

**FAMILY AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS**

**STRATEGY**

Head of Reducing Reoffending

Family and Significant Others Lead

Setember 2025

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The following document is aimed at what HMP Aylesbury aims to offer for both Families and Significant others

**Introduction**

At HMP Aylesbury, we all share a responsibility to foster and maintain positive relationships.

Supporting individuals in our care to develop meaningful and constructive connections with their family members or significant others is vitally important, especially given the distances some families may need to travel to visit their loved ones.

Our goal is to make visits less daunting, more child-friendly, and stimulating for everyone involved, while strictly adhering to all security procedures.

HMP Aylesbury is committed to exploring new ideas and providing support for those who do not receive visits, helping them build or repair relationships and access additional support networks.

In this document, “family” is defined as either a relative or any significant person whom the individual in our care identifies as providing a constructive and supportive relationship. This Family Strategy is published and made freely available to families, prisoners, and staff.

Regular ad hoc and structured discussions with key stakeholders—including staff, prisoners, and visitors—have played a crucial role in shaping the development of our Family Strategy.

**What is the impact of imprisonment on prisoners’ families?**

**The Impact of Imprisonment on Prisoners’ Families**

When this document refers to ‘families and significant others,’ we include all positive and supportive close relationships: parents, partners, carers, siblings, extended family members, and anyone who holds a meaningful role in the lives of the individuals in our care.

Globally, over 10 million children have a parent in prison. In the United Kingdom alone, Action for Prisoners’ Families estimates that approximately 200,000 children experience having a parent sent to prison each year (200,000 Silent Children Project: *The Impact of Having a Parent in Prison*).

Research shows that children of prisoners are three times more likely to engage in anti-social and delinquent behaviour. It is further estimated that 65% of boys with a father in prison will go on to offend themselves. Additionally, imprisonment can lead to emotional distress, stigma, financial hardship, and disrupted family dynamics for all members affected.

**How HMP Aylesbury Addresses These Impacts**

At HMP Aylesbury, we recognise the profound effects that imprisonment can have on families and significant others. To mitigate these challenges, we are committed to:

* **Creating a Child-Friendly Environment:** Our visiting areas are designed to be welcoming and stimulating for children, helping to reduce anxiety and promote positive interactions during visits.
* **Supporting Family Engagement:** We provide information, support services, and programmes that encourage families to maintain and strengthen their relationships with their loved ones in custody.
* **Innovative Communication Options:** For those unable to visit regularly, we offer alternative communication methods, including phone calls and video visits, to maintain contact and emotional bonds.
* **Family Support and Education:** We collaborate with external agencies to provide educational resources and support groups for families, focusing on coping strategies, emotional wellbeing, and navigating the prison system.
* **Rehabilitation Through Relationships:** We believe that strong family ties are key to successful rehabilitation and reintegration. Our staff work closely with prisoners and their families to repair and build constructive relationships, which in turn support reduced reoffending.

By actively addressing these issues, HMP Aylesbury aims to break the cycle of intergenerational offending and foster hope and resilience within families affected by imprisonment.

**Why focus on Families?**

Supportive families are a vital resource for prisoners and often play a key role in helping individuals move away from crime. A stable, supportive family can provide essential protective factors for prisoners who may be at risk of suicide or self-harm. Furthermore, having a stable family to return to upon release, or to support a transfer to a lower security category establishment, can encourage prisoners to actively engage in sentence planning and maintain positive behaviour while in custody.

Research shows that prisoners who receive visits from their families are 39% less likely to reoffend within a year compared to those who do not receive visits (May, C., et al., 2008).

However, in a small number of cases, maintaining family ties may not be appropriate—particularly where there is a risk of harm to the family. Safeguarding children and supporting victims are always priorities at HMP Aylesbury, and we work closely with the National Probation Service to uphold these responsibilities.

