



HM Prison &
Probation Service



HMP Featherstone

Families and Significant Others Policy

Governor – Neil O'Connor

Reviewed: January 2025 by Victoria Smith, Families Champion

Next Review: January 2026

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Introduction

HMP Featherstone is a Category C Training and Resettlement prison in Featherstone, Wolverhampton, England. It is operated by Her Majesty's Prison Service and was opened in 1976.

HMP Featherstone's Vision

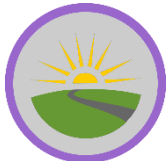
HMP Featherstone is a working community creating opportunities for all. As one team, we will empower, nurture and support each other to be the best we can be. We will create a collaborative culture where everyone feels respected, equal and safe.



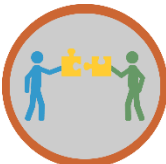
People – Creating a supportive, inclusive and caring community where everyone feels their contribution is recognised and valued



Safety – Ensuring we support all within our community. Working as one team, we will continue to make Featherstone a safer place to live and work.



Progression – Creating an environment that provides opportunities to access education, skills and work, supporting individual progression through sentence and into release.




Offender Management in Custody – Delivering effective sentence progression and improving relationships and support through high quality keywork.



Decency – Ensuring we have a clean and decent environment supporting our rehabilitative culture and providing the foundation for our community to be the best it can be.

At HMP Featherstone our Families and Significant Others Strategy is overseen by our Head of Reducing Re-Offending who is our local Families and Significant Others lead. Our Families Champion drives the day-to-day work for this pathway, and both are part of our Senior Leadership team, and they ensure that this work is a priority for the establishment.



“I do want to hammer home a very simple principle of reform that needs to be a golden thread running through the prisoner system and the agencies that surround it.

That principle is that relationships are fundamentally important if people are to change”.

Lord Farmer Review 2017

At HMP Featherstone we understand that support and contact doesn't just include immediate family but extends to friends and can include professionals. In our strategy when we refer to 'Family' this means a relative or significant people that our prisoner identifies as providing a constructive and supportive relationship to them.

Our aim is to ensure that our population have as a minimum, someone they can go to for support and who will help them to progress in their sentence. This is why our policy is referred to as Families and Significant Others Strategy as not every prisoner has family, but they may have significant others in their life that are part of their support network, who help them and may visit them. Within this policy we will refer to both parts as 'family' for ease.

How to contact us

We are aware that visitors may have queries about visiting HMP Featherstone and should you do so, you are welcome to contact our PACT visits centre team on:

Phone Number: 01902 70 3254. This number is available on Tuesday to Thursdays 11 – 4 pm and Sunday 11 – 4 pm. Saturday PACT are on site from 8:30 am until 4 pm.

You may also email the team on: Featherstone@prisonadvice.org.uk and they will reply to your email as soon as possible. Please note this inbox is only checked on days the visits centre is open so it can take a day before your email is picked up.

If your query requires them to find out any further information from within the prison this may take a further day or two to reply but they will let you know this.

Should you have any queries about families visits please email: FamilyVisitsFeatherstone@justice.gov.uk. Please note this email address is checked during the week but is not monitored regularly throughout the day.

Any matters related to prisoner safety should be raised through the safer custody contact details which are on the next page.

Our Address: HMP Featherstone, New Road, Featherstone, Wolverhampton, WV10 7PU

Phone Number: 01902 70 3000

The Visits Booking Line: 0300 0606502



We often post updates on visits, regime updates or good news stories on our “X” page which is @HMPFeatherstone. Please feel free to follow us for updates.

How to contact if you have a concern about a prisoner at HMP Featherstone

We are aware that sometimes you may have a concern about a prisoner in our custody and you will want to let the appropriate department know. Currently there are two ways to raise this by either phoning or we now have a digital platform you can contact.

