

**Family and Significant Others Strategy**

**HMP Morton Hall**

**October 2024**

**Owner: Head of Reducing Re-Offending and Family & Significant Others Lead**

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# Diversity & Inclusion Statement

HMPPS is committed to Diversity and Inclusion for all. We treat our staff, prisoners and visitors with respect and ensure equality of opportunity. We deliver our services fairly and respond to individual needs. We insist on respectful and decent behaviour from staff, prisoners, children, people on probation, and others with whom we work. We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or bullying and we take prompt and appropriate action whenever we discover them. This is underpinned by our adherence to the Public Sector Equalities Duties as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

**Communication, publicising and distribution**

This policy will be shared with staff, prisoners, and their families or significant others. It will also be shared on the [NICCO](https://www.nicco.org.uk/) website to ensure that it can be easily accessed. Copies will be made available in both the visits hall and visits centre in English and the most commonly spoken languages amongst our visitors and prisoners.

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# Background

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# HMP Morton Hall recognises the importance of supporting prisoners to develop meaningful and supportive relationships with their family or significant others. These relationships can often be key in reducing reoffending and preventing intergenerational criminality. We therefore have both a moral and ethical responsibility to assist in building and maintaining these relationships in their preparation for release.

Maintaining relationships is particularly challenging for Foreign National Prisoners (FNOs) as their families are often overseas and unable to visit and contact is sometimes more difficult. However, some prisoners have family based in England. The nature of FNOs and the associated removal proceeding with the Home Office may result in separation of families and this requires both support and sensitivity.

# For the purpose of this document, Family is defined as: a blood relative, legal or significant person within the prisoner’s life. For some, such as care leavers this may be someone that provides a statutory service (such as a social worker), friend, or associate. We understand that many prisoners within our care may have experienced non-traditional upbringings with a range of adults caring for them. Therefore, this strategy considers these relationships to fall under significant others.

# 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; we must therefore ensure that we prevent inappropriate contact.

# Positive family relationships are also likely to contribute to good order within an establishment. Evidence from establishments with positive family engagement programmes show reduced incidents and anti-social behaviour. It is likely that having meaningful and constructive relationships with family and significant others while in custody may reduce anxiety, frustrations, and isolation of imprisonment, and potentially reduce violence.

# Lord Farmer Report

In September 2016, Lord Farmer was commissioned by the Government to explore how connecting prisoners with their families can improve wellbeing, reduce reoffending, and prevent intergenerational crime. The Importance of Strengthening Prisoners Family Ties to Prevent Re-offending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime1 created 19 recommendations which put family and significant others at the heart of the prison. According to the Lord Farmer report, ‘Family should be the golden thread running through the processes of all prisons.’

# [6.3664\_Farmer Review Report (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642244/farmer-review-report.pdf)

# Concern and keep safe hotline

01522 666976

This number is staffed 24 hours per day and 7 days a week. Please call this number if you feel that someone who currently lives at HMP Morton Hall may be at urgent risk of harm (to themselves or others). Details from calls will be passed directly to the orderly officer and acted upon immediately. If you leave your name and number, we will ensure you are updated.

For non-urgent concerns, there is also the Safeguarding line (01522 666885) which is checked 4 times each day and calls passed to the Orderly Officer to action.

# Roles and responsibilities

All staff will be responsible for adherence to the Family and Significant Others Strategy. The Senior Management Team and Managers will be responsible for ensuring that it is being followed.

**Head of Reducing Reoffending**

* The Head of Reducing Reoffending is the policy owner and will provide assurance to the Governor.
* The Head of Reducing Reoffending is the Lead for Family and Significant others.
* To ensure that all aspects of this policy are being followed.
* Ensure that the policy is in place and reviewed when required.
* Chair monthly Reducing Reoffending meetings and discuss Family and Significant Others with the relevant people.
* Create and review a live action plan, ensuring progress is made against all objectives.