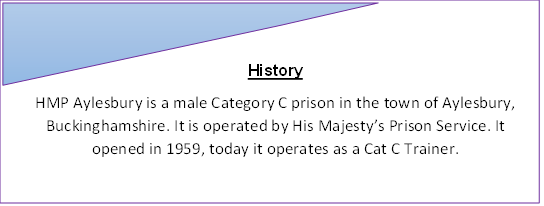
At HMP Aylesbury, the Children and Families Pathway aims to ensure the needs and interests of prisoners, and their families are effectively addressed through:

* Helping to maintain family ties where appropriate.
* Improving the parenting skills of prisoners.
* Collaborating with Safer Prisons to incorporate safeguarding strategies linked to families.
* Working with partner agencies to provide advice and guidance to families and prisoners.
* Developing a family-friendly environment within the prison and our Visitors’ Centre.
* Integrating the Children and Families Pathway across all Resettlement Pathways.
* Offering family-focused events throughout the year.
* Recognising that prisoners have specific needs and cultural preferences, including those who may find it difficult to engage with the processes outlined in this Strategy.
* Incorporating feedback from staff and prisoners, findings from our reducing reoffending needs analysis, and recommendations from inspections and assessments such as Ofsted, OSAG, IMB, Group and PGD visits.
* Considering relevant Prison Service Instructions and Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) learning bulletins.

**Key Objectives of the Family Strategy**

HMP Aylesbury is committed to fostering positive family relationships as a core component of rehabilitation and wellbeing. To achieve this, our Family Strategy is focused on the following key objectives:

1. **Enhance Family Engagement**  
   Provide welcoming, child-friendly, and accessible visiting environments that encourage regular contact between prisoners and their families, reducing barriers such as travel distance and anxiety.
2. **Support Emotional and Practical Needs**  
   Offer comprehensive support services for families, including advice, guidance, and access to external partner agencies, to help them navigate the challenges associated with imprisonment.
3. **Promote Parenting and Relationship Skills**  
   Deliver targeted programmes aimed at improving parenting skills and fostering constructive relationships between prisoners and their children or significant others.
4. **Safeguard Vulnerable Individuals**  
   Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, victims, and vulnerable family members by working closely with safeguarding agencies and implementing robust safeguarding policies.
5. **Facilitate Alternative Communication**  
   Develop and expand options for prisoners to maintain contact with families who are unable to visit in person through phone calls, video links, and other communication technologies.
6. **Integrate Family Focus Across Services**  
   Ensure that the importance of family connections is embedded across all resettlement pathways and prison activities to support holistic rehabilitation.
7. **Encourage Collaborative Partnerships**  
   Work with internal teams, external organisations, and the wider community to strengthen support networks for families and prisoners.
8. **Continuous Improvement Through Feedback and Evaluation**  
   Regularly seek feedback from prisoners, families, and staff to evaluate and improve family support services, ensuring they remain responsive to evolving needs.

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**Getting to Aylesbury**

[Find Aylesbury on a map](https://goo.gl/maps/Rbw2JmKKgYqEut2k8)

HMP/YOI Aylesbury is located within the town of Aylesbury. The closest railway station is **Aylesbury Station**, approximately a 20-minute walk from the prison. Visitors can also take a local bus or taxi from the station. To plan your journey by public transport:

* use [National Rail Enquiries](https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/)
* use [Traveline for local bus times](https://www.traveline.info/)

A car park is available for visitors. There are disabled spaces available on a first come first served basis.

**Accessibility Information**

If you have a disability, please inform the booking officer when arranging your visit so that we can make any necessary special arrangements. Please note the following:

* Wheelchairs, their users, adults accompanying them, and assistance dogs may be subject to searches, which will be conducted with sensitivity and respect.
* Visitors requiring physical assistance during their visit must be accompanied by another adult, as staff cannot provide personal assistance.
* The Visits Hall is located on the second floor; however, we can accommodate accessibility visits if informed in advance through the booking line.

If you have trouble visiting due to a disability, you are encouraged to discuss this confidentially with the Visitors Centre staff at 01296 444192.



**Contact Us**

EMERGENCY CONTACT

**Address:**

If you have a concern that there is **an imminent risk of danger to a person in our care** and you wish to speak to a member of staff to raise this concern, then you can call the switchboard: **01296 444000**

The member of staff answering the phone will not be able to discuss the person in our care with you, but they will immediately pass your concern onto a senior member of staff to action. We aim to address any issues raised on the call immediately and will let you know what the outcome is.

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

**01296 444081**

This voicemail service is checked numerous times a day.