Our digital link is available to search with 'worried about a loved one in prison' and the new portal will come up. Alternatively, the link is www.prisonersfamilies.org/hmp-featherstone

Our phone details are:

If you have a concern that there is **an imminent risk of danger to a prisoner**, and you wish to speak to a staff member to raise the concern then you can call our switchboard on:

01902 70 3000

The member of staff answering the phone will not be able to discuss the prisoner with you, but they will immediately pass your concern onto a senior member of staff to action.

If you are concerned about the safety or wellbeing of any person in our care at HMP Featherstone but there is no immediate threat or danger, then you can leave an answerphone message for the Safer Custody Team on:

01902 70 3081

This voicemail service is checked:

1. 07:30 to 09:30
2. 12:30 to 14:30
3. 16:00 to 17:00
4. 19:00 to 21:00

Who supports Families

William the Bear



Within the Families Pathway it's important we don't forget the children who visit HMP Featherstone and for children, visiting a prison can be scary.

To try and make it less scary we use the support of William the Bear. You will see William in our Visits Centre, as you come into the prison and into the visits hall. We want to make the walk from our visits centre into the prison as child friendly as it can be. Children love William and enjoy getting to see him in Visits and Family Visits.



Currently within HMP Featherstone we have several partners who support our Families and Significant Others Strategy. Our key partner is PACT who hold a 5-year contract for Families and Significant Others work until late 2027.



We have a Family Engagement Worker, and their role is to support men with any individual issues they may have regarding contact and communication with their families. They provide:

- one to one emotional and practical parenting support
- they support prisoners with maintaining family links and improving breakdown in communication and relationship issues.
- They provide Family Mediation and support for contact issues with children.
- They can advocate on behalf of our prisoners and their families and support with signposting to other agencies.

Within our Visits Centre we have support workers who support the work the family engagement worker does over in the establishment by supporting their families and friends.

They also support the parents and carers of prisoner's children or grandchildren by working them through ways to tell them that their caregiver is in prison.

They do this by using the 'Locked out' books



These are adult and child friendly and all children are given their own copy to work through with an adult. PACT sit with the adults to talk them through the resource initially then support along the way in any way we can

Visits centre staff provide structured play in the visits centre and the visits room for children visiting. They also provide structured play for any children with neurodiverse needs and provide resources to support any children or visitors with neurodiverse needs.

They promote events in the centre such as 'Harvest' where we make scarecrow faces with the children at the crafts table and Christmas where we love a bit of glitter.



With all crafts and play PACT link in with the educational curriculum and liken them as we do all our displays to create familiarity to what

children are used to seeing at school.



We proudly show off children's work in the centre and visits hall.

We hold bi-monthly family engagement worker drop-in sessions which are widely advertised for all to attend not just those having visits on the day. For those that cannot make it we have slips which they can fill in and can be given to the family engagement worker.



We also hold focus groups with our Families Champion in the visits centre regularly throughout the year where visitors can ask questions and speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Our visits centre staff provide support for visitors signing in for visits sessions, but they also provide support for first time visitors to discuss our visitors' procedures and answer any questions.

They can sign post visitors to any support they may require as well as try to answer questions about any establishment procedures.

They provide structured play and activities during Family Visit sessions which support these days to be engaging for those present.

Letters for Children: PACT provide letter writing packs for the visits centre to encourage children to write letters into their relatives; these are provided at no costs to the families.



Staffordshire
County Council

Our Library team have a programme of 'Storybook Dads' where a prisoner can record a Bedtime story for their children which is then posted to their child.

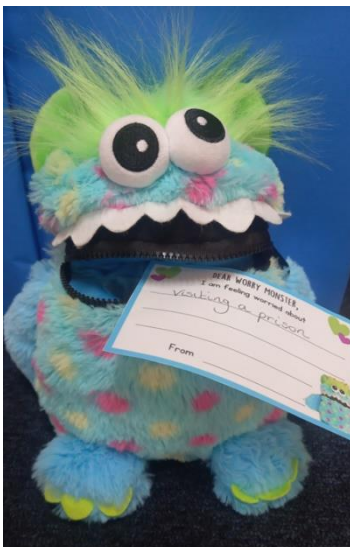


This year we are very excited to bring on board the Children's Book Project who collect donated books and gift them to children who have few, if any, of their own. They will donate a green book hut which will be based in our visits room where families can pick a book to read together in the room and the child is welcome to take home with them.

