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| Families and Significant Others Strategy  2018 |
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| March 2025  HMP Belmarsh  Family and Significant Others Lead: Governor G. King Family and Significant Others Champion: Custodial Manager P. Wilson |

# What is a strategy and why do we need one?

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| * A strategy is a plan of action which is designed to achieve a long term or overall aim. We need one because without this it would be hard to improve communication, give accountability and ensure that all the team is working towards the same aim. * At HMP Belmarsh we believe in the report written by Lord Famer and published in August 2017 that having good relationships with either families or significant others is a big part in helping a prisoner to prevent re-offending. * At HMP Belmarsh we believe Prisoners are supported to maintain and develop relationships with their family and friends. Prisoners are helped to reduce their likelihood of reoffending, and their risk of harm is managed effectively. Prisoners are prepared for their release back into the community and this underpinned by the expectations of HM Inspectorate of Prison who expect the prison understands the importance of family ties to resettlement and reducing the risk of reoffending. The prison promotes and supports prisoners’ contact with their families and friends. Programs aimed at developing parenting and relationship skills are facilitated by the prison. Prisoners not receiving visits are supported in other ways to establish or maintain family support.   HMP Belmarsh became operational on 2 April 1991 and is a high security prison located in the southeast of London which serves the local courts, so we have a diverse mix of prisoners, those on remand and those who are doing short and long sentences until they are transferred to another prison. HMP Belmarsh can hold up to 727 prisoners. |
| Who are significant others? |
| Signs in your relationships : coolguides  Significant others are those individuals who have a **close relationship with a prisoner who may be a care leaver or care experienced prisoner:**   * Care Leaver – someone who has been in care for a period of 13 weeks or more around their 16th birthday. * **Care experienced refers to anyone who has been in care at any stage of their life, no matter how short a period**.   **The significant other relationship can positively affect the individual's behavior and attitudes, and significant others could be:**   * Friend / Neighbour * Previous employer * Previous Teacher * Spouse or Partner |

How do I book a visit?

 Telephone booking line: 0208 331 4760 or 020 8331 4750  
The booking line is open Monday to Friday, 9:30am to 3pm

You can book by email:  [Belmarsh.visits@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Belmarsh.visits@justice.gov.uk) once we have your email we will endeavor to confirm your booking within 24 hours.

Where do I go when I arrive for my visit?

Below is a picture of the visitor center, this is where you book in and where both the visits’ staff and Prison Advice and Care Trust are available to help answer any questions which you may have.

A picture containing sky, outdoor, property, house

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Once you have booked in for your visit, you will then need to proceed to the Visitor Main Search (VMS):

A picture containing outdoor, sky, tree, ground

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Inside the Visitor Main Search:

A picture containing indoor, wall, door, ceiling

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You will then leave the VMS and enter the visits building:

Once you arrive in the visits building, we invite you to take a seat and when called proceed to the visit’s hall, before entering the visits hall you will see passive drug dogs working in this area.



If you are nervous or scared on dogs, when you book in for your visit inform the staff and they will give you a sticker which will alert the dog handlers and staff but please let the dog handler know and they will try and make you feel at ease before and during the search.

You will then proceed to the visits hall where you will remain for your visit:

A room with red and blue chairs

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The Creche inside the visit’s hall

A picture containing indoor, floor, shelf, wall

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After your visit you will be asked to leave the way which you came into HMP Belmarsh.

Extended Visits

At HMP Belmarsh we have extended visits which are Family Day visits. There are 12 planned for 2025. The family days are different to other visits because you have an all-day visit, lunch is provided and the person who you are visiting is encouraged to take part in the organised activities, designed to work together as a team and encourages positive relationships with children and those visiting. These must be applied for by the prisoner in advance.



Of the 12 Family Day Visits, 2 are allocated to the families of Listeners who are invited to attend the graduation ceremony e.g., upon completion of Listener training or other qualifications.

Prison Video Visits



To have a secure video call with someone in this prison you need to:

* Download the [Prison Video app](https://prisonvideo.com/app)

[](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/prison-video/id1359083734) [](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=io.phonehub.prisonVideo)

* Create an account.
* Register all visitors.
* Add the prisoner to your contact list.

How to book a secure video call

You can request a secure video call with someone in this prison via the Prison Video app.

You will receive a notification when your request has been accepted.

Closed Visits

These visits are conducted in a separate area where a large transparent barrier prevents any physical contact.

They are used as a precautionary measure to prevent the smuggling of contraband through Visits.

These are some of the reasons why you will be placed onto closed visits:

1. CAT A Prisoners will also be placed on closed visits if their visitors have not been cleared.
2. If a pass of contraband has been witnessed during your visit, then you will be placed onto closed visits for a period of three months minimum.
3. If the passive dog indicates on the search prior to the main visit’s hall, you will be offered a closed visit if there is room to accommodate and normally you will only be placed onto closed visits for this one visit.
4. Security Intelligence.