HMP Aylesbury   
Bierton Road   
Aylesbury   
Buckinghamshire  
HP20 1EH

General Phone Number:

01296 444000 (24 hours)

**Visits Booking Line:**

01296 444312

**Postal Order**

Money can be sent in by postal order, made payable to ‘HM Prison Service’. On the back of the postal order write the sender’s name and address and the prisoner’s name and prison number. Post to:

HMP Aylesbury, Bierton Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 1EH

You can also send money using your debit card or by bank transfer:

1. Make sure you have their prisoner number and date of birth

2. Go to this web page: www.gov.uk/send-prisoner-money and complete the online form.

3. Money should reach the prisoner in 1-3 working days.

**Clothing Parcel**

Prisoners are authorised to receive a clothing parcel which must be sent in within the first 28 days of their sentence. Prisoners can subsequently have a parcel sent in yearly, during the month of their birthday from approved prison catalogues.

**Your Visit**





All prisoners can receive a visit upon arrival at the establishment, prisoners need to add visitors to their ‘approved’ list through an application. They will require the full name, address, and date of birth of each visitor. Once this has been done, visitors can ring up or book online. When you book your visit, you’ll be given a booking reference number which you should make a note of. You need to book your visit with the establishment at least 24 hours before the desired visit date. If you turn up without having booked a visit you will be turned away.

**To visit someone in HMP Aylesbury:**

You will need to bring one of the following forms of identification with you:



-Passport

-Driving Licence

-EC Identity Card

-Employers/Student ID Card

-Bus Pass with photograph

-Red Maternity Book (ID option for children).

If you are unable to produce one of the above,

staff may accept combinations of

three or more of the following:

-Birth/Marriage Certificate

-Bus/Rail Pass with Photograph

-Bank Credit/Debit Card

-Young Persons proof of age card

-NUS Card

-Rent book/utility bill

-Library Card.

**Help with the cost of your visit**

Financial Assistance with Visiting: If you qualify to receive help with your finances such as benefits, you may be able to recoup all or part of the cost of your travel expenses through the ‘Assisted Prison Visits Scheme’. As part of your application, you will need to get a secondary form stamped by prison staff to prove your visit took place. You can request a copy of this form at the Visitors Centre.

**Visiting Hours**

HMP Aylesbury provides visits at the following times:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 14:00 to 16:00

Saturday and Sunday afternoon 1400 to 1600.

The Visitor’s Centre is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday this is where family and friends check in for pre-booked visits.

**How to book a visit**

A family can book a visit using the following methods:

Visits booking line Monday to Friday 09.30 – 13:30 on 01296 444302

Online, website [www.gov.uk/prison-visits](http://www.gov.uk/prison-visits)

When booking a visit, you will be asked for the following:

-Name and prison number of the prisoner you wish to visit.

-Your own name, address, and date of birth.

-The date you wish to visit.

-The number of people visiting – their names, addresses and dates of birth.

-The relation to the prisoner of anyone under the age of 18 years.

The prisoner is allowed up to 6 visitors per visit (this can include a maximum of 3 adults).

Please be aware that you need to be over the age of 18 to visit a prisoner. If a child is visiting, then they need to be accompanied by an adult.

We ask that all visitors come on their visit clothed modestly i.e. not too revealing/no offensive or inappropriate slogans or logos.

**Entering the Prison**

All visitors aged 16 or older must prove their identity before entering the prison.

[Read the list of acceptable forms of ID for all visitors](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/management-of-security-at-visits-policy-framework-open-estate/acceptable-forms-of-identification-id-when-visiting-a-prison-in-england-and-wales-annex-a).

Visitors, including children, will walk through a metal detector. You will also be sniffed by security dogs.

Staff will follow the arrangements for searching the person (Searching Policy Framework). The normal routine searching procedure may need to be varied according to the injury/disability of the person.

Aylesbury has a strict dress code policy, which means visitors should wear smart clothes. You cannot wear large coats, gloves or scarves, hooded tops, revealing clothing such as low-cut tops, shorts, or short dresses, offensive slogans, sports team clothing, ripped clothing, watches, or headwear, other than that worn for religious reasons. In addition, you cannot wear flip-flop style shoes (all shoes should have at least an ankle strap).

There are strict controls on what you can take into Aylesbury. You will have to leave most of the things you have with you in a locker. Pushchairs and car seats must be left in the visitors’ centre.

You will be told the rules by an officer at the start of your visit. If you break the rules, your visit could be cancelled, and you could be banned from visiting again.

**In the Visits Hall**

The prisoner will be waiting in the visits hall when you arrive. Normally the prisoner and his visitor(s) sit at a table in an open room, with the other prisoners and their visitors.

Physical contact between the prisoner and visitors is usually allowed briefly at the beginning and end of the visit. The person you are visiting will need to remain seated throughout the visit.