We will run pop up bookshops in the year where prisoners can choose donated books that can be sent home as a gift.

Wilbur the Worry Monster

PACT have found that sometimes the children who visit us want to discuss their worries but don't always know how to do this. We wanted a child friendly and creative way for them to do this and we have thankfully received a donation of a worry monster that your children might have seen in their schools to do this.



Our children in the centre had a competition to name him and he's now known as Wilbur!

Children can write any worries they have, and PACT staff can speak to them about these if they write their name or give advice to their parents.

Wilbur is proving very useful in the centre and we're very thankful for the donation of Wilbur.

Our 2024-2025 year

This year we learnt that we had a need for more visit's session, so we have introduced a Saturday morning visits session.

Initially we saw low take up but as of October 2024 we have seen these sessions booked at 90% and more parents are utilising this session as they prefer them as they have the remainder of their day available to them.

We are pleased parents are finding this session useful and that overall, this session is booked to good capacity.



This year we introduced sandwiches in visits which are proving popular. We offer meat option, a vegetarian option which is also halal and a fish sandwich.

They are bought from the Real Wrap company and come individually wrapped and labelled with all allergy information.

We receive deliveries across the week to cover our weekday and weekend visits.

All profits we make from these are invested back into the Families Pathway.

We have created a new visits dress code, and we have worked with other Families Leads in Region and agreed to adopt this as the Regional Dress Code that we will follow in region. This will support visitors to have consistency across sites.

In the last year we began family forums in our visits centre and held these throughout the year. We feel these are important to have open and honest conversations with Families and therefore this year will be holding these bi-monthly. These will continue with our Families Champion and PACT staff.

We will advertise these forums on 'X', on PACT's website and with posters in our visits centre in advance but we are aware that there may be other ways to communicate with our visitors we may not have thought of. If you have any suggestions, please do contact us on FamilyVisitsFeatherstone@justice.gov.uk and we welcome any ideas for how best to communicate with our visitors.

We have continued to work with our Prison Council on the direction for visits and Family Visits and are always grateful for their help and suggestions.

Our focus in the 2025-2026 year

We are currently in year 3 of our 5-year current Families and Significant Others contract with PACT and have embedded process to review our performance. We continue to hold monthly meetings with PACT to monitor their performance.

As an establishment we have asked ourselves what areas within this pathway could we give more focus to, and one area identified is prisoners who don't receive visits. It is vital that every prisoner has a support network and has contact with them.

We know that contact may not always be face to face and some prisoners may use secure video calling or 'purple visits' as it used to be called. We are going to hold focus groups with prisoners who don't receive visits to understand what stops them having visits and what support we could provide.

We will also ask our visitors for any feedback about what makes visiting difficult. We are advertising to visitors about financial assistance they may be eligible for to visit but also want to ask if there are any problems with this process.

If you want to visit and can't or need help with this, please contact our visits centre staff for help or our Families Champion.

you are welcome to contact our PACT visits centre team on 01902 70 3254. This number is available on Tuesday to Thursdays 11 – 4 pm and Saturday to Sunday 11 – 4 pm.

You may also email the team on: Featherstone@prisonadvice.org.uk

You can contact our Families Champion on FamilyVisitsFeatherstone@justice.gov.uk

We will also be introducing a focus on reading in the Visits room and are excited to announce a working partnership with the 'Children's Book Project' and we are purchasing the Key Stage 1 and 2 books that are currently part of the school curriculum so that if as part of the visit our prisoners can read with their child, they can have this experience.

We believe reading with your Family is such a gift and we don't want our prisoners to miss out on this experience. We will also purchase other popular books for children and teenagers and will keep expanding our Library.