**Head of Operations**

* To hold consultation groups with prisoners and their families and significant others about visits.
* To ensure that children have information about the searching process explained to them in a format they can understand.
* To complete 2 visits needs analysis per year.
* Monitor and amend visits times based on the needs of the population.
* Ensure that visitors to the prison are aware of how to raise a concern about their loved one/report wrongdoing.
* Quarterly testing of the visits booking arrangements to ensure that a weekday visit can be booked in the following week and weekend visits for at least the 2nd weekend after the call.

**The Family Service Provider – Lincolnshire Action Trust**

* Provide a service in line with contractual arrangements.
* Complete an annual visitors survey
* To support prisoners and their families/significant others to have healthy, supportive and meaningful relationships.
* Support prisoners and their families with a wide range of issues and barriers that are associated with having a parent/family member in custody.

**Head of OMU Delivery/Services**

To ensure that strategies for Young Adults and Care Leavers consider aspects around Family and Significant Others.

**Head of Residential**

* Ensure that keyworker plans include family and significant others consideration and engagement.
* To train keyworkers in the importance of maintaining Family and Significant Other relationships.

**Family and Significant Other Champion – CM Band 5 Operations (Visits)**

* The key role of the Family and Significant Other champion is to support the Head of Reducing Reoffending and the creation and development of a healthy relationship between prisoners and their families.

# Partnership working

To deliver the best service that we can, we need to work together with all departments within the prison, including prisoners’ families and significant others.

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Lincolnshire Action Trust (LAT) deliver family services at HMP Morton Hall and will continue to provide support to families and significant others. LAT attend the monthly partnership meeting and provide a monthly service report to the Head of Reducing Reoffending.

The work they do for family services can be easily understood by breaking it down to 3 key areas. This list is not exhaustive:

**Services for visitors**

* Providing a wide range of information in the ‘New Visitor’ information pack.
* Gathering and sharing feedback on visitors’ experiences and gathering information to make improvements in partnership with HMP Morton Hall.
* Providing advice, assistance, and information for families during visit sessions.
* Sharing a range of information on support services such as debt advice, employment and skills, children’s services, drug / alcohol support, women’s services, housing, health, and wellbeing.

**Visits enhancement**

* Providing activities during visits which can be enjoyed by prisoners and their children.
* Ensuring that prisoners are able to spend quality, focused time with their children in a child-friendly family environment.
* Maintaining the supply of toys and games on offer in the visits hall
* A Family Support Worker will offer a breakaway session each visit where children are in attendance.

**Family engagement and advice**

* Providing 1-1 casework support based on the needs of the prisoners and their families.
* Working with internal and external support agencies to ensure that family concerns are seen and dealt with.
* Supporting prisoners to input into matters relating to child protection and care proceedings.
* Facilitating meetings between social workers and fathers in custody
* Working with GP’s, schools and other professional bodies who are engaged with the family, ensuring the prisoner is fairly represented wherever possible.
* Delivering relevant child support related interventions to prisoners and their families.
* Providing independent advice/guidance to each individual accessing Family

Engagement Services, including prisoners, children, and family members accessing

provision.

Delivering an effective family practice cannot be achieved alone. We therefore work in partnership with a variety of local and national agencies, groups, charities, and departments to ensure that we deliver a well-rounded service that is able to cater to the needs of all. Here are some of the teams we are currently working with, and we aim to keep building on this.

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[](https://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/base-install/images/main-logo/company-logo.png)

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**Maintaining contact**

There are several ways for prisoners to maintain contact with their families and significant others:

* Written letters
* Email
* Telephone
* Social visits
* Family visits
* Video calls
* Storybook Dads
* Prisoner voicemail

**Written letters**

All prisoners are entitled to one letter per week at the prison’s expense. Additional stamps can be purchased by prisoners through their weekly canteen sheet. There is no limit to the amount of mail that prisoners are permitted to send, providing that they can pay for the stamps.

Prisoners held on IS91 (Home Office authority to detain on immigration) are entitled to an additional letter per week at the prison’s expense (2 in total.) Similarly, prisoners who are working alongside our Family Engagement/Support workers will be given 2 free letters per week.

