationship in preparation for their release. A person and a child playing with blocks

Description automatically generatedFor the purpose of this guidance document, ***Family*** is defined as either a blood relative, legal or significant persons that a prisoner identifies as their next of kin. For care-leavers this may be someone that provides a statutory service, friend or associate. Many of those in custody will have experienced a non-traditional upbringing, with a range of adults having cared for them, and similarly those in custody with children may have other arrangements outside of a traditional family arrangement. It is important to accommodate all ‘family’ arrangements where they provide a constructive and supportive relationship for the prisoner and their family.

We recognise that not all family relationships are positive. Family members may sometimes be the direct or indirect victims of a prisoner’s offence such as domestic abuse. These individuals have the right to protection from their perpetrator and in all cases, permission should be sought from the victim and any relevant partner agencies before making contact. This will enable the victim/family unit to be supported in the community. E.g., Victim Liaison Officer or Local Authority Social Services.

Other family or significant others may be enablers, contributing to their offending behaviour. Prisoners may be subject to harassment or restraining orders and the courts take primacy in how we manage familial and other relationships. We must therefore ensure that we prevent inappropriate contact.

A group of people sitting in a classroom

Description automatically generated**Lord Farmer’s Report**

**The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners’ Family Ties to Prevent Re-offending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime**

In September 2016 Lord Farmer report, The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners Family Ties to Prevent Re-offending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime***[[1]](#footnote-1)*** in partnership with the membership charity Clinks, was commissioned by the Government to investigate how connecting prisoners with their families can improve offender wellbeing, assist in keeping the public safe and reduce reoffending.

The Farmer report was published on 10 August and made 19 Recommendations that put family and significant others at the heart of prison reform. It supports efforts to improve the relationships between prisoners and their families or significant others and the services that are provided.

All the Farmer recommendations are in the process of being implemented and outcomes will be shared with Lord Farmer at least twice per annum.

Lord Farmer recommended the development of performance measures that will 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 prisoner’s release and positive reintegration into society.

According to the Farmer report, ‘Family should be the ‘golden thread’ running through the processes of all prisons, as well as in the implementation of standards presented in the Prison Reform White Paper - Public protection, Safety and Order, Reform and Preparing for life after prison.

Lord Farmer’s report referred to a ‘local family offer’ recommending that all establishments deliver and develop provision in the following areas and that these are reflected in their local strategies which should be a minimum offer:

* Visitor Centre/Visitor Reception Services
* Staffing structure to ensure family work represents as an operational priority
* Extended Visits – to enable supportive relationships to flourish
* Family Learning – to equip prisoners to maintain and improve relationships
* “Gateway” communications system – to demonstrate how the establishment have responsive communication systems in place for families

A child holding a card

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**Visitors Centre’ / Domestic Visits**

The visitor’s centre has been refurbished and redecorated.

An area for a tea bar has been created. We aim to have this operated by our ROTL’s soon.

***What’s new*** – We will be introducing family forums, visitor’s surveys, and with meet the Governor meetings before visits throughout the year. The dates for these will be published on the Huntercombe Community Board in the Visitors Centre. All visitors to the establishment are welcome to attend these forums. This is your opportunity to tell us what you would like to see and to give us feedback on how we are doing.

It is planned to hold 2 visitors surveys per year which will last for 4 weeks to get has many forms completed as possible to give us a good understanding of the main issues. Bimonthly forums and meet the Governor at least twice per year.

The visitor’s centre and visits hall are accessible for disabled visitors and for wheelchair users, however the large electrical mobility scooters will not be permitted into the prison.

**INTER–PRISON/VIDEO-LINK VISITS**

Visits may be allowed, on application, between close relatives (defined as a spouse/partner (including a person - whether of the same or different sex - with whom the prisoner was living as a couple in an established relationship immediately prior to imprisonment) parent, child, brother, sister (including half - or step - brothers and sisters), civil partner, fiancé or fiancée (provided that the Governor is satisfied that a bona fide engagement to marry exists), or a person who has been acting in loco parentis to a prisoner, or a person to whom the prisoner has been in loco parentis)- when both parties are prisoners at separate establishments.