How to stay in touch with a Prisoner

Secure Video Calling: Prisoners are currently entitled to a free video call, once per month which is currently provided by 'Prison Video' who have a website you can visit for information www.prisonvideo.com/ There is video instructions on the app you can access which helps explain how to use the service.

To be set up you must:

- Download the app from your mobile phone or tablets app store (they are free to download) – these services are not available using a computer.
- Have appropriate identification which can be a Passport, driving license or another government-issued photo ID available
- The prisoner's name and prison number
- Names and dates of birth and addresses for everyone who would like to be set-up for calls
- When you register for the service, you must take a photograph, and we would recommend ensuring you have good lighting for this picture.

We have step-by-step instructions and tips which are in **Annex B**.

Phone calls: Prisoners now have access to in-cell telephony 24hrs a day

Foreign national phone credit and letters: Foreign national Prisoners are entitled to convert their standard visiting orders to phone credit to make calls abroad or airmail letters.

Letters: Prisoners are entitled to 1 x second class letter per week at the prison's expense. Additional letters may be sent out at prisoner's expense.

Email a Prisoner: where family can email direct, at the cost of £0.40 pence per message. Once the email is received a member of staff will print it off and hand it to the prisoner. We offer the option to pay an additional £0.25 pence cost for the prisoner to reply back via an email.

You will need to sign up to the service on the website www.emailaprisoner.com and activate your account. Once you are signed up you can buy credit to start using this service.

Assisted Prison Visiting Unit (APVU): Visitors who are in receipt of certain benefits or have a health certificate may be able to claim for help with the cost of visiting. A form is available for you to fill in when you arrive at the visitors' centre and please ask the staff to stamp it for you. Information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-prison-visits>

You can also contact:

Help with Prison Visits

HelpwithPrisonVisits@justice.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 063 2100 Monday to Friday,
9am to 5pm

Help with Prison Visits

PO Box 17594
Birmingham, B2 2QP

Visits

To visit a prisoner in HMP Featherstone you must:

- Be on that prisoner's visitors list
- Book your visit at least 2 working days in advance
- Have the required ID with you for your visit. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/featherstone-prison#entering-featherstone>
- Adhere to the dress-code, details of which are in **Annex A**.

At HMP Featherstone prisoners can have a maximum of three adults visiting at one time. There is no limit on the number of children who can visit but they must be accompanied by a visitor who is aged 18 or older and who is allowed to bring them. Whilst there is no limit on how many children can visit, there are only so many extra chairs we have in the visits room so please be considerate with how many people you have on a booking.

Prisoners may receive two visits per month.

How to book a visit:

You can book your visit online or by telephone.

Visits Booking Line: 0300 0606502

Online: [Visit someone in prison - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/featherstone-prison#entering-featherstone) or by looking up 'Visit someone in prison' and it takes you to the link.

When are visits available:

At HMP Featherstone our visits sessions are:

Tuesday 2 – 4 pm

Wednesday 2 – 4 pm

Thursday 2 – 4 pm

Saturday 9:30 to 11:30 and 2 – 4 pm

Sunday 2 to 4 pm.

Visits are required to be one hour minimum and at HMP Featherstone we provide two-hour sessions to allow prisoners as much time as we can provide with their families and significant others.

Getting to HMP Featherstone

HMP Featherstone has a visitor's car park which includes several spaces for Blue Badge Holders and Step Free Access to the visitors' centre.



facility at the prison.

Car: From Wolverhampton take the A449 northbound – there is a visitor's car parking



Bus: Take number 70 from Stand AC to Cannock. Depart the bus at Honeysuckle Drive, Featherstone. Then walk along New Road towards the Prison (approx. 25 minutes). The Visitors' Centre is well signposted.



Train: The Nearest Railway Station is 6 miles away in Wolverhampton and you can complete the rest of journey by bus or taxi.