Visitors can get up from the seating area to obtain drinks and snacks from the tea bar or to use the toilet. The toilet is situated outside of the visit’s hall; therefore you may be required to be searched again before re-entering the room.

A visit may be held under ‘closed’ conditions if there are concerns that the visit may be a risk to establishment security, or if there is a risk of unacceptable or illegal activity taking place during the visit. During a closed visit, the prisoner and visitors will talk to each other whilst seated either side of a glass panel.

**Children**

All visitors under the age of 18 years are regarded as children and must be accompanied on a visit by an adult. This is a requirement of the establishment’s child protection policy. Children must not be left alone anywhere, at any time on the establishment premises, including in the Visitor Centre or in the car park. Prams and pushchairs must be left in the visits centre. A feeding bottle and spare nappies and wipes can also be taken on visits but no changing bag, you can ask for a clear plastic bag from a member of staff if needed. Access to baby change is available.

There are baby changing facilities and a play area (children must be supervised by a parent or guardian). A disabled toilet is also available. Lockers are also available which require a £1 deposit. You will be informed by visitor’s centre staff when it is time to go the main establishment for your visit. If you are going to be late for a visit, please contact the Visitors Centre on 01706 514357 as soon as you can. The last entry into the establishment is 30 minutes after the visit start time.

**PACT Family Services**

**Who are we?**

Pact (Prisoners Families Communities A fresh start Together) is a pioneering national charity that supports prisoners, people with convictions, and their children and families. We provide caring and life changing services at every stage of the criminal justice process: in court, in prison, on release, and in the community.

Pact’s vision is of a society in which justice is understood as a process of restoration and healing, in which prisons are used sparingly and as places of learning and rehabilitation, and in which the innate dignity and worth of every human being is valued.  We work for the common good of Society, taking a public health-based approach. We work at the intersection of criminal justice, child and family welfare, mental health, wellbeing provision and health & social care.

Our volunteers and staff can be found in courts, prisons, probation services, and in communities across England & Wales.  We are a diverse, inclusive, modern, and collaborative charity.  We build effective partnerships and sustainable solutions based on our well-established understanding of the systems in which we work, and on our historic values and ethos developed through our 120+ years of service delivery.

**More Support**

Family Forums: PACT Family Forums are a great way to get your views heard and speak to other families. The forums are a platform for visitors to voice suggestions that can lead to improvements being made around the visit experience. If you do not wish to attend our family forum but have some feedback, please feel free to write it down and place in the box provided. Speak to a member of PACT staff to find out when and where the next forum is taking place.

Social visit: PACT deliver 6 social visit sessions per year for those men who do not have visitors attend the prison in the last 12 months, these sessions are for the men to come to the visits hall, order from the T bar and socialise with games and activities.

Family Days: PACT deliver 12 Family Days per year. Family Days are a great opportunity for prisoners and their families to engage in activities and spend quality time as a family unit. Prisoners can apply for a place by putting in an application but must meet certain criteria. If you require any additional support or information, please contact PACT on: **01296 444329** **Or alternativity you can email:** **aylesbury@prisonadvice.org.uk**



Referral Process for Family Engagement Services: Pact operates a referral process within HMP Aylesbury to support the delivery of family engagement services. This process enables staff across the establishment — including reception, key workers, and personal officers — to refer prisoners for targeted support based on their family circumstances.

Referrals may be made for:

Urgent family-related needs identified during reception or induction

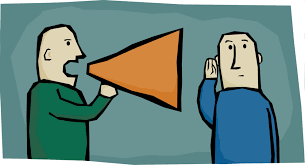
Prisoners with no current family contact or strained relationships

Engagement with family members during significant life events or transitions

Individuals needing one-to-one support

Pact staff respond to referrals by offering tailored interventions, including one-to-one support, family mediation, and signposting to external services.

**Staying In Touch**



[](http://emailaprisoner.com/)

**Email a prisoner**

If you have access to email, it is possible to keep in contact using www.emailaprisoner.com. HMP Aylesbury operates the ‘email a prisoner’ scheme but are only able to receive in-coming e-mails from family and friends which are printed out and delivered to the prisoner. Email a prisoner enables a family member or friend, anywhere in the world, to send a message to prisoners in the UK from any computer for 40 pence per message. The message is delivered to the prison within seconds so that it can be delivered to the prisoner by prison staff the next mail delivery. This service allows families to maintain contact via email and provide a faster and alternative method to letters.