**Email a prisoner**

This facility allows for prisoners to receive emails from friends, family, and official contacts through [www.emailaprisoner.com](http://www.emailaprisoner.com) . It only takes a few minutes to sign up and the message is then printed out and delivered to the prisoner. This method is often quicker and cheaper than sending a message through the post and prisoners can send a reply which is included in the cost of the initial letter.

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Description automatically generated**Telephone**

All prisoners have access to an in-cell phone where they can call approved numbers. This enables calls to be made late into the night to ensure that no matter where they are in the world, they are able to maintain contact. Prisoners can purchase phone credit as part of their canteen spends. Additionally, there are phones on each landing which are available should there be a temporary issue with the in-cell telephony.

**Social Visits**

Whilst we understand that all means of maintaining contact are valued, nothing is as important as face-to-face interaction. All sessions are of an enhanced duration of 2 hours, and the number of sessions per prisoner is based on their Incentive Policy Framework (IPF) level. These sessions are for a rolling 21-day period.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Basic** | **Standard** | **Enhanced** |
| 2 visits | 3 visits | 4 visits |

Prisoners on IS91 will be treated as remand for the purpose of visits and may receive up to 3 visits per week.

Visits opening times are monitored to ensure that everyone can access their visits entitlement. For the most up to date information on visits opening times, please see our page on the gov.uk website [Morton Hall Prison – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/morton-hall-prison)

Social visits can be booked on line, [book your visit online](https://www.gov.uk/prison-visits), by email to [hmppsvisitsbooking@justice.gov.uk](mailto:hmppsvisitsbooking@justice.gov.uk) or by telephone

Telephone booking line: 0300 303 0649  
[Find out about call charges](https://www.gov.uk/call-charges)

The booking line is open:

* Monday, Wednesday and Friday: midday to 5pm
* Tuesday and Thursday: 9am to 5pm

**Family visits**

12 family visits sessions take place per year, these usually align with children’s school holidays. Additionally, there will be specific family visits for pre-school children. During these sessions there will be a range of themes for adults and children to enjoy and these will be shared in advance. They are primarily designed to give a better quality of interaction between prisoners and their children, or in some cases, grandchildren. It is hoped that through this interaction prisoners will develop closer bonds with their children and help them realise how criminality impacts upon them both.

These days are open to prisoners of all IPF levels but due to the nature of these days the application must be endorsed by the security department.

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Description automatically generated with low confidence**Storybook Dads**

Storybook Dads is a session run by our Librarian which allows dads to record their voice reading a children’s story. A group of specially trained prisoners then add music and sound effects to enhance the story before the CD recording is sent to the child. This can often bring comfort to children as they are able to hear their parent whenever they need to. Storybook Dads recognises that enabling an imprisoned parent to maintain contact improves their self-esteem and reduces the likelihood of re-offending as well as helping with their child’s well-being. Prisoners can apply for Storybook Dads via the internal application system.

**Video calls**

Video Calls keep prisoners, and their loved ones connected with a fully secure and compliant platform which is free. To use this, you need to download the app, Prison Video. You will need an iOS or Android device to get started. You can download the app from the App Store or Google Play store onto your device. You will then need to register for an account. You will be required to verify the email address you entered when you created an account. Within the verification email you will receive a unique code that confirms your email address. The next step for your new account is to verify your identity. This process requires you to upload identification and a photo that ensures your information is correct and will help identify you when you are on a video call. Once you have submitted your identification this will be processed and is usually completed within 48 hours. Then you can start adding contacts. A contact is a person that you know in custody who you would like to have a secure video call with. You will need the person’s Prison Number to be able to add them to your account.

The Video Calls will allow for:

* Two visits per month for each prisoner.
* Video Call “Visitors” must all be on the prisoner’s approved visitors list for HMP Morton Hall.
* Each call will be for a maximum of 30 minutes.
* You can have a maximum of four “visitors” on each call.