Local Taxi Companies:

Westerfield Taxis – 01902 305333

Go Carz – 01902 717273

Black Cabs – 01902 420420

Cannock Road Cars – 01902 280487

Amber Travel – 01902 724040

Visiting Facilities

HMP Featherstone's Visitors' Centre was built in 1996 by The John Sandy Trust, using money given to it by The Tudor Trust. The centre is opposite the main gate to the Prison and is clearly signposted.

The Visitors Centre Day to day running is done by PACT with staff on hand during every visit's session.

The Visitors Centre offers the following services:



- Booking in of families and significant others
- Giving information about visits
- All first-time visitors are given one to one time in which the staff explain the whole process, put them at ease and talk them through the process of going on a visit. They also can ask any questions they may have.

- Within the Centre we have an information corner providing information on a range of services to support the visitors. These include debt advice, children's services, housing, substance misuse, health and wellbeing. These are signposted through leaflets, literature, poster, IT and staff distribute up to date prison information as and when required.



- We have a dedicated play area for children.
- Visitors can purchase refreshments in the center and have time to relax before going into the prison.



Family Visits

HMP Featherstone holds 12 family visits a year that prisoners may apply for. These visits are of a more relaxed nature where prisoner and visitors can engage in crafts and structured play together.

Family Visits are held on a Friday once a month from 10 am until 2 pm in our visits room. These days include lunch provided by HMP Featherstone and craft activities run by PACT for all to share together.



Feedback

We will continue to evaluate the needs of our population and welcome any feedback from visitors about what they would find beneficial on a visit, or families visit. You are welcome to email FamilyVisitsFeatherstone@justice.gov.uk with any suggestions or ideas.

Our Partners



West Midlands Visitors Dress Code

Please note the below applies to visitors, from secondary school aged, regardless of gender.

No tops or dresses showing cleavage.



Skirts, dresses and shorts must be knee length.

No tops showing midriff when both sitting and standing.



No ripped jeans, ripped shorts, ripped leggings, or ripped trousers.



No play suits.



No outside jackets, body warmers or hooded clothing. All coats, jackets and hooded clothing must be placed in a locker outside the visits room after being searched.



Please note the below applies to all visitors regardless of gender.

Visitors wearing more than one pair of trousers of any kind will be refused entry.

No sunglasses to be worn.



No hats of any description are allowed, except for religious headwear.



Annex B Steps and Tips for a successful Video Call

Step 1	download and install the app
Step 2	Create an account in the app and add everyone who will be on the call To create an account on the app you will need to be over 18 years old and have a picture of your driving license, passport, or other government-issued photo ID. It can take up to 24 hours for your account to be verified.
Step 3:	Make a video call request Once verified, set up the call: You must include the names of everyone who will be on the video call. Finally, add the name of the person you want to have the video call with as a 'contact'.
Step 4:	Get set up for the video call You need a reliable internet connection. Wi-Fi is recommended, but you can also use 3G or 4G mobile data. You don't need headphones for the video call, but it may help with the sound quality.
Step 5	Have the video call You should open your app ahead of the scheduled video call time and be ready for the call to start. Call times are fixed and cannot be extended. Calls will be paused if anyone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who is not booked on the call appears on the camera • behaves in a way that would not be appropriate for a social prison visit • tries to record the call or take a screenshot

Tips for a successful video call

- You can use portrait or landscape mode for your call and if you switch between the 2 settings the software will not be affected.
- Try to keep your phone or tablet as still as possible. It may be best to rest it against something, try to rest the phone close to you so the facial recognition software can see you.
- Good lighting is helpful for a call.
- You must have the call in a private place rather than a cafe or public space. Make sure the room is well-lit. Un-even lighting, for example sunlight, can disrupt the way the system recognises faces.

- It is best to sit in front of a plain wall. Pictures or patterns in the background may affect the camera being able to stay focused on your face.
- Please try to stay in one room during the call as this could affect the call.
- If the call pauses, please make sure when it comes back make sure that your whole face – and the faces of any additional people – can be seen clearly.