[logo small](http://www.prisonvoicemail.com/)**Prison Voicemail**

Prison Voicemail allows friends and family to contact the prison and leave a voicemail message for a prisoner who can then pick the message up using an individual voicemail pin number, this allows families to leave messages at a convenient time for them without worrying about missing a call. For more information check out www.prisonvoicemail.com.

**By Letter**

To send a prisoner a letter, please write his name and number on the front of the envelope and a return name and address on the back in case there are any issues and/or it needs to be returned.

**Penfriends Scheme**

HMP Aylesbury currently works with the Prisoners’ Penfriends scheme to encourage those prisoners how do not receive visits or have limited contact.

Working alongside the Prison Fellowship, HMP Aylesbury enables prisoners to write to volunteers, these schemes are being coordinated by the Chaplaincy department.

**Official Prison Visitors (OPV)**

People in our care who do not have anyone who is able to visit can request to have a volunteer prison visitor called an ‘Official Prison Visitor (OPV) who will visit and provide support. This service is offered through the Chaplaincy department.



**Its Story book Dads**

Offering opportunities for prisoners to record audio stories for their children, and to keep in touch at special times, birthdays, and festivals.

**Care Leavers**

Following the Children & Social Work Act 2017 (C&SWA 2017), all young adults defined as Care Leavers can be offered support until the age of 25. Support can consist of:

Relationships & Keeping Safe

Accommodation

Leisure and Participation

Money, Health, and wellbeing

Education, Employment and Training

Individuals can contact OMU (Offender Management Unit), their keyworker or the Prison Offender Manager Care Leaver for information. Individuals who have already declared that they are Care Leavers, then support will be given to maintain contact with their allocated Personal Advisor from their local authority whilst in custody.

**Future Planning**



**Areas for Development in 2025/26**

HMP Aylesbury is committed to continuous improvement in how we maintain the ‘golden thread’ of families and significant others in all that we do. To achieve that we have identified areas for development, which will be reviewed for progress through our Reducing Reoffending Committee on a bi-monthly basis and updated annually.

Our commitments for 2025/26:

* **Explore additional resources and support for neurodivergent children**, ensuring the visits environment is more accessible, calming, and responsive to a range of sensory and communication needs.
* **Raise the profile** of family involvement across all prison functions
* **Share and celebrate prisoner successes** with families (e.g. graduations, achievements)
* **Further develop** the Families Working Group in partnership with PACT
* **Link family provision** with work around:
* Care leavers
* Looked after children
* Prisoners who do not receive visits
* Prisoners with protected characteristics
* **Re-establish the Families Working Group** in partnership with PACT to strengthen communication with families and gather feedback for service improvements.
* **Refurbish the Visits Hall for Category C prisoners** to create a more welcoming and family-friendly environment.
* **Introduce more child-focused activities** to support positive family interactions.
* **Provide Xboxes and age-appropriate entertainment** for older children during visits.
* **Increase the number of family day visits** offered throughout the year.
* **Expand weekday/weekend visit availability** to ensure more equitable access for all prisoners.
* **Work with PACT to explore the feasibility of an ‘Outside Play’ event**, specifically designed for children visiting loved ones.

**Measuring Success**

By the number of spaces/attendees available for each visit.

By the statistics collated regarding ethnicity, race, and cultural attendance on family events.

By listening to prisoners and families through regular forums, recording and sharing comments and feedback.

By reviewing the feedback in the family forms.

By the variety of family, friends and significant others visits offered.

By collating important data from the people in our care and acting on the information gained.

**Staffing Structure**

**Our staffing structure ensures families and significant others work represents an operational priority**

**Governor**

**Deputy Governor**

**Governor**

**Head of Reducing Reoffending & Families**

**Head of OMU**

**Head of Residential units**

**Head of Security**

**Head of Safer Prisons**

**CM Family Champion PACT**

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

* **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
* **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

* **Prisoners’ Families Helpline: 0808 808 2003** info@prisonersfamilies.org

www.prisonersfamilies.org

* **Prisoners’ Families and Friends Service: 0808 808 3444** info@pffs.org.uk

[www.pffs.org.uk](http://www.pffs.org.uk)

* **HMP Aylesbury Safer Prisons Hotline**: 01296 444081- (from 08:00-17:00 Monday to Friday) 01296 444000 outside of these hours and ask for the orderly officer
* **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 in one place.