Prisoners may apply for inter-prison visits by submitting a general application to the Visits Governor explaining the details of why an inter-prison visit is being requested. All applications will be dealt with on merit, and if refused a reason for this will be provided in writing.

Applications for inter-prison visits will only be considered once prisoners have spent a minimum of three months at Huntercombe.

**Entitlements to Social Visits**

There are often particular difficulties associated with prison visiting. Visiting often involves great deal of time, effort (both physical and emotional) and expense. Visiting can be quite an emotional experience, with both positive and negative feelings in the mix: for example, families usually enjoy seeing their imprisoned loved one, but due to the brevity of the visit saying ‘goodbye’ comes quickly, which can be distressing.

Visiting can be particularly difficult for children, with poor facilities that are not ‘child friendly’ and confusing rules restricting how they can interact with their imprisoned family member; families often have to travel long distances to a prison and are often reliant on public transport; visiting times may not be compatible with teatime and bedtime routines, leaving children irritable or tired, which then may impact on school performance the following day.

Stigma for the children of prisoners can be manifested in being bullied by classmates in school.

Longer-term, children of prisoners are three times are more likely to engage in anti-social or offending behaviour than their peers who do not have a parent in prison. In order to reduce these issues, we will be introducing staff awareness training to be delivered by Pact the outcome will be that staff are more culturally sensitive and responsive to the diverse needs of prisoner’s visitors and children, and to make visiting at Huntercombe an overall better experience.

Men at Huntercombe are entitled to one VO per every 14 days.  **Only one VO may be used on each weekend, otherwise they may be used at any time during the published visits times.**

The minimum length of a visit is 1 hour, and the maximum is up to 2 hours.

Men may also earn extra privilege visits (PVOs) dependant on their level of the IEP scheme.

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| **IS91(end of sentence)** | **Basic** | **Standard** | **Enhanced** |
| 3 x Visits per week  (1 may be at the weekend)) | 2 x 1 hr Visits per month | 2 x 2 hr Visits per month | 2 x 2 hr Visits per month **+** 1 x PVO per month |

**Social & Legal Visit Times**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **AM** | **PM** |
| **Sunday** | **Closed** | 14:00 –16:00 |
| **Monday** | **Closed** | 14:00 –16:00 |
| **Tuesday** | 09:00 – 11:30  **Legal Visits ONLY** | **Closed** |
| **Wednesday** | **Closed** | **Closed** |
| **Thursday** | 09:00 – 11:30  **Legal Visits ONLY** | 14:00 –16:00 |
| **Friday** | **Closed** | **Closed** |
| **Saturday** | **Closed** | 14:00 –16:00 |

***(It is recommended that visitors arrive at least 15 minutes prior to visits starting, to allow for the ID process to be completed)***

Please remember that families/friends can book visits by using the on-line booking facility, there is also a telephone booking system available for individuals who do not have access to online booking facility.

Family/friends can book a visit on-line via: [www.gov.uk/prison-visits](https://www.gov.uk/prison-visits)

All you need is:

* the name and date of birth of the person they are visiting
* The prisoner’s number.

They can choose up to 3 possible dates and times. Prison booking staff will check what's available and confirm the visit by email.

If a visit booking request is made online and your visitor hasn’t received a confirmation email within 1-3 working days, they must email [SocialVisits.Huntercombe@hmps.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SocialVisits.Huntercombe@hmps.gsi.gov.uk%20)

There is also an opportunity to request accumulated visits for those prisoners that have relatives aboard i.e., you may be able to book 3 visits in one week (availability permitting) In order to grantee this early booking is advised.

**Family centred Visits**

It is planned to hold a minimum of 12 family and significant others child centred visits per year for enhanced prisoners only at this time. These visits will commence at 09:30 – 1500hrs and are an opportunity for you to spend time with your children.. For prisoners that have a date for their deportation and will be leaving their immediate families and children in the UK when they leave there is an opportunity for an extended departure visit, this will need to be made via an application to Pact manager in the first instance.

**Information Community Notice Boards**

The information notice boards within the Visitors’ Centre will contain the published dates for Visitor’s forums, meet the Governor and visitor’s surveys. Please keep an eye on these dates and become part of the decision-making process help us to improve our service, these will be held before your visit start time.