**Icon

Description automatically generatedPrisoner voicemail**

This is a 2022 addition at HMP Morton Hall. This prison voicemail service facilitates more frequent communications between prisoners and social contacts outside of prison through the exchange of voicemails. It began in 2015 and is currently available in 85% of prisons in England.

**What’s it for:**

* The only HMPPS-approved service that reduces call costs to mobile phones
* Enables approved contacts to leave you voicemails if they miss your call or have an important message for you.

**How Prison Voicemail Works:**

1. Leave messages from your mobile at any time. Call your Prison Voicemail number from your mobile at any time and leave a message. The message is instantly available at the other end.

2. The prisoner listens to the messages. They simply dial their Prison Voicemail number from any phone in the prison. The call costs them the price of a normal landline call.

3. Get a reply, leave another message. After listening, the prisoner can leave you a reply. When you receive a notification, just call your Prison Voicemail number to listen and respond. More information: <https://prisonvoicemail.com/prison>

**Assisted Prison Visits**

Helps with Prison Visits provides a contribution towards prison visit costs for close relatives, partners or sole visitors. The visitor must be on a low income.

The minimum age to apply for help from the APVS is 18 years (16 years when visiting a prison in Scotland). Eligible children are included on the claim. Claims are processed by the Assisted Prison Visits Unit (AVPU) in Birmingham, part of Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service.

To get help you must be listed on both the visitor *and* low-income list below:

**Visitor:**

* Husband, wife or civil partner
* Partner – living as a couple before the prisoner went into prison
* Parent or grand-parent (includes step-parent or adoptive parent)
* Brother or sister (includes half-sibling or step-sibling)
* Son or daughter (includes step or adoptive)
* Next of kin (as noted by the prisoner in prison records)
* Sole Visitor (the only social visitor in the four weeks before a claim)
* Escort to a qualifying adult or child

**Low income:**

* Income support
* Income – based Job Seekers Allowance
* Employment and Support Allowance (Income related)
* Universal Credit\* Assisted Prison Visits Scheme – Visitor Guide 3
* Working Tax Credits (with Disability or Child Tax\*)
* Child Tax Credits\*
* Pension Credit
* Hold HC2 or HC3 Certificate

\* An income limit applies to Universal Credit and Tax Credits. If someone else claims benefits for you, make your claim online and AVPU will contact you for further details if required.

Apply online at <http://www.gov.uk/helpwithprisonvisits>

The online application process allows you to upload your income details, receipts and visit confirmation. You can get a confirmation stamp for your visit from the visits centre.

Payment is made into your bank account or cashed at a Post Office.

**Supporting prisoners without family ties**

For a variety of reasons, some prisoners in our care either do not have family or significant others in their lives or do not have contact with them. Some of this is linked to being a Foreign National Offender and having no relatives in this country, whilst for others it is those who have left care. We recognise the risk of loneliness this may cause, and we have therefore found a few ways to assist in tackling this.

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Description automatically generated**Befriending service**

This service is provided by the New Bridge Foundation and is there to support those who do not receive letters or visits but most need someone to talk to. This service supports prisoners by establishing and maintaining contact through letter writing and visiting. New Bridge Befriending isn’t just a pen pal scheme – the volunteers will visit prisoners as well as writing to them. All prisoners can apply for a befriender by writing to:

Befriending Team, New Bridge, 1a Elm Park, London, SW2 2TX

**Midlands Migrant Support – formally known as Morton Hall Visitors Group**

We have worked alongside MMS (formally MHVG) since 2011. They have a group of dedicated volunteers who support prisoners facing deportation. They are able to visit to provide emotional support and practical help to prisoners at HMP Morton Hall.

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**Family tracing**

HMP Morton Hall works alongside the British Red Cross to help prisoners to find missing relatives abroad through their international family tracing service, if they have been separated by war, natural disaster, or migration. This service can be access through our resettlement and family services teams.