Family Learning & Development

Enrichment activities

If a prisoner applies for them enrichment activities are voluntary activities which will be carried out on your normal visit, in the following room, there is a timetable designed by PACT advertising the activities and once approved you will be taken off your normal visit to complete the enrichment activity on the designated days.

A picture containing indoor, wall, furniture, interior design

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The hope is that taking part in the enrichment activity will strengthen the bond between the prisoner and child. We will publish a timetable every quarter to both visitors and prisoners.

Focus Groups

We also hold focus groups with family members these are chaired by our Visitor Centre Manager and where possible one of the visits management team will also attend. These are held monthly, if you wish to contribute then please contact the visitor center manager in the enrollment center who can advise you further.

Minutes are taken of these meetings and are displayed in the visitor Centre.

We hold regular meetings with prisoners to discuss any issues around visits and how we can better support Family and Significant Other engagement

We also hold a bi monthly Family and Significant other meeting from a multi-disciplinary team in which the HMP Belmarsh Family and Significant others development strategy is discussed to help ensure that we are delivering the best possible outcomes for both prisoners and there family and significant others.





Care Leavers

Who are the Care Leavers in our Prison?

* 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 their age and the duration and timing of that care.
* If they no longer qualify for the services from their local authority, we consider them as ‘care experienced’ as we need to continue to recognise that this period of their lives could still impact on them both in a positive or negative way
* These terms should not be confused with ‘looked after children’ who are children in the Youth Custody Service establishments who are still in the care of local authorities or in some cases held on remand

When a care leaver is in custody we should:

* Identify them at the earliest opportunity
* Ensure they are allocated to a Key Worker and once sentenced, a Prison Offender Manager.
* Invite them to attend the Care Experienced Monthly Social Group

Personal Advisors (PA)

* Eligible care leavers, up to their 21st birthday, will have a personal advisor from the local authority who were responsible for them when they were in care. The support of a personal advisor is available for those who would find it of benefit it until their 25th birthday.
* Personal advisors take on the role of ‘corporate parents.’ Simply, this means that they should carry out as many of the roles of a parent that they can.
* They cannot do this alone and we need to work with local authorities to support them in this role.
* Personal advisors offer support by maintaining contact, financial support, assistance with looking for accommodation
* Personal advisors also prepare a pathway plan

Our Commitment: -

* Obtain and record the personal advisors’ details on NOMIS
* Upskills staff across all grades to better understand the needs of Care Leavers and the support available to them.
* Introduce dedicated keyworkers for Care Leavers who are trained in the specific needs of this vulnerable group and understand the support available to Care Leavers, including understanding the role of a Personal Advisor.
* Develop relationships with personal advisors to help support and manage care leavers through custody and prepare them for release. Prison Offender Managers and key workers are key to this relationship.
* Recognise that the Personal Advisor also has the role of ‘parent’; they may have known the person for a long time and may be a source of support and information
* Remember to include the Personal Advisor when family members are invited to be involved in prison activities for example ACCT reviews, post programme reviews, celebration events.



Family Service within HMP Belmarsh

Personal Development/1:1

* In-cell workbooks catered to develop skills in maintaining relationships and deal with individual needs
* Providing step by step support planning in achieving goals set through assessment.
* Attend professional meetings and advocate with/or on behalf of the clients on family matters.

Workshops

Group interventions to assist the understanding of family relationships and staying connected. Some examples are:

* “The Book about Dad” and “The Tree of Life” Workshop
* Parenting programs (Family Breakdown/Adverse Childhood Experiences)
* Staying in Touch (SiT) Arts/Crafts/Personalized Items to send home to loved ones.
* Themed seasonal groups around world celebrations/events

Community Family and Significant Others Service

* Family Assessment and 1:1 support
* Signposting to other agencies that could be beneficial for family engagement.
* Family Days and visits hall support
* Parent Groups and Workshops (Pending)

The above is services that are available but are not limited to as all clients are supported around their own circumstances.



What to do if you are worried about a loved one

For a variety of reasons, there are periods in a prisoner’s time in prison when they may become a heightened risk of suicide and self-harm. Involvement and engagement with the prisoner’s family can be useful in helping to support the prisoner through their crisis period.

The Safer Custody team will, with the prisoner’s consent, invite contribution/attendance from families at Assessment in Care Custody and Teamwork reviews, where appropriate.

The Safer Custody team also manage and monitor the Safeguard hotline. This provides families/friends with the ability to speak to a member of the Safer Custody team or leave a message about any prisoner they have safeguarding concerns about. Following receipt of this phone call, the Safer Custody team will provide all necessary support to the prisoner.

If you have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a prisoner in Belmarsh, call the safer custody hotline and leave a message. Someone will call you back within 24 hours.

Telephone: 0208 331 4844. The telephone line is checked three times a day to ensure that any concerns are answered at the earliest opportunity.

Email: safercustody-belmarsh@justice.gov.uk

In an emergency, call 0208 331 4781 or 4866

What do we offer for those who do not receive visits?