The Prison Advice & Care Trust (PACT) will be working closely with prisoners’ families and significant others in order to support and prepare for deportation and or release back into the community.

The PACT manager will also be working with the staff to raise awareness of how children can be affected by visiting their Dad’s in prison.

Prison and Prison Officers can be a scary experience for children so training will be delivered by Pact manager to ensure that all staff can help to reduce anxiety among young children, before during and after visits.

***The Visitor’s Centre is available for everyone please help us to make it a clean and decent environment for all.***

**Working in Partnership**

In order to provide the best service, we can we need to work together in partnership with all departments within the prison, prisoner’s families and significant others.

PACT now deliverers family services at Huntercombe and will continue to provide support to families and significant others. The main focus of their work will be helping individuals maintain family links and to assist in family matters where possible, they will be completing reducing reoffending forums, learning and skills forums, family days, extended departure visits were applicable, family advice, and engagement. The service will also work with visitor’s centre, education services, and will enrichment activities and family learning at Huntercombe.

Monthly partnership meetings are held and minuted these will be published on the community notice board in the visitor’s centre and on the wings. The aim of these meeting will be to look at the work completed to date and forward planning and to assess what progress is being achieved. There will also be quarterly contract meeting with PACT and Head of Safer Custody in order to monitor Key Performance Targets (KPT’s). PACT already works with the local authorities and will continue to develop links within the community this is important to ensure that support continues upon release (if applicable).

There will be regular family and Significant other forums held on the residential units throughout the year to discuss any issues or new ideas you would like to see.

**Contract Management**

Contract Management meetings with our service provider Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) will take place quarterly with the Head of Safer Prisons these meetings will be minuted and published on the P-Drive.

Visitors’ surveys are a good source of information however it’s also important to make opportunities for family and significant others to contribute their feedback. Senior managers will therefore be meeting families regularly both in visits and within the Visitors’ Centre. It’s important that senior managers contribute and attend the family forums on the units when held.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been written and agreed between PACT and HMP Huntercombe. The MoU includes Key Performance Target’s (KPT’s) ha and data sharing information protocol is also in place.

PACT manager will attend all monthly meetings in relation to Safer Custody, Visits, and Equalities with an open invitation to their line manager to attend if they so wish.

***“Our Commitment will be to make families and significant others feel part of our community to listen, and offer support and guidance”***

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**Safer Custody**

It’s important to ensure that all family and significant other’s details are recorded on reception into HMP Huntercombe. Key workers must ensure these details are maintained on NOMIS during their meetings with the individual men for whose casework they are responsible.

A group of kids sitting around a table with a cake

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There will be men who will not have any family or significant others and therefore have no visits or contact with the outside. These individuals may become isolated and it’s therefore important to identify these men to the family support worker (PACT) and to the Safer Custody Department. Working with the Chaplaincy it may be possible to provide these men with support via prison visitors who come into the establishment on a weekly basis.

It is especially important to try and engage with families and significant others when their loved ones are in crisis. This can be achieved with the help of PACT given the consent of the individual prisoner. If consent is given than our Pact manager will make, contact with his next of kin and invite them to attend the next meeting taking account of each individuals travelling time.

When prisoners are in crisis, they find it hard at times to talk to staff and keep their issues very close to themselves it’s been proven that engagement with family and significant others within an Assessment Care in Custody Teamwork (ACCT) document review can provide that outlet for individuals to open up and talk about this issue.

With mutual agreement with Huntercombe we would like to invite a family and significant others to attend these reviews. They are a positive tool and one in which you can show your support to your loved ones and so assist keeping him safe.

The family engagement worker must be invited to all ACCT were applicable by the case manager.

For further information please see the Safer Custody Strategy.

**Key Workers**

Each prisoner is allocated a Key Worker who meet with them once a fortnight. The Key Worker’s role is to support and guide the prisoner whilst in custody to address their offending behaviour.

Key workers can sign post prisoners to departments and agencies that can help them with issues.

They encourage prisoners to maintain contact with families and significant others and participate in the wider prison regime.

**Gateway to Communication**

There may be times when families or significant others will feel that their loved one may be in trouble or is just not himself perhaps, he is acting out of character. If you ever feel this may be the case than share your concern with us; we are here to help. There is a dedicated safer custody emergency line which is checked at various times each and every day to ensure that any messages left are dealt with immediately. So, you can feel confident that we are here and will listen.