**Additional PIN credit**

Prisoners who do not have a visit for 1 month, can apply to have a 5-minute free call to any country. Visits by professionals, befrienders or the Midlands Migrant Support are not included in the monthly visit. This is by application and their account will be credited with 5 minutes’ worth of credit at the rate of the destination they wish to call.

**Support from Lincolnshire Action Trust**

Every 3 months, LAT will compile data on all prisoners who have not had a visit or video call during this time. They will then visit each individual to ascertain why and to support them in building relationships or finding family/significant others if required.

**Care leavers**

**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 depends on factors such as the duration and timing of that care.

* 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 were, but are no longer, looked after, accommodated or fostered.

Our induction programme aims to identify Care Leavers at the start of their journey at Morton Hall so that they can be supported throughout. Conversations between a prisoner and their POM and keyworker will also assist in identifying, signposting, and supporting prisoners who have been in care.

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

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

Data shows that when compared to the general population, care leavers are less likely to be in education, employment or training.

**What support is available?**

Anyone in custody aged under 25 years old and who have been in the care of the local authority is entitled to personal advisor support. This aims to support those who have experienced care to live successful and independent lives both in prison and on release. This support can be continuous or every now and then as requested by the care leaver.

Young care leavers may face obstacles in stopping offending and making a transition into adulthood are entitled to additional support from local authorities which can help address these problems. The OMU department will ensure that 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.

Both POMs and Keyworkers can contact the relevant local authorities to help with accessing this service.

**Supporting prisoners with protected characteristics**

The reason that they are protected is because it is written in law that you cannot be treated unfairly because of any of these characteristics.

HMP Morton Hall prides itself on celebrating diversity and promoting people from all different groups and backgrounds to work and live together in our prison community. If a prisoner has a protected characteristic which makes creating or maintaining family contact more challenging, we are committed to work alongside this person and our equalities department to ensure that alternative measures can be used and put into place. This will be done on a case-by-case basis. Examples of support that may fall into this category are:

* A prisoner who is hard of hearing and cannot use a telephone having greater access to video visits.
* In-cell adaptations such as a phone with larger buttons for those who have a visual impairment.
* Support in letter writing from our Foreign National Officers.

We have also allowed extended in-cell calling times to cater for international family support. This has been applied for all at HMP Morton Hall.

**Understand**

To make sure our family service strategy is heading in the right direction and is meeting the identified needs of our population, we need to understand what they are. In order to gain an understanding of this, we will gather information in a number of different ways:

* 1 x annual reducing reoffending needs analysis per year which covers the pathway of Family and Significant others.
* 2 x annual visitors survey one by HMP Morton Hall and one by LAT.
* Consultation groups with prisoners about visits
* Measuring Quality of Prison Life Survey
* Prison Group Director Feedback
* Feedback from HMIP inspections

**Support**

A family member or significant other entering custody often causes significant upheaval to families, particularly children’s & dependents, and as a result it is vital that we help and support the family unit where possible and as soon as possible. The prospect and uncertainty of deportation also causes an increased anxiety for prisoners and their families.

During induction, we will ensure that all prisoners are provided with information about the family services that we offer at Morton Hall. These services will also be promoted throughout the year via the Morton Hall Community Times newspaper. Additionally, we will also offer an induction to all new visitors prior to their first visit, providing information and answering any questions. Providing key information and support at the point of arrival for both prisoners and their families is critical to maintaining family ties affected by custody.

POMs & Key workers will identify relationship issues where they arise and offer practical solutions and support to empower prisoners to take ownership of and improve relations with their families and significant others. Where they deem necessary, they will also refer to the LAT Family Services Team to ensure that specialist support and advice can be delivered.

For cases of self-harm or crisis, where deemed appropriate and beneficial to the prisoner, we will involve Family and Significant others in ACCT reviews. This will be done by the Case Coordinator and will likely be over the phone but in some cases face-to-face will be considered. Involving family members can prove beneficial, if carefully managed. Families can provide vital insights into a prisoner’s behaviour and motivations, and staff will encourage prisoners to consent for their families to be involved in their care and support

**Prison Jargon**

We understand that prison language can be confusing with all the abbreviations and slang. There are a few of the most commonly used words and phrases.