Each month we run a report from our systems to see who hasn’t received any visits and then we write to them informing them of the support available to them from the following organisations:

### NAOPV

Prison Official Visits scheme: [www.naopv.com/](http://www.naopv.com/)



The New Bridge Foundation: [www.newbridgefoundation.org.uk/](http://www.newbridgefoundation.org.uk/)

Both offer a befriending service though visits or pen friends. Key Workers will also identify those who do not have visits and signpost the individual to relevant support groups.

In the future as part of our aim to develop this work we hope to have engagement days whereby these individuals have a chance to engage with the support options that are available and build meaningful relationships.

Other ways to keep in contact

### A person wearing a suit using a mobile phone and looking at their wristwatch

### Phone calls

Prisoners have phones in their cells but will always have to call you. They will buy phone credits to do this. The phones are inactive after 10pm, but available at many times during the day.

Prisoners can phone anyone named on their list of friends and family. This list is checked by security when they first arrive so it may take a few days before they are able to call. This can take longer depending on individual cases.

You can also exchange voicemails using the [Prison Voicemail service](https://prisonvoicemail.com/).

Officers may listen to phone calls as a way of preventing crime and helping keep people safe.

### Email

You can send emails to someone in Belmarsh using the [Email a Prisoner service](https://www.emailaprisoner.com/). You can send messages to your recipient via this website, it takes only a few minutes to sign up and, the message gets delivered to the establishment in the next daily delivery.

### Colorful envelopesLetters

You can write to a prisoner at any time.

Include the person’s name and prisoner number (or date of birth) on the envelope. You must also write your own name and address on the back of the envelope.

All post, apart from legal letters, will be opened and checked by officers.



The Visits Team Managers



Governor G King:

Functional Head and FaSO Lead.

Custodial Manager P Wilson:

Visits Manager, FaSO Champion.

Supervising Officers M Britton and L Gynn.



TBC

Visitor Centre Manager, Pact.



Available information services

* 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.
* Get help with the cost of prison visits [www.gov.uk/help-with-prison-visits](http://www.gov.uk/help-with-prison-visits)

Criteria applies.

**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)

***[https://www.becomecharity.org.uk/](https://www.becomecharity.org.uk/ )*  Become- a charity for children in care and young care leavers**

* Inside Time – www.insidetime.org.uk – this website gives visiting and other advice
* Pact (Prison Advice and Care Trust) – www.prisonadvice.org.uk provides

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

* 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](mailto: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)

* **I HOP ( Barnado’s ) 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 under one umbrella.**

Family and Significant Others

Lead Job Description

A member of the Senior Management Team will take the lead on supporting the FaSO provision.

1. Be the single point of contact for, and maintain oversight of, the establishments FaSO programme.

They will offer:

* Contact details for key persons listed on the FaSO strategy.
* Contact details for key persons listed on the Gov.UK/Belmarsh page.
* Regular communication with the Family Champion.

1. Ensure the establishments FaSO strategy is fit for purpose by:

* Keeping the Strategy up to date.
* Sharing the Strategy with key stakeholders.
* Publishing the Strategy on the NICCO website.

1. Be the local lead for completion of the FaSO performance measure. They will:

* Communicate the measures to relevant stakeholders.
* Complete the Family Measures scoring booklet.

1. Contract management for Family Service Providers attending contract meetings & monitoring service delivery.

Family and Significant Others

Champion Job Description

A manager at Custodial Manager level should act as FaSO Champion.

1. Visits process:

* Create safe systems of work and risk assessments for the whole visits process.
* Monitor and improve cleanliness of the visits area.
* Meet with Supervising Officers to set out expectations of them, setting them targets towards decency and the improved running of visits.
* Meet with PACT representatives to ensure a smooth process of visitors through visits centre.

1. Family Visits:

* Ensure the full training of all Enhanced Gate Operational Support Grade staff.
* Set the standards of Enhanced Gate security.
* Ensure that visitor dress code is maintained.

1. S.O. Management, ensuring that they:

* Identify points of contact on all units for security purposes.
* Attend Security committee meetings.
* Taking the lead in getting the Visits area ready for any Security audits.
* Ensure tool accountability in each area controlled by the Visits group.

1. Complete assurance checks for visits, including:

* Monthly Assurance report.
* ACCT Checks and evidence of QA.
* Audit trails.
* Cleaning schedules.
* Domestic smoke detector checks.
* Attend population management meetings.
* Dip test some of the recorded regime to ensure delivery of what has been offered.
* Well being checks on the unit.

1. Host FaSO bi-monthly meetings:

* Ensure key stakeholders are invited to these and minutes are taken.
* Ensure actions from the FaSO meeting are distributed and completed.
* Prepare the content for the FaSO meeting.

1. Oversight of PACT Champions:

* Support the Family Engagement Worker and PACT to manage the PACT Champions.

1. Supporting those who don’t receive social or digital visits:

* Keep the database for those who do not get visits up to date.
* Ensure those who do not have regular social or digital visits are aware of what support is available.

1. Child safeguarding:

* Ensure staff are fully aware of safeguarding measures including but not limited to monitoring of persons posing a risk to children (level 4 contact).