**In an** **emergency**

Call 01491 643100 if you think a prisoner is at immediate risk of harm. Ask for the Orderly Officer and explain that your concern is an emergency.

**Non-emergency**

Call 01491 643225 if you have concerns about a prisoner’s safety or wellbeing which are serious but not life-threatening

**Staff Integrity Hotline**

0800 917 6877 (24 hours answering machine) *This number can be called anonymously. If you are concerned about a prisoner being bullied by a member of staff, you can use this number. As this line is managed separately from the prison, you can call this number anonymously.*

**Prisoners’ Families Helpline**

0808 808 2003 The [Prisoners’ Families Helpline](https://www.prisonersfamilies.org/) can provide confidential support, advice and guidance.

**PACT Telephone Hotline**

0808 808 3444 This number can be called our Families and Significant Others services provider for advice and help.

**If you are concerned about a loved one for any reason don’t let him suffer in silence, we are here to help call the number above and we will assist and look after him.**

**Please remember in an emergency call the confidential hotlines above if you do not manage to talk to a member of staff**

**Digital and Technology**

Video Calls have been implemented since March 2020. They are available 7 days a week and most prisoners are able to use the facility every 12 days.

In-cell phones were introduced throughout the establishment in 2022. This allows prisoners to contact their loved ones in different time zones at suitable times.

At Huntercombe we have the following services which help to maintain contact with Families and significant others:

* E-mail a prisoner
* Prison voicemail
* Domestic Visits
* Family Visits
* Prison Visitors Scheme

*[](http://www.google.co.uk/url?url=http://www.hdgogofunwalls.com/funny-cartoon-question-mark/funny-cartoon-question-mark-awesome/&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ved=0ahUKEwj7pOCBr9nKAhXLcRQKHWA2Dx8QwW4IKjAK&usg=AFQjCNEhq9sQWq_TCy12ri7zN8jkxTQavA)”* ***What more could we do”***

Are you making full use of these? Meanwhile we continue to look for further initiatives and with your help further improvements can and where possible will be made.

In order to better understand the needs of our population it’s important to monitor the numbers of calls that are made, when how often are wing based telephony used and publish this data.

We need to continue to monitor the booking system so that this data can be used to understand experiences / issues and to identify action required to make further improvements. The family engagement worker will assist with this via family forums and – Unit forums. It’s important to support anyone who is identified as not being able to use technology and offer support.

Regular checks are required to ensure that the right information is displayed in the right areas both inside and outside the prison. We also have a very good peer support system at Huntercombe who are located on all the Units all of which can be used in relation to communication support and for signposting.

**Developing Innovation and Practice**

Enrichment activity and innovation can improve relationships between prisoners, their family and significant others.

We are always looking to develop programmes aimed to help fathers inside maintain their special relationships with their children and here at Huntercombe we are looking to continue to develop these course and activities some of these ideas are:

* Storybook Dads (in place already)
* Departure Visits
* Support for families on discharge
* Children friendly visits design
* Family Days
* Parenting courses and programmes
* Building stronger families (4 weeks)
* Within my reach
* Parenting from prison
* Family literacy in prison (FLIP)
* Extended family centred visits / children only visits

*[](http://www.google.co.uk/url?url=http://www.clipartbest.com/cartoon-people-thinking&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ved=0ahUKEwjXiuv5rdnKAhVFtxQKHemqBNoQwW4IPDAT&usg=AFQjCNHm1y4N9z83ZehvwbbNcOcqT39-4Q)*

Children only visits will be designed for Dads to spend time with their children and spend more time with them and not their partners. The idea would be for children to be booked in with their Mums / Carer but brought through the gate with the PACT volunteers, so that fathers have 1 on 1 alone time with their children.

There would need to be extra thoughts needed on age of children coming in and consent for toilets breaks.

During these visits the carers will if they wish take part in a family forum to be held by PACT / Safer Prisons Team. Once the forum is completed, they can than join the visit.