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| **Adjudication (nicking)** | Daily process when a Governor deals with disciplinary offences. |
| **ACCT** | Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) is the care planning process for prisoners identified as being at risk of suicide or self-harm. The ACCT process requires that  Certain actions are taken to ensure that the risk of suicide and self-harm is reduced. |
| **App** | Prisoners have to put in an app (application) for anything different from normal daily routine, to add telephone numbers to their phone or to get someone onto the approved visitors list. |
| **Structured on Wing Activity** | Time when prisoners are allowed out of their cells to meet, take part in constructive leisure activities and meet professionals who can assist them |
| **Block, Seg, CSU** | HMP Morton Hall has a Care and Separation Unit – it means the same thing but it is where prisoners are sent for behavioural concerns or sometimes in their own interest. |
| **Canteen** | This is the prison shop, where your relative will be able to order extra food, toiletries, writing paper, phone credit etc. |
| **Cat A, B, C and D** | Prisoners are categorised and allocated to prisons by Security Categories. Sentenced Adult male prisoners are given a category; with A being those whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public, to D for those who can be reasonably trusted to serve their sentence in open conditions. Young adults are either classed as ‘open’ or ‘closed’. |
| **Closed Visit** | This is a Visit that is supervised by Officers where the prisoner and visitor are separated by a screen. A prisoner can be put on closed visits if there is a risk of contraband being passed. |
| **FNO** | Foreign National Offender- all prisoners at HMP Morton Hall are subject to deportation proceedings. |
| **Incentives (IPF)** | Incentive Scheme – Basic, Standard or Enhanced – depending on a prisoner’s behaviour they can achieve more privileges with good behaviour. |
| **In Possession/Prop** | Prisoners are allowed a strictly limited number of articles ‘in possession’ to keep in their cells. Anything above the limit is usually kept in ‘private property’ or handed out on a visit. |
| **IMB** | Independent Monitoring Board. These are lay people (not employed by the Prison Service) appointed by the Home Secretary to act as watchdogs. |
| **IS91** | An IS91 is the Home Office powers of immigration detention. This *may* mean that a prisoner is able to be held in custody past their expected release date. |
| **Legal Letter** | Confidential legal correspondence to or from solicitor is covered by prison rule 39. If a letter has ‘*prison rule 39 applies’* written on it, it cannot be opened except in the prisoner’s presence.  Both correspondents need to write Rule 39 on the envelope. |
| **Legal Visit** | Lawyers are allowed to visit clients in prison without using a visiting order. |
| **Listeners** | Prisoners trained by the Samaritans to listen in confidence and offer emotional support to other prisoners. |
| **Key Worker** | Each prisoner will have a Key Worker (Prison Officer) to support their progress in custody. |
| **MDT** | Mandatory Drug Testing – random urine testing for drugs. |
| **PP** | Public Protection – systems that are put in place for those prisoners that we think may pose a risk of harm to others. |
| **POM-** Prison Offender Manager | A person who will work with a caseload of prisoners to help them complete goals on their sentence plan. They will also do their categorisation which is a risk assessment which determines what category of prison they will stay or move to. |
| **PVO** | Privileged Visiting Order, sent out to visitors at the prisoner’s request; prisoners can be allowed these extra visits in return for good behaviour. |
| **Private Spends** | Money sent in by relatives or friends – small amounts which can be spent in prison canteen. |

# Reviews

This document will be reviewed annually.

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| Version Control | |
| **Section changed** | **Details of change/ Date** |
| V1.0 | New Policy created  25/09/24 reviewed |
|  | Equality Analysis Review: |
|  | 04/10/24   * Grammar/syntax check – various corrections * Reference to ‘annex A’ removed * Link to NICCO website added * Fixed broken hyperlinks * Removed duplicated links |
| V2.0 | 29/10/24   * Small wording changes |