**Care Leavers**

Any prisoner aged between 21-25 years of age who have been in the care of the local authority (Care leavers) is entitled to a personal advisor support from the local authority and anyone who requires this can obtain the information from PACT or Safer Custody Department who will be happy to contact the Local Authority.

We will ensure that anyone who is a care leaver will be offered the support from the local authority and will be supported by the Offender Management Team and local authority. Care Leavers are discussed at the weekly SIM meeting.

The aim of this guidance is to help Offender Managers and Offender Supervisors assess and plan work with young adults who are care leavers, both in custody and the community.

The key themes are:

* That young care leavers may face particular obstacles in desisting from offending and making an effective transition to adulthood.
* That some young care leavers are entitled to additional support from local authorities which can help address these problems; and
* Sentence plans for young care leavers should include actions to help young care leavers obtain and benefit fully from any additional support that is available from Leaving Care services.

**Who are care leavers?**

A care leaver is someone who has spent time in the care of the local authority. A care leaver’s eligibility for services from the local authority depends on factors such as the duration and timing of that care. This Guidance addresses work with:

* **Former Relevant Children** (under 21) - young adults who have spent at least 13 weeks in the care of a local authority between their 14th and 18th birthdays
* **Former Relevant Children Entitled to Extended Support** (up to 25) - former relevant children who have notified their local authority that they intend to pursue further education or training
* **Persons Qualifying for Advice and Assistance**- young adults (under 21) who: were subject to a special guardianship order, or at any time after reaching the age of 16, but while still a child was, but are no longer, looked after, accommodated or fostered.

*The resources section at the end of this guidance contains references you can use if you need further information on the definition of former relevant children and persons qualifying for advice and assistance.*

The Care Leavers Champion at Huntercombe is Sarah Evans, Senior Probation Officer OMU

**How can being in care affect a young person’s transition into adulthood?**

Transition to adulthood is a difficult time for many young people, but it can be especially so for young adults who have been in care. Unlike many young people, care leavers often do not have the emotional, financial and personal support of parents and other family members.

When compared to the general population care leavers are less likely to be in education, employment or training. Over a third of 19-year-old care leavers are not in education, employment or training; more likely to be attempting to live independently; and more likely to have a criminal conviction. Care leavers have been estimated to make up 27% of the adult prison population, despite the fact that less than 1% of under 18s enter local authority care annually.

*Young adults in the criminal justice system who are care leavers may need more support to help them through their transition to adulthood than other young adults. They may also need help to understand the differences between the youth and adult justice systems. Helpful guidance and advice are provided via the Care Levers strategy for Huntercombe.*

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**Governor David Redhouse**

I am delighted that Huntercombe now has this strategy setting out how we will work with the people most important to the men we look after whether that is their partner, their children, their own parents or their closest friends. The prison’s job is to help the men here prepare to lead successful lives after release. Good supportive relationships with other people are the foundation of all our lives and we need to make sure that can be the case for the men here too. So please work with us – tell us what we are doing well and what we need to do better. Tell us how you can help, tell us if you are concerned about your loved one here. Get in touch with our key staff who are working with your loved one. Join us for critical meetings if your loved one is finding things particularly difficult. We know that together we can make the time men spend at Huntercombe a really valuable turning point in their lives, and so in yours too. Together we can become the people we ought to be. Thank you.

*(Many thanks to PACT for their support and use of their photos throughout this document)*

**Annex A**

**Available support/information for Children and families and professionals working with them**

* **PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust) –** www.prisonadvice.org.uk provides

Useful information on visiting and how visitors’ centers can help families.

* **PACT – Hotline 0808 808 3444**
* **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](http://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](http://www.pffs.org.uk)

* **SHARP (Support Help and Advice for Relatives of Prisoners**) **01743 245365** for free
* **Prison voicemail** prisonvoicemail.com
* ***I HOP ( Barnardo’s )*** [*https://www.i-hop.org.uk*](https://www.i-hop.org.uk) *i-HOP is a one-stop information and advice service to support all professionals (working with children and families of prisoners) and all families of prisoners, bringing together useful information in one place*

**Linked Policies and Strategies**

**The Families and Significant Others strategy is linked to the following policies or strategies.**

HMP Huntercombe Safer Custody Policy

HMP Huntercombe Care Leavers Strategy

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642244/farmer-review-report.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)